

BIG PROBLEMS? BIGGER GOD!

Part 8: The PROBLEM of HYPOCRISY

INTRO: We continue our series with this KEY THOUGHT . . . Today Part 8 on the problem of HYPOCRISY, which is closely connected to last lesson's problem on Prejudice.

QUESTIONS: What is the deadliest and most damaging sin of all? What sin did Jesus attack the most? Self-righteousness—HYPOCRISY, one of the problems (sins?) we most justify and most practice.

HYPOCRISY IS A DAMAGING SIN. How often have *non-Christians* slammed Christianity because of hypocrisy they see in professing Christians? How many *believers* have become disillusioned and their faith weakened at being lied to or cheated by someone who professed to be Christian (and perhaps was)?

HYPOCRISY THEN AND NOW

- IN JESUS' DAY - Jesus spoke a lot on the problem of hypocrisy (the most?). Why? Real and damaging problem to becoming and being a Christ follower (Matt. 6; 15; 16; 23; Mk. 7; 8; 12; Lk. 11; 12; 20). Usually He was specifically addressing the religious leaders of His day. I find nowhere where Jesus called His disciples hypocrites, although to some degree we all are!
- TODAY - Still a damaging problem causing some to come to Christ with faulty understanding and others who are believers to wrongly understand what it means to follow Jesus.
- WARNINGS AGAINST HYPOCRISY (Isa. 29:13; Matt. 15:8-9; Mk. 7:6-7; Lk. 12:1; Matt. 16:6, 11-12). "Leaven?"

TWO OPENING OBSERVATIONS:

1. Exposing hypocrisy is helpful, especially when it's mine.
2. Practicing hypocrisy is natural since we are all sinful. Can easily go undetected.

DEFINING HYPOCRISY - largely grew out of Greek and Roman theater culture where someone wore a mask and played a part different from themselves. We are hypocrites when we pretend to be someone we actually aren't.

HYPOCRISY CHARACTERISTICS (Matt. 23)

NOTE: Addressing the religious leaders but serve as warning to all. Terms are revealing: "Woe" (7xs alas, so sorry), "Hypocrites" (7xs), "blind guides" (5xs). Two outstanding traits: (1) Hypocrites say but don't do (v.3). (2) Hypocrites do what they do (like give, pray, fast) to be seen by men (v.5). Look more at Matt. 23:

1. *They don't walk their talk* (vv. 1-3). They pretend but don't practice.
2. *They place reputation over character* (v.4). Reputation is what others think about us. Character is what God thinks of us.
3. *They do what they do to be seen* (v.5). All about the optics.
4. *They love man to honor and recognize them* (vv. 6-12)
5. *They set expectations and standards for others that they do not practice themselves* (vv. 13-22). Rom. 2:1-3
6. *They focus on the minor over the majors* (vv. 23-24). Pay attention to details and ignore the substance.
7. *They are mainly concerned with the externals* (vv. 25-28).
8. *They are usually blind to their own hypocrisy* (vv. 29-32).
9. *They will be exposed and judged* (vv. 32-36). Lk. 12:1-2; Rom. 2:1-3
10. *They break the heart of God* (vv. 37-39).

REMEDY FOR HYPOCRISY - Stopping hypocrisy completely is probably impossible. Hard to admit and repent.

Suggestions:

1. Examine self first (Matt. 7:1-5).
2. Practice the Golden Rule (Lk. 6:31-37).
3. Remind yourself how great God's love is for you.
4. Focus on being the person God wants you to be. Christlike in character is the goal.

CONC: Play acting is meant for the stage, but not for real life. Let's be real, genuine, without hypocrisy—Christians of integrity!