

What I Learned from the Scribes' Sermons

Matthew 23:1-39

What I Learned from the Scribes' Sermons

- What is a hypocrite?
 - Some are accused of hypocrisy when their works do not measure up to their words
 - But that may be an indication of weakness, not hypocrisy
 - Hypocrite comes from the Greek hupokrites meaning an actor under an assumed character (Strong's)
 - A true hypocrite is one who pretends to be something he is not, and has no intention of being

What I Learned from the Scribes' Sermons

- Jesus often addressed the scribes and Pharisees, and in one sermon He called them:
 - Hypocrites 7 times
 - Fools twice
 - Blind guides 5 times
 - Serpents and brood of vipers once

What I Learned from the Scribes' Sermons

- In spite such strong condemnation, we can learn from the hypocrites...
 - When their teaching is based on truth
 - We look beyond the messenger to the original message
 - How not to act

I Have Learned From Their Abuse Of Authority

- Binding on others what one is unwilling to do
 - Matt. 23:1-4 - “Then Jesus spoke to the multitudes and to His disciples, 2 saying: The scribes and the Pharisees sit in Moses' seat. 3 Therefore whatever they tell you to observe, that observe and do, but do not do according to their works; for they say, and do not do. 4 For they bind heavy burdens, hard to bear, and lay them on men's shoulders; but they themselves will not move them with one of their fingers.”

I Have Learned From Their Abuse Of Authority

- Doing works to be seen of men
 - Matt. 23:5 - “But all their works they do to be seen by men. They make their phylacteries broad and enlarge the borders of their garments.”
- If we want God's approval, we need to do things to glorify Him, or be seen only by Him
 - Matt. 5:16 - “Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works and glorify your Father in heaven”
 - Matt. 6:3-4 - “But when you do a charitable deed, do not let your left hand know what your right hand is doing, 4 that your charitable deed may be in secret; and your Father who sees in secret will Himself reward you openly.

I Have Learned From Their Abuse Of Authority

- Seeking special treatment
 - Matt. 23:6-7 - “They love the best places at feasts, the best seats in the synagogues, 7 greetings in the marketplaces, and to be called by men, 'Rabbi, Rabbi.’”

I Have Learned From Their Abuse Of Authority

- Jesus expected His disciples to be different
 - Matt. 23:8-12 - “But you, do not be called 'Rabbi'; for One is your Teacher, the Christ, and you are all brethren. 9 Do not call anyone on earth your father; for One is your Father, He who is in heaven. 10 And do not be called teachers; for One is your Teacher, the Christ. 11 But he who is greatest among you shall be your servant. 12 And whoever exalts himself will be humbled, and he who humbles himself will be exalted.”

I Have Learned From Their Failure As Teachers

- Failed to save others
 - Matt. 23:13 - “But woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For you shut up the kingdom of heaven against men; for you neither go in yourselves, nor do you allow those who are entering to go in.”
 - Their teaching made the commandments of God ineffective - Matt. 15:3-6
 - Their teaching came from hearts distant from God - Matt. 15:7-9

I Have Learned From Their Failure As Teachers

- Our teaching can save both ourselves and others
 - 1Tim. 4:16 - “Take heed to yourself and to the doctrine. Continue in them, for in doing this you will save both yourself and those who hear you.”

I Have Learned From Their Failure As Teachers

- Misusing religion for money and power
 - Matt. 23:14 - “Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For you devour widows' houses, and for a pretense make long prayers. Therefore you will receive greater condemnation.”
 - Elders and preachers can be guilty of this
 - 2Tim. 3:4-6; Titus 1:10-11; Acts 20:28-31

I Have Learned From Their Failure As Teachers

- Made other people worse than they were themselves
 - Matt. 23:15 - “Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For you travel land and sea to win one proselyte, and when he is won, you make him twice as much a son of hell as yourselves.”
 - Acts 20:27 - “For I have not shunned to declare to you the whole counsel of God.”

I Have Learned From Their Failure As Teachers

- Made distinctions where God did not
 - Matt. 23:16-19 - “Woe to you, blind guides, who say, 'Whoever swears by the temple, it is nothing; but whoever swears by the gold of the temple, he is obliged to perform it.' 17 Fools and blind! For which is greater, the gold or the temple that sanctifies the gold? 18 And, 'Whoever swears by the altar, it is nothing; but whoever swears by the gift that is on it, he is obliged to perform it.' 19 Fools and blind! For which is greater, the gift or the altar that sanctifies the gift?”

I Have Learned From Their Failure As Teachers

- We cannot make distinctions among God's commands
 - 1Peter 4:11 - "If anyone speaks, let him speak as the oracles of God. If anyone ministers, let him do it as with the ability which God supplies, that in all things God may be glorified through Jesus Christ, to whom belong the glory and the dominion forever and ever."

I Have Learned From Their Inconsistent Practice

- Left commands undone
 - Matt. 23:23-24 - “Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For you pay tithe of mint and anise and cummin, and have neglected the weightier matters of the law: justice and mercy and faith. These you ought to have done, without leaving the others undone. 24 Blind guides, who strain out a gnat and swallow a camel!”
- All of God's commandments are important
 - Matt. 5:19 - “Whoever therefore breaks one of the least of these commandments, and teaches men so, shall be called least in the kingdom of heaven; but whoever does and teaches them, he shall be called great in the kingdom of heaven.”

I Have Learned From Their Inconsistent Practice

- Focused only on the outer man
 - Matt. 23:25-28 - “Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For you cleanse the outside of the cup and dish, but inside they are full of extortion and self-indulgence. 26 Blind Pharisee, first cleanse the inside of the cup and dish, that the outside of them may be clean also. 27 Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For you are like whitewashed tombs which indeed appear beautiful outwardly, but inside are full of dead men's bones and all uncleanness. 28 Even so you also outwardly appear righteous to men, but inside you are full of hypocrisy and lawlessness.”

I Have Learned From Their Inconsistent Practice

- Honoring the past, but unwilling to live it
 - Matt. 23:29-31 - “Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! Because you build the tombs of the prophets and adorn the monuments of the righteous, 30 and say, 'If we had lived in the days of our fathers, we would not have been partakers with them in the blood of the prophets.' 31 Therefore you are witnesses against yourselves that you are sons of those who murdered the prophets.”

I Have Learned From Their Inconsistent Practice

- They did more harm than their fathers
 - Matt. 23:32-34 - “Fill up, then, the measure of your fathers' guilt. 33 Serpents, brood of vipers! How can you escape the condemnation of hell? 34 Therefore, indeed, I send you prophets, wise men, and scribes: some of them you will kill and crucify, and some of them you will scourge in your synagogues and persecute from city to city,”

I Have Learned From Their Inconsistent Practice

- On that generation would come the judgment for the murder of all God's prophets
 - Matt. 23:35-36 - “That on you may come all the righteous blood shed on the earth, from the blood of righteous Abel to the blood of Zechariah, son of Berechiah, whom you murdered between the temple and the altar. 36 Assuredly, I say to you, all these things will come upon this generation.”

What Can We Learn From Hypocrites?

- A great deal, provided we do not imitate their:
 - Abuses of authority
 - Failures in teaching
 - Inconsistent practices