

“Persevering Faith”
John 6:66-69
(Preached at Trinity, June 5, 2019)

I'm supplying these notes for the benefit of busy pastors who may be engaged in bi-vocational work, feeling the pressure of preparing to preach twice on the Lord's Day while trying to balance full-time secular work as well as caring for their families. While the notes of another man are no substitute for personal study, I pray that these may aid in the process of preparing to preach.

Disclaimer: These are the actual notes I bring with me to the pulpit, which I follow loosely. They are not designed for publication. While I try to make every effort to give proper credit to my sources from the pulpit, adequate citations will sometimes be absent from my notes. If anyone feels their intellectual material has been used without adequate citation, please contact me and I'll make immediate correction giving credit.

1. These verses set before us belief turning to unbelief. We find disciples, followers of Christ permanently walking away in unbelief.
2. The chapter opened with Jesus miraculously feeding over 5000 people who had gathered to hear Him teach. That evening Jesus sent them away and departed to pray. The next day a multitude came seeking Christ with their minds still fixed upon the miraculous feeding the night before. Like the woman at the well who wanted the living water so she would no longer have to make daily trips to the well, these people had their sights fixed upon a daily provision of bread.
The multitudes were willing to follow Jesus as long as He met their expectations.
3. After they found Jesus He told them:
John 6:26-27 NAU - "Truly, truly, I say to you, you seek Me, not because you saw signs, but because you ate of the loaves and were filled. ²⁷ "Do not work for the food which perishes, but for the food which endures to eternal life, which the Son of Man will give to you, for on Him the Father, God, has set His seal."
4. They asked Jesus for a sign but still couldn't get their minds off the provision of food. They called attention to the daily provision of Manna provided to Israel in the wilderness.
John 6:31 NAS - "Our fathers ate the manna in the wilderness; as it is written, 'He gave them bread out of heaven to eat.'
A. With their minds still fixed upon the miracle from day before, they pondered, wouldn't it be wonderful if they could receive such provision every day? Could Jesus do that for them?
B. Jesus turned their eyes upon the true Bread from Heaven.
John 6:32-33 NAU - "Truly, truly, I say to you, it is not Moses who has given you the bread out of heaven, but it is My Father who gives you the true bread out of heaven. ³³ "For the bread of God is that which comes down out of heaven, and gives life to the world."
5. They were unable to receive these words. Jesus kept taking them higher and higher. Not only did Jesus *give* the bread of life. He *is* the bread of life.
John 6:34-35 NAU - "Then they said to Him, "Lord, always give us this bread."
³⁵ Jesus said to them, "I am the bread of life; he who comes to Me will not hunger, and he who believes in Me will never thirst."
6. The Jews could not receive this word. Jesus is referring to Himself but it was beyond their comprehension.
John 6:51-53 NAU - "I am the living bread that came down out of heaven; if anyone eats of this bread, he will live forever; and the bread also which I will give for the life of the world is My flesh." ⁵² Then the Jews *began* to argue with one another, saying, "How can this man give us *His* flesh to eat?" ⁵³ So Jesus said to them, "Truly, truly, I say to you, unless you eat the flesh of the Son of Man and drink His blood, you have no life in yourselves."

