



HOW DID HE FEEL?

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Then the Pharisees went out and laid plans to trap him in his words. They sent their disciples to him along with the Herodians. “Teacher,” they said, “we know that you are a man of integrity and that you teach the way of God in accordance with the truth. You aren’t swayed by others because you pay no attention to who they are. Tell us then, what is your opinion? Is it right to pay the imperial tax to Caesar or not?”

Matthew 22:15-22

Have you ever known someone who has told you how you should be living as a follower of Jesus? Perhaps they claim it’s the Bible’s way—the right way. They may seem like wonderful, helpful people on the outside. But when we truly get to know them, their heart’s not there. Their Christian love is skin deep.

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A great number of Pharisees were like that. As guardians of the Torah, they focused on keeping strict laws and rules. Throughout his ministry, Jesus was openly opposed to them. He denounced them publicly for their hypocrisy, spiritual blindness, and evil ways. In Matthew 23:5, Jesus said of them, *“Everything they do is for people to see.”*

The Pharisees saw Jesus’ ministry as a threat to their popularity and their authority. Wherever he went they shadowed him, testing him with questions, hoping to find reasons to accuse him. Plotting to have him killed.

Imagine what it must have been to be Jesus in a situation like the one in the Scripture above. Imagine how he must have felt pouring out his love and goodness, healing individuals, and all the while being threatened by these hypocritical men.

When I started writing this I was thinking how painful it must have been for Jesus to be criticized and challenged by the scribes and Pharisees wherever he went. How would we feel?

But when I started studying the various Scriptures about Jesus with the Pharisees, I saw no pain in him at all. Maybe frustration. But not pain.

What can we learn from Jesus’ response towards these men? As his followers, how should we respond to the person who tells us what we should do or believe? Are you sure you can trust him? Do you want to follow him or Jesus?

To make sure, turn to One you *can* trust: Turn to Jesus and the true Word of God, your Bible.

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