

Who Will Follow Jesus?

by Rolfe Barnard

The sermon emphasizes the importance of understanding what it means to follow Jesus and the need for self-denial and obedience in the Christian life.

Duration: 57:01

Scripture: John 6:2, John 6:66-71

Topics: "Following Jesus", "Discipleship Challenges"

Description

In this sermon, the preacher discusses the kind of people who start out serving the Lord but eventually give up. He mentions three characteristics of these individuals, which he claims are true for both past and present times. The preacher shares a personal anecdote about his 14-year-old daughter who chooses not to participate in dances despite societal pressure. He also talks about a crowd that initially follows Jesus because of the miracles he performs, but eventually abandons him when they realize the challenges of following him. The preacher supports his points by referencing the Bible, specifically John chapter 6.

Transcript

The 6th chapter of John, and I read beginning with verse 66, just three, four verses. John, gospel, chapter 6, beginning with verse 66. From that time many of his disciples went back and walked no more with him.

Then said Jesus unto the twelve, Will ye also go away? Then Simon Peter answered him, Lord, to whom shall we go? Thou hast the words of eternal life, and we believe and are sure that thou art that Christ, the Son of the living God. Whenever you attempt to read in the gospel of John, or to study it or to preach from it, you are hard put to know where to start. Every one of the chapters starts in the chapter above it.

Remember these chapters were put in by men, were not in the Bible, but men tried to break up the Bible and make it by chapter form so we could find places. And they tried their best to break the Bible up into chapters at the best possible points. But in the gospel of John, it doesn't make a bit of difference where you start.

You wish you had started above that, because it's just so rich and so full. But here we are introduced in this reading of the scripture, with the teaching of the Lord Jesus Christ to a great multitude of people. In the first part of the chapter, he had worked the miracle of feeding the multitude with a few little loaves and fishes.

And he's in conflict now, and this time that we're reading about takes place six months before he dies. And a lot of people that heard him teaching and preaching, perhaps the lot to whom he fed in that multitude, among whom he fed, a lot of them joined in the cry, crucify him, crucify him. And here, because of his teaching, we're told in verse 66 from that time, from that time now, many of his disciples, they said, well, this is as far as we go.

And they went back and walked no more with him. And the Lord turned to the ones who were left, and said, will ye go away also? And Peter, answering for those who stayed with the Lord, said, Lord, to whom shall we go? Thou hast the words of eternal life, and we believe and are sure that thou art Messiah Christ, the Son of the living God. Now, this passage of scripture naturally falls into three questions.

First, what kind of people were these disciples who walked with the Lord a while, followed him for a while, and then at this hour takes, from that time, they said goodbye. And they walked no more with him and went back. What kind of people were they? The second question, why did they quit the Lord? Why did they cease to walk with him? Why did they quit following him? And third, what kind of people stayed with him? Now, that's a simple outline, isn't it? And I hope it'll help you follow the message.

Mr. Spurgeon, the great Baptist preacher who preached in London, of course, all Baptist North Hampton, preached to more men than anybody had ever lived until the days of radio and television. Mr. Spurgeon said your profession of faith may be real or it may be false, but one thing's dead certain, it'll be tested. And anybody that sets out to follow Christ in this world, he'll find out that if his profession isn't real, it won't be long, or it may be a little longer, but sooner or later things will happen and they'll converge from every direction and people will say, I got in the wrong trough, and they'll do what these people did.

They will go back and walk no more with the Lord. If everybody in this county who had made a profession of faith and claimed to have started out to follow Christ were walking with him now, this would be a gravely different county. If there's anybody here who's a member of a church and you've been a member of that church for 20, 30 years, you can close your eyes now and just count up hundreds of people, can't you? Who maybe you saw when they made a profession of faith and it looked like they were honest, it looked like they meant business, and some of them shouted, and some of them shed tears, and some of them prayed.

And they walked along pretty good, as far as you could tell, and then things began to happen from different directions. And now they don't make any pretense of seeking to live a wholly obedient life. They've joined this crowd, the first crowd that took out on the Lord Jesus Christ.

