

BE ASTONISHED!!!

By Averine Pennington, 4-07-22

“And it came to pass when Jesus had ended those sayings, the people were ASTONISHED at His doctrine for He taught them as one having AUTHORITY and not as the scribes.” (Matt. 7:28-29)

I have been studying the book of Matthew this week and while absorbing all the details of the early ministry of Jesus, the above verses pricked my heart. I began thinking about how different His words must have sounded to those listening to His teachings. His audience, for the most part, were the Jews of His day . . . people immersed in the law of Moses and the traditions of their fathers . . . which included all the additional rules and regulations that had been added over many generations. Jesus did not teach as the scribes did. He taught the gospel of the kingdom of God.

I can just imagine how those listening to the sermon on the mount must have stood with their eyes glazed over and their mouths agape in wonderment at what they were hearing:

- What??? You are blessed to be poor! You are blessed to be persecuted!
- What??? How are we salt? How are we light? How can we be a CITY on a hill?
- We know ‘Thou shalt not kill,’ but this man, Jesus, says we can’t even be angry at our brother, and if we call someone a fool, we are in danger of hell fire!
- We know ‘Thou shalt not commit adultery,’ but now we can’t even look at a woman with lust in our heart for it’s the SAME as committing adultery! Whoa!
- What??? Pluck out an eye or cut off a hand if it offends! That’s pretty drastic!
- What??? If someone slaps your face, you can’t fight back but should turn the other cheek!
- What??? Love your enemies! Bless them that curse you! Do good to them that hate you!

I hope you see what I’m getting at . . . these people were absolutely ASTONISHED! And yet Jesus spoke with such AUTHORITY! They were awed by His every word!

FAST FORWARD! How is today’s society any different? Do we embrace the things that Jesus taught? The gospel of the kingdom has not changed! The sayings emphasized above are just a few of the things our Lord taught. There’s so much more to be found in His Holy Word. All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness (2 Tim. 3:16).

Even after Jesus’ death on the cross, the gospel continued to go forth. His apostles and followers carried out the commission given by Jesus which included going to the nations and **‘teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you’** (Matt. 28:18-20). As followers of Jesus Christ, the gospel that we share with others . . . that we live by and teach our children . . . must be the same gospel that Jesus taught!

Just as those who heard the sermon on the mount and were captivated by the truth of the gospel, we also must HEAR with our hearts. We must recognize The Master’s Voice and not let the voices of the world persuade us to another gospel. The way is narrow. Sadly, many are being led astray to follow the

broad way. We are living in the end of days and are forewarned that false prophets will arise and deceive many (Matt. 24:11). We must be on guard against deception. Don't depend on someone else to tell you what path to take. You must know the word of God for yourselves and be led of The Holy Spirit. Some ministers may unintentionally teach falsely because they rely on the doctrines and traditions of men . . . much like the scribes and Pharisees did. The Apostle Paul, whose epistles comprise much of the New Testament, was a Pharisee until he heard the Master's Voice for himself ([see post of 12-7-21, entitled "The Narrow Way"](#)). However, other false prophets and teachers may be wolves in sheep's clothing who purposely seek the destruction of the children of God. Either way, it is every individual's responsibility to ask God for discernment. It is, after all, your eternal destiny that is at stake.

We are at a point in time when God can no longer wink at ignorance. Warning after warning has gone out to be ready . . . to get your house in order. Yes, that includes your dwelling and preparations for the times ahead, but first and foremost . . . **look to your spiritual house**. Are you like the wise man who built his house on the rock, or the foolish man who built his house on the sand (Matt. 7:24-27)? Please, take time now to examine your personal relationship with God. We are fast approaching that moment when the bridegroom will make His appearance. The wise virgins will enter in with Him to the marriage and the door will be shut (Matt. 25:10). It's time to fill your lamps!

Yes, those who heard Jesus speak from the mount recognized the AUTHORITY with which He taught. It was different from what they heard from the scribes . . . different from anything they had ever been taught before. The scribes and Pharisees were highly regarded as teachers of the law by the Jews of that day. Sometimes we also tend to put our religious leaders on a pious pedestal . . . thinking surely they must be more righteousness. After all, they pray all the time, know their Bibles forward and backward, devote their lives to the Lord's service, and have a hotline to heaven! Really??? Here is what Jesus told those he taught, ' . . . except your righteousness shall EXCEED the righteousness of the scribes and Pharisees, ye shall in no case enter into the kingdom of heaven (Matt. 5:20).

All must come to Christ by way of the cross. There is no other way to the Father except through faith in the only begotten Son, Jesus Christ, and what He did on the cross for us. He shed His own blood for our redemption. He is our Passover Lamb who paid the price for our sins that we might live and have eternal life with Him. He died, was placed in a tomb, and after three days was resurrected. Hallelujah! He is RISEN INDEED! After 40 days, He ascended to heaven to be at the right hand of His Father, ever making intercession on our behalf. This is the gospel that we share with all who will listen. Jesus loves you! He died that you might live! He is our Salvation . . . OUR ONE AND ONLY SAVIOR!

Are you ready to meet Him? Ready or not, He is coming! Each individual, ALONE, will answer to God on judgment day when the books are opened. There will be no excuses. NONE! You will have already made your choice to accept Him or reject Him. Only you know the true relationship you have with Jesus Christ. Is your spiritual house in order? If not, seek the Lord Jesus. Ask Him to show you what is lacking. Read His Word. Study it like you mean it! Let the Holy Spirit lead you into all truth. 'Blessed are they which do hunger and thirst after righteousness: for they shall be filled (Matt. 5:6).' I promise . . . you will never regret choosing Jesus! He does not disappoint! Be prepared to BE ASTONISHED!

Yours for the Harvest,

Averine