



Matthew 6:1 Hypocrisy

Matthew 6:1, *“Take heed that you do not do your charitable deeds before men, to be seen by them. Otherwise you have no reward from your Father in heaven.*

Matthew 6:1-18 Jesus deals with the theme about Hypocrisy.

Matthew 6:1-4, deals about Hypocrisy on giving.

Matthew 6:5-15, deals with Hypocrisy in prayer.

Matthew 6:16-18, deals with Hypocrisy in fasting.

The Greek word hypocrite which appears in **V 2, V 5, and V 16**, is *hupokritēs*. Basically, in classical Greek it is used to refer to an actor on a stage who masks his real identity and assumes a role, who plays a part that isn't the truth about his life, who assumes something other than what is genuine.

The Pharisees of Jesus' time perhaps were the all-time artists at rearranging their ashes. They made sure they put on a show.

That is the issue to which Jesus speaks in the first 18 verses of Matthew 6.

Hypocrisy is dealt with in Scripture from the start to the finish.

- There are hypocrites in Genesis.
- There are hypocrites in Revelation.

- There are hypocrites when the world begins and
- There are hypocrites when it ends.

There are hypocrites in every form of religion and even Christianity, the true form.

There were hypocrites among the 12.

There are hypocrites in the leadership of the church.

They are always around. It's just part of the sinfulness of man to play the game of religion.

God dealt with it in Israel.

Amos 5:21-24, *“I hate, I despise your feast days, And I do not savour your sacred assemblies. ²² Though you offer Me burnt offerings and your grain offerings, I will not accept them, Nor will I regard your fattened peace offerings. ²³ Take away from Me the noise of your songs, For I will not*

hear the melody of your stringed instruments. ²⁴ But let justice run down like water, And righteousness like a mighty stream.

God is saying that all these items where,

- ✓ Introduced,
- ✓ Invented,
- ✓ Commanded,
- ✓ By Me.

Now I am despising.

Why?

Because they have twisted, perverted, falsified their purpose.

They have maintained the external, but the internal is vacant, empty.

That's hypocrisy.

An outward show without an inward reality, religiosity, being bogus.

The word "seen" is *theaomai*.

An English word theatre.

- Do not be an actor on a stage before an audience as if you were in a theatre putting on an exhibition.
- Don't do your righteous deeds theatrically before a watching audience.
- Don't rearrange your ashes for the photographs of people so the impression will be made that you are holy, pious. That is being a spiritual hypocrite.

God had Amos, the prophet, deal with it in Israel, because that was the biggest flagrant violation of true religion the prophet could speak to.

The major reason that Israel fell is because of hypocrisy. The northern kingdom was taken into captivity was simply because they allowed false religion to take over the genuine.

It was not only true in the northern kingdom, but it was also true in the southern kingdom to which Isaiah wrote.

Almost sounds like an identical message which God spoke to Northern Kingdom by Amos.

Isaiah 1:11-18, *"To what purpose is the multitude of your sacrifices to Me?" Says the Lord. "I have had enough of burnt offerings of rams And the fat of fed cattle. I do not delight in the blood of bulls, Or of lambs or goats. ¹² "When you come to appear before Me, Who has required this from your hand, To trample My courts? ¹³ Bring no more futile sacrifices; Incense is an abomination to Me. The*

New Moons, the Sabbaths, and the calling of assemblies— I cannot endure iniquity and the sacred meeting. ¹⁴ Your New Moons and your appointed feasts My soul hates; They are a trouble to Me, I am weary of bearing them. ¹⁵ When you spread out your hands, I will hide My eyes from you; Even though you make many prayers, I will not hear. Your hands are full of blood. ¹⁶ “Wash yourselves, make yourselves clean; Put away the evil of your doings from before My eyes. Cease to do evil, ¹⁷ Learn to do good; Seek justice, Rebuke the oppressor; Defend the fatherless, Plead for the widow. ¹⁸ “Come now, and let us reason together,” Says the Lord, “Though your sins are like scarlet, They shall be as white as snow; Though they are red like crimson, They shall be as wool.

God says,

- everything that I have introduced,
- everything that I have commanded,
- everything that I have instituted in your religion,
- all the feasts,
- all the new moons,
- the sacrifices,
- the oblations and
- the incense,
- All of it I despise it all.

Why?

Because it is fake.

Until your hearts are made as white and pure as snow and wool, I have nothing to do with you. Don't even come into my courts.

Our dear Lord confronted much sin in His time, but never did He rebuke any sinner like He rebuked the hypocrites in **Matthew 23**.

