

The HARD WORDS of JESUS

"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'..." John 6:60-64

Offended

Many took offence at Jesus' teaching. They refused to listen to His explanations and were unwilling to accept His teachings. The Lord challenged them that if they were grumbling at His hard teaching, what would their response be to the scandal of the crucifixion and the offence of the Ascension?

"Then Jesus said to His disciples, 'If anyone desires to come after Me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow Me.'" Matthew 16:24

Questions

Are the Words of Christ too hard for you? *"...he who does not believe the Son shall not see life, but the wrath of God abides on him."* John 3:36

Are you offended? *"I know your works, that you are neither cold nor hot... because you are lukewarm, and neither cold nor hot, I will vomit you out of My mouth."* Revelation 3:15-17

Is His Word too sharp for your sensibilities? *"And whoever does not bear his cross and come after Me cannot be My disciple."* Luke 14:27

Do you feel insulted? *"Not everyone who says to Me, 'Lord, Lord,' shall enter the Kingdom of Heaven, but he who does the will of My Father in Heaven."* Matthew 7:21

Are His Commands too burdensome? *"He who is not with Me is against Me, and he who does not gather with Me scatters abroad."* Matthew 12:30

Is Christ first in your life? *"Then He said to them all, 'If anyone desires to come after Me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross daily, and follow Me.'"* Luke 9:23

Or are you conflicted? *"For whoever desires to save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for My sake will save it."* Luke 9:24

Will you also turn away? *"For what profit is it to a man if he gains the whole world, and is himself destroyed or lost?"* Luke 9:25

Will you also fall away? *"For whoever is ashamed of Me and My Words, of him the Son of Man will be ashamed when He comes in His own glory, and in His Father's, and of the holy angels."* Luke 9:26

Preferences

Would you prefer light teachings?

Do you prefer non-threatening and non-confrontational, comforting and comfortable words?

Do you prefer the sinner-friendly, Willow Creek, Saddleback, Joel Osteen, Rick Warren, Bill Hybels, *Prayer of Jabez*, *Emerging church*, compromising, cowardly, cheap grace and easy believism?

"It is impossible that no offenses should come, but woe to him through whom they do come! It would be better for him if a millstone were hung around his neck, and he were thrown into the sea, than that he should offend one of these little ones. Take heed to yourselves. If your brother sins against you, rebuke him..." Luke 17:1-3

Choices

Do you prefer to be entertained, rather than **educated**?

Would you rather be comforted than **confronted**?

Would you rather be encouraged than **edified**?

Would you prefer to be flattered, rather than **rebuked** by God's Word?

We have a choice between the easy words of the world, or the hard Words of Christ.

Contrasts

There are many who offer you easy-believism, but Jesus Christ demands **sacrificial discipleship**.

Many pastors offer a cheap grace, but Jesus Christ demands **full surrender to God**.

You have to take up your cross, deny yourself, **forsake the world and follow Christ**.

Do You Fear God?

But would you prefer to be with the crowd?

*"And I say to you, My friends, **do not be afraid of those who kill the body, and after that have no more that they can do. But I will show you whom you should fear: Fear Him who, after He has killed, has power to cast into hell; yes, I say to you, fear Him!**"* Luke 12:4-5

The Herd Mentality

Would you rather follow the herd?

Do you want to go with the majority?

Even a dead fish can float downstream.

Who Are You Seeking to Please?

We can be man-pleasers, or God-pleasers. But we cannot be both.

Comfort Zone

We live in comfortable homes, travel in comfortable cars to air conditioned shopping malls, and to comfortable churches, to hear comfortable messages.

The World or the Word

We have a choice: be popular with the world, or be faithful to God's Word.

You can seek the approval of man, or the approval of God.

The Best Teacher

Who is the best teacher? When I was first asked, my mind was racing and then the person added, if you have been in the army, then you will probably say that your best teacher was your sergeant major. Immediately I recognised the truth of that. Yes! That is true! Because your best teacher is not the one who just praises you and is satisfied with your first attempt. The best teacher, or coach, is the one who pushes and stretches you to do better, not accepting your second best. The best teacher is the one who demands more and enables you to achieve above and beyond anything you ever thought possible.

Cleansing the Temple

Our Lord Jesus Christ rebuked the religious hypocrites and drove the corrupt Jewish money changers out of the Temple with the whip. Jesus declared *"**I tell you, no!; but unless you repent you will all likewise perish!**"* Luke 13:3

What is Your Direction?

We are commanded to seek first the Kingdom of God and his Righteousness and all these things will be added unto us (Matthew 6:33).

You are faced with a clear choice between the broad way the leads to destruction and the narrow way which leads to life (Matthew 7:13-14).

Foundations

We are either building on the sand of humanism, or building on the rock of God's Word (Matthew 7:24-27).

We are either foolish or wise.

The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom (Psalm 110:10).

Indulgence

Would you rather be amused than challenged to think critically?

Would you rather have your ears tickled with what you are itching to hear, or hear the hard and sharp words of our Lord Jesus Christ?

Weak Preaching Produces False Converts

People pleasers make traitors. The *"just believe, just raise your hand"*, *"it is easy to be a Christian"*, cheap grace and easy believism is producing shallow, superficial, self-centred, weak, wet, wimps and weeds, false converts who are easily offended at the hard words of Jesus.

Do You Obey God?

"But why do you call Me 'Lord!, Lord!,' and not do the things which I say?" Luke 6:46

You Will Give an Account

"But I say to you that for every idle word men may speak, they will give account of it in the Day of Judgment." Matthew 12:36

"For we must all appear before the Judgment seat of Christ, that each one may receive the things done in the body, according to what he has done, whether good or bad." 2 Cor. 5:10

The Battle for our Souls

The world is constantly bullying us to conform. (*"Everybody is doing it!"*)

God's Word commands us to **be transformed** by the renewing of our minds.

The world tells us to be greedy. God commands us to **be grateful**.

The world wants us to be selfish. We are commanded to **be generous**.

The world tells us to take and hoard. God tells us to **give and share**.

The world encourages indulgence (*"If it feels good, do it!"*). God commands us to **sacrifice**.

The world tells us to be self-centred (*"Me, myself and I"*). We are to **be Christ-centered**.

The spirit of this age is materialism (*"Give me! Give me!"*).

We are to be spiritually minded, **living in the light of eternity**.

The world tells us to love things and use people.

The Lord commands us to **love God's Creatures** and use things.

We can bow before the idols of fame and fortune, or we can **refuse to bow to any idols**.

We can revere political and sports idols, or we can **fear God alone**.

We can choose to justify ourselves (*"I am a good person!" "It is not my fault!"*),
or we can **confess and forsake our sins**.

The world tells us to take revenge. God tells us to **do restitution**.

The world encourages boasting. The Bible teaches us to **humble ourselves before God**.

God resists the proud, but He gives grace to the humble.

You can seek approval from the world, or approval from God alone.

You can do what is popular, or you can **do what is right**.

You can accept the majority opinion, or agree with God's Word.

You can take the easy way, or take the right way.

Every decision you make makes you more a creature of Heaven, or hell.

"...Choose for yourselves this day whom you will serve, whether the gods which your fathers served that were on the other side of the river, or the gods of the Amorites, in whose land you dwell. But as for me and my house, we will serve the Lord!" Joshua 24:15

"Now to Him who is able to do exceedingly abundantly above all that we ask or think, according to the power that works in us, to Him be glory in the Church by Christ Jesus to all generations, forever and ever. Amen." Ephesians 3:20-21

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