

# Sermon on Accept the Word to Gain Life

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**Text:**

**John 6:61-71** <sup>61</sup> Aware that his disciples were grumbling about this, Jesus said to them, "Does this offend you? <sup>62</sup> What if you see the Son of Man ascend to where he was before! <sup>63</sup> The Spirit gives life; the flesh counts for nothing. The words I have spoken to you are spirit and they are life. <sup>64</sup> Yet there are some of you who do not believe." For Jesus had known from the beginning which of them did not believe and who would betray him. <sup>65</sup> He went on to say, "This is why I told you that no one can come to me unless the Father has enabled him." <sup>66</sup> From this time many of his disciples turned back and no longer followed him. <sup>67</sup> "You do not want to leave too, do you?" Jesus asked the Twelve. <sup>68</sup> Simon Peter answered him, "Lord, to whom shall we go? You have the words of eternal life. <sup>69</sup> We believe and know that you are the Holy One of God." <sup>70</sup> Then Jesus replied, "Have I not chosen you, the Twelve? Yet one of you is a devil!" <sup>71</sup> (He meant Judas, the son of Simon Iscariot, who, though one of the Twelve, was later to betray him.)

## 1 Introduction

A music star has a group of people who form his official team, such as the bandmen, sound engineers, and show assistants. Then there is another group of people who have nothing to do with the star but adore the star for one reason or another. They follow him everywhere he goes to try to get into his inner circle to make him favors and get favors from him. They are called groupies. Groupies have varying reasons for following a star. Some follow him so they can say they know the star, some follow him to have a sexual affair, some follow him to partake in his social life, some follow him to get contacts, and in rare twisted cases some follow him to kill him to make him a legend! The only people that stick with the musician when his stardom fails are the official team. The others go to find other stars to follow.

Our passage tells of a star Rabbi, Jesus Christ, who had won the hearts of the people of Israel and created a large star-like following. But when Jesus began to tell them who he really was and what he wants them to become they all left him. Those who remained were the true believers. In this passage we learn the fundamental way to become a true believer. As a true believer you must accept the Word to gain life. You must choose the Word to stay alive forevermore. You must choose the higher life to gain eternal life. When you gain eternal life,

found in the kingdom of God and its righteousness, all other things in the here and now are added unto you. You should avoid being a groupie for that will lead you to eternal damnation. If you know what types of groupies followed Jesus then you will be sure to make the right choices to avoid falling into one of those categories.

*You may ask then what type of groupies followed Jesus Christ.*

## **2 There were four types of Jesus' groupies.**

### **2.1 Groupies who seek for provisions**

The first type of groupies that followed Jesus was there for provision. They were those who became followers because Jesus had fed them miraculously. Jesus said about them in John 6:26, "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." So also in the church we have those who come for provision. Some come so the church can give them gifts when they have a baby dedication or help them financially by loan or gift. I have been told that many Ghanaians are in a certain church in this city only because when they have an event like baby dedication they want more people to attend to give them gifts! If you fall in this group I call upon you to change your attitude and seek to know the Word in order to gain life.

### **2.2 Groupies who seek after miracles**

The second type of groupies that followed Jesus was miracle seekers. They followed Jesus because they were looking for some breakthrough in their lives – healing and deliverance. Remember the ten lepers who came to Jesus for healing. Only one of them returned to join his ministry. Today, we also have such people in the church. They are not in church because of God or the church. They are in the church because of themselves so they might get some healing, deliverance, or breakthrough in their life. As soon as they get their breakthrough they will use some excuse to leave the church. It is painful when people like that snob the church after the leaders have interceded greatly for the person. We prayed earnestly for a brother for his wife to get a visa. When his wife arrived and I told her we thank God for answering our prayers she told me flat out that it wasn't our prayers that brought her here. Shortly after that they left

the church! If you fall in this group I call upon you to change your ways and seek to know the Word in order to gain life.

### **2.3 Groupies who are miracle watchers**

The third type of groupies that followed Jesus was miracle watchers. They were spectators who came to see magic like we used to do when we were kids. They had no interest in Jesus' teaching but to see the miraculous. Jesus' own brothers had a spectator attitude when they said in John 7:3, "You ought to leave here and go to Judea, so that your disciples may see the miracles you do." So also in the church we have spectators who come to enjoy the performance. They come because the preaching is enjoyable or they come because the praise and worship is enjoyable. They have no interest in the purpose of the preaching, praise and worship. If you fall in this group I call upon you to change your motives and seek to know the Word in order to gain life.