He reserved the most blistering language for those spiritual actors who had masked their vile, evil hearts with a facade of superficial religion.

God hates it. Isaiah spoke to the issue not only that time, but again several times.

Isaiah 9:17, *Therefore the Lord will have no joy in their young men, Nor have mercy on their fatherless and widows; For everyone is a hypocrite and an evildoer, And every mouth speaks folly. For all this His anger is not turned away, But His hand is stretched out still.*

Isaiah 10:6, *I will send him against an ungodly nation, And against the people of My wrath I will give him charge, To seize the spoil, to take the prey, And to tread them down like the mire of the streets.*

Do you know how hypocritical they were?

They played the game to the handle.

Isaiah 65:5, *Who say, 'Keep to yourself, Do not come near me, For I am holier than you!' These are smoke in My nostrils, A fire that burns all the day.*

God is saying don't get near Me.

You might contaminate Me for I am holier than You.

God says they are smoke in my nose.

Did you ever get smoke in your nose?

Very irritating.

How irritated is God over hypocrites?

Very irritated.

Job 8:13, *So are the paths of all who forget God; And the hope of the hypocrite shall perish,*

Job 15:34, *For the company of hypocrites will be barren, And fire will consume the tents of bribery.*

Job 27:8, *For what is the hope of the hypocrite, Though he may gain much, If God takes away his life?*

Job 36:13, *"But the hypocrites in heart store up wrath; They do not cry for help when He binds them.*

Hypocrites will receive a judgment.

Matthew 15:7-9, *Hypocrites! Well did Isaiah prophesy about you, saying: ⁸ 'These people draw near to Me with their mouth, And honour 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.'* "

Our Lord sees the statement of Isaiah relative to hypocrisy as a prophecy as well as a historical fact.

What is the prophecy?

Isaiah said, *These people draw near to Me with their mouth, And honour 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.'* "

In other words, they are hypocrites.

They give honour with their lips.

Their heart is far removed.

They have substituted the divine commandments with human traditions, and they have an inadequate system of hypocrisy.

- There were hypocrites in Israel.

- There were hypocrites in Judah.
- There were hypocrites in the time of Jesus.
- There were also hypocrites in the church.

The church is born in Acts 2.

We meet the first hypocrites in **Acts 5, Ananias and Sapphira**.

They play a big false game about giving all they possess to the Lord. All the while, they are holding back some of it in their hypocrisy. God strikes them dead in front of the gaze of the whole church, Acts 5.

Could this hypocrisy have cured?

No.

1 Timothy 4:1-2, *Now the Spirit expressly says that in latter times some will depart from the faith, giving heed to deceiving spirits and doctrines of demons, ² speaking lies in hypocrisy, having their own conscience seared with a hot iron,*

There were hypocrites in the first times and there will be hypocrites in the last times.

You know the list of hypocrites in the Bible is a series of ugly names.

The first hypocrite in the Bible is **Cain**. Cain feigned to worship God but was doing nothing but showing off and displaying his ability as a farmer and it cost him dearly. We see the unmasking of the hypocrite and the anger that caused him to murder his own righteous brother.

Absalom was a hypocrite. Absalom in 2 Samuel 15 embraces and kisses his father David, while plotting his murder and overthrow.

Joab who embraces **Amasa** throws his arms around him and while Amasa returns the embrace takes a dagger and jams it between his ribs and takes his life.

Who could forget Judas?

The hypocrite of all hypocrites, who repeatedly kisses Jesus on the cheek while even the foul deed which he has plotted is being done to bring Him to a cross of death.

Simon the sorcerer, in **Acts 8**, who feigned he would have embraced Jesus Christ and the power of the Holy Spirit. But the fact was all he wanted was the magic it could work to work himself into a better way to earn money. Peter tore his mask off.

The Cains, the Joabs, the Absaloms, the Judases, and the Simons dot their way through the Bible and tell us the ugliness of hypocrisy.

But just as ugly as any of those are the Pharisees, the Herodians, and those Jews who can pretend the worship of God in the same time they are seeking the blood of His own Son.

Hypocrisy is never presented pleasantly in the Bible.

It is seen as leaven in Luke 12 that affects that whole loaf. It has a spreading infectious capacity.

It is seen in Matthew 23 as a whited sepulchre, a filthy grave stinking with death, but covered over with a whitewash.

It is seen in **Acts 23** in the words of Paul as a whited wall which is nothing, but dirt and mud packed together, but painted to look white when its truth it is ugly brown.

Luke 11:44, Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For you are like graves which are not seen, and the men who walk over *them* are not aware *of them*."

