

Words Of Eternal Life

Disclaimer: this is an automatically generated machine transcription - there may be small errors or mistranscriptions. Please refer to the original audio if you are in any doubt.

Date: 17 January 2021

Preacher: Rev. Murdo Campbell

[0 : 0 0] Well, if we could, with the Lord's help and the Lord's enabling, if we could turn back to that portion of scripture that we read, the Gospel according to John, in chapter 6.

John chapter 6, and if we read again, at verse 66. John chapter 6, at verse 66. Where John tells us, after this, many of his disciples turned back and no longer walked with him, that is Jesus.

So Jesus said to the twelve, do you want to go away as well? Simon Peter answered to him, Lord, to whom shall we go? You have the words of eternal life, and we have believed and have come to know that you are the Holy One of God.

Lord, to whom shall we go? You have the words of eternal life. As you know, Peter's confession here, it is the confession of the Christian, because this is the confession which every Christian makes when they come to believe and confess that Jesus Christ is their Lord and Savior.

Lord, to whom shall we go? You have the words of eternal life. And like every Christian, Peter's confession of the Christian, it was made because Peter had considered the character, conduct, and conversation of the Christ.

[1 : 4 0] Peter made this confession because he had considered the character, conduct, and conversation of the Christ. So remember, Peter, he had walked with Jesus. Peter had talked with Jesus.

And by considering the character of Jesus, the conduct of Jesus, and even as we've seen in this chapter, the conversation of Jesus. It was because of these things that Peter came to the conclusion that there was no one else to turn to for salvation except this Jesus.

He alone, he said, you alone have the words of eternal life. So Peter, he concluded that Jesus was the Christ. He is the one who has the words of eternal life.

But you know, what's interesting is that it was all because of his conversation. The conversation with Jesus revealed his character and his conduct. And you know, in many ways, that's so true, isn't it?

You know, whether we believe it or not, our words, we are defined by our words. Your conversation reveals our character and our conduct because, well, if your words are beneficial and build people up, then you'll be known as an encourager and an enabler.

[2 : 5 4] If your words are gentle and gracious, then you'll be known as someone who is caring and compassionate. But if your words are boastful and bragging, then you'll be known as someone who's arrogant, maybe even aggressive.

If your words are full of assumptions and accusations and allegations, then, which are allegations that are not true, then you'll be known as someone who is dishonest and deceitful. If your words are about other people's business, when you should be minding your own business, then you'll be known as a galloping gossip.

That's because we're defined by our words. Our words reveal, our conversation reveals our character and our conduct. And needless to say, from the outset, as Christians, we should always seek and strive to possess a Christ-like character, conduct, and conversation.

But what we see here is that by considering the character and conduct and the conversation of Jesus Christ, Peter came to the conclusion that there was no one else he could turn to for salvation except Jesus.

He alone had the words of eternal life. But as we read, not everyone was of the same opinion as Peter.

[4 : 11] Not everyone came to the same conclusion as Peter. Not everyone made the same confession as Peter. Because when the crowds considered the character, conduct, and conversation of the Christ, they came to their own conclusion, they made their own confession about Jesus.

In fact, what we see in this section is that there are three confessions. There are three confessions. There's the confession of the crowds, there's the confession of the Christian, and then there's the confession of the Christ.

So there are headings this morning. The confession of the crowds, the confession of the Christian and the confession of the Christ. So first of all we see the confession of the crowds.

The confession of the crowds, look with me at verse 60. See, as when many of his disciples heard it, they said, this is a hard saying, who can listen to it?

But Jesus, knowing in himself that his disciples were grumbling about this, said to them, do you take offense at this?

[5 : 18] As we said, when the crowds considered the character conduct and conversation of the Christ, they came to their own conclusion and they made their own confession.

And as we read in verse 60, the conclusion and the confession of this crowd was that they said, this is a hard saying. Who can listen to it?

Who can hear it? You know, literally the crowds were concluding and confessing. They were saying, this is an unpleasant and uninviting saying.

Who is able to listen to this? Or even who is able to stomach this? And of course, what the crowds were referring to is what Jesus had just said about eating his flesh and drinking his blood in order to possess eternal life.

You remember, Jesus had said to the crowds in verse 54, whoever feeds on my flesh and drinks my blood has eternal life and I will raise him up on the last day.

