

EXCEPT

JOHN 19:10-11 • TV-012A

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John 19:10-11

“Then saith Pilate unto him, Speakest thou not unto me? knowest thou not that I have power to crucify thee, and have power to release thee? Jesus answered, Thou couldest have no power at all against me, except it were given thee from above: therefore he that delivered me unto thee hath the greater sin.”

I know that there are many things in the Word of God that are difficult to understand. In the book of **Romans 11:33** Paul said; *“O the depths of the riches both of the wisdom and the knowledge of God. How unsearchable, how unsearchable, are His judgments and His ways past finding out.”*

In **Deuteronomy 29:29** Moses wrote; *“The secret things belong to the Lord our God. But those things which are revealed, which are revealed, belong unto us and to our children, that we may do the words of His law.”*

In **1 Corinthians 13:12** in that very precious chapter on love; Paul says; *“Now we see through a glass dimly but then, (that is in glory) we shall see face to face. Now I know in part, but then shall I know even, as also, I’m known.”*

The very fact that it is the Word of God limits my ability to understand and to comprehend it all. *“We walk by faith and not by sight.”*

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So, you know and I know that there are many things in the Word of God that are difficult to understand and difficult for us with our natural minds, with our finite understanding, for us to grasp and to comprehend.

But, man's difficulty; (now I want you to listen carefully) man's difficulty is not with the secret passages of Scripture which he does not understand; man's difficulty is not with those Scriptures that are difficult to understand and to grasp but man's difficulty is with the Word of God which he does understand and does not like. Now that's where the problem is. That's where your difficulty is.

It's not with that Scripture that is hard to understand, secret, and beyond your comprehension; the part of God's Word that gives you trouble is that part of God's Word which you understand perfectly, and which is clear and plain, for which you don't like, that part of God's Word against which your nature and your will and your heart rebels.

Now, for example: The rich young ruler understood exactly what Christ was saying when He told him to sell his possessions; He said, "You're greedy, you're covetous, you love your possessions and you love your riches. Now you sell these things and share them with people about you."

He didn't like that because he was a greedy man. He was a covetous man. He was a proud man, he was an outwardly moral man, but he had a greedy heart. And he understood exactly what Christ was saying and he turned around and walked off.

And then the religious leaders knew what Christ was saying when He declared, "*I and my Father are one.*" They knew exactly what He was saying. They knew He was declaring unto them that He was God, that "*I and my Father are one.*"

They didn't like that. They rejected His deity. He said to them; "*He that hath seen me hath seen the Father.*" And they rejected His deity and "*They took up stones to stone Him.*" They understood exactly what He was saying.

And then that religious gathering in Nazareth where He was brought up understood exactly what Christ was saying to them when He declared there was a widow who was a Canaanite, who was a Gentile and the Lord fed her and her family and yet He didn't feed some of these Jewish widows.

And there was a Gentile who had leprosy and God healed him but He didn't heal some of the Jewish lepers. And Christ was saying to them that God was not obligated to them because they were Jews or because they were Abraham's children.

God was not obligated to them because they were the children of Abraham. God was not obligated to any man to show mercy to them. They understood that. They knew exactly what He was saying. "*And they took Him out on the brow of the hill upon which their city was built and would have cast Him down headlong.*"

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There are Scriptures which are difficult, *“His ways past finding out. How unsearchable are His judgments. Now we see through a glass dimly. We know in part, we prophesy in part.”*

But there are Scriptures which we do understand; we do understand them. And if we would walk in the light God has given us He'd give us more light.

Now my friends; I want to read this morning four statements made by the Lord Jesus Christ, four statements; I call them “clear-cut ultimatums.” These statements are plain, plain language; they are easy to understand and all concern you personally. They all have to do with your relationship with the Lord Jesus Christ.

And I say that our problem; we're always bringing up things that are difficult to understand like; where Cain got his wife and how could the world have four corners, the four corners of the earth?

And one man asked on a radio talk show the other day, “When Christ comes again, the Scripture says, every eye shall see Him.” He said, “How can that be possible when the world is round, how can everybody all over the world see Him at the same time?”

Well, there are some secret things that belong to the Lord. There are some things difficult to understand but that's not your problem. Your problem is with that Scripture you do understand. But you don't like it because it doesn't fit in with your tradition, custom, will, thoughts, or your own mind regarding the matter.

Now I'm going to give you four passages of Scripture and all of them contain one word, *“Except.”* Now you listen to them:

John 19:10-11; listen carefully; “Pilate said unto Jesus; (this was when our Lord was on trial before Pilate) speakest thou not unto me? Don't you know that I have the power to crucify you and I have the power to release you? Don't you know that?”

Jesus answered: *“Thou couldst have no power at all against me except it were given you from above.”* Is that hard to understand? It is clear isn't it?

