

Hypocrites In The Church

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God bless you,

Oluwatobi S. Adewuyi

Coordinator

Topic:

HYPOCRITES IN THE CHURCH

Bible Text: Matthew 22:15 - 22

Teacher: Moses O. Adewuyi

Prayer

Our father in heaven, the greatest of all, we bless your name for another wonderful moment. Thank you for the peace and joy that has filled our hearts. We pray that as we start tonight's study, you take control in Jesus' name. Speak to us today, Dear Father. We open today's teaching in the name of the Father, Son and the Holy Spirit. In Jesus' mighty name we have prayed, Amen.

Study

You may wonder how hypocrites are in the Church of God. As we proceed, you will understand better. It's saddening to know that just the way we had the Pharisees and Scribes who were hypocrites and always antagonizing Jesus words in those days, so do we have hypocrites in the church of God these days. But, it's something not to really be surprised of, because the bible makes us know of those things which are bound to happen in the end time.

2 Timothy 3:1-5:

"This know also, that in the last days perilous times shall come. For men shall be lovers of their own selves, covetous, boasters, proud, blasphemers, disobedient to parents, unthankful, unholy, Without natural affection, trucebreakers, false accusers, incontinent, fierce, despisers of those that are good, Traitors, heady, highminded, lovers

of pleasures more than lovers of God; Having a form of godliness, but denying the power thereof: from such turn away."

It's a pity that those who are in the church and supposed to be one of the pillars in the church, upholding the standard of Christ, are the ones bringing down and tearing apart the church of Christ. Just the way Judas was part of Jesus' ministry, so do we have some who have the characteristics of Judas in the church.

John 12:3-6:

"Then took Mary a pound of ointment of spikenard, very costly, and anointed the feet of Jesus, and wiped his feet with her hair: and the house was filled with the odor of the ointment. Then saith one of his disciples, Judas Iscariot, Simon's son, which should betray him, Why was not this ointment sold for three hundred pence, and given to the poor? This he said, not that he cared for the poor; but because he was a thief, and had the bag, and bare what was put therein."

All Judas put up here was pretense as if he cared for the poor, of which he didn't. He only cared about himself and tried to hide under the canopy of having the fruit of the Spirit— Kindness/Goodness, whereas, all was a lie. He was a hypocrite. This leads us to looking at who a hypocrite truly is.

Who is a hypocrite?

A hypocrite is a person who puts on a false appearance of virtue or religion. A hypocrite is also a person who acts in contradiction to his or her stated beliefs or feelings. Hypocrites will always put on the color of what they are not. They are always in conjunction with lies and deceit, and they believe they are always doing the right thing.

Most of the politicians we have in this present world are hypocrites too, because they paint themselves to be a particular picture to the masses during campaign, but once they are elected, they begin acting against what they had painted. Some people can criticize and blame you for not doing a particular thing even though they themselves are guilty of not doing such a thing when they are supposed to be doing it. They only see the plank in people's eyes but do not consider the beam in their own eyes. This is why Matthew 7:5 says:

"Thou hypocrite, first cast out the beam out of thine own eye; and then shalt thou see clearly to cast out the mote out of thy brother's eye."

Hypocrites will always try to point out guilt in others whereas, they themselves are guilty of the same thing. They pretend to be holy yet committing secret sins in their closet and coming out to blast someone who has not committed half of what they did in their closet. I believe we now have a foundation of who a hypocrite is?

Let's move further.

According to our topic; "Hypocrites in the church of God", it literally tells how there are hypocrites in true churches. Because, we know that there are churches with Jesus being the head, while there are some so-called churches which Jesus has no hand in. Such churches are owned by the founders who were not called by Jesus but by their own greed and lust after money. So, today, we will be examining what hypocrites in the church of God are and the categories of those who are in this level.

Let's check through our text.

Matthew 22:15-22:

"Then went the Pharisees, and took counsel how they might entangle him in his talk. And they sent out unto him their disciples with the Herodians, saying, Master, we know that thou art true, and teachest the way of God in truth, neither carest thou for any man: for thou regardest not the person of men. Tell us therefore, What thinkest thou? Is it lawful to give tribute unto Caesar, or not? But Jesus perceived their wickedness, and said, Why tempt ye me, ye hypocrites? Show me the tribute money. And they brought unto him a penny. And he saith unto them, Whose is this image and superscription? They say unto him, Caesar's. Then saith he unto them, Render therefore unto Caesar the things which are Caesar's; and unto God the things that are God's. When they had heard these words, they marveled, and left him, and went their way."