That's the tragedy of our churches today. A man said to me today something that I hear everywhere I go, and it was the grave's tumbling block in my way. He said the reason it's hard to reach the outside is unsaved people who are in our churches but who do not live holy lives.

I had suffered. I became an infidel, and that was one of the alibis I clung to because I was brought up with professing Christians. I was raised in the church, and I ran with so-called Christian boys, and the ungodliness of their lives sickened me.

And I struggled and got bitter, and for four years wouldn't dart in the door of anybody's church. And people talked to me about my soul, but I had a handy alibi. Just look at him, and look at him, and look at him, and look at him.

And if he's got religion, well, there's nothing to it. And we have to face the fact that people who make a profession and start out to serve the Lord, and then they piddle out or they play out or they quit out. They're out there on the highways now.

They live with their next-door neighbor. You work with them, and, oh, they're wicked in their lives. And it's hard.

And I want us to look at that situation a little while tonight and ask our questions, because people are still taking out after Jesus and claiming to know him and claiming to be willing to follow him. And then all along, you find out they don't follow him at all. One of the things that will break the heart of this evangelist, and I've done my dead-level best to make the message so plain, to preach hell so hot and judgment so terrible and the way of salvation so narrow that I don't see so much of it.

So I think that if you give a fellow a false hope, it's so much harder to reach him for Christ than if you give him no hope at all. And I just lean over backwards when people talk to me and want me to show them how to deceive. I know I can't show anybody how to deceive, that I can stand helplessly by and proclaim the gospel that takes the Holy Spirit to make Jesus real to a human heart.

But I always see the great multitudes. As I've gone down the land for 20 years, I wonder tonight how many of the people who profess to become Christians, as I've been preaching or walking with the Lord now, how many of them are in hell now, how many of them are in heaven now, how many of them are living holy, obedient lives now, or how many of them are following the custom all about and they're not walking with the Lord. So our first question, many of his disciples from that time, many of his disciples went back and walked no more with him.

Well, say, Brother Bond, that means they were saved and then the back slid. Well, let's look at that just a little bit. Somebody said the Bible wasn't written to confuse us, but it's not written for lazy men, and the Bible will humble us.

And here we come to where it says in black and white that many of his disciples, and we've been accustomed to thinking that a disciple meant a saved one, a follower of Christ, and it usually does. But here it's not talking about saved people at all. I wish you'd be awful careful, my friends, talking about back sliders, talking about back sliders.

I don't know why we use the term. I'm just honest with you. It does not occur one time in all the New Testament, not one single time.

And the word backslider occurs just one time in the Old Testament. In other words, if you start out tonight and think I'm wrong, and you start with Genesis 1-1 and read to the last same end of the last book of the New Testament, you'll find the word backslider occurs. Now, in the Old Testament, you'll read such expressions as my people are bent to backsliding.

And that says, well, somebody wrote a song prone to wonder, and I hope there weren't backsliders like the backsliders. That's right, folks. My people are bent to backsliding.

But my people in the Old Testament is talking about a bunch of Jews, and a few of them are saved. And most of them, every time another God comes along. But if we want to mention the word backslider, if we're just bound and determined to mention it, I tell you right now that the New Testament teaching of it is that when a child of God falls in sin, he dead sure ain't going to stay in the mud whole long.

He's going to come back. Somebody's got a feeling there. Somebody's got a feeling there.

There's a million things that'll happen like that. These folks, though, weren't, weren't, weren't, weren't, weren't, folks. Now, you're going to prove that calls them backsliders, calls them disciples.

Well, approve it by the Bible. Turn in the first part of the 6th chapter. Then you'll find out what kind of people all of these disciples who followed Jesus a while, and then the thing got too rough for them and didn't go with the Lord anymore, and the Lord turned to the ones that left and said, If you want to, go on.

I don't want anybody to follow me who don't want to. I don't want anybody to follow me because they think they've got to. Now, in the first two verses of John chapter 6, we'll let the Bible tell us what kind of folks these were.

Now, watch this. I'm taking so much time for this. I'll tell you why I'm taking much time.

We've got a little easy gospel now that lets people call themselves Christians when they never have surrendered to the rule of Christ in their lives. And the first time something comes up, they take out and quit. And we call them backsliders.