[6 : 17] And as we said last week, when Jesus made this somewhat shocking and maybe even we might think of it as a sickening statement about eating his flesh and drinking his blood. You remember that Jesus, he wasn't talking here about communion.

He was talking about the cross. Jesus was speaking about obediently submitting his flesh over to the hands of violent men to be mocked and beaten and flogged and crucified.

Jesus was speaking about his own blood, his blood being shed for the redemption and the cleansing of all those who have been elected, as we saw last week, and entrusted to him from his father.

And with that, Jesus, he compels the crowds. He compels the crowds to possess eternal life by feeding upon the finished work of the cross.

And we saw that last week, didn't we, where Jesus said, unless you come to me, you'll never possess eternal life. Unless you call to me, you'll never possess eternal life.

[7 : 23] Unless you commit your life to me, you'll never possess eternal life. But you know, for the crowds, they couldn't understand the cross.

They couldn't understand the crucified Christ, because the crowds, they wanted a crowned Christ, not a crucified Christ. The crowds wanted Jesus to be this super saviour who would overthrow the oppression of the Romans, not the suffering saviour who would die on a Roman cross.

The crowds wanted Jesus to be this earthly king with an earthly rule, not a divine king with a divine rule. But you know, my friend Jesus, he wasn't the saviour the crowds wanted.

Jesus wasn't the saviour the crowds wanted. That's why they refused to make the confession of the Christian. They might have believed in Jesus, but they refused to make the confession of the Christian, even though Jesus had compelled them.

He had compelled them to come to him and call upon him and commit to him and to confess him as the Christ. But they refused.

[8 : 34] They refused to confess Jesus as the Christ. And you know, my unconverted friend, whether you're here or at home, you're part of this crowd too.

You're part of this crowd too. Because you know only too well that Jesus, throughout your life, Jesus has called you to come.

He's compelled you to come. He's called you to commit to him and even confess him as the Christ. But you still refuse. Yes, you believe.

Yes, you believe the Bible. And the Bible says to you that you must believe. But it also says you must confess. You must believe in your heart, says Paul, and confess with your mouth that Jesus is Lord.

And then you'll be saved. But up until today, you have refused to confess Jesus as the Christ. You refuse to confess him as Lord over your life. You refuse to confess that Jesus has the words of eternal life.

[9 : 45] But notice that John refers to the crowds as disciples. He says in verse 60, when many of his disciples heard it, they said, this is a hard saying who can listen to it.

And I think John is using the term disciple. He's using it quite loosely here because a disciple is, well, a learner. You have your L plates on. So every follower of Jesus is a learner.

We're all learners. But what John is saying is that the crowds were learners. They might not be confessing Jesus, but they were learning about him. Because this crowd, they'd been looking at Jesus.

They'd been listening to Jesus. They'd been learning from Jesus. The crowd here in John 6 is just like the crowd gathered at church this morning, whether here or at home.

You're a learner. Because we've been, as we've been going through John's Gospel, my friend, you've been looking at Jesus. You've been listening to Jesus. You've been learning from Jesus.

[10 : 49] And from Jesus, you have heard the Gospel. From Jesus, you've been taught the Gospel. From Jesus, you've come to know the Gospel that he is the Gospel. He's the good news.

And you've seen the Gospel in action in his life and in his work. You've also seen the Gospel in action in the lives of others, in your home, in your family, in your community.

And yet, like this crowd, you still refuse to make the confession of the Christian. You refuse to make the confession of the Christian.

You need to believe and confess and you'll be saved. But as we said before, in this chapter in John chapter 6, it's a brilliant chapter.

It's quite a long chapter, but there's a theme. And one of the themes is bread. Because as we said before, all the events which took place in this chapter, they did so during the Feast of Passover, or as the Jews called it, the Feast of Unleavened Bread.

[11 : 50] And you remember right at the beginning of the chapter, it was bread from the lunchbox of a little boy, which Jesus broke to feed the 5,000. Where Jesus used five loaves of bread and two fish to feed what was in reality, actually, feeding the 25,000 when you add all the women and children who were present.

But it was all for a purpose, you remember. Because as the crowds followed Jesus, as they went seeking after Jesus, looking for more satisfaction, for more bread, Jesus explained to them that they'll never be satisfied.

