

"Many of his disciples said, "This is very hard to understand. How can anyone accept it?"

Jesus was aware that his disciples were complaining, so he said to them, "Does this offend you? Then what will you think if you see the Son of Man ascend to heaven again? The Spirit alone gives eternal life. Human effort accomplishes nothing. And the very words I have spoken to you are spirit and life. But some of you do not believe me." (For Jesus knew from the beginning which ones didn't believe, and he knew who would betray him.) Then he said, "That is why I said that people can't come to me unless the Father gives them to me."

At this point many of his disciples turned away and deserted him. Then Jesus turned to the Twelve and asked, "Are you also going to leave?"

Simon Peter replied, "Lord, to whom would we go? You have the words that give eternal life. We believe, and we know you are the Holy One of God."

Then Jesus said, "I chose the twelve of you, but one is a devil." He was speaking of Judas, son of Simon Iscariot, one of the Twelve, who would later betray him."

### **Jesus offended**

The gospel is offensive to many and causes scandal. Interestingly scandal is defined as "an action or event regarded as morally or legally wrong and causing general public outrage."

They were scandalised at Jesus? "Paul wrote that the crucified Messiah was a "stumbling block" (*skandalon*) to the Jews" (1 Cor. 1:23) -Edwin A. Blum,

This was the end of the popular movement to see Jesus as a political messiah. Finally people started to realise that to follow the path of Jesus is to point of downward mobility.

"As a Christian I have to say the Kingdom of God which Jesus inaugurated will prioritise care and ministry to those without power, who need to know of their full value and worth as human beings. Christianity centrally works out of a framework of following Jesus as a servant to others. It is subversive of power structures that dehumanise. It ensures the weak are not subjugated. It's central theme is The Church reflects the love of God. The decrees of God are not the first thing about God it is the relational being of God."- Mary Fisher

Jesus offered "Scandalous Blessing" to others, through mutual relationships.



There are many helpful tools in this world to explain some of the concepts which are demonstrated within the bible. The diagram above is one such tool.

In it, 4 quadrants can be found.

One axis, that of invitation, relates to a commitment to a meaningful relationship where the decision to “know and be known” can be tracked. High invitation is the willingness of one part to offer another openness and trust. On its bottom scale, it represents when people are unwilling, for a variety of reasons to get to know one another.

The other axis represents how willing people are to challenge one another in their behaviour. For our purposes this refers to how people reflect the life of Christ to the outer world, and their inward heart.

We therefore can find our relationships with other people falling into one of these 4 quadrants. The ideal is obviously to be in the “discipling quadrant”, the other three miss the mark.

Jesus now finds his words cause many to be offended, and to walk away from him. A helpful translation comes from "The Message" by Eugene Peterson.

"Jesus knew from the start that some weren't going to risk themselves with him. He knew also who would betray him." Eugene H. Peterson, *The Message*:Jn 6:64.

Jesus knows those who are with him, those who are willing to be moved from a point of comfort to a world of challenge.

### **Risk**

"If things seem under control, you are just not going fast enough." --  
*Mario Andretti*

"Pearls don't lie on the seashore. If you want one, you must dive for it." --  
*Chinese proverb*

"Go out on a limb. That's where the fruit is." -- *Jimmy Carter*

Jesus has shown them a better way, to move from religion to relationship. To see the signposts and recognise the destination. To offer life now, not just in the hereafter.

Jesus now turns to the remains and original disciples, the twelve apostles and gives them the chance to make a choice.

He is asking, "When the circumstances change, and the task is placed upon you, will you stay. When I return to heaven, which disciples will be around to act?"

Peter responds, and as often happens, his passion overtakes his wisdom.

Proverbs 19:2 :Enthusiasm without knowledge is no good; haste makes mistakes."- NLT

or translated another way

Proverbs 19:2 "zeal is not good without knowledge, and the one who acts hastily sins" -Holman Christian Standard Bible

Peter's response is accurate yet over stating. His failure is understandable, he assumes all those who have travelled with Jesus, Judas included, are all fully behind Jesus words. He does not have the

wisdom that Christ displays. He cannot comprehend that anyone would betray Jesus. Maybe, in Peter's denials at Jesus crucifixion he learnt more about the depth of the human condition, which, once restored led him into the person he becomes.

Yet in one key aspect Peter is accurate, correctly stating that Jesus has the words of "Eternal Life"

Words of Eternal life, these should be a blessing to those who desire to hear them.

### **The power of words.**

III- Eddison

*T.P's Weekly* that was published on 29 November 1907. This interview is the earliest documented account of the story of his leaving school, and is therefore likely to be the source of the historical fiction regarding his early education:

One day I overheard the teacher tell the inspector that I was "addled" and it would not be worthwhile keeping me in school any longer. I was so hurt by this last straw that I burst out crying and went home and told my mother about it. Then I found out what a good thing a good mother is. She came out as my strong defender. Mother love was aroused, mother pride wounded to the quick. She brought me back to the school and angrily told the teacher that he didn't know what he was talking about, that I had more brains than he himself, and a lot more talk like that. In fact, she was the most enthusiastic champion a boy ever had, and I determined right then that I would be worthy of her and show her that her confidence was not misplaced.

<http://www.snopes.com/thomas-edisons-mom-lied-about-a-letter-expelling-her-son-from-school/>

If we truly have the good news, what is our way of bringing this "blessing" to people.

We need to establish the key relationships to bless others, so the deeper levels can be reached, all the while showing the same accountability in our own lives.

Personal statement- James

Personal statement- Rebecca

### **Challenge**

The question is therefore, "Where are you willing to be in this scale of discipleship, what are you willing to risk, and what do you want to be."

The key issue in all of this is credibility.

Jesus could offer this challenge because he always has demonstrated his perfect relationship to the Father through the Spirit, he therefore is accountable.

If we only offer challenge to others, without being willing to accept it ourselves we lack accountability, if we are unwilling to offer challenge to others, we lack conviction.

Yet if we are unwilling to spend the time to establish the relationships needed to allow this level of challenge to come, we lack humility.

However, if we are willing to move ourselves, and to offer to others this area of discipleship, then we can see believers who have a demonstrated message which will bring eternal life to others.

We have to receive this blessing from others

We need to offer this blessing to others.

We need to move to a point of high invitation and be willing to accept high challenge, this is accountability in action.

We need to be able to offer this same invitation to others and be willing to give this challenge this too is accountability in action.

Let us, like Jesus be people of "Scandalous blessing"