

Why People Stay With Christ

by Rolfe Barnard

Rolfe Barnard emphasizes the importance of genuine faith and commitment to Christ, warning against superficial professions of faith that lack true transformation.

Duration: 46:01

Scripture: Matthew 6:33, John 6:26-27, John 6:35, John 6:44, John 6:53-56, John 6:60-63, John 6:66-69

Topics: "Abiding"

Description

In this sermon, the preacher emphasizes the importance of truly understanding what it means to be saved. He highlights that salvation is not just about making a profession of faith or getting baptized, but it requires a daily walk with God and a commitment to partake in the body and blood of Christ. The preacher warns that many who make a profession of faith may not truly be saved, as evidenced by the parable of the sower in Matthew 13. He urges listeners to examine their lives and make sure they are bearing the fruit of godliness and obedience. The sermon concludes with Peter's declaration that there is nowhere else to go but to Jesus, and the preacher encourages the audience to have the same commitment to Christ.

Transcript

I want to begin reading at verse 66 of this chapter, verse 66, and I'm going to talk tonight on something that ought to be of interest to everybody here. There is a danger that you can look at yourself and look within yourself and examine yourself too much, but we, not many of us, have that danger. You and I have the privilege or misfortune or something of living in a day when men are presumptuous, when we have, we presume we are saved, and when real faith is not so manifest.

The scriptures every once in a while say examine yourselves, whether you be in the faith, know you not that Christ is in you, except you be reprobate. The scripture says every man of us ought to have an answer for the hope that is within us. Salvation is faith in the Lord Jesus Christ, not presumption.

Faith is something that God works inside of a man, and Christ is real to him, and that's what salvation is, Christ being real, powerful, near and dear to the eternally bound men and women. So I want to read a passage of scripture tonight and ask you to be honest one more time with yourself and remember that this is something that nobody can take care of for you except you, and that's a matter of your relationship or lack of it to the Lord. I want to read about some people who were honest and earnest and sincere, I'm sure, and they walked along with the Lord Jesus when he was here in the days of his flesh for a while.

And then some things took place and they went back and quit walking with the Lord. And then some people started out to follow the Lord and they kept on. And I want us to examine these people who walked with the Lord a while and then quit, and these people who walked with him and stayed with him.

I want us to notice two or three things about the people. I'm sure they were honest, no question of honesty, but they didn't stay with the Lord. They didn't stay with him.

A man yet looks to be finally saved. We need to remember that every once in a while, especially we Baptists who fill hell with people who had an experience or made a profession that didn't lead them into a life of obedience, and yet they think they're saved. I've had the privilege this September of preaching 36 years.

Most of that time I've been going from place to place in that length of time. I've preached to a lot of people. I've seen multiplied thousands upon thousands of people as honest as they could be, as earnest as they could be.

Walk an aisle or go to an inquiry room or do something, go through and say, the Lord is my Lord and Savior. I've seen hundreds and hundreds of people in this city of Winston-Salem make a profession of faith under my management of the day. And I'd be very happy if I believed that one out of 20 of the people who make a profession of faith under my preaching actually get to the Lord Jesus Christ.

I'm glad if one does, but I'm not saying that to discourage anybody. I'm saying it to just frankly face the fact that in the 13th chapter of the book of Matthew, the Lord tells us that only one out of four of the classes of people who make a profession of faith in Christ will really be saved. He tells us about the sower going forth to sow.

And the devil comes and snatches that up and don't even have anything, and he has something else that cares of this world. And hard times come and folks take out, and the seedfulness of riches and so forth. And only that seed which falls in the good prepared ground brings forth fruit.

I'm dead certain that the Lord is telling us there that that life that does not bring forth the fruit of godliness and obedience, that life has missed the Lord Jesus Christ. If salvation is not under holiness, then it's a holy joke. And we need to remember that we live in an atmosphere, we are members of congregations where the likelihood is, even if it's a pretty good number there, the vast majority of them are going along for the ride and know nothing about the reality that there is in Jesus Christ.

What I'm interested in is two things. First, I'm more interested in me than I am you. I don't want to miss the Lord.

A fellow told me one time, hell beats full of preachers and people sticking out the windows. And I said, yes, I guess you would. I don't want to be one of them.