Here Pilate was boasting about his power over Christ, his power to do what he would with Christ. He said, “I can crucify you or let you go. I can get on your side or I can get against you, either way.”

And our Lord set the record straight, He said; *“Pilate; you couldn't have any power over me at all except it were given you from above.”*

And I say when natural, sinful, men, begin to boast of their power and boast of their ability and boast of their own freedom of will, when men begin to talk of what God can't do and what they can do and what they have the power to do; I think it's time to set the record straight.

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I think it's time to say what Christ said, *"You could have no power at all except it were given you from above."*

My friend; your birth is according to God's decree. What did God say to Jeremiah in **Jeremiah 1:5**, what did He say? He said, *"Jeremiah; before I formed thee in the belly, (who formed him); I formed you? I knew you. Before you came out of your mother's womb I set you apart."*

Your birth is according to the decree of God. You were born to whom? You were born to where you were born, as you were born, when you were born, by God Almighty's will, not by your own will.

And then, my friend; your material advantage is according to God's decree. **1 Samuel 2:7**: *"The Lord maketh poor and the Lord maketh rich. The Lord bringeth low and the Lord lifted up."* That's what the Word says.

And your talents and your knowledge and your ability; if you have ability to paint or to draw or play an instrument, if you have an ability as an electrician or as a mechanic or as a preacher or as a musician; God gave it to you.

Listen to the Word in **1 Corinthians 4:7**; *"Who maketh thee to differ from another? What has thou that thou didst not received? Now, if thou didst receive it; why dost thou boast as if you did not receive it?"*

Did you know that your health is in God's hands? Job said, *"The Lord gave; (when Job lost everything he had, even his health, he said), "The Lord gave and the Lord hath taken away."*

Do you know what Paul said about God? He said, *"Lest I be exalted above measure; there was given to me a thorn in the flesh, (a physical infirmity)."* God gave it to him.

And then, did you know your spiritual knowledge is by God's grace. In the book of **Matthew 11:25** Christ said, *"I thank thee Father, Lord of heaven and earth, because thou hast hid these things."*

What things is He talking about, the things of the kingdom, the things of the cross and the things of redemption? *"Thou hast hid these mysteries of the Gospel, thou hast hid them from the wise and the prudent and thou hast revealed them unto babes."* Who revealed them? The Father did; to whom, to babes?

Spiritual knowledge is of the Lord. Your life and death is in the hands of the Lord. Listen to **Job 14**; *"Man's days are determined, (by whom), by God."* Listen, *"The number of man's months are with the Lord. God has appointed his bounds, he cannot pass."* You say, "Where's that preacher?" It's **Job 14:5**.

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The Scripture says, *“I am God. I kill, I make alive. I wound and I heal. Neither is there any that can deliver out of my hand.”*

You see, my friend; it’s not the secret passages you’re having a problem with; it’s those passages that are clear, just like that one right there, that these natural minds and these proud hearts are not willing to bow.

We’re not willing to fall into the dust and say, “Lord, do what you will. Blessed be the name of the Lord. I’m in your hands; do with me what you will. I’m just a child; teach me. I don’t know anything.”

My life and my death are in the hands of the Lord. David wrote in **Psalms**; *“The instrument of death is already prepared.”* What will take me out of this world? I don’t know, maybe a heart attack. The problem may be already there.

Perhaps Leukemia; it may be already in my bloodstream. Maybe they’re making the car in Detroit tonight that will run into me down on the highway two years from now and destroy me. But the instrument of death is already prepared. God is sovereign over all things.

What did Christ say? *“Pilate; don’t boast of your power over me or over anything else. You couldn’t have any power at all except it were given you.”*

You couldn’t have any breath. God gave you life. You couldn’t have the ability to walk. Get up from where you’re sitting and walk across the room without God; I challenge you. Do anything without God.

Raise your hand and say, “I’m raising my hand without God almighty.” Why, *“In Him you live and move and have your being. Your salvation is of the Lord.”* That’s what the Scripture says, *“Salvation is of the Lord. We are His workmanship created in Christ Jesus.”*

Psalm 110:3: *“Thy people shall be willing in the day of thy power.”* It’s not our power; it’s His power, His power. We talk of power; it’s not ours, it’s His. *“You couldn’t have any power at all, except it were given you from above,”* Christ said.

Now you better come to that place where you recognize who God is. *“In Him we live and move and have our being.”*

Now here’s another Scripture. Turn to **John 6:44**; now listen carefully. Here’s plain language, a clear-cut ultimatum; our Lord laid down, *“No man can come to me except the Father which sent me draw Him and I’ll raise Him up at the last day.”*

He’ll participate in the resurrection of life. He’ll participate in my resurrected glory. He’ll participate in the kingdom which is to come, if He comes to me. But He’s not coming, *“Except my Father draw him.”*

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That's what Christ said. That's easy to understand. That's plain language. These people understood it. They said, "Now that's a hard saying." That's what they said. That same **John 6** read it, "*Who can hear Him? Who can understand it? This is a hard saying.*" There's nothing hard about it; it's just true. "*No man can come to me.*"

All right; here is the question; what is it to come to Christ?