### **2.4 Groupies who are demonic agents**

The fourth type of groupies that followed Jesus was demonic agents. Some in this group were sent by the Sanhedrin to trap Jesus. Others were working for Satan directly, such as Judas Iscariot whom Jesus called a devil. As Satan is not omnipresent he uses his fallen angels as evil spirits who enter people to use them. Such was the case of Judas Iscariot, chosen by Jesus himself but commandeered by Satan. The Greek word translated as devil also means, adversary, slanderer, or false accuser. There are people in the church who have been commandeered by Satan. They become the church's adversary and rise up easily against the church – they do things against the church even though they may say they like the church. Some slander the leadership saying malicious things about them in order to assassinate their character to weaken or destroy their preaching and witness. Others are false accusers who accuse the leadership without any basis in fact – they manufacture accusations to cripple their effectiveness. If you find yourself doing these things then pray to rid yourself of the demonic influence in your life. Otherwise you are doomed to destruction.

Remember that all these types of groupies were following Jesus. In our passage we find that these groupies were offended by the true teaching of the Word. It made them grumble and complained about the Word. They believed in themselves, in human effort, even while following Jesus. We have all these behaviors in the church today!

Except for the devil groupies all fell away when Jesus raised his teaching level to the highest degree of spirituality. They lost the Word and thus were destined for eternal damnation. The devils stayed because they had a job to do! A devil in the church will cause confusion but stay in the church unless you deliberately cast him out.

*You may ask then what type of follower should you be in order to accept the Word to gain life.*

### **3 The true believers were not groupies but kingdom people**

For you to gain life you must be a follower who is a true believer. The final group of followers of Jesus was the eleven apostles (excluding Judas Iscariot) who were the true believers. Peter spoke on their behalf to explain their attitude when he said, “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.” In the church, we have such a group also. They come to church because they seek to know the Word and they look at the ultimate gain, eternal life. They study the Word regularly, they pray regularly, they obey the Word, and they promote the interests of the church. They value the Word and know and have experienced its transforming power and its restorative power. They are completely consumed by the Word. They “have been born again, not of perishable seed, but of imperishable, through the living and enduring word of God.” (1 Peter 1:23) They live and move and have their being in the Word.

I commend this group to you. You should be a true believer. You must choose the Word to stay alive forevermore. You must choose the higher life to gain eternal life.

When you are in this group, the Word is a lamp to your feet and a light for your path. (Psalm 119:105)

When you are in this group, the Word is living water that quenches your thirst.

When you are in this group, the Word is the bread of heaven that satiates your hunger.

When you are in this group, “you are strong, and the word of God lives in you, and you have overcome the evil one.” (1 John 2:14)

When you are in this group, the Word is like fire and like a hammer that breaks a rock in pieces. (Jeremiah 23:29)

When you are in this group, the Word is like a double-edged sword for fighting spiritual warfare. (Ephesians 6:17, Hebrews 4:12)

When you are in this group, the Word is a strong tower that gives you impenetrable protection.

When you are in this group, the Word is like a miracle medicine. (Psalm 107:20)

When you are in this group, the Word restores your troubling situations. (Isaiah 34:16)

When you are in this group, the Word transforms your circumstances.

## **4 Conclusion**

Groupies follow a star for a variety of reasons other than the person’s real welfare. There were four types of groupies who followed Jesus. There were groupies who sought provisions. There were groupies who sought miracles. There were groupies who were miracle watchers. There were groupies who were demonic agents sent by the devil to destroy Jesus’ ministry and Jesus himself. These groupies were offended by the true teaching of the Word. Except for the devil groupies all fell away when Jesus raised his teaching level to the highest degree of spirituality.

The nature of Jesus’ congregation is similar to our congregations today. I call upon you to ensure that you are not one of such groupies. Instead you should be a true believer. For true believers accept the Word in order to gain life. You must choose the Word to stay alive forevermore. You must choose the higher life to gain eternal life.