I don't want to be one of them. And I have a holy horror and dread of the judgment. I hear in this giddy age the people who hardly ever see a thing read the Bible and they heard somebody say they are longing for Jesus to come back.

I don't believe them. I think they're lying through the teeth. I'm not sanctious myself because when he comes I've got to stand at the judgment seat.

And I also believe when he comes I've got to witness as he sends people to hell. And I'll tell you right now, it's not going to be a Sunday afternoon picnic when there at the judgment we have to stand by and come up and give testimony as God examines people. Sometimes it solemnizes me as I remember that God will have a few million years to examine the case of just one individual and still there would be as much time as there was because that'll be a time when time will be no more and eternity rolls and God will take plenty of time before he finally sends a person to spend eternity in hell.

And he'd take a million years to examine your case. All evidence will be brought in and none of it will be left out for that's the time when the dead are going to be judged out of the book of the law, you know, and their works and everything we've done and left undone will be brought back. I tell you it's serious.

It's serious. We've just got one life to live and then there's a long eternity. And I've lived all the days of my life in a generation where more people have made profession of faith and then taken out and quit making any effort to walk with Christ than have come to the Lord Jesus Christ.

So I'm interested in this subject tonight and I want to talk to you about the three things that are true of people who stay with the Lord until they're finally saved. Verse 66 of the sixth chapter of the gospel of John, from that time, from that time, that means in a moment we'll have to go back and look at the scriptures ahead of us here in order to understand what it means by from that time something must have taken place, something happened, he taught something, some reaction had occurred for it came to a crisis and at a certain time many of his disciples went back and walked no more with him. Then said Jesus unto the twelve, will ye also go away? And 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.

There are three questions suggested for these scriptures here and I'll read some more directly as a context and I want you to listen. Maybe the Holy Spirit will grant unction and anointing to somebody's heart tonight. Are you interested? First, what kind of people were these disciples who walked with the Lord Jesus a while and then went back and walked with him no more? Second, why did these disciples who went with the Lord a while and then took out on him, why did they quit? And third, what kind of people were the people who didn't take out on him, who stayed with him under final salvation? Do you folks believe the scripture that occurs twice in the book of Matthew that he that endureth to the end, the same shall be saved? Do you believe that? It's so isn't it? It's so isn't it? He that endureth to the end, the same shall be saved.

Multitudes of people make some sort of a start in what we call a Christian profession, but only those people who endure to the very end shall be finally saved. Is that your doctrine? That's God's truth. And that's a solemn thought.

I guess I'm pretty keenly sensitive to it because I've had the opportunity going from place to place to see so many, many more people make a profession of faith than you have if you've just had a local ascent, been in one church or two, three little churches and lived in one place and haven't traveled as it's been my joy or burden to do. I just close my eyes sometimes and the multitudes of people under my poor little ministry I've seen make a profession. Boy, it'd be embarrassing to go around and see how they're living now.

See how they're living now. And I make no apologies for it, ladies and gentlemen, unless a power from Almighty God comes into your life that changes your desire and gives you a strength that you didn't have, then you are not a child of God. I'm aware of the fact that a man can't live a Christian life.

I'm aware of the fact that a woman can't live the Christian life. I'm aware of the fact that a power from above has to spell the difference. But I'm also aware of the fact that the great majority, it looks like, of people who've made some sort of a start in some sort of a profession seem to have just completely taken out on all efforts of holiness, all efforts to be obedient, all efforts to be finally saved.

I don't want to be in that crowd. I don't want to be in that crowd. What kind of people were these disciples that walked with the Lord a little while and then took out on Him? Well, the Scripture's clear in this same chapter.

Although they're called disciples, you have to watch the Bible sometimes and not make it mean what'll fit into your little theory. For this verse of Scripture here is one of the verses of Scripture that they built this non-Bible doctrine of backsliding on. People sometimes fall out with me.

They ask me, Brother Barney, do you believe the Bible teaches backsliding? And I say emphatically not. There isn't one word in the New Testament about it. And did you know, my friends, the only reference to backsliding in the Old Testament is to unsaved Jews who were a member of the elect nation but were not saved themselves.

