



John 6:35-37, 53-71

Is Jesus Hard To Follow?

At this time in His ministry lots of people were following Jesus. Many in the large crowds had been a part of the feeding of the 5,000. They had been hungry. They had been given a great sermon...and they had been well-fed too. They decided they wanted more. They started to follow Jesus. **But is Jesus hard to follow?**

They had come to consider themselves Disciples of Christ. And for a while everything seemed 'cool'! What a really wonderful way to spend one's life. Listen to a good sermon, have some fellowship and get fed! **But is Jesus hard to follow?**

"This discipleship stuff is easy," they may have thought. So Jesus tells these fair-weathered disciples: ***"Do not work for bread that spoils, but for food that endures for eternal life."*** So they replied, ***"Sir, from now on give us this bread."***

They had no clue as to what Jesus was really talking about. And then He comes up with this: ***"I am the bread of life. He who comes to me will never go hungry, and he who believes in me will never be thirsty."*** It seemed most folks took what Jesus said literally. And I am afraid...this is often how people view the Christian faith and participation in church today.

Many come into discipleship thinking; "All I got to do is follow Jesus and all my problems will magically disappear!" Does life become real and alive if and when we follow Christ? **You bet!** Is following Christ the only answer to this life's pain and misery? **You better believe it!** Is it a way to escape the troubles of this world? **Not a chance!!!**

As a matter of fact...when we follow Jesus, we take on—not only our problems—we take on the problems of the entire world! Oh no! The entire world? That is correct...and you thought we just took on the problems of our rural churches.

Jesus, the Savior of the world, who paid the ultimate price with His life so that we may live, calls us into the struggle with Him. Jesus calls us to get down in the trenches, in the fox holes and fight alongside Him for the salvation of the world! Not so glamorous after-all is it? **So we ask again. Is Jesus hard to follow?**

Jesus says, ***"Whoever comes to me, I will never turn away."*** ***"Come to me! I will give you eternal life! I will make you whole! I will make your life meaningful. I will never turn you away!"***

But we do turn away from Him and find ourselves back in the same mess we were in before! For many of us, **Jesus is too hard to follow!** So we leave. We turn away. **We run from the only One who can give us LIFE!**

"If the world hates you, keep in mind that it hated me first," He warns us. ***"If they persecuted me, they will persecute you also."*** ***"Whoever does not take up their cross and follow me is not worthy of me."*** ***"Whoever finds his life will lose it, and whoever loses his life for my sake will find it."*** ***"I tell you the truth, unless you eat the flesh of the Son of Man and drink his blood; you have no life in you."***

We are told that after Jesus said these things, many of his disciples said, ***"This is a hard teaching. Who can accept it?"***

When we consume Jesus and thus allow His love and His compassion to consume us **we find ourselves doing things we could never imagine doing**. Our entire lives take on a new and different meaning; **our priorities change**—and we enter into a quality of life that can only be described as eternal, right here on earth!

His way is not the easy way. **His way** leads to a Cross! But **His way** also leads to the empty tomb! The most important thing in this life is to say “**yes**” to **Jesus** and to stay focused on our faith!

In doing this we will be missionaries in the fields of our community and beyond. Souls will be saved, lives will be healed and the hungry will taste the bread of life!