

January 14, 2024

**Encounter:
The Pressure to Leave**

Scripture: John 6:60-69

Big Idea: During his disciples' doubt and deconstruction, Jesus offers challenge and hope.

The Challenge: What do we do with the hard teaching of Jesus? John gives us an insight into the decisions that his disciples made as some left and some committed. As we live in a world with contrasting messages, alluring lifestyles, and differing ideas, how do we maintain commitment and vibrancy with Jesus?

Pastoral Prayer for this Message:

- KAC would be a warm place for those who are in a season of doubt or uncertainty.
- KAC would be a committed place, amid a secular world, to faithfulness unto the Lord.

*Life Group Leader: Be aware that some people theologically struggle with this conversation because of a belief that people are either always saved or they were never saved to begin with. In other words, they would theologically push back against the idea of deconstruction or the thought of those who fall away from their faith. As a coach, if you sense this belief could be in the room, acknowledge it at the beginning of the time together and say something like:

There are some theological nuances here concerning the perseverance of belief for people. The idea that people are always saved, or were never saved to begin with, is here in this conversation no doubt. For us to have a profitable time together, let's stay away from these theological commitments, and instead see the passage in front of us as it is: there were some disciples who "turned back" and no longer followed Jesus. Let's leave some room for mystery..."

Questions for Discussion:

- 1. Who can accept it? Vs. 60**
 - Have you ever been in a place of doubt and uncertainty with Jesus before? What sparked it, and how did you make it through?
 - Read the previous passage, what was it about Jesus teaching that these disciples found difficult?
 - What aspect of Jesus' teaching is difficult or challenging for you to believe and live out?
- 2. Does this offend you? Vs. 61-65**
 - Jesus is "aware" of the disciples grumbling. What does this say about our places of uncertainty, confusion, or deconstruction?
 - The gospel of Jesus is offensive as it is a message of self-denial. Yet often we make it more offensive by our behavior, attitudes, or words. What are some examples of some unnecessarily offensive things Christians do to dissuade people's further investigation of Jesus?
 - Jesus' words are "Life" and "Spirit." Although following Jesus can be difficult, the promise is Life. How have you experienced the Life-giving words and presence of Jesus this week?
- 3. You do not want to leave too, do you? Vs. 66-67**
 - Have you seen people "turn back" from following Jesus? How has this affected you?
 - What are some ways you can minister to these people, who for whatever reason, have decided to not follow Jesus anymore?
- 4. Lord, to whom shall we go? Vs 68-69**
 - Peter is saying, "The alternatives to following you are not good." Have you tried to live your life apart from Jesus before? What made you reconsider Him?
 - Why does Peter say this? (You have the words of eternal life!). What does Peter say about Jesus and what does it mean?

Application:

- Ask people if they are struggling in their faith with uncertainty or doubt. Pray for them.
- Pray for those in the room who know people close to them who are not currently following Jesus.