

The “Musts” of Christianity Mark 10:42-45

The word “*must*” is often found in Scripture. That concept means there are things necessary for us to do.

The word “must” is out of step with most people. It seems politically incorrect to suggest people must obey God’s teaching. Our culture is more inclined to make up their own faith or religion or to select what they wish to obey rather than follow all the teaching revealed in the Bible. Most people want choices, and the word “must” means they have no choices. “Must” is a verb that describes an obligation, a requirement, a moral necessity. **“Must” removes every other option.** If we want to please God and have eternal life, then there are some things that we must do. This isn’t as strange as you might think, even Jesus had some things that he must do. So, it is not strange that we too have things we must do.

We may think that God has nothing that He must do, but God’s great love for us moved Him to send Jesus into this world. Love moves even the Lord to make a commitment. *Jesus knew that He must do His Father’s will.* In **Jn. 9:4** we read, ***“We must work the works of him who sent me while it is day; night is coming, when no one can work.”*** While on earth Jesus lived within the same time constraints as we do. According to Jesus, now is the time we must do God’s will.

Jesus knew that He must die on the cross; He prophesied His death and His resurrection. **Mt. 16:21-23** says, ***“From that time Jesus began to show his disciples that he must go to Jerusalem and suffer many things from the elders and chief priests and scribes, and be killed, and on the third day be raised. And Peter took him aside and began to rebuke him, saying, “Far be it from you, Lord! This shall never happen to you.” But he turned and said to Peter, “Get behind me, Satan! You are a hindrance to me. For you are not setting your mind on the things of God, but on the things of man.”*** Thought Peter did not want Jesus to die, Jesus knew that He must fulfill God’s plan of redemption.

When the crowd came to the Garden of Gethsemane to arrest Jesus, **Mt. 26:51-54** records what happened, ***“And behold, one of those who were with Jesus stretched out his hand and drew his sword and struck the servant of the high priest and cut off his ear. Then Jesus said to him, “Put your sword back into its place. For all who take the sword will perish by the sword. Do you think that I cannot appeal to my Father, and he will at once send me more than twelve legions of angels? But how then should the Scriptures be fulfilled, that it must be so?”*** Jesus knew that

He must die in order to fulfill the eternal plan of God. He could have stopped it, but it was necessary for Him to fulfill the Scriptures.

Jesus was utterly obedient to the Father, even when the Father demanded everything from Him. When the Father commanded His Son Jesus to go to the cross, Jesus obeyed. Jesus took Peter, James, and John with Him to the Garden of Gethsemane. And Jesus told them in **Mt. 26:38**, *“Then he said to them, “My soul is very sorrowful, even to death; remain here, and watch with me.”* I can only imagine the pain that Jesus felt then. He fell on His face on the ground and scripture says of Him, *“And being in agony he prayed more earnestly; and his sweat became like great drops of blood falling down to the ground”* (**Luke 22:44**). But the persistent prayer of Jesus in **Mt. 26:42** was, *“My Father, if this cannot pass unless I drink it, your will be done.”*

The example of Jesus is vital; we must follow in His steps. **Hebrews 5:7-9** says, *“In the days of his flesh, Jesus offered up prayers and supplications, with loud cries and tears, to him who was able to save him from death, and he was heard because of his reverence. Although he was a son, he learned obedience through what he suffered. And being made perfect, he became the source of eternal salvation to all who obey him,”* We need to understand, the Father heard His prayer. Many think the prayer of Jesus was to remove the cup, and that is certainly what He wanted at one point. But the ultimate prayer of Jesus was *“your will be done,”* and God heard Him. He became the source of eternal salvation to all those who obeyed Him. *Know this, it is true that we must believe, but as with Jesus, we must also obey!*

