



Homilies from the Hypocrites

Matthew 23:1-39

What Is A Hypocrite?

- Hypocrisy is not merely when one's walk does not measure up his talk, nor always when he does not practice what he preaches.
- It may be a result of weakness and not hypocrisy. He wants to do right; he simply does not strive hard enough.
- Hypocrite comes from the Greek hupokrites (hoop-o-kree-tace), meaning an actor under an assumed character; stage-player (Strong's).
- A true hypocrite according to scripture is one who pretends to be something he or she is not, **and has no intention of becoming.**
- God did not charge you with the responsibility to make this judgment about others.

Jesus Sternly Addressed Hypocrites

- Hypocrites (7 times)
 - Matt. 23:13-15, 23, 25, 27, 29
- Fools (twice)
 - Matt. 23:17, 19
- Blind guides (5 times)
 - Matt. 23:16-17, 19, 24, 26
- Serpents, brood of vipers (once)
 - Matt. 23:33

We Can Learn From Hypocrites

- We can benefit from their teaching of God's word.
 - Matt. 23:1-3
 - Don't automatically disregard the message even though the messenger is a hypocrite.
 - Phil. 1:15-18
 - Look beyond the messenger to the original source of the message.
 - Rom. 1:16

We Can Learn From Hypocrites

- We can also learn how not to act, what kind of behaviors to avoid.
- What sermons would hypocrites preach from the benefit of hindsight?

Do Not Abuse Your Authority

- “I bound on others what I was unwilling to do.”
 - Matt. 23:1-4 - “Then Jesus spoke to the multitudes and to His disciples, 2 saying: ‘The scribes and the Pharisees sit in Moses' seat. 3 Therefore whatever they tell you to observe, that observe and do, but do not do according to their works; for they say, and do not do. 4 For they bind heavy burdens, hard to bear, and lay them on men's shoulders; but they themselves will not move them with one of their fingers.’”

Do Not Abuse Your Authority

- This generates disrespect for all authority, including the Word of God.
- If I want others to have high regard for God's word, then I must live in such a way that manifests respect for God's word.

Do Not Abuse Your Authority

- “I should not have done works to draw attention to myself, but rather to God.”
 - Matt. 23:5 - “But all their works they do to be seen by men. They make their phylacteries broad and enlarge the borders of their garments.”

Do Not Abuse Your Authority

- “I loved to dress up in religious clothing that gave appearance of devotion. Over time, people saw through the clothes to the real me.”
 - Matt. 5:16 - “Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works and glorify your Father in heaven.”
 - Matt. 6:1-18

Do Not Abuse Your Authority

- “I should not have pursued attention and special treatment.”
 - Matt. 23:6-7 - “They love the best places at feasts, the best seats in the synagogues, 7 greetings in the marketplaces, and to be called by men, ‘Rabbi, Rabbi’.”

Matt. 23:8-12

- “But you, do not be called ‘Rabbi’; for One is your Teacher, the Christ, and you are all brethren. 9 Do not call anyone on earth your father; for One is your Father, He who is in heaven. 10 And do not be called teachers; for One is your Teacher, the Christ. 11 But he who is greatest among you shall be your servant. 12 And whoever exalts himself will be humbled, and he who humbles himself will be exalted.”

Be True To Your Teaching

- “I failed to truly show others the way to the kingdom of heaven, and therefore failed to go in myself.”
 - Matt. 23:13 - “But woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For you shut up the kingdom of heaven against men; for you neither go in yourselves, nor do you allow those who are entering to go in.”

Be True To Your Teaching

- “Through my extra doctrines, I rendered the commandments of God ineffective.”
 - Matt. 15:4-6 - “For God commanded, saying, ‘Honor your father and your mother’; and, ‘He who curses father or mother, let him be put to death.’ 5 But you say, ‘Whoever says to his father or mother, Whatever profit you might have received from me is a gift to God -- 6 then he need not honor his father or mother.’ Thus you have made the commandment of God of no effect by your tradition.”