They'll never experience satisfaction in their heart and in their life until they taste the true bread which comes down from heaven. And Jesus said to them, the bread of God is not a portion, but a portion.

He's the one who comes down from heaven and gives life to the world. And with that Jesus declared to us, I am the bread of life. Whosoever comes to me shall not hunger, and whosoever believes in me shall never thirst.

As what Jesus has taught us, taught the crowd, if you want to possess eternal life, you must come, you must call, you must commit, and you must confess Him as your Lord and Savior.

[13 : 10] But as we see in this section, bread is not only the one important theme. There's another important theme. And the other important theme is the crowds, the crowd that we're part of this morning.

And as you see, there's a progression in the attitude towards Jesus from the cloud. You start at the beginning of the chapter, and at the beginning of the chapter, the crowds are delighting in Jesus.

But then they begin to start doubting Jesus. Then they start debating with Jesus. Then we see them disputing with Jesus. And now right at the end of the chapter, they're denying Jesus.

At the beginning of the chapter, the crowds are following after Jesus. But by the end of the chapter, they're saying, forget it. We're not following you any longer.

They want to forget Jesus. And that's because the crowds who followed Jesus, they did so only because Jesus was this new phenomenon.

[14 : 11] He was the new fad and fashion of the day. Everyone was following Jesus. Everyone was going to see this miracle work. Or everyone was gathering to hear this preacher with authority.

Everyone was following Jesus in the crowd. But human nature, being what it is, the crowds were attracting an even greater crowd. And for many people, like it is in this crowd, it's easy to go along in the crowd.

It's easy to follow Jesus in the crowd. It's easy to blend into the crowds. It's easy to get lost in the crowd. But for John and all the other Gospel writers, the crowds that follow Jesus, it was always a negative thing.

Because as we've said before, Jesus isn't into crowds. Because there are crowds in hell. And Jesus isn't into the numbers game.

We've said this many times before, the numbers game of counting church attendance or views on YouTube or likes on Facebook. And that's because Jesus doesn't want the confession of the crowds.

[15 : 16] Jesus wants the confession of the Christian. Jesus wants people to believe in Him and confess Him as their Lord. He doesn't want the confession of the crowds.

He wants the confession of the Christian. He wants individuals who will come to Him and call upon Him and commit to Him and confess Him as their Lord and Savior.

Jesus wants people, Jesus wants people who will love Him and look to Him and listen to Him and live for Him.

My friend, Jesus doesn't want the confession of the crowds. He wants the confession of the Christian, which brings us to consider secondly, the confession of the Christian.

So first of all, the confession of the crowds, but then the confession of the Christian. Now look at verse 66. We're told that after this, many of His disciples turned back and no longer walked with Him.

[16 : 15] So Jesus said to the 12, do you want to go away as well? Simon Peter answered him, Lord, to whom shall we go? You have the words of eternal life.

And we have believed and have come to know that you are the Holy One of God. You know verse 66, as we read it there, you know, it's got to be one of the saddest and yet the most solemn verses in the Bible.

After this, many of His disciples turned back and no longer walked with Him. John explains that after Jesus has compelled this crowd, pleaded with Him to come, call, fight and confess Him as their Lord and Savior, they refuse.

After these disciples had delighted in Jesus, they were now denying Him. After these learners had looked and listened and learned from Jesus, they're now refusing to love Him and live for Him.

And we're told that they walked with Him no longer. They walked with Him no longer. This crowd turned their back on Jesus.

[17 : 34] You know, after being in the presence of Jesus and hearing the preaching of Jesus and experiencing all the privileges of Jesus, they turned their back on Jesus.

And you know, my unconverted friend, whether you're here or at home, that's what you're doing. You know, that's what you're doing every time you hear the Gospel.

Every time you hear Jesus saying to you, come to me, call to me, commit to me, confess me. Do you know when you walk out of here, you're turning your back on Jesus?

You're turning your back on Jesus. But of course, like it is with every crowd, there are different people present in the crowd, just like there are different people present in the crowd this morning, whether here or at home.

There were some in the crowd who were curious. There were some who were confused. There were some who were committed. There were also some who were counterfeit.