As an overgrown grave so covered with grass that you no longer know it's a grave and so you are defiled in stepping on it.

Proverbs 26:23, *Fervent lips with a wicked heart Are like earthenware covered with silver dross.*

It is seen as a broken pot covered over with silver, so no one knows the fatal crack that's there.

It is seen in **Matthew 13** as the tares that grow amidst the wheat.

Matthew 7:15, *"Beware of false prophets, who come to you in sheep's clothing, but inwardly they are ravenous wolves.*

As that wolf in sheep's clothing.

2 Peter 2:17, *These are wells without water, clouds carried by a tempest, for whom is reserved the blackness of darkness forever.*

All the promise is there, but when the bucket is lowered, it's clanging and banging and dry and empty.

It is seen in **Matthew 9** like a mourner who mourns at a death because he is paid to mourn. Phony, fake tears.

One of the customs among the Jews at a mourning when somebody died, was to rend your garments, to tear your clothes as a sign of your sorrow.

The Bible speaks of rending garments. The historians say that the Jews became so good at the hypocrisy of sorrow that when they would tear their garments. They were always sure to tear them on a seam, so they could be easily sewn together for the next morning.

Hypocrisy, the impression of caring when you don't care. Of being righteous on the outside when you are unrighteous on the inside.

V1, take heed/ beware.

Beware tells us that we are not looking at something that is a sentimental issue or something that is a soft matter. This is serious. Beware.

Why?

There are consequences.

We are in the Sermon on the Mount.

The Sermon on the Mount is designed to present to the Jewish people of that time and to every succeeding generation, whoever reads the Bible, the true standard of righteousness.

- ✓ The Lord began with the character of righteousness in the Beatitudes.
 - ✓ Then He moved to the influence of righteousness, salt, and light in the world.
 - ✓ Then He moved into the very elements of righteousness.
 - ✓ The character of righteousness, its influence, and its standards. The character of righteousness exceeds that of the scribes and the Pharisees.
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- They didn't have that kind of character.
 - They weren't mourning over their sin.
 - They weren't meek.
 - They weren't broken in spirit.
 - They weren't hungering for righteousness.
 - They weren't pure in heart.
 - They weren't peacemakers.
 - They weren't merciful.
 - They weren't any of those things.

Jesus told them that they don't meet the standard.

Then Jesus talks about the influence of righteousness. It's salt and light. It preserves and lightens the world. They didn't do that. They were part of the rot and part of the darkness.

Then He says now I want to tell you the standards of righteousness. He started them in **Matthew 5:21-48**.

- They didn't live up to any of them.
- They never met it.
- Their character was unqualified for His kingdom.
- Their influence was unqualified for His kingdom, and so was their standard of righteousness.

Jesus is still talking about the same thing, the standards of righteousness here in chapter 6.

But there's a little twist.

Matthew 5:21-48, He was talking about the righteousness taught by the scribes and Pharisees.

Matthew 6, He wants to see the righteousness practiced or lived by the scribes and Pharisees.

One is their theology and the other is their living.

Matthew chapter 5, Jesus was saying this is what the religious leaders teach but this is what God teaches.

Matthew chapter 6, Jesus is saying this is how the religious leader's worship, live their life and what they practice. But God's standard is up here.

So, in one section He is dealing with their teaching and in another He's dealing with their practice.

In chapter 5, He is dealing with their morality, their theological content, their moral choices, their cognitive information, their standard of morality.

In chapter 6, He is dealing with their religion. How that morality works out in their lives. Their worship was fake because their theology was fake.

True religion must have both. You must have the rational and the truth.

You must have the moral standards.

You must have the proper teaching, and then it must be lived out in the proper way.

Here when they put their religion to practice it is substandard. Their theology is inadequate and so is their practice of religion.

The morality of their system doesn't make it and neither does the operation of their system.

As believers, we must have both.

There are always those people who think Christianity's only a matter of what you do.

Just go to church and give a little in the offering and do a religious ritual. Do your daily Bible reading or whatever then you are all right. That's not all there is. There is that intellectual responsibility to have a moral standard.

There are people today who just think all you need is the moral standard.

- They think all you have got to do is religionist Christianity.
- They don't want to identify with the church.
- They are anti-church,
- They are anti-structure, anti-organization.

- They just want to be pious in a vacuum.
- They want to be moral in a social way.

But there is a balance.

Jesus is saying yes, you have to proper teaching, but yes, there is a place for giving, praying, and fasting within the community of those who believe. That is to be exercised properly.

