

# What I Learned from the Scribes' Sermons

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## Introduction:

### A. Matt. 23:1-39

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

### B. Jesus addressed hypocrites, scribes and Pharisees

1. In one sermon He called them hypocrites 7 times, fools twice, and blind guides 5 times, and serpents, brood of vipers once

### C. In spite such strong condemnation, we can learn from hypocrites.

1. We can heed their teaching when it is truth - Matt. 23:1-3
  - a. Don't automatically disregard the message if the messenger is a hypocrite
  - b. Look beyond the messenger to the original message
2. We can also learn how not to act.

## I. I HAVE LEARNED FROM THEIR ABUSE OF AUTHORITY

### A. Binding on others what one is unwilling to do

1. Matt. 23:1-4
2. This breeds disrespect for all authority, including the Word of God
3. If we want others to have the highest regard for God's word, then we must practice what we preach

### B. Doing works to be seen of men

1. When they did their works, they did it to be seen - Matt. 23:5
2. They loved to wear religious clothing that gave appearance of devotion
3. Over time, hypocrisy will become evident to others
4. If we want God's approval, we need to do things to glorify Him, and to be seen only by Him - Matt. 5:16, 6:3-4

### C. Seeking special treatment

1. The Pharisees loved special treatment - Matt. 23:6-7
2. Jesus expected His disciples to be different - Matt. 23:8-12

## II. I HAVE LEARNED FROM THEIR FAILURE AS TEACHERS

### A. Failed to save others - Matt. 23:13

1. They made the commandments of God ineffective - Matt. 15:3-6
2. Their teaching came from hearts distant from God - Matt. 15:7-9
3. Our teaching saves both ourselves and others - 1Tim. 4:16

### B. Misusing religion for money and prestige - Matt. 23:14

1. Elders and preachers can be guilty of this
  - a. 2Tim. 3:4-6; Titus 1:10-11; Acts 20:28-31
2. We should view godliness with contentment as true gain - 1Tim. 6:3-8

- C. Made other people worse than they were themselves - Matt. 23:15
  - 1. We must be careful not to put ourselves or traditions between God's word and those we teach, but teach them the whole counsel of God -
    - a. Acts 20:27
- D. Made distinctions where God did not
  - 1. The scribes and Pharisees made distinctions in oaths - Matt. 23:16-22
  - 2. We cannot make distinctions among God's commands - 1Peter 4:11

### **III. I HAVE LEARNED FROM THEIR INCONSISTENT PRACTICE**

- A. Left commands undone - Matt. 23:23-24
  - 1. All of God's commandments are important - Matt. 5:19
- B. Focused only on the outer man - Matt. 23:25-28
  - 1. Concerned with keeping the traditions of ritual cleansing
  - 2. Willing to put up with extortion, self-indulgence, and lawlessness
  - 3. We can be guilty of having the wrong focus: big buildings, large crowds
    - a. Fellowship without challenging sinners to true repentance
    - b. Rom. 12:2
- C. Honoring the past, but unwilling to live it
  - 1. They honored the prophets of God, but were more like their ancestors who murdered the prophets - Matt. 23:29-31
    - a. They would do more harm than their fathers - Matt. 23:32-34
    - b. Upon that generation would come the judgment for the murder of all God's prophets (the destruction of Jerusalem) - Matt. 23:35-39
  - 2. We honor men like Jesus and Peter, but are we willing to live what they preached?

#### Conclusion:

- A. What can we learn from hypocrites? A great deal provided we do not imitate their abuse of authority, failure in teaching, and inconsistent practice
- B. Some people avoid church because "there are hypocrites there."
  - 1. There may be hypocrites in the church, but that's no reason to go to hell
  - 2. Did the hypocrisy of Judas Iscariot justify the rest of the apostles to abandon Jesus?
  - 3. Do hypocrites at a football game discourage you from going?