

# Chapter 5

## Maintaining a Distinction, Proclaim The Truth

“ ... This is an hard saying; who can  
hear it?” – John 6:60

## PROCLAIM THE TRUTH

This fifth message is the second part of the previous message, in which we learned that we have to maintain our distinction if we're going to be the church that people need. In 1<sup>st</sup> Timothy 3:15, the church is referred to as the house of God, the church of the living God, and the pillar in the ground of truth. Those three things speak loud and clear that there is a distinction between the Lord's church and all other religious institutions. That distinction must be maintained at all times in these days of seeker friendly, seeker sensitive churches. When the emphasis is upon giving people what they want, what is pleasing to the flesh, what is in line with their perceived needs and their notions of God, and presenting a message that is nonthreatening to their present belief system. The idea is, if they like you, if you can be popular, if you can be desirable, then that will attract them and they'll be saved. However, popularity has nothing to do with God saving a soul.

Our duty, our responsibility is not to make the truth acceptable, but to declare it, sound it out, proclaim it, and to live it. If we are going to maintain our distinction, we have to, at all times, proclaim the truth, making no alterations whatsoever. When you make enough alterations and adjustments to the truth, it soon ceases to be the message that people need. If it ceases to be the message that people need, that church ceases to be the church that people need.

I want to show Christ as our example in these things. In John 6:60-69, it says, *“Many therefore of his disciples, when they had heard this, said, This is an hard saying; who can hear it? When Jesus knew in himself that his disciples murmured at it, he said unto them, Doth this offend you? What and if ye shall see the Son of man ascend up where he was before? It is the spirit that quickeneth; the flesh profiteth nothing: the words that I speak unto you, they are spirit, and they are life. But there are some of you that believe not. For Jesus knew from the beginning who they were that believed not, and who should betray him. And he said, Therefore said I unto you, that no man can come unto me, except it were*

*given unto him of my Father. 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.”*

Leading up to these verses there was the miraculous feeding of well over five thousand people with five loaves and two small fishes. In John 6:14, the scriptures show that those who had seen the miracle, those who had experienced the miracle, we're now convinced that Jesus Christ was the Messiah that the Old Testament spoke of. John 6:14-15, says, *“Then those men, when they had seen the miracle that Jesus did, said, This is of a truth that prophet that should come into the world. When Jesus therefore perceived that they would come and take him by force, to make him a king, he departed again into a mountain himself alone.”* Jesus knew that these who had experienced this miracle would come and take him by force and make him a king. In John 6:22-24, it says, *“The day following, when the people which stood on the other side of the sea saw that there was none other boat there, save that one whereinto his disciples were entered, and that Jesus went not with his disciples into the boat, but [that] his disciples were gone away alone; (Howbeit there came other boats from Tiberias nigh unto the place where they did eat bread, after that the Lord had given thanks:) When the people therefore saw that Jesus was not there, neither his disciples, they also took shipping, and came to Capernaum, seeking for Jesus.”*

The following day of this miraculous feeding the people gathered. They are looking for Jesus Christ but he is nowhere to be found. This greatly perplexed them because on the previous evening, there was only one boat on that side of the sea, and they saw the apostles get in that boat alone and depart. So where was Jesus? They concluded that He must have miraculously got to the other side.

So this great multitude of people, (remember He fed five thousand men besides women and children,) make their way to the other side. We see they are seeking Jesus. That does not mean that they are seeking Christ as Savior. They had just experienced a miracle and now they are seeking Jesus. Remember, with the whole seeker sensitive movement, we have to appeal to the seeker. The question is, what are they seeking? Many who say they are seeking Jesus do so for the wrong reasons, which we will see here. Recently, I had someone call. They didn't ask what we believed, they asked if we had activities. Then they asked if there were single women between the ages of 40 and 60. That's all they cared about. Seeking, yes, but what were they seeking? So it is today.

