

Prayer Updates



ENCOUNTERS WITH
CHRIST
Jesus' Life in the Gospel of John

**"Christ's Encounter with
People Losing Faith"**

Message by René Schlaepfer February 25-26, 2006

JOY & BLESSING

David and Karina Karabensh celebrate the birth of their son, Brendan Michael, born 2/15.

HOSPITALIZATIONS & SURGERIES THIS PAST WEEK

David Foster – Good Samaritan, improving

Ellie Tefertiller – testing, regulated her medications

Faye Davis – testing, yet to be diagnosed

Robert Walters – had a fall, injured spine, in RCU up to six weeks

Recent hospitalizations & surgeries:

Debbie Kaesemeyer, Gary Williams, Ladell Faulk, Mary Long, Steve Sierra, Jeri Beth Schipper, Gloria Heiss

Upcoming surgeries:

Dennis Mowles – cancer surgery 3/1 at Stanford

Ladell Faulk – cancer surgery 3/1 at Dominican

We want to provide pastoral support...

Please call 465-3395 when someone is hospitalized, scheduled for surgery, becomes a shut-in, or in special need. Prayer support is available through our pastors and numerous prayer groups – call 689-9400. Please pick up a Prayer Update at the Information Desk or Welcome Center.

In John 6 we see the same crowds who were at the "Feeding of the 5,000" miracle begin to doubt Christ the very next day. This encounter shows the fascinating variety of reactions people had to Christ even in his lifetime.

Even in Christ's day, many people found following Jesus...

• Too _____

Jesus answered, "I tell you the truth, you are looking for me, not because you saw miraculous signs but because you ate the loaves and had your fill. Do not work for food that spoils, but for food that endures to eternal life. . . ." John 6:26,27

"So they asked him, "What miraculous sign then will you give that we may see it and believe you? What will you do? Our forefathers ate . . . it is written: 'He gave them bread from heaven to eat.'" John 6:30,31

Some were intrigued, but wanted _____ they could _____

• Too _____

Then they asked him, "What must we do to do the works God requires?" Jesus answered, "The work of God is this: to believe in the one he has sent." John 6:28,29

Some were still focused on religious _____ rather than _____

• Too _____

At this the Jews began to grumble about him because he said, "I am the bread that came down from heaven." They said, "Is this not Jesus, the son of Joseph, whose father and mother we know? How can he now say, I came down from heaven?" John 6:41,42

Some found Christ's _____ outrageous

• Too _____

They . . . began to argue sharply among themselves, "How can this man give us his flesh to eat?" John 6:52 (compare v. 40 and v. 54)

Some did not understand, yet were too _____ to wait for understanding

• Too _____

On hearing it, many of his disciples said, "This is a hard teaching. Who can accept it?" John 6:60

Some did not like the teachings, and wanted them _____

Aware that his disciples were grumbling about this, Jesus said to them, "Does this offend you? . . . The words I have spoken to you are spirit and they are life. Yet there are some of you who do not believe." John 6:61,64

From this time many of his disciples turned back and no longer followed him. "You do not want to leave too, do you?" Jesus asked the Twelve. John 6:66,67

Why did some stay with Jesus?

Peter's response is helpful for all of us:

1. _____ else? "Lord, to whom shall we go?" John 6:68a
"I do believe; help me with my unbelief!" Mark 9:24
2. _____ else? "You have the words of eternal life." John 6:68b
3. _____ else? "We believe and know that you are the Holy One of God." John 6:69

What is _____ ?

Daily Meditations

Brief daily devotions based on this weekend's message

This week's memory verse: Simon Peter answered him, "Lord, to whom shall we go? You have the words of eternal life. We believe and know that you are the Holy One of God." John 6:68,69

Monday

Today, an overview: Have you ever struggled with the any of the five reasons people didn't believe Jesus, as listed in the message notes? Which ones?

How have you overcome your questions enough to have faith?

It's fascinating to me that throughout the Bible, even believers find following God to be confusing, yet somehow their doubts could co-exist with their walk of faith (Think of Moses, David, Job, Mary, Thomas and other disciples). How do you explain the difference between people who choose to have faith while they have questions versus those who allow their questions to short-circuit their faith?

Thank God today that He loves you and gives you the freedom to express your doubts to Him. Talk to Him about your struggles with faith. Pray that your study this week will encourage your heart and grow your relationship with Him.

Tuesday

Read John 6:25-36. Why are the crowds still searching for Jesus? How does Jesus' response show the difference between his interests and theirs?

Read John 41-44. In verses 41-42, how do the crowds respond to Jesus' claims?

How is the principle of the hometown prophet (see 4:44) played out here?

Has your familiarity with Jesus (raised on Sunday School stories, church schools, catechisms, etc.) ever kept you from seeing Jesus for who He is really is? Or kept you from hearing the message of grace He truly teaches? How so?

Ask God to show you any area of your life or thoughts where familiarity with Him has bred complacency. Pray that your heart will be soft and your love for Jesus will grow each day.

Wednesday

Read John 6:57-66. What teaching do the followers find so unacceptable?

I believe if they had really been listening, they would have understood that Jesus meant fully receiving and believing Him — and not physically eating Him! Compare 6:40 to 6:54, for example, or Jesus' well-known habit of teaching in parables and allegories (See Matt. 13:34). Why do you think they turned away? Because:

1. They understood
2. They did not understand
3. They did not want to understand
4. Other: _____

Have you ever been really impressed with and moved by Jesus, only to turn away from Him the next day or the next moment? Why does that happen?

Thank God today that He is faithful to you even when you are doubting Him. Pray that you will grow deeper in your understanding of God's character and love for you. Pray that you'll be an encouragement to those you encounter.

Thursday

Read John 6:67-69. What impresses you about Peter's answer to Christ?

How do you relate to this answer in regards to your own faith?

When times are hard, what keeps you from junking your own faith and going on to something else?

Look back over your walk with God to this point. Spend time thanking God for His presence with you through the good times and hard times. Thank God for the grace He has poured out on you. Pray that as you face hard times in the future that you'll be quick to recall God's past faithfulness to you.

Friday

John 7 is a fascinating chapter that follows up on Christ's encounter in John 6 and goes into more detail about the varied reactions to Jesus in his lifetime — in fact, you can find just about all the modern reactions to Christ right here! Read the following passages and list the reactions to Jesus:

John 7:3-6	John 7:12	John 7:15	John 7:20
John 7:31	John 7:40-44	John 7:45-47	

Why do you suppose John — who says he wrote this Gospel "that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God..." (John 20:31) — includes so many candid examples of unbelief, not only in this chapter, but throughout his book? What do you think might have been happening in the early church that would have motivated John to write about these events in Christ's life?

Thank God today for sending Jesus to die on the cross and save you. Thank God for the freedom and new life you have in Him. Talk to Him honestly about your fears and struggles to trust Him. Allow Him to hold your hand and reassure you of His love for you. Pray that you will grow in faithfulness to Him

Saturday

Please pray for the weekend services today: That God would fill everyone in church this weekend with His Spirit. Get this week's verse committed to memory and go over any devotions you may have missed. Spend time worshipping God in prayer today!

Some questions this week adapted from Serendipity New Testament for Groups