

The Hypocrisy of Religion

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Last time we addressed the subject of false faces, or what the Bible calls hypocrites. A dear godly Methodist pastor friend of mine when calling in homes of people often heard that the reason they did not attend church was because of the hypocrites in the church. Tiring of hearing this reply, he responded with these words, "Then dear friend, why do you not come to church and add one more hypocrite to the church?"

The definition of a Hypocrite is in simplicity, a person who tries to deceive others into thinking he is something he is not. There are many ways one can be guilty of hypocrisy. Just declare you are something other than what is true and you become a hypocrite. For example if some asks how you are feeling, and you say "fine" when you are not, you are a hypocrite. When we lie to cover our failures we become hypocrites. Again we say, any attempt to deceive is hypocrisy. Since we saw last time that God declared that no hypocrite will ever stand before him in heaven we can understand why God further declares that no liar will enter heaven either.

Sometimes religion is a promoter of hypocrisy. In Matthew 23:1-39 Jesus said the Scribes and Pharisees placed themselves over Moses and the Old Testament law and add to the teachings of the Bible, contrary to what God has said. For this reason Jesus charged them with hypocrisy in the practice of their religion.

Mt 23:13-15, "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. 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. "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. NKJV

Mt 23:23-31, "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. Blind guides, who strain out a gnat and swallow a camel!
"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. Blind Pharisee, first cleanse the inside of the cup and dish, that the outside of them may be clean also. "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. Even so you also outwardly appear righteous to men, but inside you are **full of hypocrisy** and lawlessness. "Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, **hypocrites!** Because you build the tombs of the prophets and adorn the monuments of the righteous, 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.' NKJV

Religion is an active form of hypocrisy in which people try by law keeping, good works, and religious ritual to make themselves acceptable to God. They do this apart from the only way God says we can be saved, forgiven, and have assurance that Heaven is our eternal destination. The difference between religion and true Christianity is that religion is man's attempt to improve himself by his own sincere efforts to become acceptable to God, while Christianity is a personal relationship with God through the Lord Jesus Christ who paid in full, once for all, the price of your and my sins on the cross.

Jesus said religion is binding burdens too heavy to carry for all who give themselves to religion.

Mt 23:1-4, " Then Jesus spoke to the multitudes and to His disciples, saying:
"The scribes and the Pharisees sit in Moses' seat. 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. 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.**" NKJV

Further Jesus said the ones who are leaders in religion tell you what to do and not to do, but at the same time they themselves do not keep these laws. God says that the letter of the law kills us while the spirit of the law gives life.

2 Cor. 3:6, "who also made us sufficient as ministers of the new covenant, **not**

of the letter but of the Spirit; for the letter kills, but the Spirit gives life.”

NKJV

Before I personally came to Christ Jesus as my one and only Savior, I was filled with such bitterness against religion because of all of its commandments. I never knew what freedom was really all about until I trusted Christ to save me apart from my failures and my sins. I hope dear friend you can so clearly see how that Religion is Hypocrisy. Only Jesus can save!