It is a question of what you know, what you believe, and how you act. The two must be together.

Jesus is setting a standard here that nobody else has ever set in the history of the world, except God.

No other human system ever came across this standard.

It exceeds every system that has ever existed at the invention of man.

Matthew 5:20, *For I say to you, that unless your righteousness exceeds the righteousness of the scribes and Pharisees, you will by no means enter the kingdom of heaven.*

Jesus goes on then to present a moral standard that is more than the scribes and the Pharisees who were the teachers in Israel. All right, so it is superior to that system.

There is a superior moral standard.

Matthew 6:2, *Therefore, when you do a charitable deed, do not sound a trumpet before you as the hypocrites do in the synagogues and in the streets, that they may have glory from men. Assuredly, I say to you, they have their reward.*

Matthew 6:5, *And when you pray, you shall not be like the hypocrites. For they love to pray standing in the synagogues and on the corners of the streets, that they may be seen by men. Assuredly, I say to you, they have their reward.*

Matthew 6:16, *Moreover, when you fast, do not be like the hypocrites, with a sad countenance. For they disfigure their faces that they may appear to men to be fasting. Assuredly, I say to you, they have their reward.*

The hypocrites are synonymous with the Pharisees and the scribes.

Again, Jesus is saying when you practice your religion, when you live out your spiritual life, it's got to be superior to theirs too.

So what Jesus is saying is that what I am saying to you is superior in content and in practice to what's going on right now.

This is an incredible indictment of the whole system.

Jesus goes from theology to righteousness that relates to morality, to the righteousness that relates to practical religion, and then righteousness that relates to everyday things.

From **Matthew 6:19** till the end of the sermon, Jesus talks about everyday things. Like what you eat, drink, wear, clothing and all those kinds of things. He talks about money.

Jesus goes from your theological moral values to your religious practices, to your everyday living.

The whole sequence, He says

- your theology is inadequate,
- your religion is inadequate and
- your approach to life every day is inadequate.

Your standards are totally too low.

Matthew 6:19, *“Do not lay up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moth and rust destroy and where thieves break in and steal;*

Matthew 6:25, *Therefore I say to you, do not worry about your life, what you will eat or what you will drink; nor about your body, what you will put on. Is not life more than food and the body more than clothing?*

Why?

Because that is characteristic of them.

They were hung on laying up treasure on earth.

They were anxious for their life.

So, He says it's got to be a system beyond that of the scribes and the Pharisees.

People from outside Christianity will look at our theology, our religion, our worship, and our daily living must be superior to the finest system men could ever devise at their very best efforts. It's inadequate.

Further, there are some people who might say that I would just as soon scratch all religion altogether and just be a pagan, just get a philosophy and go with it.

The Lord does the same thing with human philosophy.

Matthew 5:47, *And if you greet your brethren only, what do you do more than others? Do not even the tax collectors do so?*

You are not only to have a commitment that is better than the scribes and the Pharisees, but it should also be better than the heathen/ tax collector.

They are substandard.

Matthew 6:7, *And when you pray, do not use vain repetitions as the heathen do. For they think that they will be heard for their many words.*

Matthew 6:32, *For after all these things the Gentiles seek. For your heavenly Father knows that you need all these things.*

Christ is saying, I am offering you a standard and the standard is superior in its content, in its worship and in its daily living to any religious or nonreligious system the world has ever seen.

Now when somebody asks you, how come you Christians say you are the only ones that have the truth?

Answer them that is what Jesus said.

Jesus, without question, is the most narrow-minded human who ever lived. He said, "Everything I say to you is true and anything else is false." Only He back up the fact that He had a right to say it.

We don't make it.

We come miserably, woefully short of the standard for His kingdom.

He is the King of Kings.

- You must realize that you can't make it.
- Your theology is inadequate,
- Your religion is inadequate,
- Your approach to life is inadequate,
- You need somebody to wash away your sin, purify you, give you a new nature fit for my kingdom.

Jesus is saying that I am that somebody who can offer you.

We are looking at that middle between theology and everyday living.

This section of religious worship or practice.

V 1, *"Take heed that you do not do your charitable deeds before men, to be seen by them. Otherwise you have no reward from your Father in heaven.*

This has to do with your worship, your religious activity.

Be sure you do it not to be seen by men.

Jesus gives us three illustrations.

- 1. Giving in verses 2-4.**
- 2. Praying in verses 5-15.**
- 3. Fasting in verses 16-18.**

The Lord just picks out three religious' activities, three spiritual activities, three elements of worship.

Giving has to do with our religion as it acts toward others.