All this multitude is seeking Christ. Beginning with John 6:26, Jesus begins to preach a message unto them. Did Jesus alter the message since these were seekers, or did Jesus simply preach the truth? Verse 26 says, "*Jesus answered them and said, Verily, verily, I say unto you, Ye seek me, not because ye saw the miracles, but because ye did eat of the loaves, and were filled.*"

I want to look at several things in the verses that we read. There is the reaction of the people to the message of Christ. They are called disciples because they are seeking Christ, which doesn't mean that they are saved.

First there is the reaction of the majority to the message of Christ in this passage of scripture. It was a reaction of intolerance. Notice John 6:60, we don't know how many of this group of over five thousand there were, but a huge multitude was now standing before Christ and Christ has preached to them, "*Many therefore of his disciples when they had heard this, said, This is an hard saying; who can hear it?*" When they came to Christ they heard something that they were not accustomed to hearing. They also heard something that they did not expect to hear. They thought the message of Christ was very difficult, quite puzzling, exhausting to their flesh, and very harsh. "*This is a hard*

*saying.*” They found it to be very stern, demanding, unpleasant, and uncomfortable. This is a message that caused them distress. It was a message that was unbending. They found the message of Christ to be intolerable. In John 6, Jesus could see how the people were receiving the message, He could see the distress they were in hearing what He was saying, but did Jesus at any time alter the message? No. He just continued to deliver the truth.

We see also that it was a reaction of murmuring and grumbling. In John 6:61, *“When Jesus knew in himself that his disciples murmured at it ...”* When Jesus preached, they began to complain and gripe about what He was saying. The fact that they murmured indicates that they're not happy. Happy people do not murmur. Jesus has not gotten with the program of the seeker sensitive movement. These people were not happy, they were not comfortable, and they were not satisfied. The message was not to their liking. You murmur when something is not to your liking. This message was distasteful and unappealing to them. The question is, did Jesus, anywhere, at any time alter the message? No, He never did.

We also see that it was a reaction of offense. In John 6:61, the people are murmuring, and Jesus didn't say unto them, “I'm sorry I didn't mean to hurt you, I didn't mean to make you uncomfortable. Let me try to present it a different way. Let me try to present it in a way where you won't be offended.” He just asked them a question, “Does this offend you?” What I have said to you, does this offend you? When someone is offended they are insulted. The truth that Jesus preached and taught here offended and it insulted them. When you are offended, you feel that you have been wronged. These people felt that they had been wronged by the truth that Jesus had presented. Sometimes when you are offended there may be outrage and resentment. This was how these people reacted to the truth of Jesus Christ. They were offended.

All of this would lead to a withdrawal. In verse 66, *“From that time many of his disciples went back, and walked no more with him.”* They didn't just go away, they stayed away. They never came back. They were offended at the truth that Jesus preached, and being offended, they withdrew. They found the message so difficult, so unbearable, so distasteful, so unappealing, and they were so insulted, they felt so wronged and outraged, that they left. In fact, the only ones remaining were twelve, and one of them was lost. The rest of the thousands that were there, left.

Why did they react this way? Had Jesus done something wrong that would cause them to react this way? The reaction was to the preaching and the teaching of the truth. It was simply what Jesus said that caused this departure. Now if a preacher today had thousands of people that he was preaching to, (and no doubt there were thousands here,) and by the time he got done with his message, there were only twelve left, that preacher would be looking for a different church, I guarantee it. He's an utter failure in the minds of most people. That is why it's not the seeker sensitive church that's the danger, it's that whole thought process behind the whole movement. That's the danger.

They reacted this way to the truth. What did He preach that would cause such a strong reaction? Back up to John 6:27, we see He began by telling them that the spiritual was more important than the material. He says, *“Labour not for the meat which perisheth, but for that meat which endureth unto everlasting life, ...”* He stressed spiritual things. Anything wrong with that? No, nothing wrong with that. But this was the reaction.