In the Old Testament we'll read Scriptures like this. My people are bent to backsliding. The people who are called my people in the Old Testament are called His people because they were members of the Jewish nation and God chose that nation as an elect that only a remnant inside of that nation actually were saved.

Actually saved. You better listen to me now. We've got an easy so-called gospel now that allows people to make a profession of faith and live like the devil and still say they're saved.

But my friends, folks that are living in disobedience aren't saved. People who are living without following the best of the know-how, the marks and the steps of Jesus Christ have never come into vital contact with Him. And you can call them what you want to.

They do not know what it means to be married to, to be joined to the living vine, the Lord Jesus Christ, and to have power flow from Him to them that enables them to live the supernatural life that God says is a Christian life. I'm just not trying to prove a doctrine. I'm trying to magnify.

If a man ever comes into contact by faith with the Christ of the Scriptures who's now alive, he'll not be perfect. He'll not be perfect. But bless God, he'll walk to be perfect, and a power will come into his life that'll change him and fix him so he'll never be the same again.

That's not bragging on people. That's bragging on the power of the living Christ who comes down here to provide what He requires, what He requires. Now the Scriptures settle it that even those people who were called, as many of His disciples went back, they weren't saved people.

They weren't saved people. The first two verses of this sixth chapter, it's a long chapter, turn back in your Bible. These people, two things are said about these people.

The reason they followed the Lord, verses 1 and 2, after these things, Jesus went over the Sea of Galilee, which is the Sea of Tiberias, and a great multitude followed Him. Because they saw His miracles, which He did on them, that was disease. I wouldn't speak a word against the miracles the Lord did.

I'd love to see a revival of them now. God knows it looks like it, but do not have a great revival of the supernatural. This generation in the church and out is going to hell in spite of all we can do.

But that's in God's hands, and I do not know about that. But I do know this, that if we had great miracles, that God raised people from the dead here in Winston-Salem, nobody would be saved because somebody's raised from the dead. Nobody ever gets saved.

Now listen to me. Nobody ever gets saved apart from hearing and responding to the word of the Lord. Miracles have their place, and I believe in them.

But miracle working doesn't get people saved. There's just one way on earth that God gives faith to sinful people, and that faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God. Suppose I could work a miracle here tonight.

People say, I see that miracle. I'll trust Christ. Nothing to it, my friends.

That's the only way people get saved. Or they could say they'd take Jesus, and they could say they'd trust Christ, but they wouldn't do it. There's one thing we need to remember sometime when we get discouraged and blue.

I've held hundreds and hundreds of meetings. Some of them big ones, and some of them little. Some of them good ones look like, and some of them flat tires.

And when you're having a flat tire, you tend to get under the juniper tree, and you say, well, the people are not interested in it. Because before I finally backslide quite that much, I remember this, whether anybody ever listens to it or not, whether anybody in the rest of time that God gives ever pays the least attention to the word of God, nobody will ever get saved apart from the hearing and responding of the word of God. These folks saw the Lord work miracles and said, that's for me.

They said, that's for me. That's for me. Now have the Lord choose us to add to His work signs and wonders and miracles to test His word.

That's His business. That's His business. I pray for it every day, more than I ever did in my life.

But I'm going to stick to preaching the word. I'm going to stick to teaching the word. I can't work miracles.

If God is in a miracle going on, I want it to be. If He wants them to work. But Paul preached the word! And God attended the preaching of the word as He saw fit.

Nobody gets saved just with a sign to go with the crowd. And then later in this chapter, it says they fall in for the loaves and fishes. For the loaves.

For what they could get out of it. What they could get out of it. I said, I think the first day I was here last Sunday or some time since I've been here, one of the most solemn things you've ever heard, I repeat, nobody goes to heaven who isn't willing not to go.

It's going to get so serious between you and the Holy God that you're going to quit saying, gimme, gimme, gimme, gimme, gimme, and using God as somebody to get something out of and something of the glory of God. Don't thud your soul. Do you ever get soul? The way you're interested a little bit in God instead of yourself all the time.

You just can't use God to get something out of Him. That isn't the way salvation is to those. It's something that calls us to pause, my dear friends.

It's pouring down rain. This is grocery night. This little group of us here.

