

Fickle, Fragile, Falling or Faithful

Pastor Steve Berger September 20, 2015

What kind of follower of Jesus are you, or are you going to be?

We are living today in the days of an acceleration of Godlessness, anti-Christian atmosphere, persecution from without the church, corrosion from within the church. This is a message of warning, education, and vision. What kind of followers of Jesus are we going to be?

- Fickle
- Fragile
- Falling
- Faithful

Backdrop

Jesus' ministry is preaching truth, performing miracles, thousands are following

- Jesus just did miracle of 5 loaves and 2 fish for 5,000 men, plus women and children
- they declare "this is the Prophet," want to take Him by force and make Him King — "genuine believers"
- Jesus leaves and goes to other side of the lake; they follow and find Him next morning
- **John 6:26-36**
 - Jesus answered them and said, "Most assuredly, I say to you, you seek Me, not because you saw the signs, but because you ate of the loaves and were filled. Do not labor for the food which perishes, but for the food which endures to everlasting life, which the Son of Man will give you, because God the Father has set His seal on Him." Then they said to Him, "What shall we do, that we may work the works of God?" Jesus answered and said to them, "This is the work of God that you believe in Him whom He sent." Therefore they said to Him, "What sign will You perform then, that we may see it and believe You? What work will You do? Our fathers ate the manna in the desert; as it is written, 'HE GAVE THEM BREAD FROM HEAVEN TO EAT.'" Then Jesus said to them, "Most assuredly, I say to you, Moses did not give you the bread from heaven, but My Father gives you the true bread from heaven. For the bread of God is He who comes down from heaven and gives life to the world." Then they said to Him, "Lord, give us this bread always." And Jesus said to them, "I am the bread of life. He who comes to Me shall never hunger, and he who believes in Me shall never thirst. But I said to you that you have seen Me and yet do not believe.

Fickle

- have the right words — "this is the Prophet"
- have natural actions that seem right — "take Him and make King"
- wrong hearts, "ate loaves and filled" — are revealed by words they speak
- leads to wrong responses, "what shall we do to work the works of God", "what miracle will you do for us next," what can I get out of it?
 - fickle followers deflect the truth
- leads to empty faith- "you do not believe;" want Him to perform more for them

**Fickle followers of Jesus will say some right words, even do some right actions,
but it's only so long as there's something in it for them...
so long as I get, get, get, I'm in!
But don't challenge or confront me about my commitment,
I'll deflect or manipulate, and thus expose my true heart.**

Bottom line — *fickle followers don't really believe, verse 36, don't have a saving faith!*

Question — *Is that you, honestly? Don't deflect. Don't make an excuse. Recognize and repent, Jesus is reaching out to you! He wants you to make it real, so that you can experience abundant life.*

THE STORY UNFOLDS

- **John 6:57-69**
 - As the living Father sent Me, and I live because of the Father, so he who feeds on Me will live because of Me. This is the bread which came down from heaven—not as your fathers ate the manna, and are dead. He who eats this bread will live forever." These things He said in the synagogue as He taught in Capernaum. Therefore many of His disciples, when they heard this, said, "This is a hard saying; who can understand it?" When Jesus knew in Himself that His disciples complained about this, He said to them, "Does this offend you? What then if you should see the Son of Man ascend where He was before? It is the Spirit who gives life; the flesh profits nothing. The words that I speak to you are spirit, and they are life. 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 would betray Him. And He said, "Therefore I have said to you that no one can come to Me unless it has been granted to him by My Father." From that time many of His disciples went back and walked with Him no more. Then Jesus said to the twelve, "Do you also want to go away?" But Simon Peter answered Him, "Lord, to whom shall we go? You have the words of eternal life. Also we have come to believe and know that You are the Christ, the Son of the living God."

Fragile

- hears the truth
- this saying is hard — harsh, severe, tough, too much, too extreme
- complainers — grumbling and murmuring about the truth
- offended — *skandalidzo*, scandalous, make you want to turn away?

