

The BIG QUESTIONS about Christianity
Walking the Walk - The Problem of Hypocrisy
12-26-10
Scripture Reading - Matthew 7:13-27

Hypocrisy Defined

- Hypocrisy is when someone says one thing and does another.
When someone talks the talk but doesn't walk the walk.
- My kids know the definition well and they call me on my hypocrisy all the time.
- A great example would be yesterday (Christmas Day).
 - o One of the things I try hard to do as a Christian is make *the best use* of the time that God has given me.
 - **Ephesians 5:15-16 (ESV)**
¹⁵ Look carefully then how you walk, not as unwise but as wise, ¹⁶ *making the best use of the time*, because the days are evil.
 - “Only one life it soon will pass only what’s done for Christ will last,” a saying in John Piper’s house growing up.
 - o I try and teach my kids to do the same, and so I get after them about things I deem to be a waste of time like watching TV. I talk to them a lot about how TV will melt their brains or suck their brains and how I’d be glad to take a sledgehammer to it or drop it out the window if they’re tempted to watch it too much ☺.
 - o The Devil knows this and so he decides to put a special NBA quintuple header on Christmas Day! Celtics/Magic and Lakers/Heat on ABC
 - o Sophia called me on my hypocrisy at halftime of the Laker game

Hypocrisy is a HUGE problem within the church today

There are a whole lot of so called “Christians,” both young and old alike, who are saying one thing and doing another; who are talking the Christian talk but not walking the Christian walk. This is a HUGE problem for two reasons.

- 1) It makes Jesus look bad
 - o When Christians look bad Christ looks bad because we are His followers and His representatives here on earth

- **2 Corinthians 5:17-20 (ESV)**

¹⁷Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation. The old has passed away; behold, the new has come. ¹⁸All this is from God, who through Christ reconciled us to himself and *gave us* the ministry of reconciliation; ¹⁹that is, in Christ God was reconciling the world to himself, not counting their trespasses against them, and *entrusting to us* the message of reconciliation. ²⁰Therefore, *we are ambassadors for Christ*, God making his appeal *through us*. We implore you on behalf of Christ, be reconciled to God.

- **Matthew 5:13-16 (NIV)**

¹³"*You are* the salt of the earth. But if the salt loses its saltiness, how can it be made salty again? It is no longer good for anything, except to be thrown out and trampled by men. ¹⁴"*You are* the light of the world. A city on a hill cannot be hidden. ¹⁵Neither do people light a lamp and put it under a bowl. Instead they put it on its stand, and it gives light to everyone in the house. ¹⁶In the same way, let your light shine before men, that they may see your good deeds and praise your Father in heaven.

- o If you are a Christian then you ARE Jesus' representative here on earth whether you want to be or not. The only question is, "*Are you a good one or are you a bad one?*"

2) It turns people away from Him

- o I don't know that I've *ever* met an unbeliever who hasn't mentioned hypocrisy as one of the main reasons they don't believe in Jesus and want nothing to do with His church.
- o People HATE hypocrites, *especially Christian hypocrites*
 - Larry and Chris
- o Nothing *hurts* our evangelistic efforts more than when we don't walk the walk, and on the flip side nothing *helps* our evangelistic efforts more than when we do.
- o This is a HUGELY important issue.