They ain't backsliders. They never did get saved. They never did get saved.

Now, we'll let the Scripture. And we've got to come to preaching a gospel that saves people from the love of the sins, and from the practice of the sins, and from the power of the sins. And that's all the gospel is in this book.

I go up and down to the country and they tell me that a Christian ought to know. I hear it preached today that a Christian ought to tie. That ain't so if you haven't got saved your way.

I hear it preached that a Christian ought to keep the Sabbath. All of this doing the same thing on the Lord's day. All of this doing as I please on the lane out.

That's what it is. You call me an old fool guy I didn't read the Bible. I didn't write it.

Listen. Listen. These disciples, let's see who they were.

First two verses, chapter 6. After these things, Jesus went over the sea of Galilee, which is a sea of Tiberias. And a great multitude followed him because they believed his word and believed he is the Son of God and believed that he could save them from their sins. Did I read it right? You ain't got your Bible.

You don't know. Did I? Yes. Didn't read it right, did I? Huh? Did I? And a great multitude followed him because they saw his miracles.

Boy, you let a divine healer come to this town. Woo! All these folks got the flu. Hell, get up and go.

Boy, there ain't a picture show in this country that draws as good as the fellow that comes along. And Jesus was doing the job, bud. He wasn't just claiming that he was healing people.

See? And everybody and his dog and Grandma Susan and the old Brindle Cow, they went out. He's getting a cry. Watch this.

He's getting a cry. And this cry says, You know something's going on around here. That's Son of Jesus.

He's okay. And I'm going to join up with him. And they did.

But it wasn't long until they said, This ain't what you thought we was getting into. And they quit. Oh, there are people that listen to a preacher that never tells them what they're getting into.

They'll either make a confession of faith and then they find out what it costs to follow Jesus. They said the preacher didn't tell them nothing. Jesus always warned people what it meant to line up with him.

And he said, Now, boy, it's the best time to quit, and this fool here died in me. And these folks, they just got in and followed him for the miracles, you see. And then when the going got rough, they took out.

The second question is, Why did these people take out on Jesus? And I'm not going to try to answer it, because if I did, it'd take all my time tonight. And I want to get to the last point. But if you want to keep out of hell, now you listen to me.

If you want to keep out of hell, now you listen to me. I'm going to get on you one more time, three times. I've mentioned the fact that there's something bad wrong around here.

You folks don't bring your Bible. There's something bad wrong. I'm telling you the God's truth.

You don't get more interested in this business than that. I'm scared for you. I am, sure.

I ain't mad at you, but I'm scared for you. I don't believe you've got sense enough to make it to heaven. Not if you get to paying a little more attention to the God book.

I tell you, we better get interested in this thing. Jesus said that this great gate was difficult to get in. That's what it said, isn't it? Didn't it? We'd better pay attention to it.

Just any kind of profession, just any sort of thing, suits us to go on to hell. But you take your Bible, if you're very much interested in this, and you read that sixth chapter, and read how Jesus told them what it meant. And when they found out what it meant to be a child of God, they said, this is too hard for us.

And they quit. They quit. And you remember this, that you are living in a day, listen to what I'm saying, you are living in a day when holiness is made fun of.

Baptists, my own people, I talk about them because they're my people. They'll stand on the outside of the church and smoke a cigarette and make fun of holiness. God help us, folks.

God help us. This is the day when if you just mention obedience, somebody will call you a Camelite. And we've let the Church of Christ take the word obedience out of the Bible, and we're afraid to use it, but it's a big word.

This is the day when every new fad comes along, the Church first opposes it and then takes it. I can remember when there wasn't any mixed bathing in the South. Best Christians do it now.

I can remember when the movie began to come on, the Church fought it. Now they've joined it. That's right.

Now they've joined it. I don't know what will come next, Brother Samuel, but we'll first look at it and then we'll join it. This generation.

Look out, folks. Better folks than us have found out what it meant to be a follower of Jesus Christ, and they've said exactly what these people said. This is a hard saying.

We can't take it. We didn't know this being Christian meant denying ourselves. We didn't know that in order to walk with Jesus it meant you had to buffage your body.