7. Finally, Jesus told them.
John 6:54-56 NAU - "He who eats My flesh and drinks My blood has eternal life, and I will raise him up on the last day. ⁵⁵ "For My flesh is true food, and My blood is true drink. ⁵⁶ "He who eats My flesh and drinks My blood abides in Me, and I in him."
8. This was the last straw
John 6:60 NAS - "Many therefore of His disciples, when they heard *this* said, "This is a difficult statement; who can listen to it?"
9. In **Verse 2** the multitude was referred to as a "large crowd." Besides women and children, there were 5000 that were fed.
 A. They were followers of Christ, but their faith was of a temporary, spurious sort. Makes this clear in **Verse 64**.
John 6:64 NAU - "But there are some of you who do not believe." For Jesus knew from the beginning who they were who did not believe, and who it was that would betray Him."
 B. Jesus reiterates the nature of God's sovereign grace.
John 6:65 NAU - "And He was saying, "For this reason I have said to you, that no one can come to Me unless it has been granted him from the Father."
10. This would prove to be the last straw for many.
John 6:66 NAU - "As a result of this many of His disciples withdrew and were not walking with Him anymore."
 Most were not hostile. They just simply lost interest and walked away.
11. The crowd began to disperse and soon Jesus stood alone with the twelve.
 A. Jesus then turns to the twelve and says, "What about you?"
John 6:67 NAU - "You do not want to go away also, do you?"
 B. Peter answers with the words that are in the heart of all of God's people.
John 6:68-69 NAU - "Lord, to whom shall we go? You have words of eternal life. ⁶⁹ "We have believed and have come to know that You are the Holy One of God."
 C. This is the nature of genuine faith.
- I. Genuine faith presses on and endures until the end
 A. Genuine faith is not deterred by hard sayings
 1. There are difficult statements in the Bible. Many are offended.
 2. The true believer may not understand everything. He may not fully comprehend the mysteries of the Trinity, or of the union of the two natures of Christ, or the virgin birth, or election and predestination.
 But these things do not turn him away.
 B. Genuine faith is also not turned back by the many trials in this life—both difficult circumstances as well as difficult people.
 1. The Christian endures opposition and persecution with patience
 a. The true believer presses on through every circumstance of life.
 b. The true believer presses on through every kind of persecution.

- c. We often face difficult people—this is true both inside and outside the church.
- You may experience difficult individuals within your own extended family. They can't understand your unwavering commitment to Christ and His church. This is a sad reality that Jesus predicted:
Matthew 10:34-36 NAS - "Do not think that I came to bring peace on the earth; I did not come to bring peace, but a sword. ³⁵ "For I came to set a man against his father, and a daughter against her mother, and a daughter-in-law against her mother-in-law; ³⁶ and a man's enemies will be the members of his household."
 - You may face difficulty at work because of your steadfast faithfulness to Christ and His Word. By God's power you are enabled to withstand the opposition.
 - There have always been difficult people within the church. Every pastor has experienced opposition—often from those who are sure they're doing the right thing.
 Paul spoke of Alexander the coppersmith who had professed to follow Christ but turned out to be an enemy of the cross.
2 Timothy 4:14 NAU - "Alexander the coppersmith did me much harm; the Lord will repay him according to his deeds." But Paul pressed on.
- d. Living for Christ is difficult in a world that hates Him. We'll sometimes face opposition for doing the right thing—for simply living like Christians.
2. Christians will often face very difficult circumstances. Sometimes our faith will be greatly tested.
 3. The false or temporary professor of Christ does not endure. Jesus taught this in the Parable of the Sower.
Matthew 13:20-21 NAU - "The one on whom seed was sown on the rocky places, this is the man who hears the word and immediately receives it with joy; ²¹ yet he has no *firm* root in himself, but is *only* temporary, and when affliction or persecution arises because of the word, immediately he falls away."
 4. Trials are the very things sent to try and test our faith to prove it genuine
 - a. How many church members today would go to prison or suffer cruel torture for their faith?
 - b. For many in churches today, you cannot even get them to come to church. Every possible excuse will keep them from worship
 - c. Paul said,
2 Timothy 1:12 NAU - "For this reason I also suffer these things, but I am not ashamed; for I know whom I have believed and I am convinced that He is able to guard what I have entrusted to Him until that day."

