

Bible Studies

What is a Hypocrite?

Read Romans 2v17-24

When Jesus looked at the religious institutions of His time He accused them of hypocrisy. The same charge is often made against the Church today. Sometimes it is true. At other times it is the result of a fundamental misunderstanding of what Christianity is about.

Jesus once said to his disciples *“Be on your guard against the yeast of the Pharisees, which is hypocrisy.”* Luke 12v1. The question is, did He mean, “watch out, those Pharisees are dangerous”? Or did He mean, “be careful that the same hypocrisy found in them does not infect you.” I think the latter.



What is hypocrisy?

The simplest definition *is saying one thing and doing another.* However, as we will see, there is a bit more to it than that.

The Greek word used in the Gospels is *Hypokrino*, it means, *a stage actor*, and it came to mean one who play acts or disguises himself, a pretender.

In what way are hypocrites actors?

Originally it meant *one who gives an answer*, (in a play; one who responds). This is interesting because to be a hypocrite you have to believe something strongly, you have to have a known opinion. This is one reason why the church is open to charges of hypocrisy.

Why do you need an opinion to be a hypocrite?

The *krino* in *Hypokrino* is the verb to judge, (reply, expound or interpret). Hypocrisy is associated with judging others.

In what way are hypocrites false judges? **Romans 2v1**

Why do so many people accuse Christian’s of being hypocrites?

Look up these passages and work out what they were doing that made them hypocrites.

Matthew 6v2

Matthew 7v3-5

Matthew 15v7-9

Matthew 22v18

Matthew 23v13

Matthew 23v25&27

Matthew 23v29-30

The first reference is interesting, did the Pharisees involved believe in giving? Was it part of their teaching? Did they want to give and enjoy doing so? The answer to all these has to be yes. Since they taught alms giving not to give to the poor would be hypocrisy. Not to do so publicly would have been to open themselves to the charge of hypocrisy. Jesus knew their motives were wrong. They taught and did the right thing, but they were still hypocrites.



What things are associated with hypocrisy?

What are the opposites?

Is he a hypocrite?

A rich Christian who believes in God’s love and drives past a slum without doing anything. 1 John 3v17

A preacher who admits to his own failings but preaches the need for holiness. Romans 7v18, 1 Cor 9v27

A preacher who preaches holiness yet lives in unrepentant sin? Mat 23v27

A drunk who lectures people on the dangers of alcoholism.

A pro-life activist who secretly has an abortion.

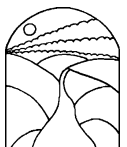
An anarchist who won’t pay his taxes.

An anarchist who does pay his taxes.

An adulterer who attends church regularly.

The last two are the interesting ones. It depends why the anarchist pays his taxes and why the adulterer attends church. If he does so to gain respectability, he is a hypocrite. But not if he does so knowing his sin and knowing Christ is his only hope to overcoming it.

On hearing this, Jesus said to them, “It is not the healthy who need a doctor, but the sick. I have not come to call the righteous, but sinners” Mark 2:17



Churches are places for sinners not saints. To become a Christian we need to acknowledge our sinfulness. (It is impossible to be saved while denying that you are a sinner.) If I were perfect, I would not need Jesus. I go to church because I am a sinner and I need Jesus very badly. The dentist is a good place to go if you have a tooth ache!

We must recognize the vast difference between those who are trying to live as Christians but who make mistakes and those who say they are Christians but do not try to live better.

Does being a Christian make you better than anyone else?



Be perfect, therefore, as your heavenly Father is perfect. Matthew 5:48

Assuming (quite safely) that none of us has quite got to that position, **how could you preach on this verse without being a hypocrite?**

In one sense it is impossible. Because we are preaching a standard that none of us can keep. If this is hypocrisy, then every preacher and every Christian is guilty.

What was Paul's attitude? Philippians 3v12

And be found in him, not having a righteousness of my own that comes from the law, but that which is through faith in Christ—the righteousness that comes from God and is by faith. Philippians 3:9

What is the difference between made righteous and self righteous?

Which one are you? Where does our righteousness come from?

For who makes you different from anyone else? What do you have that you did not receive? And if you did receive it, why do you boast as though you did not? 1 Corinthians 4v7

Our righteousness is a gift, we cannot boast of it.



How are you going to avoid being a hypocrite?

Be humble, be honest, be loving, be sincere.

Acknowledge your faults. Be transparent, don't put up a façade.

Live a life consistent with what you believe.

Glory in forgiveness, not self righteousness.

Let God work in your life to deal with sin.

Live on your actions not your words.

Condemn sin never sinners. Live grace, forgiveness and love.