Well, it's not a physical coming because Nicodemus came to Him in that way physically one night. The rich young ruler came to Him physically but he didn't come to Him spiritually. Coming to Christ; what is it? It's not coming to Him physically.

It's not just coming to His church. You can be a church member and not be in Christ's body. You can be a church member and not be in Christ's family. Judas was. Judas was an apostle. He was a treasurer of that early group.

Coming to Christ is not coming to the ordinances, the baptismal waters. You can come to a baptism and not come to Christ; Simon Magus did. Peter said, "*Simon; your heart's not right with God.*" And He said that to him after he was baptized.

Coming to Christ is not just coming to the Lord's Table, to the bread or to the wine. What is it to come to Christ? He said, "If you come to me I'll raise you in the last day. If you come to me I'll give you life. If you come to me I'll give you peace. If you come to me I'll give you rest."

Well what is it? Well, coming to Christ is described in three words, all making up the word faith. Now coming to Christ, first of all, is to believe on Him. The Philippian jailer said to Paul, "*What must I do to be saved?*" And Paul said, "*Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ.*" Believe on Him.

"*Believe the record that God hath given concerning His Son.*" Believe who God says He is. God said; "*This is my Son. This is the Word which was with God and was God and the Word by which all things were made. And the Word was made flesh and dwelt among us. God was in Christ.*" Who is He? He's God in the flesh.

What did He do? He came down here as our representative. He met the law for us and obeyed the law perfectly, imputing to us a perfect righteousness. He went to the cross and bore our sins in His body on the tree. Why did He do it, "*That God might be just and justify the ungodly?*"

That's why He died on the cross; that's why blood is essential to salvation; not only because it's precious and not only because it is valuable but because, "*The wages of sin is death.*" God required death. Christ had to die to save you because "*The wages of sin is death.*" Sin brings forth death. And Christ had to die.

And the reason Christ could redeem so many people is because of who He was; the infinite Lord died on that cross in human flesh. Do you believe that record? That's what it is to come to Christ; it's to believe.

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Hebrews 6 says; *“No man can come to God, except he believes God, believes the record God hath given concerning His Son.”*

What is it to come to Christ? It’s to trust Him. Paul said, *“I’m persuaded that He’s able to keep that which I’ve committed to Him.”*

I trust Him as He’s revealed in the promises. I trust Him as the sufficient Saviour. I trust Him as the acceptable substitute. I trust Him as my Lord and Master. I trust Him. He can save; *“He’s able to save to the uttermost them that come to God by Him.”*

What is it to come to Christ? It’s to receive Him; *“As many as received Him, to them gave He the power to become the sons of God.”*

We receive Him as our prophet to teach us, our king to reign over us, and our priest to make intercession for us. That’s what it is to come to Christ. It’s to believe the record that God hath given. It’s to trust Christ as He’s revealed in the promises. And it’s to receive Him, conscientiously, intelligently and willingly as your Lord and your Master.

Now, what is Christ saying? No man can come in that way except the Father draw him. That’s a supernatural work. That’s a divine work, a spiritual conversion. It’s not a physical coming to Christ. It’s not just a physical decision. It’s a spiritual miracle. It’s a new birth.

What is conversion? Well first of all it’s a resurrection. *“You hath He quickened who were dead in trespasses and sins.”* That’s God’s Word. What is conversion? It’s a new birth. Christ said; that those who received Him were, *“Born of God, not of blood, not of the will of the flesh, not of the will of man, but born of God.”*

It’s a new creation. *“We’re His workmanship created in Christ Jesus.”* It’s a divine revelation. Paul said, *“God who separated me from my mother’s womb and called me by His grace was pleased to reveal His Son in me.”*

And it’s a divine keeping; *“We’re kept by the power of God through faith.”* The apostles one day said to the Lord after He had talked about the mystery of the Gospel and the spiritual conversion; they said; *“Lord, who then can be saved?”* And our Lord said, *“With men it is impossible.”*

Now, if you’re setting out to save yourself; take the words of Christ there and carefully weigh them; *“With men it is impossible but with God all things are possible.”* God can save. God can give you a new heart. God can give you a new nature. God can give you a love for Christ. God can forgive your sins.

God can make you a new creature. God can do it but you can’t do it. Your preacher can’t do it and momma can’t do it but God can do it. That’s what He’s saying here; *“No man can come to me except my Father draw him.”*

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Now here's the third statement, **Luke 13:3**. Now I say; these are clear statements; no problem here and no difficulty here. It's what we want to believe. And I'm afraid many of us just don't want to accept the words of Christ as they're written.