There are two main reasons for hypocrisy within the church

- 1) A lot of people who call themselves “Christians” aren’t
 - a. There are only a few are on the narrow road that leads to life
 - i. **Matthew 7:13-14 (NIV)**
¹³ "Enter through the narrow gate. For wide is the gate and broad is the road that leads to destruction, and many enter through it. ¹⁴ But small is the gate and narrow the road that leads to life, *and only a few(will) find it.*
 - b. You can tell what a road a person is on by their fruit
 - i. **Matthew 7:15-20 (NIV)**
¹⁵ "Watch out for false prophets. They come to you in sheep's clothing, but inwardly they are ferocious wolves. ¹⁶ By their fruit you will recognize them. Do people pick grapes from thornbushes, or figs from thistles? ¹⁷ Likewise every good tree bears good fruit, but a bad tree bears bad fruit. ¹⁸ A good tree cannot bear bad fruit, and a bad tree cannot bear good fruit. ¹⁹ Every tree that does not bear good fruit is cut down and thrown into the fire. ²⁰ *Thus, by their fruit you will recognize them.*
 - ii. **John 15:8 (ESV)**
⁸ By this my Father is glorified, that you *bear much fruit and so prove to be my disciples.*
 - c. A lot of people don’t realize they’re on the wrong road
 - i. **Matthew 7:21-23 (NIV)**
²¹ "Not everyone who says to me, 'Lord, Lord,' will enter the kingdom of heaven, but only he who does the will of my Father who is in heaven. ²² Many will say to me on that day, 'Lord, Lord, did we not prophesy in your name, and in your name drive out demons and perform many miracles?' ²³ Then I will tell them plainly, 'I never knew you. Away from me, you evildoers!'
 - ii. **Revelation 3:15-17 (ESV)**
¹⁵ " 'I know your works: you are neither cold nor

hot. Would that you were either cold or hot! ¹⁶ So, because you are lukewarm, and neither hot nor cold, I will spit you out of my mouth. ¹⁷ For you say, I am rich, I have prospered, and I need nothing, *not realizing* that you are wretched, pitiable, poor, blind, and naked.

- d. The primary fruit of those on the right road is obedience to God and His Word
 - i. **Matthew 7:24-27 (NIV)**
²⁴ "Therefore everyone who hears these words of mine *and puts them into practice* is like a wise man who built his house on the rock. ²⁵ The rain came down, the streams rose, and the winds blew and beat against that house; yet it did not fall, because it had its foundation on the rock. ²⁶ But everyone who hears these words of mine and does not put them into practice is like a foolish man who built his house on sand. ²⁷ The rain came down, the streams rose, and the winds blew and beat against that house, and it fell with a great crash." _
 - ii. Thus those who are truly Christians are those who are not only talking the talk, but *walking the walk as well*

2) Even true Christians are still sinners

- a. Salvation process = justification, sanctification, glorification
- b. **Galatians 5:16-17 (ESV)**
¹⁶ But I say, walk by the Spirit, and you will not gratify the desires of the flesh. ¹⁷ For the desires of the flesh are against the Spirit, and the desires of the Spirit are against the flesh, for these are opposed to each other, *to keep you from doing the things you want to do.*
- c. **Romans 7:15-25 (ESV)**
¹⁵ I do not understand my own actions. For I do not do what I want, but I do the very thing I hate...¹⁸ For I know that nothing good dwells in me, that is, in my flesh. For I have the desire to do what is right, but not the ability to carry it out. ¹⁹ For I do not do the good I want, but the evil I do not want is what I keep on doing...²¹ So I find it

to be a law that when I want to do right, evil lies close at hand. ²² For I delight in the law of God, in my inner being, ²³ but I see in my members another law waging war against the law of my mind and making me captive to the law of sin that dwells in my members. ²⁴

Wretched man that I am! Who will deliver me from this body of death? ²⁵ Thanks be to God through Jesus Christ our Lord! So then, I myself serve the law of God with my mind, but with my flesh I serve the law of sin.

- d. My MOB experience as a young Christian

Two things we need to do in response to this

1) Test ourselves to be sure we're in the faith

a. **2 Corinthians 13:5 (ESV)**

⁵ *Examine yourselves, to see whether you are in the faith. Test yourselves. Or do you not realize this about yourselves, that Jesus Christ is in you? —unless indeed you fail to meet the test!*

b. Lots of good tests

- i. Fruits of the Spirit (Galatians 5:22-23)
- ii. 1 John

1. **1 John 5:13 (ESV)**

¹³ *I write these things to you who believe in the name of the Son of God that you may know that you have eternal life.*

