

Except No. 152

Introduction.

- I. Once a **little 7 year old boy** was very fidgety in a church service. After the service the mother told how she finally got her son to sit still and be quiet. About halfway through the sermon, she leaned over and whispered, "If you don't be quiet, the preacher is going to lose his place and will have to start his sermon all over again." It worked. Not a whisper from the young man.
- II. I have sometimes lost my place in a sermon, but I will do my best not to do so today..
 - A.. This Lord's day I would like for us to study the word "Except."
 - B. Jesus used this word several times to emphasize some of the great truths of God. These truths are of eternal importance.
 - I. **Humility** - Jesus used the word "except" to emphasize the importance of humility. (Matt. 18:1-4).
 - A. Jesus taught we must be humble, as a child, to enter God's kingdom. The arrogant and proud will have no part with God. (Matt. 23:12; Jas. 4:6).
 - B. Jesus also emphasized that humility determines greatness in the kingdom of God.
 1. The truly great one in the kingdom is willing to serve. He is willing to serve in any capacity whether it be great or small. He is lead, to preach, to teach, to lead singing, to be the head of a committee. He is willing to clean the baptistry, to prepare communion, to knock doors and tell others about Christ. He is also willing to follow and serve even in the lowest capacity.
 2. He remembers Jesus said. (Matt. 20:27, 28).

<p>"Father, where shall I work today?" And my loved flowed warm and free. Then He pointed me out a tiny spot, And said, "Tend that for me." I answered quickly, "Oh, no, not that; Why, no one would ever see, No matter how well my work was done; Not that little place for me."</p>	<p>And the word He spoke-it was not stern; He answered me tenderly: "Ah, little one, search that heart of thine, Art thou working for them or me? Nazareth was a little place, And so was Galilee."</p>
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- II. **Righteousness** - Jesus used the word "except" to emphasize a lesson on righteousness. (Matt. 5:20).
 - A. Jesus emphatically stressed that our righteousness must exceed the righteousness of the scribes and the Pharisees.
 - B. In order to understand the import of this statement we need to make a study of the righteousness of these men.

1. The scribes and Pharisees **did not practice what they preached.** (Matt. 23:3).
 - a. One **time a preacher observed a little boy watching him as he was nailing the trailing vine.** The minister asked, “Are you trying to get a hint or two on gardening?” “No,” said the lad, “I’m just waiting to see what a minister says when he hammers his thumb.”
 - b. This story conveys a great and important truth. Christians must make sure that they practice what they preach. Others are constantly watching us to see if our religion is real or merely a pretense.
2. The scribes and Pharisees were very **self-righteous.**
 - a. They would have nothing to do with Gentiles and other they regarded as sinners. They thought they were too good to associate with them. They even criticized Jesus for trying to teach them that they might be saved.
 - b. **On one occasion we read where Jesus sat down to dine with many publicans and sinners.** The Pharisees seeing this pointed their fingers at Jesus and said to His disciples, “Why eateth you teacher with publicans and sinners?” Jesus rebuked them for this wicked attitude and said He had come to seek and save those who were lost. He taught we must be merciful to sinners. We must be careful we do not develop this holier than thou spirit.
3. The scribes and Pharisees did **everything to be seen of men.**

MAT 6:1 "Beware of practicing your righteousness before men to be noticed by them; otherwise you have no reward with your Father who is in heaven. "When therefore you give alms, do not sound a trumpet before you, as the hypocrites do in the synagogues and in the streets, that they may be honored by men. Truly I say to you, they have their reward in full.3 "But when you give alms, do not let your left hand know what your right hand is doing 4 that your alms may be in secret; and your Father who sees in secret will repay you. 5 "And when you pray, you are not to be as the hypocrites; for they love to stand and pray in the synagogues and on the street corners, in order to be seen by men. Truly I say to you, they have their reward in full. 6 "But you, when you pray, go into your inner room, and when you have shut your door, pray to your Father who is in secret, and your Father who sees in secret will repay you.