But bless God you're here. And after a while you're going to be at the judgment stand before a Holy God. And I come to you and ask you now if you never have given much serious consideration to it and God's name did, have you actually heard God speaking to you through His Word? Have you heard God? Has this Word become real to you? I've heard from God.

These people just followed the Lord to watch Him work miracles. They followed Him for the loaves and fishes. That's why they took out on Him.

It's interesting to note in this chapter, and I do not want to touch on this for a minute, but it'll be here till midnight. But it's interesting to note why these people walked with the Lord a little while and then took out. And this is so interesting to me because it is such a perfect picture of the day in which we live today.

I'm not saying that people have taken out on being member of churches. I'm saying people have taken out on the Lord. America now, to be consistent, we all joined the Catholic Church, most of us Baptists.

Next Sunday morning the churches of this city will be full. And then the members of the churches, for the most part, will spend the rest of God's holy day doing as they please. We don't even think enough of God now to have one day of the week holy.

Huh? Holy for Him. I'm not saying that you live in a day when people have taken out on joining the churches. You're living in a day where people have taken out on effort to live a separated life in their hearts from the spirit of this awful darkness.

If it keeps on much longer, only God knows what the hardest is going to be in America. You and I are living in a day when people, for reasons known to themselves, who made a start, who joined the church, who made a profession, may have been perfectly honest and sincere, but they didn't stay with it. Did they get saved and then get lost? No, sir.

They never got saved to start with. But when they did find out, and here's something that breaks my heart, they had to find it out after they made their profession instead of finding it out before they did. This is serious.

In the New Testament, one thing I know is dead certain about the Lord Jesus Christ and His preachers. They honestly faced people with whom they preached with something of what is involved in standing up and saying, Jesus Christ is my Lord and He is my Savior. And He told them something about what that meant.

What it meant to follow Him. What it meant to walk with Him. What it meant to commit themselves to Him.

And men and women set out and counted the cost. It don't cost anything to be saved, but it costs everything after you're saved. Everything.

And my Lord lost His crown many a time like He did here in this 6th chapter by telling people the truth. Telling people the truth. Telling them before they commit themselves.

If this business of being saved is just a matter of making a profession, getting baptized and going to church, well, that's all right. But if this business of being saved means, listen to me now, a daily walk, and it does. If this business of being saved means to eat of His flesh every day and drink of His blood every day, then people ought to be told.

And yet this crowd of people who followed Him for His miracles and for the loaves and fish, and before the Lord receives their profession, He proceeds to teach them a little bit. And three things in this chapter He taught, gravely attended them. And I haven't time to go into them, but I do want to say this about one of them.

He tells them here in this 6th chapter, 6th John, I want to read it. In the 48th verse, I want you to follow me carefully. For your soul's sake as I read this passage from the verse 48, Jesus said, I am that bread of life.

Your fathers did eat manna in the wilderness and are dead. But this is the bread which cometh down from heaven, talking about Himself, that a man may eat that of and not die. I am the living bread which came down from heaven.

If any man eat of this bread, he shall live forever. And the bread that I will give him is my flesh, which I will give for the life of the world. The Jews therefore strove among themselves, saying, How can this man give us his flesh to eat? Now notice carefully what He says here, verse 53.

Then Jesus said unto them, Verily, truly, truly, I say unto you, Except ye eat the flesh of the Son of Man and drink His blood, you have no life in you. Now what does He mean by that expression? In language that you and I can understand, and He uses a once for all expression. Unless there's a crisis comes in your life, and you actually, watch it now, unless you actually lay hold on Me and partake of Me and are laid hold of by Me until we become one, you'll have no life whatsoever in you.

A man can profess to accept Jesus as his Savior, I hear that, and have no life. In order to have life in him, you've got to be joined to the One where life is. And the Bible is plain, that in a world that's a big cemetery, there's life in one place and one place only.

And that's in the Lord Jesus Christ. And a man absolutely not to believe about Him, but he's got to be united to Him by faith. Unless that happens there's a crisis, you'll have no life in you.

But then verse 54 makes it a little more binding. My Lord said in verse 53, except ye eat one time and drink one time, then He says verse 54, whoso eateth My flesh, these little girls shall go into school. They know the difference between eat and eateth.