Some think, “You don’t have to do anything to be saved. God has done it all.” Yes, we are saved by grace through faith; and Scripture says salvation is a gift in **Romans 6:23 and in Ephesians 2:8-9**. But we must also realize that gifts often have conditions or obligations to fulfill. You need to understand this, meeting conditions does not earn the gift, but conditions do obligate the person who will receive the gift. For instance, in **John 9** Jesus healed a blind man by anointing His eyes with some mud that He made with saliva. Jesus told the man, “Go, wash in the pool of Siloam’ (Which means Sent).” So according to verse seven he went and he washed and came back seeing. The Lord Jesus gave the man his sight. No one would suggest that by washing in the pool the man healed himself or earned something as precious as his sight; but he had to meet the condition of the washing

before he enjoyed the healing! The blind man didn't argue with Jesus; he simply went to the pool and washed.

While it is true, we are saved by grace, God's gift of grace is conditional. The Scriptures plainly teach that there are some things that we must do in order to please God; they are not optional. **First, we must come to Jesus.** Acts 4:12 says, *"And there is salvation in no one else, for there is no other name under heaven given among men by which we must be saved."* If one is to be saved, he must come to Jesus; no one else can save him. In Jn. 12:26 Jesus himself said, *"If anyone serves me, he must follow me; and where I am, there will my servant be also. If anyone serves me, the Father will honor him."* We must follow Jesus, no one else can save us.

Second, we must believe in God. In Hebrews 11:6 we read, *"And without faith it is impossible to please him, for whoever would draw near to God must believe that he exists and that he rewards those who seek him."* Faith in God means believing what He says and that He will keep His promises. It is absurd to claim that we believe in God, if we are unwilling to believe what He teaches. In a conversation with the Jews about whether Jesus was from God and the Son of God, Jesus in Jn. 8:24 said, *"I told you that you would die in your sins, for unless you believe that I am he you will die in your sins."* Faith in Christ means believing that He is the Christ, the Son of God, and the Lord of all. Believing in Him means taking what He teaches seriously. The Lord must be heartbroken that some people are Christians in name only, professing to believe in the Christ, but following after the ways of man.

Third, we must repent of our sins. Jesus in Luke 13:3 said, *"No, I tell you; but unless you repent, you will all likewise perish."* Repentance is not an option for anyone who wishes to live with God. Paul in Romans 6:11, describes what repentance does. Paul said, *"So you also must consider yourselves dead to sin and alive to God in Christ Jesus."* Repentance means stopping our old sinful ways and living for God. Romans 8:12-13 makes it even more clear, *"So then, brothers, we are debtors, not to the flesh, to live according to the flesh. For if you live according to the flesh you will die, but if by the Spirit you put to death the deeds of the body, you will live."* To live with God, we must repent, putting to death the deeds of the body that lead to death.

Fourth, we must be baptized. In John 3, Nicodemus came to Jesus at night. Jesus told him in John 3:5-7, *"Jesus answered, 'Truly, truly, I say to you, unless*

one is born of water and the Spirit, he cannot enter the kingdom of God. That which is born of the flesh is flesh, and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit. Do not marvel that I said to you, ‘You must be born again.’” This birth of water and the Spirit refers to baptism, just as every early Christian testified and believed. One must be baptized in order to enter God’s kingdom. When Saul of Tarsus was blinded on the road to Damascus, Jesus Himself told Saul in **Acts 9:6**, *“But rise and enter the city, and you will be told what you are to do.”* *The men who were traveling with him stood speechless, hearing the voice but seeing no one.”* Saul was led to the city where he waited to be told what it was, he was to do. While he was waiting, we are told he prayed and fasted for three days; and yet he was not yet saved. He had not yet learned what he must do. Eventually God sent to him Ananias, Saul tells of this event in **Acts 22:12-16**, *“And one Ananias, a devout man according to the law, well-spoken of by all the Jews who lived there, came to me, and standing by me said to me, ‘Brother Saul, receive your sight.’ And at that very hour I received my sight and saw him. And he said, ‘The God of our fathers appointed you to know his will, to see the Righteous One and to hear a voice from his mouth; for you will be a witness for him to everyone of what you have seen and heard. And now why do you wait? Rise and be baptized and wash away your sins, calling on his name.’”* According to the apostle Paul in **verse 16**, God had not yet taken away his sin, and it was in the act of baptism that God took away his sins. If God demanded it of Paul, then he also requires it of us – God has not changed his method of cleansing sin from the lost.