c. But today I want to focus on just one and that's obedience. *Are you someone who not only hears Jesus' words, but puts them into practice? (Matthew 7:24)*

i. **1 John 3:4-10 (ESV)**

⁴ Everyone who makes a practice of sinning also practices lawlessness; sin is lawlessness. ⁵ You know that he appeared to take away sins, and in him there is no sin. ⁶ No one who abides in him keeps on sinning; no one who keeps on sinning has either seen him or known him. ⁷ Little children, let no one deceive you. Whoever practices righteousness is righteous, as he is righteous. ⁸ Whoever makes a practice of sinning is of the devil, for the devil has been sinning from the beginning. The reason the Son of God

appeared was to destroy the works of the devil. ⁹
No one born of God makes a practice of sinning, for God's seed abides in him, and he cannot keep on sinning because he has been born of God. ¹⁰ By this it is evident who are the children of God, and who are the children of the devil: whoever does not practice righteousness is not of God, nor is the one who does not love his brother.

ii. **1 Corinthians 6:9-10 (ESV)**

⁹ Do you not know that the unrighteous will not inherit the kingdom of God? Do not be deceived: neither the sexually immoral, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor men who practice homosexuality, ¹⁰ nor thieves, nor the greedy, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor swindlers will inherit the kingdom of God.

iii. **Psalms 32:1-5 (ESV)**

¹ Blessed is the one whose transgression is forgiven, whose sin is covered. ² Blessed is the man against whom the Lord counts no iniquity, and in whose spirit there is no deceit. ³ *For when I kept silent, my bones wasted away through my groaning all day long. ⁴ For day and night your hand was heavy upon me; my strength was dried up as by the heat of summer. Selah ⁵ I acknowledged my sin to you, and I did not cover my iniquity; I said, "I will confess my transgressions to the Lord," and you forgave the iniquity of my sin.*

2) Make sure we're walking the walk - What does that look like?

a. **1 Timothy 4:12 (NIV)**

¹² Don't let anyone look down on you because you are young, but set an example for the believers in speech, in life, in love, in faith and in purity.

i. Speech - How does Jesus want us to talk?

1. **Ephesians 4:29 (NIV)**

²⁹ Do not let any unwholesome talk come out of your mouths, but only what is helpful for *building others up* according to

their needs, that it may benefit those who listen.

ii. Life – How does Jesus want us to live?

1. **Philippians 1:21 (ESV)**

²¹For to me to live is Christ, and to die is gain.

a. Knowing Christ and making Him known

iii. Love – How does Jesus want us to love?

1. **Matthew 22:37-40 (NIV)**

³⁷Jesus replied: "'Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind.'" ³⁸This is the first and greatest commandment. ³⁹And the second is like it: 'Love your neighbor as yourself.' ⁴⁰All the Law and the Prophets hang on these two commandments."

iv. Faith – How does Jesus want us to believe?

1. **Proverbs 3:5-6 (NIV)**

⁵Trust in the Lord with all your heart and lean not on your own understanding; ⁶in all your ways acknowledge him, and he will make your paths straight.

v. Purity – How pure does Jesus want us to be?

1. **1 Timothy 5:1-2 (NIV)**

¹Do not rebuke an older man harshly, but exhort him as if he were your father. Treat younger men as brothers, ²older women as mothers, and younger women as sisters, with *absolute purity*.

In summary...

- Hypocrisy is a HUGE problem in the church because...
 - o It makes Jesus look bad
 - o It turns people away from Him

- The two main reasons for hypocrisy in the church are...
 - o A lot of people who call themselves Christians aren't
 - o Even true Christians are still sinners

- We need to respond to hypocrisy by...
 - o Testing ourselves to be sure we're in the faith

- o Making sure we're not only talking the talk but walking the walk as well

So far TWE seems to have a pretty good reputation in regard to hypocrisy

- Blake's comments

I think this is *especially true of our youth*.

Let's resolve keep it up and to do even better in 2011!