

**EMBRACING
THE HARD SIDE
OF JESUS**



Note excerpt from B: *“It seemed Jesus suddenly changed course and I was not prepared for it. ... I was even surprised how weak I was in not trusting Him more and that something so small could throw me into such a state.”*

(Jesus speaking, from a message given to B.)

“Yes My wind is wild and untamed and you've experience a bit of My unexpected nature but now you must pick up your courage and use what you've learned to come ride with Me once again and not fear it. Don't fear Me, don't say I am too unpredictable to trust... Haha sweet one! I am the God of the universe! I am wild! And I am teaching you to love My wild nature and to love flying with it! Come let's run, let's ride, let's fly! With the crazy, wild, unpredictable nature of your God.”

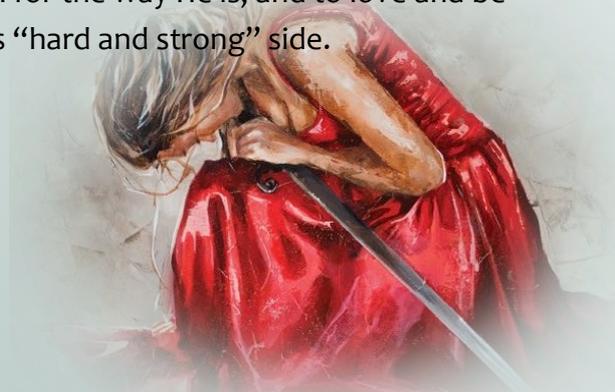
Comment:

I very much could relate to the heart roller coaster, fire-and-ice experience. I've had very similar feelings through some of life's trials over the past couple years. And I have to keep choosing if “the relationship is still on”. Will I keep going with this challenging person called Jesus Christ? But I seem to just need Him so much, that whatever He is like, however He reacts, whatever He tests me in, hard to manage or not, I just can't go on without Him. And His warm and loving side always makes up for it. So I've chosen, and I keep choosing to “Embrace the hard side of Jesus”. It's part of the package deal.

Here are a few thoughts I've had, verses I think about, and what has helped me to keep on going and not be “offended” in Him, but to keep exploring Him, and proving that I really do want Him forever, no matter what that will mean for me. The other alternative is in no way attractive.

His “good” is just too good to pass up. So I need to

take the challenging and straightening sides of Him with it, and learn to love them too. Since He is not going to change, and all He does is for good, it's me that needs to change and learn to be a bit tougher and braver, and have more faith. I need to learn to be thankful for the way He is, and to love and be glad for His “hard and strong” side.



Others had tests on this too. Here's what Jeremiah said:

Jeremiah 20:7 O LORD, thou hast deceived me, and I was deceived; thou art stronger than I, and hast prevailed: I am in derision daily, every one mocketh me.

In Isaiah, the Lord gives a clue that there would be times that His appearance would not be attractive—especially when on the cross:

Isaiah 53:2 For he shall grow up before him as a tender plant, and as a root out of a dry ground: he hath no form nor comeliness; and when we shall see him, there is no beauty that we should desire him.

A rock of offence He is called—and His disciples need His “testimony” and “law” to make it:

Isaiah 8:13 Sanctify the LORD of hosts himself; and let him be your fear, and let him be your dread.

Isaiah 8:14 And he shall be for a sanctuary; but for a stone of stumbling and for a rock of offence to both the houses of Israel, for a gin and for a snare to the inhabitants of Jerusalem.

Isaiah 8:15 And many among them shall stumble, and fall, and be broken, and be snared, and be taken.

Isaiah 8:16 Bind up the testimony, seal the law among my disciples.

Some of Jesus' disciples said it was “a hard saying”, too tricky for them to understand, and they were offended—meaning “off ended” and didn't make to the end:

John 6:60 Many therefore of his disciples, when they had heard this, said, This is an hard saying; who can hear it?

John 6:61 When Jesus knew in himself that his disciples murmured at it, he said unto them, Doth this offend you?

John 6:66 From that time many of his disciples went back, and walked no more with him.

Jesus said believing in Him would upset the applecart and even family ties:

Matthew 10:33 But whosoever shall deny me before men, him will I also deny before my Father which is in heaven.

Matthew 10:34 Think not that I am come to send peace on earth: I came not to send peace, but a sword.

Jesus' parable says He is "a hard man":

Matthew 25:24 Then he which had received the one talent came and said, Lord, I knew thee that thou art an hard man, reaping where thou hast not sown, and gathering where thou hast not strawed:

Matthew 25:25 And I was afraid, and went and hid thy talent in the earth: lo, there thou hast that is thine.