He had preached and taught concerning Himself. John 6:27 again, He says, *“... the Son of man shall give unto you: for him hath God the Father sealed.”* He said in verse 29, *“... believe on him whom he hath sent.”* He says, Jesus Christ is the one that God the father has sealed. Jesus is the one that God the father has sent. This is the message that He's preaching. John 6:32, says, *“Then Jesus said unto*

*them, Verily, verily, I say unto you, Moses gave you not that bread from heaven; but my Father giveth you the true bread from heaven*", which is referring again to Jesus Christ. Verse 35, *"And Jesus said unto them, I am the bread of life: ..."* He is stressing the spiritual.

He is also stressing the person of Jesus Christ. John 6:48, He again says, *"I am that bread of life."* Verse 51, He says, *"I am the living bread which came down from heaven: ..."* The message was a message about Jesus Christ. The message was about this "I am more than a miracle worker. I am what you need. I am the bread of life." And if you tell people today that Jesus Christ is the one they need, He is the only one that can help them, that message is unbearable, that message is offensive to many. Many are going to leave. Just preaching Christ will cause many to leave.

He also preached the sovereignty of God. He put God on the throne in His preaching. He took the crown off of sinful man and put it upon the head of God. They found that to be unbearable, painful, distasteful, and very unappealing. They were insulted, wronged, outraged, they felt resentment, and they left. In John 6:63 He told them *"... the flesh profiteth nothing: ..."*, it's the spirit. Look at verse 63, *"It is the spirit that quickeneth; the flesh profiteth nothing:"* They couldn't take that. He's preaching the sovereignty of God.

He is preaching Christ, He is preaching the sovereignty of God, but He also preaches the total depravity and the inability of man to save himself. Man doesn't mind hearing that he needs to be saved as long as you leave him to believe that he can save himself. What man gets upset about is that he can do NOTHING to save himself, that only Christ can save him. In John 6:44, He said, *"No man can come to me, except the Father which hath sent me draw him: ..."* He's preaching the depravity of man. He's preaching the sovereignty of God. He presents man in the gutter of his depravity. He presents that man is dead in trespasses and sins. That he's depraved, corrupt, and unable to rise up in his

own strength and come to God. You know what? That message didn't go over any better then than it does now. You still get the same response to that message today. He told them that the flesh profited nothing. He told them the truth about themselves.

As you read through John 6, you see that Jesus spoke in very certain terms. He left no room for their beliefs. It's just simply what he said. That's the way the word of God is to be presented. It is to be preached in very certain terms, leaving no room for personal opinion. It's just simply, "This is what God has said."

They've heard this message, but this isn't what they came to hear. There will be many, and there have been many, through the years of Home Baptist Church, that have come in these doors, and they heard a message that they didn't come to hear. They heard a message that they did not expect to hear. They left and some of them, you haven't seen since. They left simply because the truth was offensive to them.

Jesus preached that salvation was only in and through Him. Notice John 6:47, He said, "... *He that believeth on me hath everlasting life.*" Verses 49-51 say, "*Your fathers did eat manna in the wilderness, and are dead. This is the bread which cometh down from heaven, that a man may eat thereof, and not die. ... if any man eat of this bread, he shall live for ever: ...*" He's telling them, I am your only hope. Then in verse 53, "*Then Jesus said unto them, Verily, verily, I say unto you, Except ye eat the flesh of the Son of man, and drink his blood, ye have no life in you.*" In other words, you're damned, you're condemned without Jesus Christ. That offends people. People find that very, very offensive.

Jesus is not preaching anything that is not true. He's not preaching anything that we don't preach today. He's preaching Jesus Christ, the depravity of man, and that salvation is only in and through Christ. People were offended. You can preach works and that satisfies people. It satisfies people to believe, "I have to do something to be saved." I mean, it's more satisfying to people if you tell



them, “You have to crawl 20 miles on your hands and knees on broken glass.” That will not offend them as much as telling them, “There is only one way and that's Jesus Christ.” Now they're going to get offended.

People don't mind hearing about works. They want to know that they can do something. You can preach baptism. Many have and they've started their own denominations. You can preach baptism and that will not offend people. You can preach church membership or you can preach a social gospel, and people will applaud, and will feel good. But you preach Jesus, as the one and only way of salvation, and the majority of people find that message too intolerable.

