

Woe Unto You

4th - 6th Grade
Lesson 8

The Reproof of Christ

We have learned about how Jesus loved others. We have learned about His many miracles. We have learned about Jesus' compassion. We have learned about the many different ways Jesus showed His love to us. We know that Jesus loves everyone! But, Jesus does not like sin. Though Jesus loves us and will never leave us, He does not like it when we sin. Many stories are about Jesus helping people, but He corrected people in this story. Jesus rebuked the scribes and the Pharisees for their sin. They were not doing right. This is what He told the scribes and the Pharisees.

The Responsibility

Then spake Jesus to the multitude, and to his disciples, Saying, The scribes and the Pharisees sit in Moses' seat: All therefore whatsoever they bid you observe, that observe and do; but do not ye after their works: for they say, and do not. For they bind heavy burdens and grievous to be borne, and lay them on men's shoulders; but they themselves will not move them with one of their fingers.

—Matthew 23:1-4

The scribes and the Pharisees were supposed to be men who studied the law. They were supposed to know the Scriptures that God had given to Moses so they could help people. They were supposed to be good examples to people by living right. They were supposed to be godly men. Jesus told His disciples that the people should listen to the scribes and Pharisees just like they would have obeyed Moses. The scribes and Pharisees were supposed to judge the people.

Everyone looks up to someone. The scribes and Pharisees were supposed to be men that the people could look up to. Some people probably look up to you. We need to be careful that we are always behaving the way we should so that we can be good examples to those who look up to us.

The Reality

But all their works they do for to be seen of men: they make broad their phylacteries, and enlarge the borders of their garments, And love the uppermost rooms at feasts, and the chief seats in the synagogues, And greetings in the markets, and to be called of men, Rabbi, Rabbi.

—Matthew 23:5-7

The scribes and Pharisees were supposed to know the books of the Law. They were supposed to be able to teach the people what was important to God. Instead, they were teaching the people what was not really important. They were teaching them minor things instead of major things. Instead of being good examples, they exalted themselves above other people. They liked people to

praise them. They were very prideful. They were not praising God; instead, they wanted to bring glory to themselves. They were supposed to judge the people with the Bible, but they started making up their own rules instead. They were not being fair to the people.

The Reproof

But woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! for ye shut up the kingdom of heaven against men: for ye neither go in yourselves, neither suffer ye them that are entering to go in.

—Matthew 23:13

Do you know what reproof means? It means correction. Jesus used the phrase, “Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees” eight times in Matthew 23. He was correcting them for their sinful ways. They were not acting the way they were supposed to. God was not pleased with them. They were rebuked for actions that could have caused other people not to go to Heaven.

The scribes and Pharisees were not telling the people what they needed to know. (Matthew 23:13) They were also having the people call them names like “Rabbi” and “Master.” Those names should have been used only for Christ. (Matthew 23:8-10) But the leaders liked to be called those names because it made them feel important. Jesus rebuked them for being prideful (Matthew 23:11-12) and for pretending to be close to God when they were not. (Matthew 23:25)

All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness: That the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works.

—II Timothy 3:16-17

II Timothy tells us that God has given us the Bible to show us where we need to be corrected. We need to read the Bible so we will know how God wants us to behave. The Bible is one of God’s ways of communicating with us. That’s why we call it the Word of God.

God also sent His Holy Spirit to rebuke us. When we ask Jesus to save us, the Holy Spirit comes to live in us. Sometimes when we do wrong, we feel bad about it. That is the Holy Spirit telling us that we need to make right whatever we did that was wrong.

Conclusion

We can learn a lot from the scribes and Pharisees. Jesus rebuked them for many things in Matthew 23. The Holy Spirit rebukes us sometimes too. We need to always obey the Holy Spirit when He asks us to obey. He lets us know when we are not doing what pleases God. If we will read the Bible, God will show us what we need to change. God does not rebuke us because He hates us. God rebukes us because He loves us!