He wishes we'd have faith in Him and His Word and love Him, so we aren't offended, but are overcomers:

Psalms 119:165 Great peace have they which love thy law: and nothing shall offend them.

Matthew 1:6 And blessed is he, whosoever shall not be offended in me.

old. I was glad to see how much I could understand with my more mature soul. Still, it was challenging and abrasive in parts. But I realized in recent years, that if I had only read it again and again, in a shorter amount of time, I would have understood more. I wouldn't have had to go all those years with that bad taste in my young understanding.

So in the past two years, when I started with audio listening through the Bible, it was hard to hear those rough parts, the prophets, and some other places, but I was braver this time, and I went for it again and again. As soon as I was through hearing the Bible all the way through, I'd start it up again. I just listen to a bit each day, when I cook and clean. Now I have accepted it, and have matured. It makes sense when read through quickly one time after the next. I am over the "choking" stage, and see things clearer now with deeper understanding.

So this was all helping me to embrace this hard side of Jesus.

Now I've reached a state where I know He is tough and strong, and past my finding out or understanding, but I can't and don't want to live without Him, so I embrace all sides to Him, He's a package deal. He's not just going to love me and dote on me, but also cleanse and purge and prune and fix me up.

Some other thoughts I've had are:

Do I want to be married to a wimp? Who can't really give it to my tormentors, and just let people forever do as they please? If I want a strong defender who doesn't put up with the wrong, I get that—but He'll also do what is truly best for me, and correct me also.

One time when I was reeling from the latest "hard side", I had a vision that really helped me.

It was a vision of the house with lots of rooms in it, and each room had experiences so I'd know different sides of God, and learn how He feels. But it was hard to go through. In the end of the vision I left the building and so did Jesus. We left, through separate doors. I needed time to ponder, and He knew it. He wasn't expecting that I'd rush up to Him and be so enthusiastic, until later on. He was giving me time to recover. And I did recover, and embrace again fully.

Another thing is that I want to have many feelings and experiences with Him. Then I will be able to have deeper communication with Him, knowing more how He feels. So tough experiences that give me a glimpse of how He feels enrich this side of me. We'll be more on the same page, the mature one, and I'll be able to have more intelligible conversations. Deep ones, not just shallow talk.

Comment:

I'm a sensitive person, and I first read through the Bible, cover to cover, when I was 16-18 years old. There were some places, many, that were just a bit too tough meat for me. Sadly, I was a bit shell shocked, and didn't try that again for an embarrassing 12 years. I read the Bible and memorised it, but stayed away from the hard parts that went down sideways.

Then I bravely faced it again when I was 30 years



Sometimes I think of it as a test, like He is saying, "Do you still want me? Are you sure?" A test of our love.

Then I show that I'm not just here for the good times, but I really do want to stick with Him through it all. I know, deep in my heart, some of this "hard appearance" is a filtering method to prove where our hearts are really at. But I just know that when the veil is lifted, and we get to know Him more as He really is, we are totally going to be in awe and love Him more than ever. And if He sees that I loved what I knew of Him, as little as I saw, and as "tough love" as I experienced, and still wanted Him, He's going to lavish me with love all the more. I just know it.

So I'll stick with it, so that one day I'll get to see Him in His full beauty, and He can say of me too, as He did with His disciples:

Luke 22:28 Ye are they which have continued with me in my temptations.

Luke 22:29 And I appoint unto you a kingdom, as my Father hath appointed unto me;

Luke 22:30 That ye may eat and drink at my table in my kingdom...

Comment:

But when my faith fails, He is still faithful. Like in January 2019, I had that very feeling of being surprised how I could be so thrown off; so weak in faith. I had a big test of faith through something someone had said. The test was so intense and escalated so fast, that it wasn't too long before I was even doubting if Jesus really existed. This is after 40 years of a close relationship, since reaching out personally to get saved.

I was so blown and knocked for a loop, all I could do was look at my picture of Jesus and quote in prayer what Psalm 119:179 says. "Seek me—Lord find me."

I said, "Lord, I've sought You all my life. This time, "seek thy servant", seek and find me." I left it up to Him to prove His reality to me. I was out of steam, out of breath; I wanted to be found of Him. I wasn't going to struggle.

And He answered the challenge, through this and that, faith was restored. A good dose of humility was earned too. I realized how weak I really am, except for the grace and faith of Jesus and the Holy Spirit's work in my heart and mind to keep my faith going, and keep me growing closer to Jesus.

Isaiah 50:10 Who is among you that feareth the LORD, that obeyeth the voice of his servant, that walketh in darkness, and hath no light? let him trust in the name of the LORD, and stay upon his God.

