Matthew 23: 13-23
Jesus said to the crowds and to his disciples:
"Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, you hypocrites.
You lock the Kingdom of heaven before men.
You do not enter yourselves,
nor do you allow entrance to those trying to enter.
"Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, you hypocrites.
You traverse sea and land to make one convert,
and when that happens you make him a child of Gehenna
twice as much as yourselves.
"Woe to you, blind guides, who say,
'If one swears by the temple, it means nothing,
but if one swears by the gold of the temple, one is obligated.'
Blind fools, which is greater, the gold,
or the temple that made the gold sacred?
And you say, 'If one swears by the altar, it means nothing,
but if one swears by the gift on the altar, one is obligated.'
You blind ones, which is greater, the gift,
or the altar that makes the gift sacred?
One who swears by the altar swears by it and all that is upon it;
one who swears by the temple swears by it
and by him who dwells in it;
one who swears by heaven swears by the throne of God
and by him who is seated on it."

Our Scripture Reflection
Why was Our Lord so hard on and harsh to the religious leaders and teachers of His day?
1. The primary accusation leveled against them is hypocrisy (from a Greek word meaning stage actor). They often carried out their religious duties for appearance sake.

2. In order to shake them up and shake them loose from their complacency to that they might take their faith seriously, hopefully, experience salvation one day. We must learn a lesson from them. We are called to live our faith to the fullest, not the least we can get by with. And if we do...we will experience more joy than we ever thought possible.

**Food for your Journey**

God’s hard instructions are never his last words to us, for the woe, the waste and the tears of life belong to its interlude, not its finale.

—F.B. Meyer.

**A Prayer from the Heart**

Dear God, You created me to be Your own treasured possession. You sent Your Son Jesus to bring me back when I take You for granted and go my own way. Help me to wake up and realize the great treasure I have in my relationship with You. Amen