[18 : 37] Those who were curious, well, they went wherever Jesus went. They liked to look at Jesus and listen to Jesus and learn from Jesus. But they didn't love Jesus. They didn't live for Jesus.

They were curious about the Christ, but not willing to confess the Christ. And there are some of you like them this morning in this crowd. You're curious about the Christ.

You're here every week, or you're online every week, and you like to look at Jesus and listen to Jesus and learn from Jesus. But do you love Jesus?

Do you want to live for Jesus? You're curious about the Christ because you enjoy coming to church or watching from home, or maybe you enjoy reading the Bible or listening to the Gospel.

But that's as far as it ever goes with you. You're curious, but you're not willing to confess. There are others in the crowd. We see them. They're all around us.

[19 : 35] They're confused. They're confused because they thought that their upbringing and their upright living was enough to save them. And they're confused because they thought that their religious observance of Bible reading and church attendance and tithing, if I do all these things, I'll be saved.

But now Jesus is saying, unless you come, call, commit, and confess me, you'll be saved. And that's what confuses them. What's in their head isn't what Jesus is saying.

And they need to come and realize that this is what Jesus is saying, is what they need to do unless you come, call, commit, and confess me as Lord. You will never be saved.

But then there are those in the crowd who are committed and we're thankful that they're committed. Even in this crowd, there was 11 out of 12 disciples who were committed to Jesus.

They'd left their nets. They'd left their tax booths. They'd left their fields to follow Jesus. They'd left everything to follow after Jesus because they were committed.

[20 : 40] But there were also those in the crowd and this is the solemn one. They were counterfeit. As you know, Judas was in this crowd. And sadly, like many Judas thought that by just being part of the crowd, it was enough to be saved.

But it wasn't. And we'll come back to that in a moment. But what we're seeing here is that after Jesus had compelled these crowds, the majority of the 5,000 plus crowd, they turned their back upon Jesus and they walked with him no longer.

It's one of the saddest and one of the most solemn moments in the Bible. And you know, it reminds me of the time when I was in college in the Free Church College in Edinburgh.

You know, every day after college, a few of us, we would have to walk down the Royal Mile to catch the bus at the end of the day. And as you'd expect, the Royal Mile was always full of people, always buzzing with tourists, walking around, seeing all the city attractions that are on the Royal Mile.

And like it is, there are many, in many cities, there would be someone on the street entertaining the crowds, just like people busking. But on this occasion, there was this individual who was doing lots and lots of stunts.

[21 : 56] He was doing stunts like blowing fire and throwing juggling swords. And he tied himself up at one point. And he attracted this large crowd around him.

In the middle of the Royal Mile, he even blocked the whole street. We couldn't get past him. There was about two to three hundred people and they were all gathered in this huge circle around this entertainer.

And they were watching him do his stunts. And he was very good. So we stopped to watch him too. But you know, it was as this entertainer was coming to the end of his show.

He began to explain why he did what he did. And you know, to my amazement, he told the crowd. The man stopped and he told the whole crowd in front of him that he used his talent in order to attract lots of people to come and listen to him so that he could tell them all about Jesus.

And you know, at that point, when I heard him saying that, I thought, wow, this is amazing. What an opportunity to tell this two to three hundred people about Jesus.

[23 : 02] What an opportunity to share the gospel. But you know, what frightened me was that as soon as the entertainer said the word Jesus, almost everyone in the crowd, they did a 180 degree turn to turn their back upon what the man was saying about Jesus.

In fact, the man didn't actually say anything about Jesus. All the man did was say the word Jesus and they turned their back. And you know, what's even more solemn is that the entertainer, he only attracted the crowds and said that thing about Jesus as a joke.

He quickly got the crowd to turn around and listen to him again and carried on with what he was doing. But you know, it reminded me that this huge crowd of people, as soon as they heard the name Jesus, they turned their back.

It reminded me of the hardness of the heart. There are soon as the crowds hear the name Jesus, they turn their back. Why? Because they're offended by him.

They're just like this crowd here in John 6. They were offended by Jesus and they turned their back upon Jesus and walked with him no longer.

[24 : 12] And with that, what we see here is that Jesus, he turns to his twelve apostles and he says to them, do you also want to go away? Do you also want to go away?