Do not condemn others when you are guilty. Romans 2v1

Do not claim to be what you are not – claim to be what God made you.

Do not elevate yourself by teaching others a standard you won't keep.

Do not think of yourself more highly than you ought, Romans 12:3

Do nothing out of selfish ambition or vain conceit, but in humility consider others better than yourselves. Philippians 2:3

M L Jones spoke about *practising the presence of God*. Remembering that God sees and knows all you do, and that it is God you need to impress and not anyone else.

What effect does our hypocrisy have on the World? Romans 2v24



How are you going to avoid being seen by the world as a hypocrite?

The best way to avoid being seen as a hypocrite is to avoid being a hypocrite.

The world sees us as hypocrites when we say one thing and do another. When we claim to be better than them. When we are inconsistent with our teachings. As we have seen this is inevitable, we teach total purity, yet not one of us practices it. So we must be honest about what we believe and who we are. About grace, forgiveness and how God is changing us.

The danger here is that we build 'cardboard cathedral' that others can only find to be false. We think the glory of the church is in our perfection and sinlessness. That the moment you become a Christian you become impeccable (unable to sin). That it is our job to point out how much better we are than others and how they are obliged to live to our standards.

If this is our attitude can we do anything but fail?

Is the Church about being respectable?

The glory of the Church is in God's forgiveness, power and righteousness. It is evidenced by the fruit of the Spirit in our lives. *In the same way, let your light shine before men, that they may see your good deeds and praise your Father in heaven. Matthew 5v15*

It is in God that I found what I need. I am a sinner saved by grace.

One of your work mates tells you that one of your Christian friends has just been caught in stealing from the firm. **What do you say?**



A millstone around our necks.

The fear of hypocrisy has deeply effected the church. This is a work of the enemy.

Many are so scared of being a hypocrite that they will not go to church or publicly live as a Christian. "Don't you know Jesus hates hypocrites! "(**does He?**). "When I have triumphed over sin go to church." "If I cannot live the Christian life correctly then I cannot live it at all".



What are the flaws in these arguments?

How can the fear of being a hypocrite effect your Christian walk?

If you are sincere before God can you be a hypocrite?

Bible Studies

What is a Hypocrite?

When Jesus looked at the religious institutions of His time He accused them of hypocrisy. The same charge is often made against the Church today. Sometimes it is true. At other times it is the result of a fundamental misunderstanding of what Christianity is about.

Jesus once said to his disciples *"Be on your guard against the yeast of the Pharisees, which is hypocrisy."* Luke 12v1. The question is, did He mean, "watch out, those Pharisees are dangerous"? Or did He mean, "be careful that the same hypocrisy found in them does not infect you." I think the latter.



What is hypocrisy?

The simplest definition *is saying one thing and doing another*. However, as we will see, there is a bit more to it than that.

The Greek word used in the Gospels is *Hypokrino*, it means, *a stage actor*, and it came to mean one who play acts or disguises himself, a pretender.

In what way are hypocrites actors?

Originally it meant *one who gives an answer*, (in a play; one who responds). This is interesting because to be a hypocrite you have to believe something strongly, you have to have a known opinion. This is one reason why the church is open to charges of hypocrisy.

Why do you need an opinion to be a hypocrite?

The *krino* in *Hypokrino* is the verb to judge, (reply, expound or interpret). Hypocrisy is associated with judging others.

In what way are hypocrites false judges? **Romans 2v17-24**

Why do so many people accuse Christians of being hypocrites?

Look up these passages and work out what they were doing that made them hypocrites.

Matthew 6v2

acted men's approval

Matthew 7v3-5

Judged taught others full of sin themselves.

Matthew 15v7-9

acted one way with their lips another with their heart.

Matthew 22v18

pretending to be sincere, acting as spies.

Matthew 23v13

legalism without grace

Matthew 23v25&27

outside inside

Matthew 23v29-30

We are better than them

The first reference is interesting, did the Pharisees involved believe in giving? Was it part of their teaching? Did they want to give and enjoy doing so? The answer to all these has to be yes. Since they taught alms giving not to give to the poor would be hypocrisy. Not to do so publicly would have been to open themselves to the charge of hypocrisy. Jesus knew their motives were wrong. They taught and did the right thing, but they were still hypocrites.



What things are associated with hypocrisy?

What are the opposites?

Is he a hypocrite?

- A rich Christian who believes in God's love and drives past a slum without doing anything. 1 John 3v17
- A preacher who admits to his own failings but preaches the need for holiness. Romans 7v18, 1 Cor 9v27
- A preacher who preaches holiness yet lives in unrepentant sin? Mat 23v27
- A drunk who lectures people on the dangers of alcoholism.
- A pro-life activist who secretly has an abortion.
- An anarchist who won't pay his taxes.
- An anarchist who does pay his taxes.
- An adulterer who attends church regularly.