Fifth, we must worship in spirit and in truth. In **John 4:23-24**, the Lord Jesus said, *“But the hour is coming, and is now here, when the true worshipers will worship the Father in spirit and truth, for the Father is seeking such people to worship him. God is spirit, and those who worship him must worship in spirit and truth.”* Many today have confused true worship with a worship that entertains. True worship differs from the pretense of man-made worship. Jesus defines true worship in **verse 22** he tells the woman at the well, *“You worship what you do not know; we worship what we know, for salvation is from the Jews.”* He then tells her that God is a Spirit and we must worship Him in spirit and in truth. Worship is truly genuine when it is from the heart – that is, spirit, and based on the truth of Scripture. What the Samaritans were doing was not truly worship. While it might have come from their hearts, it was not based on the truth of Scripture – at that time, the O.T. Scripture, which the Jews had. *If it is not in spirit and truth, it is not true worship.* According to **Mt. 15:8-9** the Pharisees and

their disciples' worship was in vain, because they tried to worship God with the traditions of men and not according scripture (see also **Mt. 15:4-6**). According to Jesus worship based on the teaching of men, is vain – that is, empty.

Sixth, we must pay close attention to God's teaching. **Hebrews 2:1-3** tells us, *“Therefore we must pay much closer attention to what we have heard, lest we drift away from it. For since the message declared by angels proved to be reliable, and every transgression or disobedience received a just retribution, how shall we escape if we neglect such a great salvation? It was declared at first by the Lord, and it was attested to us by those who heard,”* God in Scripture demands that we pay close attention and keep His commandments. We must not add to, nor take away from the revealed Word of God found in the Bible. We have no right to rewrite God's teaching to suit ourselves or our culture.

Seventh, we must obey God rather than men. When the apostles appeared before the Sanhedrin, the high priest said in **Acts 5:28**, *“We strictly charged you not to teach in this name, yet here you have filled Jerusalem with your teaching, and you intend to bring this man's blood upon us.”* Peter's response is found in **verse 29** *“But Peter and the apostles answered, “We must obey God rather than men.”* We have to stand up for our God and our faith above all else. God is not one voice among many – God is God, and He demands our obedience.

Eighth, we must help the weak. In **Acts 20:35** we read, *“In all things I have shown you that by working hard in this way we must help the weak and remember the words of the Lord Jesus, how he himself said, ‘It is more blessed to give than to receive.’”* Christians must stand ready to help those in need. As Christ gave of Himself to help the weak, so must we, His followers.

Why does all of this matter? This matters' because there is one more must!!!! We must all appear before God in the judgment. **2 Cor. 5:10** says, *“For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ, so that each one may receive what is due for what he has done in the body, whether good or evil.”* On Judgment Day everyone, including you, will have to face Jesus on the judgment seat of God. The Lord will judge righteously, saving His followers and condemning those who don't believe or won't obey Him. The question you need to ask at this very moment is, **“Are you ready?”**

While Jesus offers His gift of salvation to everyone, not everyone is prepared to meet the Master when He comes. Just as the virgins in **Mt. 25** needed oil for their lamps but did not have any, will you also be lacking on that day? According to

Jesus in that parable, the time to prepare is now, Judgment Day will be too late. We don't know the day nor the hour of His coming, so we must be prepared at all times.

Have you met God's conditions for His grace? Do you believe? Have you repented? Have you confessed Jesus as the Christ? Have you been baptized into Christ for the forgiveness of your sins? Have you remained watchful and ready to meet Him? Please don't wait another day unprepared to meet your God! Get ready today – accept his offer of grace by doing what He commands. You will never regret doing what is right, but you will regret being unprepared.