And as you know, Peter, he responds with the confession of the Christian. And I love the way it's written in the authorized version. Lord, to whom shall we go?

That was the words of eternal life. And we believe and are sure that thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God. It's a beautiful confession. It's the confession of the Christian.

As we said earlier, Peter made the confession of the Christian because he had considered the character, the conduct and the conversation of the Christ. And like every Christian, Peter came to the conclusion that there was no one else he could turn to for salvation.

Jesus alone had the words of eternal life. Lord, to whom shall we go? Thou art the words of eternal life. We believe and are sure that thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God.

[25 : 15] My friend, this is the confession every Christian makes when they come and they call and they commit and they confess Jesus as their Lord and Savior.

Because the confession of the Christian is, who else can we go to? Who else can we follow? Who else can we turn to when our world is turned upside down?

Who else can we look to when bereavement breaks into my home and into my family? Who else can we listen to when the world is filling our minds with all these voices?

Who else can speak words of eternal life into our situations and into our circumstances? Because my friend, the reality is, no one can accept Jesus.

You know, we can't go to anyone else in this world with our burdens of sin, sickness, suffering or sorrow. We need to bring them all to Jesus.

[26 : 18] Lord, to whom shall we go? Thou art the words of eternal life. We believe and are sure that thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God. And you know, that's the confession of the Christian.

And you know, that's a confession we should be saying every day. Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God. But you know, the question all boils down to.

This is what Jesus is coming to. Is this confession your confession? Is this confession your confession? And you might say, well, this is very simplistic, Mordeaux.

But this is the gospel. Believe and confess. Believe and confess. Is this your confession?

Are you looking to Jesus? Are you living for Jesus? Do you love Jesus? Is this confession the confession that shapes and sanctifies you in your life? Is this the confession that encourages you and enables you to bring everything to Jesus?

[27 : 24] Lord, to whom shall we go? Is this your daily confession? My Christian friend, is this your daily confession? Lord, to whom shall we go?

Or is it somebody else you seek first before you go to Jesus? My unconverted friend, is this your confession? Lord, to whom shall we go?

That was the words of eternal life. We know and believe that Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God. Is this your confession?

Because it's the confession of the Christian. And it's the confession we must live by and die by confessing this Christ as the Lord and Savior.

And so we've seen the confession of the crowds. We've seen the confession of the Christian. But lastly, and more briefly, the confession of the Christ. The confession of the Christ.

[28 : 18] Now look at verse 70. Jesus answered them, did I not choose you the twelve and yet one of you is a devil?

He spoke of Judas, the son of Simon, as scariot, for he was, he, one of the twelve, was going to betray him. You know, after the crowds had departed and the Christian had declared Jesus, he described.

And what we see is that the Christ described Judas as a devil. He's a diabolos. He's an accuser and a slanderer of the Christ.

Of course, John, he then adds his own commentary in verse 71 and he explains who this person was. He says it's Judas. But as you know, John wrote his gospel long after this event.

It was written long after the betrayal of Jesus and the crucifixion and burial and resurrection of Jesus. But at this point, none of the disciples knew who would be a devil.

[29 : 21] And you know the disciples just trying to enter into their own experience. You know the disciples, they must have wondered, maybe even worried, who it would be.

Maybe they suspected it might be Peter. Because when Peter tried to persuade Jesus not to go to the cross, you remember that Jesus said, get behind me Satan.

Maybe they suspected it would be James or John. Because they argued with one another. James and John, you remember they argued with one another who would be the greatest in the kingdom of heaven.

Maybe the disciples started suspecting it would be Thomas. They said that he was willing to die for Jesus and go anywhere for Jesus. Maybe they suspected it would be Simon the Zealot or Matthew the tax collector who would turn their back on Jesus.

But you know, I firmly believe that the disciples, they didn't ever suspect it would be Judas the Scarlet who would betray Jesus.

[30 : 22] You know, by all the outward appearances, he seemed to be the most trustworthy. He had the money bag. He was the treasurer.

They thought he would never stab Jesus in the back. But as we're told in verse 64, Jesus knew from the beginning who they were who did not believe and who would betray him.

And you know, it's a solemn and sobering thought. Jesus knew all about Judas. Jesus knew all about Judas.