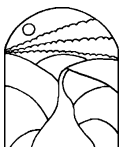
The last two are the interesting ones. It depends why the anarchist pays his taxes and why the adulterer attends church. If he does so to gain respectability, he is a hypocrite. But not if he does so knowing his sin and knowing Christ is his only hope to overcoming it.

On hearing this, Jesus said to them, "It is not the healthy who need a doctor, but the sick. I have not come to call the righteous, but sinners" Mark 2:17

Self-righteousness, inconsistency, judgment better than mental, thinking of yourself as better than others. etc

Humility, consistency, concept of our sinfulness but our forgiveness.

STREAMS IN THE DESERT



Waiuku AG
Ray Moxham
www.wag.org.nz
WaiukuAG
@maxnet.co.nz

Churches are places for sinners not saints. To become a Christian we need to acknowledge our sinfulness. (It is impossible to be saved while denying that you are a sinner.) If I were perfect, I would not need Jesus. I go to church because I am a sinner and I need Jesus very badly. The dentist is a good place to go if you have a tooth ache!

We must recognize the vast difference between those who are trying to live as Christians but who make mistakes and those who say they are Christians but do not try to live better.

Does being a Christian make you better than anyone else?



Be perfect, therefore, as your heavenly Father is perfect. Matthew 5:48

Assuming (quite safely) that none of us has quite got to that position, **how could you preach on this verse without being a hypocrite?**

In one sense it is impossible. Because we are preaching a standard that none of us can keep. If this is hypocrisy, then every preacher and every Christian is guilty.

What was Paul's attitude? Philippians 3v12

And be found in him, not having a righteousness of my own that comes from the law, but that which is through faith in Christ—the righteousness that comes from God and is by faith. Philippians 3:9

What is the difference between made righteous and self righteous?

Which one are you? Where does our righteousness come from?

For who makes you different from anyone else? What do you have that you did not receive? And if you did receive it, why do you boast as though you did not? 1 Corinthians 4v7

Our righteousness is a gift, we cannot boast of it.



How are you going to avoid being a hypocrite?

Be humble, be honest, be loving, be sincere.

Acknowledge your faults. Be transparent, don't put up a façade.

Live a life consistent with what you believe.

Glory in forgiveness, not self righteousness.

Let God work in your life to deal with sin.

Live on your actions not your words.

Condemn sin never sinners. Live grace, forgiveness and love.

Do not condemn others when you are guilty. Romans 2v1

Do not claim to be what you are not – claim to be what God made you.

Do not elevate yourself by teaching others a standard you won't keep.

Do not think of yourself more highly than you ought, Romans 12:3

Do nothing out of selfish ambition or vain conceit, but in humility consider others better than yourselves. Philippians 2:3

M L Jones spoke about *practising the presence of God*. Remembering that God sees and knows all you do, and that it is God you need to impress and not anyone else.

What effect does our hypocrisy have on the World? Romans 2v24



How are you going to avoid being seen by the world as a hypocrite?

The best way to avoid being seen as a hypocrite is to avoid being a hypocrite.

The world sees us as hypocrites when we say one thing and do another. When we claim to be better than them. When we are inconsistent with our teachings. As we have seen this is inevitable, we teach total purity, yet not one of us practices it. So we must be honest about what we believe and who we are. About grace, forgiveness and how God is changing us.

The danger here is that we build 'cardboard cathedral' that others can only find to be false. We think the glory of the church is in our perfection and sinlessness. That the moment you become a Christian you become impeccable (unable to sin). That it is our job to point out how much better we are than others and how they are obliged to live to our standards.

If this is our attitude can we do anything but fail?

Is the Church about being respectable?

The glory of the Church is in God's forgiveness, power and righteousness. It is evidenced by the fruit of the Spirit in our lives. *In the same way, let your light shine before men, that they may see your good deeds and praise your Father in heaven. Matthew 5v15*

It is in God that I found what I need. I am a sinner saved by grace.

One of your work mates tells you that one of your Christian friends has just been caught in stealing from the firm. **What do you say?**



A millstone around our necks.

The fear of hypocrisy has deeply effected the church. This is a work of the enemy.

Many are so scared of being a hypocrite that they will not go to church or publicly live as a Christian. "Don't you know Jesus hates hypocrites! "(**does He?**). "When I have triumphed over sin go to church." "If I cannot live the Christian life correctly then I cannot live it at all".



What are the flaws in these arguments?

How can the fear of being a hypocrite effect your Christian walk?

If you are sincere before God can you be a hypocrite?