

Are we the same on the outside as the inside? (Slide 1)
Hypocrisy and the Lack of Self-Awareness

Reading: Matthew 15:1-9

There is a funny little story that I heard about a father who complained that his wife and children spent way too much time watching television.

The children would sit in front of the television and watch cartoons on Saturday mornings and he could barely pull them away from it. Before church services, there they were slowly putting on their clothes for Sunday services because, once again, they are glued to that old television.

The wife, as he refers to his bride, is always watching those daytime soap operas and neglecting the housework. He looks about the house and with disgust he exclaims; **“This house is a mess!”** All because of that television. The dishes are piled up and the laundry is overflowing in the hamper. The beds are not even made!

He stands in the midst of his messy house with the television blaring on Sunday afternoon and declares; **“Just as soon as Football season is over, I’m pulling the plug!”**

Hypocrisy is sometimes like a blind that is placed over our understanding, leading to a total lack of self-awareness.

Seemingly, hypocrisy can take on two forms. One in which an individual simply lacks self-awareness and one in which a person knows exactly what they are doing.

Jesus said in:

Matthew 7:1-5 (Slide 2)

1 “Do not judge so that you will not be judged. 2 For in the way you judge, you will be judged; and by your standard of measure, it will be measured to

you. 3 Why do you look at the speck that is in your brother's eye, but do not notice the log that is in your own eye? (Slide 3) 4 Or how can you say to your brother, 'Let me take the speck out of your eye,' and behold, the log is in your own eye? 5 You hypocrite, first take the log out of your own eye, and then you will see clearly to take the speck out of your brother's eye.

Verse 1 has been misused in so many fashions and situations. Jesus is talking about making righteous judgments (the common meaning is "to decide") which truly fits with recognizing our own shortcomings before trying to rectify others.

I am always telling my students in my shop class to keep their safety glasses on. One reason is that if you get a "hot" piece of "spatter" embedded in your eye, the only way to get it out is to "drill it out."

It's much easier to get a speck out of your eye than spatter embedded in your eye. Sometimes with a speck one can merely blink their eyes and it falls out. Therefore, if someone is going to help someone see, they must be sure that they can see clearly themselves.

Self-awareness is an obstacle that gets in our way sometimes and creates an obvious hypocritical judgment!!

(Slide 4) Hypocrisy as defined as **"the practice of claiming to have moral standards or beliefs to which one's own behavior does not conform; it's pretense."** It's like an actor portraying something that they are not anything like.

(Slide 5) **Self-Awareness** is defined as **conscious knowledge of one's own character, feelings, motives, and desires**. Lack of: one would be devoid of these!

According to Webster's New Collegiate Dictionary, hypocrisy is defined as an "act of playing a part on stage; feigning to be what one is not; the false

assumption of an appearance of virtue or religion.” In other words, a hypocrite appears to be virtuous (having or showing high moral standards) but, in reality, lacks virtue.

Many people view Christians as hypocrites. Simply stated, we sometimes fail to “**practice what we preach.**” That judgment can be true if we don’t behave virtuously. However, the world often looks to find fault with Christians. Therefore, we must with humility and self-awareness, live our Christian life.

Philipians 2:14-15 (Slide 6)

14 Do all things without grumbling or disputing; 15 so that you will prove yourselves to be blameless and innocent, children of God above reproach in the midst of a crooked and perverse generation, among whom you appear as lights in the world,

When one who professes to be in Christ, but through behavior or speech don’t imitate the virtuous standard set by our Lord, then in fact, we have become hypocrites in their eyes and in God’s. We stand before Him in sin.

Most often though, our virtue signaling is the result of the lack of self-awareness rather than outright hypocrisy. We are often over zealous when pointing out someone else’s faults and we are blinded to our own.

Self-awareness is something that we need to keep in mind. In order to help someone with a fault we need to be sure we are considering our own state as to not to become guilty as well. The one with the beam or plank in his eye also needs someone who can clearly see to remove it.

Paul says in:

Galatians 6:1 (Slide 7)

Brethren, even if anyone is caught in any trespass, you who are spiritual, restore such a one in a spirit of gentleness; each one looking to yourself, so that you too will not be tempted.

Meekness is the word used in the KJV for the word gentleness as translated here. When Paul talks to the brethren at Ephesus he urges them to be unified. That requires working together and helping one another.

Ephesians 4:1-3 (Slide 8)

Therefore I, the prisoner of the Lord, implore you to walk in a manner worthy of the calling with which you have been called, 2 with all humility and gentleness, with patience, showing tolerance for one another in love, 3 being diligent to preserve the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace.

One of the critical characteristics that they are to have which will aid in Spiritual Unity, is gentleness. Note that it is also coupled with humility and patience. It is certain that these three mainstays of Christianity will help alleviate unintentional hypocrisy which, in many cases, is the lack of self-awareness.

I don't believe Jesus equates having a beam in your eye with outright Hypocrisy. If that were the case then He would have compared this circumstance with the hypocrisy of the Pharisees.

Don't get me wrong, He still calls it Hypocrisy, but it's fixable. First remove the beam, the plank, as Luke calls it and then you can see clearly to remove the "speck" from your brother's eye.

Outright hypocrisy is devilish behavior and much more difficult to fix. The virtue signaling is now to the point that a person has elevated himself above others and feels entitled as their judge. This is so prevalent in the political world. We are told to not do something while they do what we can't do.

Paul warns in the book of Romans to **not** judge those who may be weaker in the faith. This nearly rises to the level of the behavior of the Pharisees.