Men tell me, well, a habit's got to hold on. I can't break it. My.

Well, why don't you quit calling yourself a Christian? Because the Christian life is beating down your body. That's what it means to follow Jesus. I've had men say, well, Brother Barnes, if the Lord would take the desire for whiskey away from me, I'd quit.

Sure you would. I've had them say, if the Lord would take the desire for tobacco away from me, I'd quit. Sure you would.

But the Christian life is to fight. The Christian life demands that every day you deny yourself and that every day you buffage your body. That's what that is.

Well, who wants to do that? Not many folks. Not many folks. They say, now, I tell you what we'll do, oh, Brother Barnes, he's just a radical fool.

But that won't solve the problem. You've still got survival. I didn't mind if any man would come after me.

Let him deny himself. It's a life of self-denial. And pick up a cross.

It's a life of daily dying. And follow me. It's a life of living his will and seeking to do it.

Every day. Who wants to do that? Now, Brother Barnes, if you tell me how I can get to heaven when I die in this hell, let me indulge every desire of my old body and call anybody a radical fool says anything about it, okay. But if you think I'm going to be one of those fanatical fools going around and this gang found out something of what it meant.

And when they found it out, they said this is too hard. This is too hard. This is too hard.

My little girl's 14 years old and she's finding out something. Every little girl in my little girl's grade in high school goes to dances. Except my little girl.

Every club they've got in the high school has dances. And my little girl can't join a one-up. Of course she does.

She says dancing's okay. I'm so old fogey. I still won't allow it.

But she walks alone. She walks alone. And she's just 14 years old.

And brother, I'm telling you that God's truth, unless she really knows Jesus Christ, she ain't going to make it. Next thing I know, she'll be going to dances. Just a little church membership ain't no good.

All the other kids are church members. You see the point? They tell us in our town that 85% of the 14, 15, 16-year-old girls of our town smoke cigarettes. I get on you men about that.

I expect you get awful mad at me. But I'm going to warn boys and girls against it. I never saw a good man that warned his children to follow in his steps.

And doctors tell us what that evil habit has on little girls and how it will affect the babies that are to be born. And I'm going to cry out against it. I don't want my beautiful little girl to smoke cigarettes.

Do you men who use tobacco stand on the outside of God's house and use it? Do you want your little girls to do you? I don't believe you do. Sure hope you don't. But my little girl's a back number.

She don't smoke cigarettes. She don't go to dances and so forth. Some years ago, we lived for many years in Tulsa, Oklahoma.

You have to keep every door locked in the city. And then it's not safe for a woman. And my wife said, Honey, we're going to move to a small town.

It's so wicked here in the city. We sold our little equestrian home, moved to a little town called Benito, Oklahoma, where my wife had a sister. I'd gone all the time.

Had one Baptist church in the little town, about 8,000 people. We went up and joined up. My little girl went to Sunday school.

She is seven and eight years old. Two years we were there. Pretty soon, my little girl started asking us to let her go to the movies.

And we'd say, Honey, you say you are Christian? Yes, Daddy. You think Christians ought to go? My wife said, Brother, she began to name. And every little girl in her class in Sunday school spent Sunday afternoon in the movies.

And to make it worse, their Sunday school teacher did too. And to make it worse, nothing was ever said from the pulpit. And my little girl was the only little girl on her street that didn't spend Sunday afternoon in the movies.

Of course, they couldn't go to church that night because they were too tired. That church couldn't even have a primary or a junior training union because all the kids had been in the movies all afternoon, so tired. Mother had to keep them home at night.

Well, my wife and I began to put on. God says, We're going to do about this. And I went to see the pastor.

And I talked to him privately. I said, Brother Pastor, I'm away all the time. My wife and baby here, we're Baptists.

We come to your church. I told him what was up again. I said, Can't you help me out? And he laughed at me.

He said, Ralph, you're a radical. And I tell you what we finally did. We could do it and you couldn't.

We moved back to the city. Sold our little home. Went back and bought a little equity in another one.

Went to a big city of a couple of hundred thousand where by searching around we could find a church where the church would help me and my wife try to rear our little child. God help us, folks. You are living in a day where the churches have sold out to Hollywood and everything else.