One's a one time occurrence, and the other's a continuous. My Lord is saying in verse 53, salvation includes a crisis. When you lay hold of Christ, and He lays hold of you, and you receive Him, and He receives you, and there's a bargain and a bind in there, and there's a join in there.

And then it continues, for He says whoso eateth My flesh, He just keeps on. He keeps on. Except ye abide in Me and I in you.

He keeps on. Whoso eateth My flesh and drinketh My blood hath eternal life, and he'll have it till the last day. For His promise in the last phrase of that verse is, I'll raise him up at the last day.

I don't blame these people for taking out on the Lord. He made it clear to them, young man. He made it clear, young girl.

That little profession of faith that hadn't affected you, and hadn't bound you to Christ, and hadn't made you a bond slave of Him, made you fall in love with Him, and made Him the center and circumference of your life, and His will the thing that makes you take those things that are so absent from church life today. That little profession doesn't do that. No good.

No good. I'll tell you what's good. Reality.

I'll tell you what's good. To actually be joined to Him. I'll tell you what's good.

To actually be married to the Lord Jesus Christ. I'll tell you what's good. To know He's yours, and you're His.

And He speaks to you, and you know it so. That you and I are in this fellowship there. That's what it is to be a Christian.

That's what it is to be a Christian. These folks said that's too much for us. We wouldn't mind if we could be Sunday morning followers or something like that, but you can't have that.

This is crystal clear, is it not? That if a man doesn't have as the chief thing that motivates his whole life the doing of the will of Him whom he claims to be Lord. That man doesn't know the Lord. He knows nothing of the Lord.

You don't have to beg people to read the Bible, and beg people to pray, and beg people to do this, and beg people to give, and beg people to come to church. If something had happened that had made the will of God the most precious thing in their life, and that's exactly what takes place when a man is joined by living faith. The first two services I did, I spoke on seeking the Lord.

Oh, my soul, I didn't try to get you to make a profession. You've done, done that. I wish it secretly becomes real until there's a union of peace joined between you and Him.

Until there's reality. God knows we want reality. And Jesus is alive, or is He? And He's alive if He is, and He gives life to men and women when they're joined to Him.

He says, I'm come that they might have life! Life! Life! Don't tell me about the good little things you do or the bad little things you don't do. Who's interested? I'm looking for life. Jesus gives it.

This is too much for those people. And they said this is hard. They stumble at it.

They're offended. And they said we just can't take this. This is just too bad.

We can't take it! But there's one little group of people that could. And that time many of the disciples went back and walked no more with Him. And the Lord turned to the, just twelve people left.

And one of them was the devil from the beginning, in the name of Judas, the Lord knew about it. He said, you want to leave too? Will you also go away? And Peter gave three, an answer that had three statements in it. And I want these three things to be true of me and of you.

These three things describe somebody that's a Christian. These three things describe what a man has to have and experience to walk with and keep on walking with the Lord. Good times and bad times.

Times of victory and times of defeat. Times when the dews fall and wonders. Everything's parched with the drought.

In season and out of season. Men and women, boys and girls. Who can say with Peter three things? First Peter said, Lord, we've burned all our bridges behind us.

We've got nowhere else to go. We can't go away from you. Ah, it's good if men and women are faced with something, what's involved in confessing the Lordship of Jesus Christ in the world at the night.

Burn every bridge behind you. Goodbye, Mama. Goodbye, Papa.

Goodbye, everything. He's my Lord. Peter said, Lord, to whom shall we go? And you know, Peter, you know what he told my brother? He left all to follow the Lord.

It meant something. You know what old Peter did? He got kicked out of his church, we'd call it. Huh? Yes, sir.

His family were divided. It meant something for a Jew in my Lord's day to stand up in a nation that had crucified Jesus and still hadn't repented on it. Say, that fellow you hung on a tree outside the city of Jerusalem, he's my Lord.

He's my Savior. And I'm going to walk with him. Burn every bridge behind me.

You know, you can't get by with holding one hand behind your back in this business. It's a wholehearted commitment, whatever the cost. Happy is the man or woman, boy or girl, to whom this thing got so real that whether stink or swim, live or die, survive or perish, I've committed myself to the Lord Jesus Christ, come what may.

