

Hard Sayings Of Jesus

Lesson 1

I. What constitutes a hard saying?

- a. Hard sayings come in **two** types:
 1. Those that are easy to understand but run counter to the **instincts** of the natural man.
Matt 5:44 But I say unto you, Love your enemies, bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you, and pray for them which despitefully use you, and persecute you;
KJV
 2. Those that are difficult to understand, and if you do understand it, you will find it **unacceptable** to the natural man.
John 6:53 Then Jesus said unto them, Verily, verily, I say unto you, Except ye eat the flesh of the Son of man, and drink his blood, ye have no life in you. KJV

II. Why Jesus' statements are considered hard

- a. People come to an understanding of their religious dogma and doctrine with **preconceived** notions.
- b. The fewer preconceptions **we bring** from outside the more clearly we see Jesus as He really was.
- c. It is all too easy to believe in a Jesus who is largely a construction of our own **imagination**.
- d. But the Jesus we meet in the Gospels gave offense right and left and was even perplexing to his own **disciples**, who knew him best and heard Him most clearly. John 6:53 Then Jesus said unto them, Verily, verily, I say unto you, Except ye eat the flesh of the Son of man, and drink his blood, ye have no life in you. KJV
- e. Jesus upset all notions of religious **propriety**. Matt 9:11 And when the Pharisees saw it, they said unto his disciples, Why eateth your Master with publicans and sinners? KJV
- f. He spoke of God in terms of **intimacy** which sounded like blasphemy. John 8:58-59 Jesus said unto them, Verily, verily, I say unto you, Before Abraham was, I am. 59 Then took they up stones to cast at him: but Jesus hid himself, and went out of the temple, going through the midst of them, and so passed by. KJV
- g. Jesus made His hearers think. Things He said involved them in a critical reappraisal of strongly held beliefs, prejudices, and He challenged the prevailing consensus of **opinion**. John 3:10 Jesus answered and said unto him, Art thou a master of Israel, and knowest not these things? KJV
- h. Therefore, any utterance which caused His hearers to engage in this type of thinking is considered a **hard saying**.

III. This Week's Hard Saying

John 6:53 Then Jesus said unto them, Verily, verily, I say unto you, Except ye eat the flesh of the Son of man, and drink his blood, ye have no life in you. KJV

IV. Why it is considered hard

- a. Many of his hearers reacted to this statement incredulously and rejected it as the statement of a **madman**. John 6:61; 66
- b. It was not understood by anyone who took it **literally** or who took His statement out of its context. It was hard both because it ran counter to the instincts of, and was unacceptable to the natural man.

V. The Context

- a. Chapter 6 of John relates a series of exchanges between Jesus and His hearers around the topic of eating and being fed which was intended to reveal a deeper **spiritual truth** of the person and work of Jesus.
 1. He feeds the 5000 which was essentially for the sake of His **Disciples**. 1-14
 2. He is followed by those whom He had **fed** the day before 22-27
 3. Christ reproves them for seeking **carnal food**. 26-28
 4. Jesus redirects their Jewish thinking of having to perform a multitude of works to **one singular** task...that of belief in Him. This is the key to understanding the passage 29
 5. He explains in detail how their belief in Him is the effect of having been **drawn** by the Father which qualified them for eternal life. 30-59
- b. Jesus clearly means His words to be taken spiritually and **not literally**. John 6:63
- c. To His Jewish hearers the words were not only obscure but also would have been **offensive** in the extreme since Jews were not even to eat meat with blood still in it, but drinking it was over the top.

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d. Therefore, the physical or literal understanding of His statement would have to be ruled out completely.

e. The question remains: How do we then understand the words of Jesus in a spiritual sense?

VI. The Historical View

a. Augustine in the 4th century:

1. "it is therefore a figure, bidding us communicate in the sufferings of our Lord, and secretly and profitably treasure in our hearts the fact that His flesh was crucified and pierced for us".

2. "Believe, and thou hast eaten."

b. Bernard of Clairvaux in the 12th century expounded the words "He who eats my flesh..."