Luke 13:3; listen to it; *"Except you repent, you'll perish."* How clear, how clear that is. How much clearer could it be, *"Except you repent?"* And Christ said it twice in **verse 3**, *"Except you, you repent, you'll perish."* That's what He said.

It's impossible to come to Christ without leaving those things that oppose Christ. *"No man can serve two masters."* It's impossible to walk with God and walk with the world; it can't be done. It's an impossibility. *"Except you repent you'll perish."*

It's impossible to serve God and serve myself. Paul said, *"It's impossible to please men and please God. No man can serve two masters."*

If you don't repent you'll perish. "Well preacher; what is repentance?" Well, let me give you a definition of repentance. First of all I'll give you the old one; "Repentance is a change, but oh what a change." Repentance is a turning. That's what the old-timer's use to say; "Repentance is a change, repentance is a turning, but oh what a turning."

In **Isaiah 55:7** our Lord said, *"Let the wicked forsake his way and the let the unrighteous man forsake his thoughts and let him return to the Lord."*

Now there's repentance. Repentance is a change. It's a change of manners. *"Let the wicked forsake his ways. If any man be in Christ he's a new creature. There's a way that seemeth right unto men but the end is destruction."*

Let me give you a little homely illustration and make a few folks mad while I'm doing it: These folks riding down the highway with CB radios reporting where the policemen are located; that's wrong and that's evil and that's sinful and that's a conspiracy against the servants of God who are magistrates and policemen.

Now, we'll justify that. Man will justify that; he'll find a way to justify that. But that's not God's way, that's your way. And repentance is to forsake your way, no matter how much you like it, no matter how much it appeals to you, no matter how right you think it is. But God says it's wrong.

I wonder; are we teaching our children, are we teaching our children to disobey the law as long as we know where the law is located? It's all right to break the law if the law is not there watching you, *"Forsake his way."*

Repentance is a change of manners. If any man be in Christ he'll manifest the fruits of the Spirit; love, joy, peace, long-suffering, patience, and peace. That's a different way to walk isn't it, the

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way of peace, the way of patience, the way of gentleness, and the way of love? That's not our way, I know it; it's God's way. And repentance is to turn from your way to God's way.

All right; *"Let a man forsake his thoughts."* That's a change of mind. Here's where the converting work takes place; it's not just the outward deeds. I might quit this and quit that and quit the other and still have a wicked heart.

But if God changes my mind, God changes my mind about His Word, and changes my mind about Him and changes my mind about myself and changes my mind about my neighbor, a converting work has taken place, I've repented of my thoughts.

Now, if a man loves God he will serve God. If a man loves holiness he will pursue holiness. If a man hates sin he'll avoid sin but he's got to have a change of mind first. He's got to have a change of mind.

Our Lord Jesus Christ said, *"Peter; do you love me? Yes Lord I do. Then you feed my sheep."* But it's based on love for Christ.

What is repentance? It's a change of manners, a change of mind, and a change of masters. Thomas knew what repentance was when he fell on his knees and said, *"My Lord and my God."* God's my Lord and He's my Master and I'm sold out to Him.

That's repentance; I belong to Him. I belong to him lock, stock, and barrel, my home, my family, my car, my income, my friends, my children, belong to Him. He's the boss. That's repentance. This is clear. And the other one, *"Except you repent you'll perish."*

All right; here's the last verse now. Now listen to this one in **Matthew 5:20**; *"I say unto you, except your righteousness exceed the righteousness of the Scribes and Pharisees you won't enter the kingdom of heaven."*

What is righteousness? Well, it's holiness, goodness, purity, perfection, conformity to God's law. For what kind of righteousness did the Pharisees have, whether it was their own? Paul said, *"They went about to establish their own righteousness."*

What was their righteousness? It was outward, not inward. Christ said, *"They cleaned up the outside and forgot the inside."* On the outside they looked like a carpeted graveyard. On the inside, *"They were full of dead men's bones."*

They did it to be seen of men. All their works, Christ said, *"They do to be seen of men."* If they can impress you with their holiness then they feel good. But you're not the one they must impress. And then, *"Their righteousness was filthy rags."* That's what Isaiah said.

Where is this righteousness that Christ said we must have that exceeds theirs? It's the righteousness of Christ, His righteousness. He is our righteousness. It is the righteousness of God which we have in Him.

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Old John Jasper, a preacher up in Richmond, Virginia; somebody asked him one time, they said “John Jasper; when you enter the gates of heaven and somebody walks up and says what right have you got to be here, what are you going to say?”

He said, “I am going to say I’ve got no right to be here at all. I’m here on the righteousness of the Lord Jesus Christ!”