Romans 14:1-4 (Slide 9)

Now accept the one who is weak in faith, but not for the purpose of passing judgment on his opinions. 2 One person has faith that he may eat all things, but he who is weak eats vegetables only. 3 The one who eats is not to (Slide 10) regard with contempt the one who does not eat, and the one who does not eat is not to judge the one who eats, for God has accepted him. 4 Who are you to judge the servant of another? To his own master he stands or falls; and he will stand, for the Lord is able to make him stand.

(Slide 11) If you have ever watched someone who is a logger, downing trees in the forest, you may have noticed something quite strange. In the forest, a great many of the trees that appear to reach nearly to the sky, which are majestic in nature and appear to hold twice or more potential for lumber than other trees, are left untouched. Why, because they appear majestic and alive on the outside but are dead and rotten on the inside. This is the essence of hypocrisy.

Matthew 23:25-28 (Slide 12)

25 "Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For you clean the outside of the cup and of the dish, but inside they are full of robbery and self-indulgence. 26 You blind Pharisee, first clean the inside of the cup and of the dish, so that the outside of it may become clean also.

(Slide 13) ***27 "Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For you are like whitewashed tombs which on the outside appear beautiful, but inside they are full of dead men's bones and all uncleanness. 28 So you, too, outwardly appear righteous to men, but inwardly you are full of hypocrisy and lawlessness.***

Jesus warned His disciples to be aware of the hypocrisy of the Pharisees.

Luke 12:1-3 (Slide 14)

1 Under these circumstances, after so many thousands of people had gathered together that they were stepping on one another, He began saying

to His disciples first of all, "Beware of the leaven of the Pharisees, which is hypocrisy. (Slide 15) 2 But there is nothing covered up that will not be revealed, and hidden that will not be known. 3 Accordingly, whatever you have said in the dark will be heard in the light, and what you have whispered in the inner rooms will be proclaimed upon the housetops.

The Lord cautions them because virtue signaling can grow and we all can get caught up in it.

Paul tells Titus that he left him in Crete to set things right. Appoint virtuous men as elders but to be aware that there are men who may appear to have the right qualifications but are merely actors, pretenders, hypocrites.

Titus 1:10-16 (Slide 16)

10 For there are many rebellious men, empty talkers and deceivers, especially those of the circumcision, 11 who must be silenced because they are upsetting whole families, teaching things they should not teach for the sake of sordid gain. (Slide 17) 12 One of themselves, a prophet of their own, said, "Cretans are always liars, evil beasts, lazy gluttons." 13 This testimony is true. For this reason reprove them severely so that they may be sound in the faith, 14 not paying attention to Jewish myths and commandments of men who turn away from the truth. (Slide 18) 15 To the pure, all things are pure; but to those who are defiled and unbelieving, nothing is pure, but both their mind and their conscience are defiled. 16 They profess to know God, but by their deeds they deny Him, being detestable and disobedient and worthless for any good deed.

Christians become hypocrites when we say we are all in for God and live otherwise. Christianity is 24/7. We are in Christ everyday, not just on the Lord's day as we sit in a pew.

If we know who we are and where we're going, we won't be hypocrites.

Paul introduces his letter to the church in Ephesus in this way:

Ephesians 1:1 (Slide 19)

1 Paul, an apostle of Christ Jesus by the will of God,

To the saints who are at Ephesus and who are faithful in Christ Jesus:

The saints, those set apart for a special purpose. Who are faithful in Christ Jesus. In Paul's introduction we find out who we are and why we are here. Our identity is not our job, our family, our specific occupation, or our outward physical appearance.

Our identity rests in Christ Jesus as one who is set apart for His purpose. To obey His will and to teach others the truth. That's hard to do if what we project on the outside doesn't match the identity we have on the inside.

We need to be sure that our faith isn't shallow nor absorbed in hypocrisy. Not only will we miss that great reward but others may fail too.

I leave with you this passage of scripture for your consideration:

Matthew 24:45-51 (Slide 20)

45 "Who then is the faithful and sensible slave whom his master put in charge of his household to give them their food at the proper time? 46 Blessed is that slave whom his master finds so doing when he comes. 47 Truly I say to you that he will put him in charge of all his possessions. (Slide 21) 48 But if that evil slave says in his heart, 'My master is not coming for a long time,' 49 and begins to beat his fellow slaves and eat and drink with drunkards; 50 the master of that slave will come on a day when he does not expect him and at an hour which he does not know, (Slide 22) 51 and will cut him in pieces and assign him a place with the hypocrites; in that place there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth.

Invitation

Anything that separates us from God is considered sin. Sin prevents us from having a relationship with God because God is light and sin is darkness. Our sin must be washed away so that we stand before God clean in His sight. This is done through Baptism. Immersion in water simulating the death, burial, and resurrection of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.

If you have not been Baptized, why wait? Do it now!

If you have once been Baptized but find that you lack faith or have stumbled along the way. Let us help you by praying for you and with you and restoring your relationship with the Almighty God.

If we can help you in any way please let us know.

Lesson Text

Matthew 15:1-9

1 Then some Pharisees and scribes *came to Jesus from Jerusalem and said, 2 "Why do Your disciples break the tradition of the elders? For they do not wash their hands when they eat bread." 3 And He answered and said to them, "Why do you yourselves transgress the commandment of God for the sake of your tradition? 4 For God said, 'Honor your father and mother,' and, 'He who speaks evil of father or mother is to be put to death.' 5 But you say, 'Whoever says to his father or mother, "Whatever I have that would help you has been given to God," 6 he is not to honor his father or his mother.' And by this you invalidated the word of God for the sake of your tradition. 7 You hypocrites, rightly did Isaiah prophesy of you:

8 'This people honors Me with their lips,

But their heart is far away from Me.

9 'But in vain do they worship Me,

Teaching as doctrines the precepts of men.'"

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