

# WHY WILL YOU LEAVE JESUS?

Dowlen Road, July 12, 2009 PM

## Introduction:

- A. Turn to **John 6:66**.
  - 1. To those of us gathered in this place, the choice made by the people in this passage is unimaginable. Even if you know nothing about what came before this statement – what Jesus said or did that provoked this response, it is still unimaginable.
  - 2. Knowing what we know, understanding the consequences of leaving Jesus, we just cannot imagine ever making that choice.
  - 3. Can you? Can you ever see yourself giving up on Jesus: not coming to services like this, not praying or studying, not trying to live a godly life?
- B. But actually, some of us will make this choice.
  - 1. Every year we begin with some people who will not be walking with Jesus when the year is over. This year will be no exception.
  - 2. I chose this topic for a kid's night because so many young people make this choice. When they go off to college, as many as 70% of young Christians stop walking with Jesus. Some of those will come back. But churches are still losing about half of their young people. I think better of this crowd. But I don't want to see even one of you make that choice to leave Jesus.
- C. Maybe that seems impossible to you right now. But it happens far too often.
  - 1. The question we want to examine tonight is: why does this happen? What excuses do people give when they decide to stop walking with Jesus?
  - 2. Let's look at four common reasons people give for leaving Jesus. I want us to see how foolish each excuse really is.
  - 3. My hope is that we will remember how foolish they are should we ever be tempted to use one of these.

## Reason (1) *Believing the Bible just isn't smart!*

- A. This is sometimes what happens to young people when they go off to college and for the first time find their faith seriously challenged.
  - 1. It might happen in biology class as the professor piles on all of the evidence that he believes "proves" evolution is true. He may also mock anyone who believes that some god created the world in six days. He may say that only an ignorant, backward thinking person could believe this.
  - 2. A lot of young people find themselves in this situation when they go off to college. Some begin to wonder if it is really smart to believe what they were taught in Bible class about God creating the world (**Genesis 1:1**). Some even begin to wonder if it's smart to believe in God at all. It happens. I've known some people who went off to school believing in God and Genesis, but came away just not sure that believing was smart.
- B. Could this happen to you?
  - 1. Right now, sitting in this place, it may seem impossible that this would ever happen to any of us.
  - 2. Let me add that there is a certain absurdity in allowing a man to convince that what the Bible says about the beginning is not true. Have you ever stopped and asked yourself, how does the professor know how the world began? Where did he get all of this information about big bang and evolution? This answer is, this is what he was taught – perhaps his college professor; perhaps what he learned when he read his textbooks. But this still leaves us with a question: where did his professor learn it? Take that back as far as you want and ultimately what all these educated men must admit is that they learned this information from someone else. It doesn't matter what evidence they claim to have to support their theories. They were not there. They don't really know.
  - 3. We can know with certainty that the Genesis account is right because it was inspired by the One who WAS THERE (**II Timothy 3:16, Genesis 1:1**).
  - 4. Doesn't it make sense to put your faith in the words of One who was actually there, rather than trust in those who are simply repeating what others have told them (**Psalms 119:99**)?
- C. This all sounds reasonable now. The challenge is to remember these things when your faith is under attack. When that professor is looking down his nose at you, telling you that all the evidence says evolution is true and no intelligent person can believe otherwise, just remember...He's only repeating what he's heard others say. He doesn't really know. He wasn't there. Don't let someone who DOES NOT KNOW undermine your faith.

## Reason (2) *Sin Is Fun!*

- A. This is the lie that Satan has been trying to get men to buy since the very beginning (**Genesis 3:1-8**).
  - 1. There are four things I want you to notice from this story.
    - a. First, Eve knew the score. She knew it was God's will that she NOT eat this fruit.
    - b. Second, Satan lied to her. He told her that eating this fruit would be good for her.
    - c. Third, Eve believed his lie. She listened to Satan and ate the fruit.
    - d. Fourth, she learned that God was right and Satan was wrong. She suffered because she listened to Satan.
  - 2. You would think that since this is a relatively simple method that Satan has been using from the start that men would have this figured out by now.
  - 3. But oddly enough, Satan continues to use this process and it still works.
    - a. Just like Eve, God has told us not to do some things. He tells us not to get drunk (**Ephesians 5:18**); not to have sex with people to whom you are not married (**Galatians 5:19**); not to lie (**Colossians 3:9**); not to fill our minds with corrupt stuff (**Proverbs 4:23**). Like Eve, we know the score.
    - b. Second, the problem is that Satan lies to us about this stuff. He tells us that this stuff is good for us. He wants us to believe that when we don't participate, we are missing out. This is the lie that Satan wants us to believe.
    - c. Third, some choose to believe his lie. Even though they knew better, just like Eve they choose to do what God tells them NOT to do. Some even leave Jesus. They leave Him because they are convinced that the people around them living in sin are really having fun, and they are missing out. One of the toughest things about being an elder is trying to talk to someone who has left the Lord because they believe that a life of sin has something to offer them.
    - d. Fourth, just like Eve, they make a mess of things. Ultimately, everyone figures out that God is right. The question is, how far will I fall and how big of a mess will I make of my life before I figure out that sin has nothing to offer.

