

- **\*Read II Peter 3:14-18\*** In a text concerning the coming day of Judgement, the Apostle Peter encourages the reader to be sure of their salvation by being found in Jesus in peace, spotless, and blameless. This was to be their ultimate goal as that day approaches. Also from the text, it seems as if these brethren also received some writings from the Apostle Paul. Not surpassingly, Peter notices that there are some things contained within Paul's writings that are difficult to understand. He recognizes that there are some who would distort or twist these writings and understand and apply them in such a way that would lead only to their own destruction. "Do not be carried away by these people!" is the admonition of Peter. "Don't be carried away, but instead grow in grace and the knowledge of the truth" are the final words from Peter to the recipients of this letter.
- These admonitions were for the recipients of these letters, but they are also our admonitions because we hold within our hands the inspired writings of both Peter and Paul. Let's be honest for just a second...there are some things within the writing of Paul that are difficult to wrap ur minds around and figure out. Have you read the book of Romans?? However, The Apostle Paul isn't the only person who spoke some difficult things that are recorded for us in Scripture.
- If you will, please turn with me and consider what is recorded for us in **John 6:59,60**. Just previous to this, Jesus teaches the multitudes in the synagogue in Capernaum concerning their need to drink of His blood and eat of His flesh. Many of His disciples respond in a way that isn't surprising. "This is a difficult statement; who can listen to it?" Truly this was a difficult statement from Jesus and it made a lot of people scratch there head, and this certainly wasn't the only time that Jesus made some statements that were difficult for those who heard it and for us today.
- Tonight, I would like for us to consider the subject of difficult statements of Jesus. Over the next few months, I would like for us to consider some of the more difficult sayings of Jesus. Our studies will challenge us to really consider and ponder the teachings of our Lord. Some people are resigned to just not give much effort to understand the difficult teachings of Jesus or other parts of Scripture, but we want to be better than that. We want to roll up our sleeves and consider some of these difficult teachings of Jesus. This lesson will serve as a spring board for our considerations of some of Jesus's difficult sayings.

### **I. Some of Jesus's teachings are difficult to understand and/or apply to our lives.**

- A. The difficult sayings and teachings of Jesus are made so for a few different reasons. One of the reasons we see here in this text of **John 6**. Jesus tells these people that it is necessary for them to eat of His flesh and drink of His blood....say what?? Is Jesus really saying that people must commit cannibalism? How could there even be enough of Jesus flesh for everyone? Obviously, Jesus isn't advocating for cannibalism...but this isn't exactly easy for anyone to understand.
- B. It could also be that we clearly understand the teaching of Jesus, it isn't very confusing...but it just might be difficult for us to apply to our lives. Consider the teaching of Jesus concerning loving our enemies. (**Matt. 5:38-42**) This isn't something that comes naturally to most people, and that makes it a difficult teaching of Jesus.
- C. It might also be that some of Jesus's sayings are more difficult for us to understand because of the differences between life in the first century and our lives, today. Often Jesus in His parables used examples of things that were common in that day. Fishing, farming, and other things were used to help the people understand what He wanted to get across to them. For those people, those things made complete sense for them. But for us...well they are a little more difficult to understand because our lives are different.
- D. These and other reasons might make some sayings of Jesus difficult to understand and or apply. This can't be argued, and it gives us good reason to consider some of those things over the next few months.

### **II. Coming to a proper understand of the difficult sayings of Jesus is important.**

- A. Again, there are some things that Jesus say that are difficult and some would rather just ignore them and say that we don't need to waste our time trying to figure out what Jesus meant.
- B. I just can't disagree with that statement anymore! We certainly need to give effort to be able to understand the teachings of our Lord while He walked on this earth.

- C. **II Timothy 3:16,17** comes to my mind when something like this is said. The Apostle Paul is clear that the inspired Scriptures of God are very much profitable for many things, and included within the inspired Scriptures of God are the teachings of Jesus. His teachings, even the difficult ones will teach us what is right, how to get right, and how to stay right.
- D. We must definitely need to give the effort to come to understand the teachings of Jesus...even the difficult teachings that He gave to the people.

### **III. There might be disagreements on some of Jesus's difficult sayings.**

- A. Some of these things we will study are controversial in their nature and not all people agree on what exactly is meant by the teaching or saying. So why is it that we might not all totally agree on these sayings of Jesus.
- A. We might not agree because we honestly see the teaching or saying different ways and we understand the details in different ways.
- B. It could be the case that we disagree because one side or all sides haven't considered a specific aspect of a particular teaching or saying of Jesus.
- C. It might also be that we are coming from different perspectives or preconceived biases. In this case, it might be that we are trying to come to a specific understanding because it fits our own understandings and desires.
- B. Some of these things can be resolved by diligent study and an open heart to new ideas that we might not have considered before, but if we go into one of these studying desiring a particular result then it will be hard for us to have anything but disagreements.
- C. We must give every effort to be patient in these studies and consider the things that are said, and I truly hope that when something is said that might be different than what is currently believed that we all will follow the wise words of James and be "quick to hear, slow to speak, and slow to anger." (**James 1:19**)

### **IV. Our approach to Jesus's difficult saying is important.**

- A. The way we approach these studies will greatly determine how profitable they will be. Our attitudes towards these issues will go a long way in us either learning and growing...or us shutting out the things that are said and having no chance of expanding our knowledge of God's Word. We know that there is the possibility of disagreements on some of these difficult issues, so therefore our approach must be honest and pure if we want to achieve a proper understanding of Jesus's teachings.
- B. If we have a poor approach...if we automatically dismiss others who don't see things the way we do...if we dismiss the intelligence of others because they see things differently than we do...if we never consider the possibility that we could be wrong...then these studies will not be profitable, at all. We won't grow. We won't expand our knowledge and understanding of Jesus's teachings, and that will just be really sad. It will be sad for us to take our time to consider some of Jesus's difficult teachings, and never even really have a shot of growing from it.
- C. Instead, my hope is that we will approach these studies with an open and humble heart and spirit. As I study and put together these studies, I will seek to start from an open slate. I will study and read as much as I can on these subjects and then I will do my best impression of the Bereans by searching to see what is most compatible with the truth of Scripture. (**Acts 17:11**) I really hope you will do the same. I hope you'll open up your Bible and simply consider the lessons we can learn from these difficult sayings and teachings for Jesus.
- D. If our approach is good then our studies will be beneficial to us all. If not...well then we won't profit as we should. Just as with all things, I hope we will be more concerned with what is true... not what is profitable...not what is comfortable...but what is true. Our desire must be for truth no matter the consequences. It might be that I find out that what I used to think just isn't the best option in regards to truth. If I find that to be the case then I must put my pride aside and seek the truth of God's word above all other things.

I'm pretty excited about these upcoming studies. I know that considering some of these difficult sayings of Jesus will take a lot of effort to try and understand what Jesus meant by these things and how and why they matter to us, but with God's help and an open Bible, great things can be accomplished. May God help us all in these studies and in all studies to seek His truth so that we can grow in Him in all things.