I'll tell you, that'll help you when temptation comes. And that'll help you when the tide's going against you. And that'll help you when you see your friends taking out on holy living and the things of God.

If you made a committal that cost everything potentially, burned all your bridges behind you. You know, if you're as weak as I am, you'll go back like these folks did if you hadn't burned all your bridges behind you. The second thing that Peter said, that I want to be true of people I get a chance to preach to and witness, and I sure want to be true of me.

He said, we believe and are sure that thou art that Christ, the Son of the living God. He said, we took you at your word, and now we know. Now we know.

Now we know. I'll tell you right now, brother, if you trust your mother's Savior, you won't stay with it. He's got to become yours.

He's got to be real to you. This thing's got to be real to you. Second-hand religion won't work when the storm of the Spurgeon, your pastor quoted him a while ago, most preachers do.

They won't preach what he preached, but they quote him a lot, calmly with you. But he said, you're still our cause. It'll be tested.

Bless God, it will be tested. If yours hadn't, just give it a little more time. You'll be tested.

Tested by the fires of persecution. Tested by the wiles of Satan. Tested by some providence from God or on the sword of Satan.

Your professional will be tested. God, grant that when it's tested, you'll have one thing working for you as a boy saved. I know who you are, Lord.

I took you at your word. Now I know. We're not saved by knowledge.

We're saved by faith. But faith grows into knowledge, thank God. You take it, you surrender to him, you commit yourself to him, and pile the Holy Ghost on his testimony in the book.

And then the Holy Spirit will give you an inward witness. You can stand up, face the fiery darts of hell, and say, I know who he is. That's the God's truth.

A poor little old individual like me, come to the place I can stand, well then, by the grace of God, I can tell the God's truth. I know that Jesus Christ is the eternal Son of the eternal God. Isn't that wonderful? And I'll tell you right now, you can't say that in God's name, seeking till you can.

That's the only thing that'll stand the test. We believe and we're sure. We know who you are.

We're not fixing to go anywhere else. We found out who you are. I covet that.

As far as I'm concerned, I'm not willing to trust myself into Christ's hands on the testimony of anybody on earth except Almighty God. I actually come to where I believe with all of my soul that God did come to this earth in Jesus Christ. He died on the cross for me.

God graced it. I actually got to where I believe that. I do.

As far as I'm concerned, that's settled with me. God helped it. Don't take anything less than God's word.

That's the third thing that Peter said that describes a Christian. A Christian is somebody who's burned all his bridges. A Christian is somebody who's found out who Jesus is.

There's no such thing as being a Christian unless you've found out who Christ is. You trusted just a vacuum. And a vacuum can't save you.

And a Christian is somebody else that can save you with Peter here. Thou hast the words of eternal life. Your words quicken me.

I came to you and you did for me what only God can. A friend of mine said, a fellow asked him one time, said, Mr. So-and-so, if a man came to your city and claimed to be Jesus Christ, would you believe him? My preacher friend said, if he did for me what Christ did for me, I'd believe him. They tell me that all over the country now little groups and cells are being formed of people longing for reality.

Hear this. Don't settle for anything else than coming into the very presence of Christ that the Spirit makes him real in this book. Stay in there till he does for you what only God can.

Don't take it as a matter of Bible doctrine that a Christian has his sins forgiven by the Lord. Seek a union of peace with him until you have a consciousness in yourself. Just as much as when he was here in the flesh

he said, Thy sin be forgiven thee.

He's alive now. You speak to men, give them the consciousness that their sins have been settled, fallen away, just as real as he did when he was here in the days of the flesh. In God's name, don't go around here whistling to keep the booger man away.

The same Christ who tell a woman, Go thy way in peace, still speaks peace to men when they get into vital contact with him. And I'm still saying now, don't you settle for anything less than the living Christ through his word speaking peace to you until the troubled soul is no longer troubled and peace. Peter said, thou hast the words of eternal life.

We came to you and you did for us what our souls thirsted. This is not second-hand religion. This is getting first-hand contact with the crucified Christ who isn't dead now, but he's alive in the spirit.

Men can get in touch with him. He'll touch you. Years ago, I used to be connected to the Piedmont Bible School as an Evangelist part-time teacher for a while.

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