

Bible Study on Lessons for November 13-14

This is the beginning of a three part sermon series centering on our Lord and Savior. The sermon will look at Jesus as Rabbi as teacher. The key text will be the largest collection of His teachings which are found in the Sermon on the Mount.

Begin by reading *Job38:1-, 12, 19-21*

The book of Job is the story of a good man who suffers total disaster. All his children are killed, he loses all his wealth and property and finally to add insult to injury he is inflicted by a repulsive disease. Then some friends come to bring him comfort, but instead they try to explain his suffering in traditional terms by telling Job that he is being punished for his sins. Job refuses to believe this and continues to maintain his innocence before God.

In the verses you have just read we see God speaking to Job; however He does not give an answer to Job's questions and instead overwhelms him with a poetic picture of his divine power and wisdom.

Question: In our super scientific world how do you react to this amazing description of God's creative power?

Next read Psalm 39:1-7 Again we are reading another psalm in which the writer is going through an intense period of personal suffering. In this case he even wonders how long he will survive, but even with all his troubles he still places his hope in God.

Question: How about you? Have you ever been at such a low point in your life that you questioned whether you could even go on living?

Page 2

Now read Matthew 5:1-12 the Sermon on the Mount is one of the most disturbing and challenging portions of scripture. In his book *The Jesus I Never Knew* Philip Yancey tells the story of a friend who was on the faculty at Texas A&M University who assigned the Sermon on the Mount to her composition class. Her student's reactions to this portion of scripture surprised her. "In my opinion religion is just one big hoax," wrote one student. Another wrote: "There is an old saying that 'you shouldn't believe everything you read' and it applies in this case. More critical comments from her students.

The stuff the churches preach is extremely strict and allows for almost no fun without thinking it is a sin or not.

I did not like the essay "Sermon on the Mount." It was hard to read and made me feel like I had to be perfect and no one is.

The things asked in this sermon are absurd. To look at a woman is adultery. That is the most extreme, stupid, unhuman statement that I have ever heard.

Wow some harsh reactions! So what about yourself? Do you find these teachings of Jesus easy to follow? Are they confusing? Do you think they are absurd?

So come to worship and let's see what I can make of this in a sermon.