- B. Could this happen to you?
1. Right now, sitting in this place, it may seem impossible that this would ever happen to any of us.
  2. Think of what it takes to believe that sin is really fun and I'm missing out.
    - a. First, I have to believe that God does not love me; that He's not really seeking my best. This is what Satan tried to tell Eve (**Genesis 3:5**, "God knows"). Surely we all know better than this (**John 3:16**).
    - b. Second, I have to believe that Satan is seeking my good; that he wants the best for me. Surely we know better (**John 8:44, I Peter 5:8**).
    - c. It should never be that Satan would ever persuade any of us who know better to listen to him.
- C. It all sounds so reasonable now. But I need to remember this when I'm under the Devil's assault.
1. Any time I find myself wanting to do something that I know is wrong and believing that I'm missing out on all the fun, I need to remember that Satan is working on me. He's trying to destroy me.
  2. God is always at work through the instructions found in the Bible. He's trying to protect me.
  3. Don't wait until you've made a mess to figure that out.

### Reason (3) *Serving God is a drag.*

- A. I think for some people this is absolutely true!
1. Serving God is a drag because it's only about "going to church on Sunday." They think little about God the rest of the week. They don't study or pray. They don't serve others or share the gospel. They may even do some things that go against God's will for them.
  2. Then Sunday morning comes along. They are dead tired from being out late the night before. They drag themselves out of bed. They miss the first 20 minutes of Bible class because they are late. They mumble through the singing, wondering in the back of their minds why we have to sing so many songs. They keep an eye on their watch during the preaching, hoping the sermon won't run long. Then, as soon as the last "amen" is said, they are out the door.
  3. If this is what it means to serve God, then serving God will be a drag. I will start looking for excuses to skip out even on the few things I do. In fact, most people who live this way will eventually give up on serving God altogether. When you try to talk to people like this, they have no interest because serving God never really meant anything to them.
- B. Could this be you? It might be one day, if you're just hanging on and giving a half-hearted effort.
1. Serving God is not just about showing up for a worship service each week.
    - a. It's about having a relationship with our God (**Romans 8:14-16**).
    - b. It's about passionately worshipping this God, recognizing that He has been so good to us, that He deserves our praise (**Psalms 18:3**).
    - c. It's about living His will for our lives and enjoying the peace that comes with this choice (**II Timothy 3:16-17, Philippians 4:9**).
    - d. It's about connecting with your spiritual family and building relationships with other people who are trying to go to heaven (**Acts 2:46-47**).
    - e. It's about serving other people (**John 13:14-15**).
    - f. It's about sharing the gospel with other people (**Matthew 28:18-20**).
  2. You can't do this half way. If you try, you will be miserable and will give up altogether one day. You have to serve God with your whole heart.
- C. This all sounds so reasonable now. But challenge is to remember it when I'm discouraged. When you begin to say to yourself, "I'm just not getting anything out of these worship services" or "I just can't see how being a Christian is making a difference," recognize that the problem is with me. I'm not serving God with my whole heart. The answer is not to give up on the Lord, but to change myself.

### Reason (4) *Christians are mean.*

- A. Oddly enough, some people choose to leave Jesus because some fellow disciple mistreated them.
1. Sometimes this happens as a result of a conflict. People get in a fuss over some issue and feel like a brother mistreated them. So, they stop coming to worship and they give up on serving God.
  2. Other times people just feel like they are neglected. No one cares about them and takes care of them, so they stop following Jesus.
  3. Some get angry and pull back. They may not leave altogether, but they stop coming faithfully and being involved in the Lord's work. They offer God half-hearted service.
- B. Could this be you? Could you decide that your brethren have been mean to you and use this as an excuse to stop following Jesus? I hope you can see that this choice doesn't make a lot of sense.
1. First, why would I leave Jesus because of the way someone else treated me? This is what we are doing when we stop gathering with His people, stop worshipping, stop studying...we are giving up on Jesus. He deserves our praise and worship, no matter what others may do (**John 3:16**).
  2. Second, why would I do this to myself? If I stop doing God's will – for whatever reason, I put my own soul in jeopardy (**Matthew 7:21**). Would I choose to condemn myself because of what someone else did to me?
  3. Third, even if someone has mistreated me and is unrepentant – even if they make themselves an enemy to me, let's not forget our duty to them (**Romans 12:17-21**).
- C. It seems so unreasonable at this moment to stop serving God because we believe we've been mistreated. The challenge is to remember this when my feelings have been hurt. No matter what others may do to us – even our own brethren, we never respond by leaving the Lord.

**Conclusion: *We've got to stick with Jesus (John 6:68).***