And mother and father are having a time. I couldn't get anywhere with my little girl. All the other little Christians, they said they were.

I do not know their hearts. Mom and Papa thought it was fine. Pastor thought it was fine.

Sunshine teacher thought it was fine. And on the Lord's day, me like bad enough on any other day. Too bad for me.

But on the Lord's day that God said, keep holy, this day's mine. Not for your pleasure. It's for us and the worship of God.

We had to move back to the city. God help us, my friends, the war is on. The battle's on.

What are we going to do? Well, to help make God, I'm going to do my best. I'll lean over back but I'll be a financial factor. But I'm going to keep saying that a man or woman in the pulpit of the pew of a church that's not going to live separate from this wicked world ought to be decent enough to walk down the aisle and say, take my name off the road.

These folks took out on Jesus when they found out what it meant to follow him. But I've spent more time than you and was even dipped into it and haven't even dipped yet. But I want to talk to you just for the next few minutes on the kind of people that didn't take out.

And there are three things said about them. And those three things will be true of people then and true of people now who start out to serve the Lord and keep on till the 5 o'clock whistle blows. These three things describe a person who knows the Lord and keeps on serving.

Peter answered for the crowd. I'd see him as the big multitude walk away. And the Lord Jesus turns to the little handful that are left and said, will you also go away? If you want to, go ahead.

They've decided they don't want to walk with me. They've decided the battle's too tough and the way's too hard. You boys won't go too? And Peter said, Lord, to whom shall we go? He said, Lord, we got nowhere to go.

For the first thing that's true of people who start out and stay with Jesus, they're people who burn their bridges behind them. Peter in another place said, Lord, we've left all to fall. When I read that, brother, and I look at this sickening stuff they call Christianity now, where people won't even give up the dirty, filthy habits to follow Jesus.

I say, my God, listen to me. Peter said, we've left all to fall. Of course, under this generation where we've been taught you don't have to give up anything just come on to Jesus and everything will be hunky-dory.

It's different. Peter hadn't heard it that way. He said, Lord, we've left all.

Lord, to whom shall we go? When we came and enlisted under your banner, we left everything behind. You talk to a missionary who's ministering today in Japan and they'll tell you that they won't baptize anybody into a church in Japan until at least two years after they profess to be Christians. And the reason is that they've been worshiping idols over there and they've been worshiping the emperor as their God and they're tied up with opium and they're tied up with whiskey and they're tied up with adultery and licentiousness and they live in terrible sin.

And they say it's no trouble at all. Now, listen to me. Missionaries tell me, and I've talked to them personally, they said, Roth, the Japanese people are very polite and if you ask them to take Jesus they wouldn't think of turning you down.

But they'll take your Jesus but they'll hang on to their other guns. They'll take your Jesus but they'll keep their opium and smoke it. They'll take your Jesus but they'll keep their whiskey and everything else.

And I said, well, it's no different here. It's no different here. Oh, God help us.

You can't have Jesus while you hang on to other gods. You just can't do it. You can't have Jesus and love this world through you.

You've got to drop those things to reach out and take Christ Jesus. Peter said, Lord, we've left all. Lord, to whom shall we go? Thou hast the words of eternal life.

Years ago I was preaching in Tulsa, Oklahoma where I lived for many years. And the church out there asked me to preach for them. And I remember some of the dear women of the church I don't know how on earth they did it but they were able, of the Lord, to work a miracle.

And they got a Jewish woman from a very rich Jewish family there. Got her to come in to hear me preach. That's something, you know, to get a Jewish person to come to hear the gospel.

They'd been taught all their lives that Jesus was not the Son of God and not the Lord and Savior. And somehow or another they got her to come in. And night after night after night she'd come and listen and hear me preach.

Night after night she'd go away. One night I came to the services a little early. Some of the women came out of the prayer room and their faces beige with tears.

One of them spotted me. She came and got me off when nobody was watching. She said, Brother Barnard, this is the night.

The crisis time is tonight. This is the night. This is the night.

