

# Hard Sayings Of Jesus

**Introduction.** In John 6 Jesus called Himself “the bread of life,” and He said, “He who comes to Me shall never hunger, and he who believes in Me shall never thirst” (v. 35). The Jews began to complain because of this (v. 41), and Jesus went on to say, “Most assuredly, I say to you, unless you eat the flesh of the Son of Man and drink His blood, you have no life in you” (v. 53). “Therefore many of His disciples, when they heard this, said, ‘This is a hard saying; who can understand it?’” (v. 60). In what sense was the Lord’s word “hard?” The original word translated “hard” means difficult or uncompromising (cp. Matthew 25:24; James 3:4; Jude 15).

Jesus had a lot of teachings that were unpleasant or hard to take, so we’re going to examine some of them and look at why they were unpleasant.

## ***I. Luke 14:26***

- A. These were the words of Jesus to the crowds that accompanied Him. The Greek word translated “hate” means, in this context, “to disregard, to refuse preferential treatment, to love less” (cp. Matthew 10:37). Jesus’ followers must have single-minded loyalty for the Master, and nothing is to be allowed to get in the way of faithful discipleship (Matthew 4:21-22).
- B. Why is this a “hard” saying? Because it involves one of the strongest obstacles in the path of truth: human emotions. Most people will not place Jesus before their own parents, siblings, spouse, and their own selves. And they think of the command to do so as repulsive. If a person desires to be the Lord’s disciple, they must be prepared to reject anyone and anything that stands between them and following the Lord (Acts 20:22-24).

## ***II. John 14:6***

- A. Contextually, Jesus had told the apostles that He was going to prepare a place for them. He told them they know the way where He is going. Verse 5 reads, “Thomas said to Him, ‘Lord, we do not know where You are going, and how can we know the way?’” It was then that Jesus said, “I am the way, the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through Me.”
- B. Why is this a “hard” saying? Because of the exclusivity of the Lord’s words. Jesus is the only person through whom people can gain access to the Father (Acts 4:8-12). We cannot come to the Father through Mary, the mother of Jesus, or through the Pope of Rome, or through the apostle Peter. It furthermore means that you won’t find Christ in Islam, Hinduism, or Buddhism. In today’s religious circles people do not like to think in terms of exclusion. It doesn’t fit with the ecumenical and politically correct thinking of the majority. Most people consider phrases like “no one comes except through me” to be bigoted and arrogant. It is neither; it is a true statement because Jesus said it.

## ***III. Matthew 7:21***

- A. Those words are among the concluding part of Jesus’ famous teaching on the mountain. Why is this a “hard” saying? Contrary to popular opinion, Jesus

teaches that mere lip service, or making a “profession” of religion is not good enough to gain entrance into the kingdom of heaven. A person has to do the Father’s will. If one must do the Father’s will, then works of obedience are essential, and since works of obedience are essential, a person is not saved by faith alone, grace alone, love alone, or anything else alone. Jesus never shied away from uncompromising truths of salvation (Matthew 5:20; 10:32-33).

- B. Most of the religious world will never accept this saying because it is difficult. It is difficult because it contradicts what they have always been taught, and human tradition, even when wrong, is like the talons of an eagle in a fish. It is hard to break the grip of human tradition. It is also difficult to accept because in their mind, it indicts some within their family and the so-called good people of the world. Their “gut” reaction is often outrage. Even though Jesus said what He said, their human emotions refuse to let them yield to the Lord. The Lord’s unpleasant words make them react as Pharaoh did when God sent Moses to him: he hardened his heart (Exodus 4:21; 8:15). If you want to be a part of the family of Christ, you have to do His will (Matthew 12:50).

#### **IV. Matthew 19:9**

- A. In this context, the Lord is responding to the question posed by the Pharisees: “Is it lawful for a man to divorce his wife for just any reason?” (Matthew 19:3). The Lord essentially answered, “No.” Why is this a “hard” saying? Because it goes against the popular tide of moral looseness regarding marriage and divorce. The Lord implies there is one basis for divorcing a spouse and marrying another, and that is on the ground of sexual immorality committed by the person who will be divorced. Divorces for another reason have their own set of instructions (1 Corinthians 7:10-11).
- B. I don’t bring this up because I worry about the members here committing adultery, but because we all have to constantly deal with it. About one half of all marriages end in divorce. When Hollywood celebrities, sports figures, politicians, legal authorities, and the rich and famous marry and divorce on a whim, they are only hurting themselves, for they cannot mock God (Galatians 6:7). Human emotions weigh heavily on issues like this. People would rather stay with someone they “love,” even though they have no right to them, than to “love” God and abandon unlawful relationships. You keep standing for the truth in an uncompromising way (Ephesians 5:11).

#### **V. Matthew 6:25**

- A. The phrase “do not worry” is an imperative. Jesus’ disciples are told to stop worrying. This is another difficult saying of Jesus. Why? Because nearly every person I have ever known (including myself) worried about life, health, clothing, or something they considered a necessity but were lacking. A person has no more right to worry about these than they do to commit adultery, lie, steal, murder, or blaspheme.
- B. Why do most people worry? Because they doubt God’s ability to deliver them out of life’s dungeon, or they have convinced themselves that worry helps the situation. I’ve heard it said that stress comes from trying to do it all on our own,

whereas peace comes from putting it all in God's hands. Noah didn't worry about the flood. Abraham didn't worry about whether God would provide the sacrifice. David didn't worry about Goliath. Paul didn't worry about his incarceration and impending death. Each of them trusted God (Psalm 4:5; 5:11; Hebrews 13:5-6).

**Conclusion.** These statements from the Lord are difficult and uncompromising. Can we live by them? Being a Christian is a whole lot more than putting on a tie or a dress and showing up three times a week. It is a deep, devoted decision to be one with Christ and take up your cross and follow Him.