**For fragile followers of Jesus
challenging truth gets labeled as too harsh and severe,
too tough and extreme, leads to complaining about it, causes offense**

Listen — *it's not just Jesus' words that cause offense, it's what He allows in our lives that can cause offense...*

- **Matthew 11:2-6**
 - And when John had heard in prison about the works of Christ, he sent two of his disciples and said to Him, "Are You the Coming One, or do we look for another?" Jesus answered and said to them, "Go and tell John the things which you hear and see: The blind see and the lame walk; the lepers are cleansed and the deaf hear; the dead are raised up and the poor have the gospel preached to them. And blessed is he who is not offended because of Me."

So very important — ... if you are fragile and offended at the words and ways of God, you must go back to the Word, believe His truth, find strength to obey — Jesus took John back to Isaiah 35, 61.

Encourage you — even great people can be fragile and offended at times, that's ok, you just can't stay there, you must go back to trusting the word and ways of God!

Warn you — today, fragile, offended people are twisting God's truth to affirm and condone their and others' sinful ways — being offended is a sign of the times.

- **Matthew 24:10-13**

- And then many will be offended, will betray one another, and will hate one another. Then many false prophets will rise up and deceive many. And because lawlessness will abound, the love of many will grow cold. But he who endures to the end shall be saved.
- staying offended will cause relational problems with people who aren't offended
- staying offended is a breeding ground for false prophets to deceive you
- staying offended, being deceived causes lawlessness to abound
- staying offended causes love to grow cold — don't be or stay offended!

But — even in this spiritual climate — you can endure to the end to be saved!

Falling

- as in falling away from faith in Jesus...

When a fickle and fragile lifestyle goes unrecognized and un-repented of, it leads to a falling away...

- **John 6:66**

- From that time many of His disciples went back and walked with Him no more.
 - that same falling away is prophesied in last days

- **2 Thessalonians 2:3**

- Let no one deceive you by any means; for that Day will not come unless the falling away comes first, and the man of sin is revealed, the son of perdition...

- **1 Timothy 4:1**

- Now the Spirit expressly says that in latter times some will depart from the faith, giving heed to deceiving spirits and doctrines of demons,

- **2 Timothy 4:3-5**

- For the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine, but according to their own desires, because they have itching ears, they will heap up for themselves teachers; and they will turn their ears away from the truth, and be turned aside to fables. But you be watchful in all things, endure afflictions, do the work of an evangelist, fulfill your ministry.

We are living in the days of an unprecedented falling away, entire denominations are falling away from the truth of the gospel, once respected leaders have heeded seducing spirits and doctrines of devils, and have condoned and affirmed the fickle, fragile, and offended in their unbiblical ways.

Mark my words — there is much more to come, don't be surprised, the falling away must happen before the return of Jesus — don't be numbered among them!

"People are leaving the church" — "Millennials can't relate to close-mindedness" "need to change the message" — tell it to Jesus, he never once changed His message to appeal to the masses — thousands followed him, ended up with 120 — didn't change a thing about His message — God's truth is God's truth and He doesn't need our approval — we need His!

Faithful

- we must be faithful followers while others are falling away...
- **John 6:67-69**
 - Then Jesus said to the twelve, "Do you also want to go away?" But Simon Peter answered Him, "Lord, to whom shall we go? You have the words of eternal life. Also we have come to believe and know that You are the Christ, the Son of the living God."
- there's no one else
 - You have words of eternal life, You are the Christ, the Son of the living God... even when others are fickle, fragile, complaining, offended, and falling away because of the truth — I believe and know Who You are, I'm sticking with You no matter what!

Question — Are you fickle, fragile, falling away — recognize and repent, you're ripe for deception!

- **Hebrews 3:12-14**
 - Beware, brethren, lest there be in any of you an evil heart of unbelief in departing from the living God; but exhort one another daily, while it is called "TODAY," lest any of you be hardened through the deceitfulness of sin. For we have become partakers of Christ if we hold the beginning of our confidence steadfast to the end,

House of Prayer

Click on "House of Prayer" on www.gracechapel.net to fill out a prayer request.

We pray for requests for one month, and at our weekly prayer meetings.

Please come join our House of Prayer,
Tuesday, September 22nd at 6:30 p.m. in the Sanctuary.