4. The scribes and Pharisees were **scrupulous in small matters.** (Matt. 23:23, 24).
 - a. Explain text.
 - b. This is true of many people today. Camel swallowing is a big, big problem today.

1) **It is a problem in our community today.**

- We have laws against **mad dogs**, and then we license liquor which kills 10 thousand for every one who dies of rabies.

- In our country today we have **laws against sending pornography through the mails** and then allow literature that is equally immoral to be sold on our newsstands, shown on our TV's and put on the internet.
- We are placing **great emphasis on closing the missile gap** and almost none on the moral gap.
- **A boy who steals an apple** is brought before the juvenile judge, but a man who steals a million dollars is often put up for public office. In essence we say, "Steal a dollar and get sent to jail; steal a million and get sent to congress."

2) Camel swallowing is a **problem in the home.**

- **Mothers** often scold their children for lying about the breaking a dish and then see someone coming to the door they do not want to see and send them to the door with the message, "Mother is not at home."
- **Fathers** often lecture their children on honesty and then laugh with their friends, in front of the children, over the "slick deal" they pulled on the basis of someone's ignorance
- **Parents** often lecture their children about keeping their bodies clean and then let them fill their minds with the trash found in the modern romance magazines and movies

3) Camel swallowing is a **problem in the church.**

- There are some who criticize others for **financing the church** through bingo games, pie supper and say the church should be supported by free will offerings (which is correct) who are stingy and begrudge the crumbs they give to God.
- There are some who criticize others for not **partaking of the Lord's supper every week** (as the scriptures teach) who do not discern the Lord's body when the supper is being served.
- There are others who criticize the way **others take care of orphans** and **do personal work** and then do nothing themselves.

4) Brethren, if we are not very careful it is so easy to strain out the gnat and swallow the camel as the scribes and Pharisees did.

III. **The New Birth** - Jesus used the word "except" used to emphasize the importance of the new birth.

A. Once a ruler of the Jews came to Jesus by night and said. (Jn. 3:1,2).

B. Jesus answered. (Jn. 3:3-5).

1. Jesus affirmed that except one born of the water and the Spirit he cannot enter God's kingdom.
2. Since God promises to save only those in His kingdom, it is extremely important that we understand the new birth. It will help us to understand it if we will think a moment on what is involved in a physical birth. Two things are necessary for a physical birth. There must be a conception and a delivery. Without these 2 things you cannot have a physical birth.

3. **This is also true in the spiritual realm.** There must be a conception and a delivery.

- a. The Holy Spirit's part in the new birth corresponds to the conception. The Holy Spirit produces faith in the hearts of men. He does this through the word of God, the truth, the gospel. (Mk. 16:15; Rom. 1:16; 1 Cor. 4:15; 1 Pet. 1:23).
- b. This brings us to the water's part in the new birth.
 - 1) The part of the water corresponds to the delivery of the physical birth. Just as it is necessary for one to be delivered from his mother's womb in order to have life, it is necessary for one to be delivered out of water to become a new creature in Christ.
 - 2) A study of the conversions in the book of Acts shows this to be true. Let's consider a few examples. (Acts 2:37, 38, 41; 8:12, 35-39; 16:30-33).
 - 3) We find that in each of these conversions that those who believed the gospel, the message of the Spirit were baptized. They came forth out of the water to walk in the newness of life. (Rom. 6:4).

C. What does all of this mean to us today?

1. It means we must believe and be baptized in order to be saved.
2. This is precisely what Jesus said. (Mk. 16:16).
3. Jesus teaches in the clearest possible words that baptism is essential to salvation.

Conclusion.

- I. Yes, Jesus used the word "except" to teach some of the great truths of God. These truths should be implanted in every heart and obeyed by every person.
- II. We urge those outside of Christ to make Jesus your Savior and live daily for Him. Jesus is the only way to heaven. (Jn. 14:6). Come to Jesus now as we stand and sing.

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