Praying has to do with our religion as it acts towards God.

Fasting has to do with our religion as it relates to ourselves.

Giving is then touching the lives of people around us.

Praying is then communing with God,

Fasting deals with our own flesh.

The mortification of the flesh, self-denial, discipline, bringing ourselves to Christ in terms of total commitment.

These three illustrations beautifully sum up all the elements of our spiritual life, of our life of worship.

It's almost as if they ascend, because you really start with a right spirit in your own heart purging yourself, fasting being a part of self-denial. When you are right then your prayers are going to be right. Out of fasting comes prayer and out of prayer comes giving.

Jesus ascends from giving to praying to fasting, and says to them in effect, you do all these, you give, you pray, you fast, but substandard and I offer you something beyond that.

V 2 says, "when you give,"

V 5 says, "when you pray,"

V16 says, "when you fast."

It doesn't say if, it says when.

Why?

Because it's an assumption that you will do that.

It's assumed as a part of religion, worship, spiritual service.

The Bible talks about doing righteous acts.

God never designed for us to be monks. Monasticism, stuffing yourself into oblivion and doing all your righteousness locked up in cubicle is not biblical.

Some have misinterpreted this verse. Well, beware that you don't do any of your righteous acts before men, so go in a corner and do all your righteous acts.

Doesn't the Bible teach that we're to do righteous acts before men?

Psalm 106:3, *Blessed are those who keep justice, And he who does righteousness at all times!*

It's blessed to always do righteousness.

Isaiah 58:2, *"You seek me daily and delight to know my ways as a nation that did righteousness."*

1 John 2:29, *If you know that He is righteous, you know that everyone who practices righteousness is born of Him.*

We are to do righteousness and we are to do it where it can be seen so that people know we belong to God. We are to let our righteousness be manifest.

V 1, *"Take heed that you do not do your charitable deeds before men, to be seen by them. Otherwise you have no reward from your Father in heaven.*

It says right here that you don't do your righteousness before men.

You do your righteousness but not for the purpose of simply being seen by men so that you look good.

Matthew 5:16, *Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works and glorify your Father in heaven.*

The motives are different.

It says do your works that God may be glorified.

But don't do your works that men may glorify you.

Two sides of the same thing.

We are to do what we do that men may glorify God, but not for the purpose of seeking approval from them.

I have that temptation in my own life.

Our Lord had that temptation, I am sure, because He was at all points tempted like as we are.

But there are times when you are tempted to preach to be esteemed of men rather than to give God the glory.

There are times when you give and make sure you tell certain people that you gave, especially people who question your commitment, so they will know how really spiritual you are.

Or you pray a long and wordy prayers.

Or you fast or look sort of tragic, which is often confused with spirituality.

Just look sick or painful and people will think you are humble.

The love of honour was the deadly of vain of true devotion. Other vices bring forth evil works, but this brings forth good works in an evil way. St. Augustine

It was a mark of the Pharisees that when they gave, they blew a horn about it.

When they prayed, they stood in a public place and prayed out loud, so everybody knew how spiritual they were.

When they fasted, they put cosmetics on their face so they would look half dead, hoping someone would say, what a holy man he is.

We are to let our light shine.

We are to let our works be seen that God may be glorified.

But we are not to do it that we may receive honour.

That's hypocritical.

Matthew 5:16 and 6:1 could best be summed up by indicating that they are both dealing with different sins.

In chapter 5, He is dealing with salt and light with the fact that we need to be an influence in the world. He is dealing then with the sin of cowardice. "Let your light so shine before men." Don't be a coward. You are the salt, and you are the light.

But in chapter 6, verse 1, He's dealing with the sin of hypocrisy.

We are to show when tempted to hide and we are to hide when tempted to show.

What is your motive?

Two people can give.

Two people can pray.

Two people can fast.

Two people can do religious deeds.

You and I would never know the difference between one or the other. Yet, to God one is a source of joy, a sweet-smelling savour and the other is smoke in his nose.

The difference is inside that person.

Who is the best illustration of this?

Jesus.

Jesus preached His messages in the public hearing.

Jesus lived His life day by day, the flawless majestic sinlessness of His life in front of the gazing eyes of the whole watching world.

Jesus performed miracles, wonders, and signs so everyone could see.

In humility He responded.

"I have come not to seek mine own honour, but the honour of Him who sent me."

It was motive.

Do your righteous deeds.

Do them that your light may shine to the glory of God.

But beware when you do them to rearrange your ashes so somebody's picture of you will turn out to appear more holy than you really are.