

Goal: That the hearers would look to Jesus as the only way to eternal life.

There are 3 kinds of people in the world, those who can count, and those who can't. Wait, that's only 2, right? OK, there are 2 kinds of people in the world, those who are willing to work, and those who are happy to watch them work. There are 2 kinds of people in the world, the ones that do something and others who ask, "*Why didn't you do it the other way?*" There are 2 kinds of people in the world, those who divide people into 2 types, and those who don't. There are lots of 2 kinds of people sayings. Some are funny, others are wise, but today Jesus tells us that there are really only 2 kinds of people in this world, those who believe in Him, and those who don't. Christian author C.S. Lewis put it this way, "*There are two kinds of people: those who say to God, 'Thy will be done,' and those to whom God says, 'All right, then, have it your way.'*" The Bible is full of 2 kinds of people sayings.

In our reading from Proverbs, Solomon describes two kinds of people, those who are wise and those who are foolish. Paul makes the same distinction in Ephesians, those who live in darkness and those who are light in the Lord; those who live for themselves and those who submit to one another out of reverence for Christ. Finally, Jesus describes those who believe in Him and receive life and those who don't and have no life at all.

For the past four weeks we've watched the crowd of over 5000 follow Jesus, being fed by Him, listening to His teachings, but now it was coming to the point where the rubber hits the road. Jesus' words were becoming much more poignant and to some, offensive. Especially when He said, "***Whoever feeds on My flesh and drinks My blood has eternal life, and I will raise him up on the last day. For My flesh is true food, and My blood is true drink. Whoever feeds on my flesh and drinks my blood abides in me, and I in him.***" (John 6: 54 – 56) That's just too much, too graphic, right? So, how did Jesus followers respond? Most of them were offended and they walked away. ("***When many of his disciples heard it, they said, 'This is a hard saying; who can listen to it?' But Jesus, knowing in himself that his disciples were grumbling about this, said to them, 'Do you take offense at this?' After this many of His disciples turned back and no longer walked with Him.***" (John 6: 60 – 61, 66)

Taking offense seems to be at epidemic levels in our society. Comedians won't play college campuses anymore because it's too difficult to come up with jokes that won't offend somebody. Sports teams are changing decades-old mascots because somebody took offense. In some neighborhoods, you can't fly Old Glory on your property because,

well, the U.S. flag is somehow offensive. And I've had to learn not to use the phrase "you guys" anymore, because it's offensive, not everyone's a guy.

But what did Jesus do on a regular basis? He offended people! He routinely said things that ticked off the upper crust of Jewish society. Jesus calls out sin for what it is; that's offensive to people. He declares sins forgiven; that offends people. He says that He is God; that offends people. He tells people they're doing life wrong, doing faith wrong, pretty much everything they think they're doing right is wrong. His words offend.

In His church today, people still get offended, and it's always a reflection of their relationship with Jesus. Do they trust in Jesus, do they believe His words, or do they not? There are some here this morning who don't really buy everything God says in His Bible, thus their relationship with Jesus is based upon their views and not on His. There are some who come to church to feel good, to sing the songs they want to sing and hear what they want to hear, and if pastor points out the sins of others, that's fine. But what if pastor gets a little too personal with me? Or what if another Christian says something that offends me? I might be tempted to stay away from church to avoid them. You and I may not always have the purest motives for coming to church, because often we let our sinful desires, our fears, and our pride get in the way.

There are two kinds of people in the world—those who submit to Jesus, and those who get offended by Him. That's what makes preaching God's Word so difficult. Preaching against divorce or homosexuality or abortion or greed is difficult when our society embraces such things. It's difficult to speak against evolution and what worldly science teaches as the beginnings of the universe because that's what all the universities and schools are teaching, and no one seems to question them. It's difficult to administer the Sacrament of the Altar as our Lord directed because so many churches have open communion policies for anyone and everyone to participate. It's difficult to maintain that the office of the ministry is reserved only for men, because it sounds like I'm sexist. There are lots of hot topics we hear being addressed, and most of the time, it's the Christians, who are trying to be faithful to God's Word, that cause offense.

Remaining faithful to Jesus and God's Word will be challenging for us. It's not popular. If we want to be popular, we shouldn't be following Jesus. But we believe that apart from Jesus there is no hope, there is no life. ***"So Jesus said to the twelve, "Do you want to go away as well?" Simon Peter answered him, "Lord, to whom shall we go?"***

You have the words of eternal life, and we have believed, and have come to know, that you are the Holy One of God.” (John 6: 67 – 69) Faith makes all the difference in how we hear God’s Word and how we follow Jesus.

There are two kinds of people in the world, those who follow Jesus in faith and those who refuse. Those who refuse might follow Jesus for a while, but as soon as it gets difficult, they turn away. They might search for another church where they hear what they want to hear. For instance, last Sunday, I listened to a sermon from another church that concluded with, *“You are an exceptional person and Jesus came to this world so that you would know that you are exceptional.”* People fill movie theatres to hear that message, right? But is that why Jesus came into the world? No! He came into the world to save wretched sinners from death and give to us eternal life. He came to save you and me. And those who follow Jesus by faith understand that the Father gives us true life.

That life began for each of us when God brought us into His family in Christ, just as we saw Him draw Evelyn to Himself this morning in Christian baptism. He gave her life in His Son, life with Him, and with each of us for all eternity. And even though her life, like ours will experience its challenges, her God, and our God, promises to be with us until the very end of the age. And the Father will continue to draw us to Jesus so that we will continue to have our faith nourished and grow closer with Him.

It’s not easy to follow Jesus. We are always going to have that tension of living in this world and living in Christ. Our human nature will get offended and want to turn away, but I want to encourage you to let faith be your guide. Embrace Jesus’ difficult teachings, even though you might not fully understand them and so that say with Peter and all Christians throughout history, ***“Lord, to whom shall we go? You have the words of eternal life, and we have believed and come to know that You are the Holy One of God.” (John 6: 68 – 69)***

There are two kinds of people in this world, those who look inside of themselves and those who look up to God. The world would tell you to follow your heart but the Lord tells you that your heart is sinful and corrupt. The world will encourage you to trust in your wisdom, but God reminds us that man’s wisdom is just foolishness to Him. So, don’t listen to the world, rather hear the Lord’s call to follow Jesus, because Jesus is the way that leads to eternal life! Amen.