She said, Miss so-and-so is here tonight and I'll tell you what's happened today. Her husband told her that if she embraced Jesus as her Savior and Lord that he couldn't come back home. She couldn't come back home.

The Jewish family, the husband's words, Lord. She had two beautiful little Jewish children. Beautiful home.

Husband a rich man. That same day her mother and father came to see her. They'd been in distress and had been praying.

The Jews had been meeting in the synagogues over the city and praying to their God afraid this woman was going to disgrace their religion by accepting Jesus, you know. And mother and father came to that woman that day and told her that if she, this was their turn, if she embraced the religion of Jesus that they would have her funeral in the synagogue the day after and they'd mourn her for dead and she'd never be in their home again. Yes, she came that night.

Think of it. I've tried to picture it. She came to the service.

She came alone. She came down there. If I take Jesus, I'll never see my two children again.

If I take Jesus, I can't go back to my husband. If I take Jesus, I can't go back to my home. If I take Jesus, mother and father will never speak to me again.

If I take Jesus, they'll have a funeral and bury me and mourn me for dead. If I take Jesus. And she sat and listened to me preach.

And when I gave the invitation, others started coming. And I saw her push her glasses up like that and wipe the tears as they flowed out of her eyes so she could see. And in just another minute, here she came.

She didn't kneel. She fell. And after a while, she stood.

When they were receiving people, I put my arm on her shoulder and I said, you folks, look at her. This woman comes to confess Jesus as Lord. She knows it'll cost her husband, her two girls, her home, her mother and father.

Some of you won't even give up your dirtiest sins. Two days later, they had the biggest funeral that city had ever seen among the Jews. They got her rich.

Cash that cost over \$1,000. Hauled it down in an ambulance. Undertakers first.

The biggest synagogue in the city was full. They pushed that casket down. The rabbi stood up and preached the funeral that morning.

Mother and father came and looked in the empty casket and mourned the child. They took it out to the Jewish cemetery and buried that casket two years ago. That's been about 16 years ago.

Two years ago, I was in Oklahoma in a meeting and I had to close. I took a day off from coming home. And I went to Tulsa.

For the last 16 years now, that little Jewish woman has been a church missionary there in Tulsa. That's the happiest woman I have seen in my life. And from that day to this, she's never seen her children.

She's never talked with her husband. She's never talked with mother and father. She's never been able to enter either of their homes.

Her husband's married again. Another woman takes care of her two little girls who are now pretty good size. That woman has a calm heart.

Just radiates the presence of God. And she'll make you ashamed of yourself when you stand in her presence. Brother, when she came to Jesus, she burned the bridges behind her.

She knew what it cost. And she ain't fixing to quit it. She's not fixing to quit it.

People who burn the bridges behind them when they come to Jesus will stay with it. They'll stay with it. The second thing that's true of people who stay with Jesus are people who found out who He is.

Peter said, Lord, to whom shall we go? Thou hast the words of eternal life. And we believe and we are sure that Thou art that Christ, the Son of the living God. Over and over again I tell you that if Jesus is just a

theory to you, you're not going to follow Him.

If you just took Him by second-hand religion, you're not going to stay with Him. He's got to be real to you, my friend. This one whom you never saw, never touched.

My God, my friend, you've got to so believe the testimony God left of His Son in this book that having believed the testimony God gives you, He'll give you a testimony and a witness in you where Jesus will be real. And brother, if you ever find out who He is by revelation, you won't quit Him. He'll never fail you.

He never let anybody down. He's thicker, closer than a brother. Peter said, Lord, we found out who You are.

And let that crowd go if they will. We're not going to leave you. You're the Son of, do you know Him? Of that God, do you know Him? In this day of second-hand religion, do you know Him? I was up in Chicago years ago preaching in a church for the Christian Men's Business Radio Committee.

And the entertainment dinner up in the big high-powered cafe. And at that dinner there was a missionary who'd just returned from Japan. And he told me some shocking things about what happened when we first got into the war with Japan.

We had missionaries over there. And he said that as soon as the war was declared, all the missionaries were rounded up in Japan and they were given two alternatives. They could bow down and worship an image or a statue of Emperor Hiyorita and go on about the preaching.