- C. Besides the many difficulties of the Christian life, there is the continual draw of this world. Sometimes the greatest threat is not from persecution but Satan's subtle temptations to embrace his idols.
- Christian perseverance is not drawn away by worldly affairs or materialism
- a. Jesus described this as the profession choked by thorns
Matthew 13:22 NAU - "And the one on whom seed was sown among the thorns, this is the man who hears the word, and the worry of the world and the deceitfulness of wealth choke the word, and it becomes unfruitful."
 - b. The Bible has much to say about materialism – severe warnings
Matthew 6:24 NAU - "No one can serve two masters; for either he will hate the one and love the other, or he will be devoted to one and despise the other. You cannot serve God and wealth."
James 4:4 NAU - "You adulteresses, do you not know that friendship with the world is hostility toward God? Therefore whoever wishes to be a friend of the world makes himself an enemy of God."
1 Timothy 6:9-10 NAU - "But those who want to get rich fall into temptation and a snare and many foolish and harmful desires which plunge men into ruin and destruction. ¹⁰ For the love of money is a root of all sorts of evil, and some by longing for it have wandered away from the faith and pierced themselves with many griefs."
 - c. The Christian isn't drawn away by the materialism of this world.
- D. Christian perseverance is not drawn away from Christian duty. In other words, he maintains the rigors of the Christian life—he continues steadfastly in his commitment to Christ.
- 2 Timothy 2:3-4 NAU** - "Suffer hardship with *me*, as a good soldier of Christ Jesus. ⁴ No soldier in active service entangles himself in the affairs of everyday life, so that he may please the one who enlisted him as a soldier."
- Luke 9:62 NAU** - "But Jesus said to him, "No one, after putting his hand to the plow and looking back, is fit for the kingdom of God.""
- II. Perseverance is only possible through the power of God working in us
- John 6:68 NAU** - "Lord, to whom shall we go? You have words of eternal life."
John 6:44 NAU - "No one can come to Me unless the Father who sent Me draws him; and I will raise him up on the last day."
- A. Our salvation is based upon God's eternal covenant. Our salvation is God's work in us.
 1. Our security is based upon Christ's ability to keep the covenant.
John 6:39 NAU - "And this is the will of Him who sent Me, that of all that He has given Me I lose nothing, but raise it up on the last day."
 2. It is secured upon the work of Christ
John 6:37-39 NAU - "All that the Father gives Me will come to Me, and the one who comes to Me I will certainly not cast out. ³⁸ "For I have come down from heaven, not to do My own will, but the will of Him who sent Me. ³⁹ "This is the will of Him who sent Me, that of all that He has given Me I lose nothing, but raise it up on the last day."

3. Jesus Christ will never lose one for whom He died. His bride is protected from every enemy.
- B. It is maintained upon the indwelling presence of the Holy Spirit and His almighty power. With such power we cannot fall.

John 6:62-63 NAU - "What then if you see the Son of Man ascending to where He was before? ⁶³ "It is the Spirit who gives life; the flesh profits nothing; the words that I have spoken to you are spirit and are life."

 1. The Holy Spirit is called the earnest or pledge or guarantee of our inheritance – shall that prove worthless

Ephesians 1:13-14 NAU - "In Him, you also, after listening to the message of truth, the gospel of your salvation-- having also believed, you were sealed in Him with the Holy Spirit of promise, ¹⁴ who is given as a pledge of our inheritance, with a view to the redemption of *God's own* possession, to the praise of His glory."
 2. How can the Holy Spirit lose one within whom He dwells

Jude 1:24-25 NAU - "Now to Him who is able to keep you from stumbling, and to make you stand in the presence of His glory blameless with great joy, ²⁵ to the only God our Savior, through Jesus Christ our Lord, *be* glory, majesty, dominion and authority, before all time and now and forever. Amen."
 3. The Christian perseveres by God's almighty, preserving power
- C. Christian perseverance is a supernatural contentment – We have found the greatest of all treasures.
 1. The Christian is satisfied with Christ
 2. When many were forsaking Christ He turned and asked His disciples, "Will you also turn away."

Peter replied:

John 6:68-69 NAU - "Lord, to whom shall we go? You have words of eternal life. ⁶⁹ "We have believed and have come to know that You are the Holy One of God."
 3. This contentment is not based on something that arises from within ourselves. It is not stoicism where we simply grit our teeth and bear it. It is a God granted peace and confidence in Christ.
 4. Christ sends us a peace in every situation. He gives us the assurance that He is with us now and forever.

Conclusion:

1. For most people, any endeavor that leads to constant adversity and hardship will quickly be abandoned. Christians, however, have remained steadfast and immovable through every hardship through the almighty power of God.
2. While others are drawn away by the unending draw of this world the true believer presses on. While others turn back, the true believer remains steadfastly with Christ.
3. The true believer presses on because he is being preserved by the power of God.

1 Peter 1:3-5 NAU - "Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who according to His great mercy has caused us to be born again to a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, ⁴ to *obtain* an inheritance *which is* imperishable and undefiled and will not fade away, reserved in heaven for you, ⁵ who are protected by the power of God through faith for a salvation ready to be revealed in the last time."