1. "He who reflects upon my death, and after my example mortifies his members which are on earth, has eternal life."

c. Therefore, the idea of eating and drinking figuratively suggests that one is participating in some fashion with the thing eaten or drunk. Job 15:16 how much less man, who is vile and corrupt, who drinks up evil like water! NIV Job 34:7 7 What man is like Job, who drinks scorn like water? NIV John 4:34 Jesus saith unto them, My meat is to do the will of him that sent me, and to finish his work. KJV

d. To eat Christ's flesh is to partake in or to participate in what is represented by His flesh. IE: performing the will of the Father and thereby participating in the righteousness of Christ. Rom 3:22 This righteousness from God comes through faith in Jesus Christ to all who believe. NIV

e. It is a spiritual imputation; through faith in Christ. 1 Cor 10:3-4 3 And did all eat the same spiritual meat; 4 And did all drink the same spiritual drink: for they drank of that spiritual Rock that followed them: and that Rock was Christ. KJV Rom 4:9-12 Does this blessedness then come upon the circumcised only, or upon the uncircumcised also? For we say that faith was accounted to Abraham for righteousness. 10 How then was it accounted? While he was circumcised, or uncircumcised? Not while circumcised, but while uncircumcised. 11 And he received the sign of circumcision, a seal of the righteousness of the faith which he had while still uncircumcised, that he might be the father of all those who believe, though they are uncircumcised, that righteousness might be imputed to them also, NKJV

f. To drink His blood is similarly, to participate directly (in a spiritual sense) in the atoning sacrifice of His blood. Rom 3:25 God presented him as a sacrifice of atonement, through faith in his blood. NIV Rom 5:9 Since we have now been justified by his blood, NIV Eph 1:7 In whom we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of his grace; KJV

g. Therefore: This statement can only be understood in the spiritual sense.

1. It is by faith, an active identification with Christ, a faith that really unites believers with Him in all that He represents.

2. It is a faith that is produced by the new birth and a faith that changes the believer and imputes to him the righteousness of Christ that believers eat the body and drink the blood of Christ

h. In this passage, Jesus is not making a direct reference to communion, but this discourse has been used within Roman Catholicism as a biblical basis for the doctrine of "Transubstantiation".

i. This doctrine states that the elements of the Eucharist (bread & wine) literally and really become the substance of Christ's body when consecrated by the priest.

j. This doctrine emerged in 1215, and was later reaffirmed at the Council of Constance (1415) and again by the Council of Trent in 1551.

VII. Application

a. In what ways do you personally participate in the eating of Jesus' flesh and the drinking of His blood?

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I. What Constitutes a Hard Saying?

- a. Hard sayings come in _____ types:
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II. Why Jesus' Statements Are Considered Hard

- a. People come to an understanding of their religious dogma and doctrine with _____ notions.
- b. The fewer preconceptions _____ from outside the more clearly we see Jesus as He really was.
- c. It is all too easy to believe in a Jesus who is largely a construction of our own _____
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- e. Jesus upset all notions of religious _____. Matt 9:11
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- b. Jesus clearly means His words to be taken spiritually and _____. John 6:63
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- d. Therefore, the physical or literal understanding of His statement would have to be _____ completely.
- e. The question remains: How do we then _____ the words of Jesus in a spiritual sense?

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2. "Believe, and thou hast _____."
- b. _____ of Clairvaux in the 12th century expounded the words "He who eats my flesh...
 1. "He who reflects upon my death, and after my example _____ his members which are on earth, has eternal life."
- c. Therefore, the idea of eating and drinking figuratively suggests that one is _____ in some fashion with the thing eaten or drunk. Job 15:16; Job 34:7 7; John 4:34
- d. To eat Christ's flesh is to partake in or to participate in what is _____ by His flesh. IE: performing the will of the Father and thereby participating in the righteousness of Christ. Rom 3:22
- e. It is a spiritual _____; through faith in Christ. 1 Cor 10:3-4 3; Rom 4:9-12
- f. To drink His blood is similarly, to participate _____ (in a spiritual sense) in the atoning sacrifice of His blood. Rom 3:25; Rom 5:9; Eph 1:7
- g. Therefore: This statement can only be _____ in the spiritual sense.
 - a. It is by faith, an _____ identification with Christ, a faith that really unites believers with Him in all that He represents.
 - b. It is a faith that is _____ by the new birth and a faith that changes the believer and imputes to him the righteousness of Christ that believers eat the body and drink the blood of Christ
- h. In this passage, Jesus is not making a direct reference to communion, but this discourse has been used within Roman Catholicism as a biblical basis for the doctrine of "_____".
- i. This doctrine states that the elements of the Eucharist (bread & wine) literally and _____ become the substance of Christ's body when consecrated by the priest.
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