And if they didn't, they'd put them in a concentration camp. And my friend said that many of the missionaries crossed the fingers and bowed down and went through the motions of worshiping the Emperor as their God and then went ahead and preached the gospel. And he got all over them about it.

He said that's awful for them to do it. And I said, well, I couldn't talk about that. Because I'm way over here, about 6,000 miles from the danger.

And I don't know whether I'd stay true to Jesus or not if I knew that the price of it might be concentration camp and death. And a lot of the missionaries are put in jail, rotted and died there. There's just one thing I know.

I never have been tested like a lot of people. I never have preached at a church yet where communists stood on the outside and took the names and addresses of everybody that was there. I never have preached in a country where they killed off all the pastors like they did in Russia.

I never have preached in a country like Korea where up to now they say they killed over 8,000 preachers of the gospel, most of all, I ain't going to brag yet. But I know this, that in big things and little things, unless Jesus is real to you, you ain't going to let him burn your feet. You're not going to endure the scorn of this and take out unless he's real.

But if he's real, God bless you, I believe you'll say, Turn on the machine gun. You can kill me, but you can't get me to die. The last thing that's true of people who stay with Jesus first, they burn the bridges behind them.

Second, they come to know Jesus. They know him. They know who he is.

And third, Peter said, Lord, to whom shall we go? Thou hast the words of eternal life. What does he mean? Peter said, Lord, we've been to you, and you've done for us what we needed and what our hearts hungered for. Somebody asked a preacher friend of mine, Dr. Bob Jones, down in Greenville, South Carolina.

He said, Dr. Bob, says a fellow came to Greenville and pretended to be Jesus. Would you believe him? Dr. Bob said, Lord, if he did for me what Jesus did, I'd believe him. Oh, if Jesus never done anything real for you, I think you young people will go the way of most young people.

You'll keep your names on the church road and say, Goodbye, Jesus. I think unless you've been to Jesus and he did for you what answered the longings of your soul, gave you peace, gave you a conscious knowledge of the forgiveness of sin, I think that first thing you know, the pressure of the world will get too big for you. You'll join the crowd from that time that went back and walked no more.

Brother Sammy, there sure will be a lot of people in this country that dance with joy if you take out on Jesus. You say you're no bald-headed fool. Bald-headed? I don't know about that.

They say, Ah, we'll give him another year or two. That's where the world is. You make a confession of faith and they say, Ah, we'll hang around.

They've seen some men who got religion played out, haven't they? They're pretty skeptical. They're tickled to death. They're tickled to death.

And you play out for all this stuff that's something you worked up, I'll tell you that. You'll play out before you have a little experience. I'll tell you that.

Oh, you'll play out unless Jesus has done for you what only God can do. I keep telling people, keep on coming to Jesus. Maybe next time you'll text to him on this dial and advise to go out from him to you and he'll heal the disease of your soul and break the shackles of your sin.

Be peaced. Peace! I'm alarmed by the professing church members who do not have peace. Two Christmases ago I was preaching in Greensboro, North Carolina that's 29 miles from where I live and they were letting me drive backwards and forwards so I could be at home some.

One night the telephone rang, a young preacher said, Roger and I want to go over here tonight, preacher. And I said, alright. And we arranged a place to meet, two young preacher boys.

Went over and had the service and came back and got back to where their car was parked in Winston-Salem and they were getting out. Young Roger Mary, the young preacher had gone to school to me a while and was still in school. He put a bill in my hand.

It was dark. He said, preacher, I've been saving this up. I wanted to give it to you to help you.

And I thought I knew about what he did. He worked in the afternoon shoe store with a wife and three children living on his GI going to school and didn't have much money. And so I stuck it in my pocket and I thanked him with this heart.

And I didn't even look at him when I went to bed that night. It was late. The next day I put on my clothes and reached in there and found the bill.

Took it out before I put it in my pocket but I looked at it. It was fifty. And I just cried a little bit.

I knew that boy had been saving that. And I was buying a tin at the time. And he knew about it and he wanted to help me.

And I came in there going to the phone bawled him out and said, I'm going to bring it back. You can't afford it. But I said, no.

