

Kids' Chronicle

Jesus teaches humility

BY JOE SARNICOLA

The people of the village had waited many days for Jesus to arrive. They knew he would be stopping to meet them on his way back to Jerusalem.

When he came, hundreds of men and women, children and grandparents gathered around Jesus and sat waiting for him to speak. He whispered something to his disciples and then stood up to address the crowd.

"My friends," Jesus said. "Thank you for coming today. I have heard of your hospitality for a long time, and I appreciate the kindness you have shown to me and my disciples."

Jesus had to stop briefly as the people cheered and shouted thanks back to him.

"There are men among you who teach in your schools and temples," he said. "Listen to their words carefully, for the words of Moses are as important now as they were when God first gave them to him. But these men, these Pharisees who teach, do not obey the laws they preach. So listen to what they say, but do not follow their example."

The people looked around at each other and at the Pharisees who had come to see Jesus. The Pharisees avoided the looks of the people and stared angrily at Jesus. They were outraged that he would say such a thing about them. Jesus continued speaking.

"These men would have you become slaves to the law, as if it were a heavy sack to carry. Yet they see themselves as above the law. They think their expensive robes and long tassels make them great. But what



Illustration by Amy Sundstrom

they wear does not hide from God what they truly are. Hypocrites."

Gasps and words of surprise rippled through the crowd. No one had ever criticized the Pharisees before like this. Yet the people knew in their hearts that what Jesus was saying was true. The Pharisees demanded that they be called by their titles, rather than by their names. They bragged about their donations to the temple. Their prayers were long and self-important.

"I give you some simple rules," Jesus said. "Treat one another as brothers and sisters. And call on God as your father in heaven. Those of you who are the leaders of your community, consider yourselves servants. Do not be fooled by the illusion of power. Those among you who are humble

will be seen as the greatest in the eyes of God.

"To the Pharisees I ask, what is more important, your money or your souls? If you teach one thing and do another while claiming to be men of God, God sees you. There is the law and there is justice. A man may be clean outside, yet his heart is black. God will hold you responsible for your actions."

Q&A

READ MORE ABOUT IT:
Matthew 23.

1. What did Jesus call the Pharisees?
2. How should the community leaders act to please God?



Bible Accent

The Pharisees were experts in the laws that God had given to Moses. But Jesus often called them hypocrites because they were more interested in appearing holy and important than they were in serving God with humble hearts. They believed their religious status made them superior to the other people of their villages. They loved to brag about their titles and about their wealth. Money was very important to them.

Jesus used the Pharisees to show what can happen when people place the law higher than God, who gave them the law.

St. Jude

St. Jude was one of the original twelve disciples of Jesus. The Gospels of Matthew and Mark refer to him by the name of Thaddeus. Although scholars believe he was related to Jesus, little is known of him or his occupation before Jesus called him to be one of his followers.

According to tradition, after the day of Pentecost, when the Holy Spirit came to the followers of Jesus, Jude traveled into Persia, possibly with Simon, to preach the word of God. Both men are believed to have died there as martyrs.

St. Jude is the patron saint of hopeless causes. We remember him on Oct. 28.

Bible Trivia

What New Testament author was a Pharisee before he became a Christian?

Send Answer to: Catholic Courier Bible Trivia, P.O. Box 24379, Rochester, N.Y. 14624. Please include your name, address and school name.

All entries must be received by Nov. 14, 1996. A winner will be selected at random from all the correct entries submitted.

Last month's winner was Ashley Marie DeMarco, a homeschooler in Fairport. She correctly identified Luke as the author of the Book of Acts.

Puzzle

Cross out the letters b, c, d, w, x, y, and z to learn what God wants us to be.

b scxewxzrc vyzz an cxt d s

Answer can be found on page 7.

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