Be True To Your Teaching

- “My teaching came from a heart far removed from God.”
 - Matt. 15:7-9 - “Hypocrites! Well did Isaiah prophesy about you, saying: 8 'These people draw near to Me with their mouth, And honor Me with their lips, But their heart is far from Me. 9 And in vain they worship Me, Teaching as doctrines the commandments of men.’”

Be True To Your Teaching

- Effective teaching that saves others begins with me.
 - 1Tim. 4:16 - “Take heed to yourself and to the doctrine. Continue in them, for in doing this you will save both yourself and those who hear you.”

Be True To Your Teaching

- “I used religion to take advantage of the vulnerable and weak, and to impress others.”
 - Matt. 23:14 - “Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For you devour widows’ houses, and for a pretense make long prayers. Therefore you will receive greater condemnation.”

Be True To Your Teaching

- 2Tim. 3:5-6 - “Having a form of godliness but denying its power. And from such people turn away! 6 For of this sort are those who creep into households and make captives of gullible women loaded down with sins, led away by various lusts.”
- Titus 1:10-11 - “For there are many insubordinate, both idle talkers and deceivers, especially those of the circumcision, 11 whose mouths must be stopped, who subvert whole households, teaching things which they ought not, for the sake of dishonest gain.”

Be True To Your Teaching

- 1Tim. 6:3-6 - “If anyone teaches otherwise and does not consent to wholesome words, even the words of our Lord Jesus Christ, and to the doctrine which accords with godliness, 4 he is proud, knowing nothing, but is obsessed with disputes and arguments over words, from which come envy, strife, reviling, evil suspicions, 5 useless wranglings of men of corrupt minds and destitute of the truth, who suppose that godliness is a means of gain. From such withdraw yourself. 6 Now godliness with contentment is great gain.”
- 2Cor. 8:21 - “Providing honorable things, not only in the sight of the Lord, but also in the sight of men.”

Be True To Your Teaching

- “I was so self-deluded that I made people worse than myself.”
 - Matt. 23:15 - “Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For you travel land and sea to win one proselyte, and when he is won, you make him twice as much a son of hell as yourselves.”
- “By my emphasis on hobbies and other traditions of men, rather than on the word of God, I created a new denomination in my own image.”

Be True To Your Teaching

- “I made distinctions where God did not.”
 - Matt. 23:16-22 - “Woe to you, blind guides, who say, ‘Whoever swears by the temple, it is nothing; but whoever swears by the gold of the temple, he is obliged to perform it.’ 17 Fools and blind! For which is greater, the gold or the temple that sanctifies the gold? 18 And, ‘Whoever swears by the altar, it is nothing; but whoever swears by the gift that is on it, he is obliged to perform it.’ 19 Fools and blind! For which is greater, the gift or the altar that sanctifies the gift? 20 Therefore he who swears by the altar, swears by it and by all things on it. 21 He who swears by the temple, swears by it and by Him who dwells in it. 22 And he who swears by heaven, swears by the throne of God and by Him who sits on it.”

Be True To Your Teaching

- Teaching our “think so’s” and “it seems to me’s” instead of telling people what the Bible really says and only what it says.
- To guard against this, “let us speak where the Bible speaks, and be silent where the Bible is silent.”
 - 1Peter 4:11 - “If anyone speaks, let him speak as the oracles of God...”

Do Not Be Inconsistent In Practice

- “I got so focused on my new distinctions, I left many commands of God undone.”
 - Matt. 23:23-24 - “Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For you pay tithe of mint and anise and cummin, and have neglected the weightier matters of the law: justice and mercy and faith. These you ought to have done, without leaving the others undone. 24 Blind guides, who strain out a gnat and swallow a camel!”

Do Not Be Inconsistent In Practice

- All of God's commandments are important.
 - Matt. 5:19 - “Whoever therefore breaks one of the least of these commandments, and teaches men so, shall be called least in the kingdom of heaven; but whoever does and teaches them, he shall be called great in the kingdom of heaven.”