Which means he knows all about us too. Jesus knows who will delight in him. Jesus also knows who will desert him and deny him and disown him and dishonor him.

Jesus knows all about us. He knows whether we'll delight or deny him, disown him, dishonor him or even desert him.

[31 : 25] And you know what these verses are reminding us? Is that we need to pray every day that we will be kept.

Every single day we need to pray, Lord, keep me. Lord keep me. We need to pray that we'll continue to delight in Jesus every single day and that will not desert him or deny him or disown him or dishonor him as our Lord and Savior.

My friend Judas, he's a solemn and sobering warning to every one of us. Every one of us that we need to pray that we'll be kept and we need to keep confessing the confession of the Christian.

It might seem very simple to make that confession. But that's what we're called to do. We're to confess. Believe in your heart, confess with your mouth.

We need to make the confession of the Christian and keep making the confession of the Christian. In fact, it was my good friend, JC Reil.

[32 : 36] He wrote in his commentary. And with this I'll close. Reil said, if there was ever a man who had great privileges and opportunities, that man was Judas Iscariot.

He was a chosen disciple, a constant companion of Christ, a witness of his miracles, a hearer of his sermons, a commissioned preacher of his kingdom, a fellow and friend of Peter, James and John.

It would be impossible, says Reil, to imagine a more favorable position for a man's soul. Yet, if anyone fell hopelessly into hell and made shipwreck for eternity, that man was Judas Iscariot.

And you know these words, they make me shudder. But they remind me, I need to pray every day, Lord, keep me.

Lord, keep me. Because I cannot keep myself. As we said to the children, John 15, verse 5, without Jesus said, without me, you can do nothing.

[33 : 52] That's why we need him every day. We need to pray, Lord, keep me. We need to confess the confession of the Christian. We need to keep confessing the confession of the Christian.

Every morning. Lord, to whom shall we go? That was the words of eternal life. We are sure and believe that the Lord, the Christ, the Son of the living God.

We need to confess the confession of the Christian and keep confessing the confession of the Christian. But you know, my friend, Jesus is asking you this morning, is this your confession?

Is this your confession? Jesus was the most loving man who ever lived, and he compelled the clouds to come, to call, to commit, and to confess Jesus Christ as their Lord and Savior.

So my friend, you come, you call, you commit, you confess Him, and make this your confession, not only today, but every day you are in this world.

[35 : 15] To whom else shall we go? That was the words of eternal life. May the Lord bless these thoughts to us, and let us pray.

O Lord, our gracious God, may give thanks for the wonder of the Gospel that Jesus would call us at all.

We bless the Lord that He has words of eternal life, that He is able to bring us from the darkness of sin into the newness of life. And Lord, we pray that we would come to Him, that we would call upon Him, that we would commit our lives to Him and confess Him, that He is the Christ, the Son of the living God.

O Lord, keep us, we plead, for Lord, we know that we cannot keep ourselves, that our hours keep even our going out and our coming in, from this time forth, and even forevermore.

Guide us, we ask, lead us by thy spirit, day by day, and go before us in all things, for Jesus' sake. Amen. Now we're going to bring our service to a conclusion by considering the words of Sam Forte. Sam Forte in the Scottish Salter, it's on page 259, if you're using the Blue Sam Book. Sam Forte, we're singing or considering the words from the beginning down to the verse Mark 4.

[36 : 46] As you know, these words, the words that are very precious, because these words are in many ways the confession of the Christian.

I waited for the Lord my God and patiently did bear. At length to me, He didn't climb my voice and cry to hear. He took me from a fearful pit and from the myri clay, and on a rock, He set my feet, establishing my way. We'll consider the words down to the verse Mark 4 to God's praise.

I waited for the Lord my God and patiently did bear. At length to me, He did.

As you know, these words, the words that are very precious, because these words are in many ways the confession of the Christian. I waited for the Lord my God and patiently did bear. At length to me, He didn't climb my voice and cry to hear. I waited for the Lord my God and patiently did bear.

At length to me, He did. As you know, these words, the words that are very precious, because these words are in many ways the confession of the Christian.

[39 : 18] I waited for the Lord my God and patiently did bear. At length to me, He did.

Respecting all the birds towards us, I stayed aside to lie.

I was done for the benediction.

Amen.