

Which of Jesus' Teachings Do You Follow?

"When Jesus had finished these words, the crowds were amazed at His teaching; for He was teaching them as one having authority, and not as their scribes."

—Matthew 7:28-29

This description followed what we call 'The Sermon on the Mount.' There were similar reactions to Jesus' teachings later on.

For example...

Just a couple of days before the crucifixion of Jesus His religious opponents attacked Him with everything they had. The Pharisees plotted together to trap Jesus by putting Him in a politically awkward position. After Jesus' had wisely responded the crowds reacted:

"And hearing this, they were amazed...."

—Matthew 22:22

Then the Sadducees posed a question, more of a riddle. They intended to embarrass Jesus with an impossible theological conundrum. Again, He answered wisely.

"When the crowds heard this, they were astonished at His teaching."

—Matthew 22:33

The Pharisees challenged Jesus again, and once again He answered them. Then He asked them a question regarding their interpretation of Scripture.

"No one was able to answer Him a word, nor did anyone dare from that day on to ask Him another question." —Matthew 22:46

(Some have called Jesus the Master Teacher, and rightfully so.)

Then, in the very next verse, or more accurately, in the very next breath, Jesus began to warn His disciples AND the crowds about the scribes and Pharisees, labeling them as *hypocrites!*

That's right. In Matthew 23 Jesus pointed out the hypocrisy of the scribes and Pharisees and warned folks not to follow their example. Jesus was not guilty of name-calling. Yet, many in our current society would 'crucify' a person for lashing out in judgment like that! (They misunderstand.)

People today love the teachings of Jesus when He says, "Love one another"; when He tells the Parable of the Good Samaritan; the Beatitudes; when He says, "I will give you rest."

However, some people cannot tolerate the strong stance of Jesus against sin:

- ◆ Anger brings guilt just like murder;
- ◆ Lusting for a woman is sinful;
- ◆ Divorce is almost always wrong;
- ◆ Lying is wrong (all the time);
- ◆ Retaliation is not God's way.
- ◆ If you refuse to forgive another person, God will not forgive you.
- ◆ Religious activity is completely meaningless without a sincere heart.

These are some of the moral and ethical teachings of Jesus also found in the Sermon on the Mount.

The Master Teacher who amazed the crowds and taught love ALSO preached repentance saying that without upright, moral living **"you will not enter the kingdom of heaven."** Jesus even warned that there would be *many* who would claim to be His followers, who would claim to have done good deeds in His name, yet who practiced unrighteousness. *We must embrace all that Jesus did and all that He taught.*

Enter through the narrow gate...for the gate is small and the way is narrow that leads to life, and there are few who find it.

—Matthew 7:13-14