Do Not Be Inconsistent In Practice

- “I focused only on the outer man.”
 - Matt. 23:25-28 - “Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For you cleanse the outside of the cup and dish, but inside they are full of extortion and self-indulgence. 26 Blind Pharisee, first cleanse the inside of the cup and dish, that the outside of them may be clean also. 27 Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For you are like whitewashed tombs which indeed appear beautiful outwardly, but inside are full of dead men's bones and all uncleanness. 28 Even so you also outwardly appear righteous to men, but inside you are full of hypocrisy and lawlessness.”

Do Not Be Inconsistent In Practice

- We must emphasize true repentance, a conversion of the inner man.
 - Rom. 12:2 - “And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, that you may prove what is that good and acceptable and perfect will of God.”

Do Not Be Inconsistent In Practice

- “I honored my heritage, but was unwilling to live up to it.”
 - Matt. 23:29-31 - “Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! Because you build the tombs of the prophets and adorn the monuments of the righteous, 30 and say, ‘If we had lived in the days of our fathers, we would not have been partakers with them in the blood of the prophets.’ 31 Therefore you are witnesses against yourselves that you are sons of those who murdered the prophets.”

Do Not Be Inconsistent In Practice

- “I would have rejected, opposed, and even harmed my godly ancestors.”
 - Matt. 23:32-34 - “Fill up, then, the measure of your fathers' guilt. 33 Serpents, brood of vipers! How can you escape the condemnation of hell? 34 Therefore, indeed, I send you prophets, wise men, and scribes: some of them you will kill and crucify, and some of them you will scourge in your synagogues and persecute from city to city.”

Do Not Be Inconsistent In Practice

- “My generation and succeeding generations murdered all of God's New Testament prophets in the destruction of Jerusalem in 70 A.D.”
 - Matt. 23:35-39 - “That on you may come all the righteous blood shed on the earth, from the blood of righteous Abel to the blood of Zechariah, son of Berechiah, whom you murdered between the temple and the altar. 36 Assuredly, I say to you, all these things will come upon this generation. 37 O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, the one who kills the prophets and stones those who are sent to her! How often I wanted to gather your children together, as a hen gathers her chicks under her wings, but you were not willing! 38 See! Your house is left to you desolate; 39 for I say to you, you shall see Me no more till you say, ‘Blessed is He who comes in the name of the LORD!’”

Do Not Be Inconsistent In Practice

- We honor men like Jesus, Paul, and Peter, but are we willing to live what they preached?
- Or, have we chosen to live with the 21st century compromise with first century Christianity?

Do Not Be Inconsistent In Practice

- With the hypocrites, their primary interest was in what others thought of them based on how they acted in their presence.
 - They had little interest in what God saw when He looked at them.
 - They had no interest in what they saw when they looked inside.
- The true measure of your faith, the honest measure of my own faith, is not what others see here at services, it is what God sees when we are alone or in the presence of the lost, it is what we see when we carefully look within ourselves.

Homilies from the Hypocrites

- Speaking of hypocrites, some people avoid the church because “there are hypocrites there.”
- There may be hypocrites in the church, but not as many as judgmental sinners may think.
 - Remember, a hypocrite is not someone who teaches the truth but occasionally fails to live up to it; that’s just a weak person.
 - A hypocrite is someone who teaches truth and has no intention to live it.

Homilies from the Hypocrites

- My question is this: Who gave the sinner the power to read the hearts of people trying to be Christians and judge their motives?
- Ironic isn't it? The sinner, who avoids Christians because he thinks they are judging him, is guilty of judging Christians.
- Leads me to ask who is the greater hypocrite: the Christian who tries and occasionally fails to practice what he preaches, or the sinner who judges him without truly knowing his heart?

Homilies from the Hypocrites

- Even conceding that there may be hypocrites in the church is no reason to reject the Gospel.
- Did the hypocrisy of Judas Iscariot empower the rest of the apostles to leave Jesus?
- Do you allow the presence of hypocrites keep you from enjoying other activities (sports events, vacations, etc.)?
- Which is better, to spend a short time with hypocrites in the church, or to spend eternity with hypocrites in hell?
- Remember what Jesus said of the hypocrites: “How can you escape the condemnation of hell?” - Matt. 23:33 (Applies to hypocrites inside and outside of the church)