It means a lot to that boy. Boy, that boy just loved me to death. He had a wife that had made two professions of faith.

She wouldn't let him have a family altar. She wouldn't let him read the Bible to her. She fussed and stormed at him.

If he went to church, she wouldn't go. She didn't want him even to talk to the youngsters about the things of God. She's been to church twice, been ducked or something twice, made two professions of faith, had no interest whatsoever in the things of God.

He got her to hear me preach. And she heard me twice and got fighting mad at me. Said, I'm no radical.

Oh, I'm just terrible. She stayed away two or three nights. God was working.

She started coming back. And one night she said, God saved her. They got a lovely home now.

They just follow me around when I'm in that country. And that young preacher, if he had a million dollars, he'd give me half of it to help me get the gospel out. Never do I see them that they come up to me with the light of heaven in their faces telling me about they got a family altar now, teaching the children the things of God.

They're happy. Study the Bible together. That boy loved me because the Lord saved his wife.

He loved me because the Lord saved his mother. His mother was a pink-cheeked, white-haired, beautiful old woman about 67 years old. She'd been a member of the church 40 years where I was holding a meeting.

Everybody pointed to her as the best woman in the church. And one night when we said that there were troubled souls and they wanted prayer, they'd lift their hands up high and went. We stood for a while for an invitation, but she made no move, and that's why our service is over.

She's gone. The pastor came to me. He peeped a little that night.

He said, I wonder what Mother Mary's trouble about tonight. I said, I don't know. She didn't tell me.

Next night she came back, and while I was preaching, she began to weep. And when we asked for hands of troubled souls, up her it went. And when we gave the invitation, she came.

We stayed with her till 11 o'clock. I'll never forget. She walked down the aisle, and I met her, and I said, Mother Mary, what troubled you? She said, Brother Preacher, for 40 years I've tried to serve the Lord, but I've never known peace in my heart.

Never. My Lord said, My peace I leave with you. My peace I give unto you.

My God, don't you be satisfied unless you have it. But after about 11 o'clock, she got up and went away. Next night she came.

She didn't just weep. She sobbed while I preached. And I asked for hands of troubled souls.

Hers, among others, went up. There she came back to the altar. She wept and sobbed, and we sought to help her.

But you just can't help folks when they're in that shape. You just have stamina. It's just between them and God.

Way late at night, she got up and went home. The whole church was in rebellion. They said, Why, she's all right.

That preacher, I ain't done anything. Next morning was Sunday, and I came out. The woman speak the Sunday school class.

And I got out a little early. And there's a little delegation standing out by the church. And sort of waiting for me.

As I got out of my car, Mother Mary came walking out from underneath me. And the sound was gone, and the burden was gone, and the joy! She said, Brother Barnard, this morning while I was washing the breakfast dishes, I did fully trust the Lord Jesus. And He did give me peace.

He did give me peace. Ours is the trusting. His is the giving of peace.

Oh, if you've been to Jesus, and He's done for you, what only the Lord can do. I think you'll not take out on Him. But you'll remember this, that the battles you fought this week, they'll be harder next week.

And the mountains you'll have to climb next week will be higher than the ones this week. And the longer it goes, the rougher it gets. Maybe the day will come when you'll learn sufficient unto the day is evil thereof.

And He'll also say, as thy days, so shall thy strength be. And if the Lord lets you live, instead of being an old, sour, grey-headed man, everybody will like to be around you the older you get. Because the longer you walk with Jesus, the more like Him you'll become.

Until your very life is a benediction and a blessing to struggling sinners as they press up the hill. That's the kind of folks who are going to stay with Jesus. Let us stay.

Audio: <https://sermonindex1.b-cdn.net/15/SID15671.mp3>

Source: <https://sermonindex.net/speakers/rolfe-barnard/who-will-follow-jesus/>

Grow in Your Walk with Christ

Listen and read messages that will stir your heart for Christ and point you to deeper repentance and devotion.

- 50,000+ Sermons from speakers past and present
- 3,900+ Classic Christian Books freely readable online
- 1,200+ Bible Translations and Commentaries
- Over 450k forum posts — Join our vibrant online Christian forum

www.sermonindex.net