Jesus also preached and taught total commitment of those who knew Jesus Christ. Notice John 6:57, “*As the living Father hath sent me, and I live by the Father: so he that eateth me, even he shall live by me.*” That's commitment. People don't want to hear anything about commitment today. They don't want to hear anything about surrender. That's unappealing to them. It's not what they want to hear.

Their reaction was not only to the message of Jesus Christ, their reaction was to the person of Jesus Christ. That's always so, because it's His message. You reject the message, you're not just rejecting the message, you're rejecting the person Jesus Christ. John 6:66, again, says they, “*... went back, and walked no more with him.*” He was the one that they were rejecting. You can not separate the message of the book from the person of Jesus Christ. They deserted Christ. They relinquished all attendance upon His ministry. They disowned all attachment to His person. They threw off all His authority. They not only disregarded His teaching, they disregarded him.

Why did they act this way? One reason is because they had a wrong perception of Jesus Christ. In John 6:15, they desired to come, take Him by force, and make Him a king. Before Jesus preached they had this idea that they

could do with Jesus Christ as they pleased. “If we want to make Him a king, we will.” That's what folks believe today. As long as God, as long as Jesus Christ is somebody that they can do with what they please, they're not offended. They thought that they could fit Him into their own little box. As Jesus preached this message they found out that Christ did not fit into what they thought. Christ did not fit into their perception, Christ did not fit into their plan, Christ was not somebody that they could control. Christ was not somebody that they could shape and mold, and therefore they were offended. So offended, that they left.

They also had a wrong motive for seeking Jesus Christ. John 6:26, “*Jesus answered them and said, Verily, verily, I say unto you, Ye seek me, not because ye saw the miracles, but because ye did eat of the loaves, and were filled.*” They were blind to the spiritual significance of Christ. The only thing they saw was, “This man fed us.” The only thing they saw was temporal and material. They were there to get something to satisfy their flesh. When Jesus Christ did not satisfy their flesh, they were offended. When the message did not satisfy their flesh, they were offended. The whole seeker sensitive movement is, “Satisfy the people. Satisfy the seekers.” These people were looking for something that would satisfy themselves. They were looking for something that would make them feel good about themselves, and they basically saw Jesus as a “meal ticket” for their physical needs. When they found out that that wasn't the case, they were offended.

They wanted Jesus Christ to do something sensational. “Feed us again!” They wanted Jesus Christ to do something spectacular. They wanted something that would impress them. They wanted some excitement. Don't you think that that was an exciting time when Jesus fed over five thousand? Certainly it was, and they wanted more of that. “We want excitement.” The message that Jesus preached didn't give them any of that and they were offended. They were only interested in what they could get

from Jesus without any concern for His glory, without any concern for His will. They wanted something from Him, and they would set the terms. When they found that it didn't work that way, they were offended.

They were opposed to the truth. That is another reason they were offended. They were opposed to the claims of Jesus Christ. They were disciples in name only. John 6:64, says, *“But there are some of you that believe not. ...”*, that's very pointed, *“... For Jesus knew from the beginning who they were that believed not, and who should betray him.”* In other words, all of these people had no personal relationship to Jesus Christ. They had no close association to Jesus Christ. They had a name, and that's all they had. They had no close contact, warm friendship, or kinship with Jesus Christ. What happens, when you present the truth and people have no relationship, no closeness to Jesus Christ, and no personal contact with Jesus Christ, is they leave. That's what happened here. If you think about it, you can not build a church upon the foundation of a people who have no relationship with Jesus Christ. I don't care how happy the message makes them, if they have no relationship to Jesus Christ, you have nothing. That's what many are trying to build upon today.

What did Jesus do on this occasion? At the beginning of the chapter, over five thousand people are seen following Christ. They're listening to Him. By the end of the chapter, there are only twelve left, and one of them is unsaved. In the eyes of the religious world, John 6 is perhaps the most unsuccessful sermon preached in the history of man. You have thousands of people. “Oh what an opportunity pastor. You've got to be careful now, you've got thousands of people. Take advantage of this opportunity.” He did, He preached the truth and everybody left with the exceptions of twelve. “Oh what a failure”, is how the religious world would look at this.

But the Lord never failed in anything. The Lord was never unsuccessful in anything. I say to you that this was a

successful message. It did exactly what Jesus intended it to do, because Jesus never did anything that wasn't successful. What we have to realize is sometimes the Lord uses preaching to weed out. He doesn't just use preaching to bring in, he uses preaching, many times, to weed out. Wherever there's sheep there's goats, wherever there's wheat there's tares. You just keep preaching the truth and the Lord has a way of weeding out.

Jesus could see that the people were upset as he was preaching and when they left, He did not change, He did not alter the message. He did not attempt to make it more desirable nor must we. We must simply preach the truth. He did not attempt to tone it down. “Well maybe pastor if you just tone it down a little, you can say the same thing, but just tone it down a little. Try to approach it from a different way.” Is that what Jesus did? No. He just preached the truth.

He did not seek to cater to those who found the message intolerable and offensive. What happens many times today, is churches cater to those who find the message offensive more than they do to those who find it appealing. Something is terribly wrong with that mindset. This whole chapter (John 6) is a sharp rebuke to the whole seeker friendly, seeker sensitive movement. Jesus did not attempt to build upon popularity. He had over five thousand people following Him. In the eyes of the religious world, “If He just would have toned it down a little, what a following he would have had”. He wasn't interested in popularity. He was interested in presenting the truth.

If you want a crowd, the seeker sensitive movement model, it will work. If a church wants a crowd, study the seeker sensitive movement, it will work. It will get you a crowd. But that's all you'll have. If you want solid, sincere, mature followers of Christ, if you want to be the church that people need, then you just keep holding onto the truth, and you keep on proclaiming the truth for His honor and His

glory no matter how many people leave. You just preach the truth.

When people find the message of the truth to be intolerable, unbearable, when they are offended by the truth of God, when they murmur, complain, and grumble at the truth of God, don't cater to them, don't apologize, don't pamper them. Here's what you do. You keep on loving them, you keep praying for them, and you keep on standing for the truth. You don't move one inch and you just keep on praying that God would get a hold of their heart.

What did Jesus do after the masses left? He turned to the twelve and he said, "*Will ye also go away?*" This was a call to examination. Can you imagine what went through their minds as all these people left in mass. Jesus asked them a question that would cause them to examine themselves. The answer that Peter gave, "*... to whom shall we go? Thou hast the words of eternal life.*" Lord, we don't have any place else to go. That's true today, of those that believe and practice the truth. Where are you going to go? If you leave Christ, where are you going to go? Think of all of those that you have seen get offended and leave Christ. Where are they now? They walk no more with Him.

Christ is the only one. I ask you, if the truth offends you, if you leave Him, where are you going to go? You're going to go down a road to destruction. My point is, we must maintain our distinction. One of the distinctions is truth. You can not waver from truth. You stand for truth matter what it costs. That's the only way you can be the church that people need.

People need the truth today. They don't need to be told a bunch of lies. They don't need to be told things just to make them feel good. They need to be told the truth. They will receive it or they will reject it. That's the only two things you can do. It's not our business, nor is it in our capability to cause them to receive it. That's God's business. Our business is to stand for the truth, preach the truth.

## PROCLAIM THE TRUTH

There are fewer and fewer people all the time preaching the truth. It is rare. This is not mainstream. What we have here is not mainstream. People come in here, and they hear things that they've never heard in their life. They're shocked. Some come back. They want to see what the nuts are going to do next. "What are these crazy people going to do next?" They come back out of curiosity. The Lord may save them. The Lord does bring them back. There are some who leave and we never see them again. But, we can't get so sidetracked where we begin to think, "Well we've got to keep them from leaving." To keep them from leaving, you have to do something to keep them to stay. Doing so will cause you to cease to be the church that they need. You've now become the church they want, not the church they need. God help us that we would never be the church that people want, but the church they need.