One of the ways the Pharisees and the scribes tried so much to get Jesus was through what He said. They believed they could use His words against Him and they monitored every single word spoken by Him. This is why we really need to be careful with words spoken by us as believers, because if they could monitor the words spoken by Jesus and we claim to be of Christ, the kingdom of darkness is also monitoring our words. However, we thank God that our Jesus is full of wisdom, knowledge and understanding. He knew what they were up to and answered them the perfect way. With the question they asked Him, they would have gotten hold of His words if He had answered a "yes or no" answer. They wanted Him to speak against Caesar or speak against God which they would use to show to the people that He was false. But, Jesus was wiser, hallelujah!

Say this with faith: **I receive wisdom in the name of Jesus Christ.**

The Pharisees were hypocrites because they were trying to tempt Jesus. They already knew the right thing to do but they were forcing words out of Him. They were making Him say things that would go against God or the laws of their country so that they might use it against Him. They were pretenders who pretended not to know the answer to what they asked. But due to the wisdom Jesus was filled with, after He answered them, they marveled and left Him, even though it was for a while. We have hypocrites functioning in diverse areas in churches today. Please remember that the church is not the building or auditorium, it's the gathering of believers with Jesus being the head.

1 Corinthians 14:23:

"If therefore the whole church be come together into one place, and all speak with tongues, and there come in those that are unlearned, or unbelievers, will they not say that ye are mad?"

This verse talks about the whole church coming together and speaking in tongues. It was majorly referring to the believers coming together and praying in tongues, as I have never seen a building mutter words before, nor have I seen buildings move to come together before. Also,

Ephesians 5:23-24

"For the husband is the head of the wife, even as Christ is the head of the church: and he is the savior of the body. Therefore as the church is subject unto Christ, so let the wives be to their own husbands in every thing."

Christ is the head of the church, which means that the church is definitely a body of people and not bricks and blocks. Christ wouldn't be the head of bricks, concrete and blocks. Since it's clear that the church is the gathering of believers, I believe we should understand that whenever we say "we are going to church", we are not going to meet the buildings, "we are going to meet and fellowship together with believers of like mind and passion". So, this is why a believer would not go late to church because he is not going late to the buildings but going late to the gathering of the believers in which the presence of God is present in their midst. Glory to Jesus! We spoke about hypocrites, how they are dominating some parts of the church. Let's look at the ways they are doing this and their attributes in the church. Just as we have known that the Pharisees and Sadducees were purely hypocrites because it showed in their way of life and in their attitude towards Jesus. Also, we know how Jesus was tempted by the hypocrites just to make Him do things that would be used against Him. However, we thank God for our God's foolishness is wiser than the wisdom of men.

Now, let's look at the activities of hypocrites in the church.

ACTIVITIES OF HYPOCRITES IN THE CHURCH:

1. The area of donations, payment of tithes and offerings: One of the activities of hypocrites is trying to be who they are not and to show to the church that they are givers. They try to portray what they are not to the people. This also happened amongst the early church in the family of Ananias and Sapphira.

Acts 4:37:

"Having land, sold it, and brought the money, and laid it at the apostles' feet."

This verse tells how that the church was united and people sold their properties just to give to the apostles to distribute to others who were in need. This was a common experience with the church after they were gripped in the heart through the word of God, that we all are brothers and sisters.

Acts 5:1-2:

"But a certain man named Ananias, with Sapphira his wife, sold a possession, And kept back part of the price, his wife also being privy to it, and brought a certain part, and laid it at the apostles' feet."

Ananias and Sapphira did not have the power to give just the way others gave. Instead of them to give according to their ability just as the bible says that;

2 Corinthians 9:7:

"Every man according as he purposeth in his heart, so let him give; not grudgingly, or of necessity: for God loveth a cheerful giver."

They decided to be who they were not. They wanted to prove that they could also give and be counted amongst those who sold their properties to give to the poor. What a hypocritical way of thinking! Both the husband and the wife were not renewed in heart. If only one of them went vehemently against the decision, they wouldn't have carried it out. But both of them thought the same way. More reason it is good to marry the right person for your life, who will always point you to doing the will of God. The funniest part is that they were not instructed by anybody to sell their property. They decided to do it

themselves. If they had brought only 10% out of the whole money and donated to the church, they would have received blessing from Apostle Peter for even doing so. But, because they were hypocritical in nature, they wanted to give half of their possessions and want full blessings. They wanted to rob God of His blessings from Peter's mouth. Well, we all know what happened to the both of them afterwards. Also, some would want to give their offerings/tithes and hold it in a way to show to those around them that they are giving big offerings. But, whenever they give a small amount of money, they squeeze the money in their hands to the extent that it almost gets torn just to make sure the person next to them doesn't see the little amount they are dropping. They do this to make it look as though they always give offerings/tithes in high amounts. This is a hypocritical act which has no reward!

2. The area of living a double faced life: This is one the most common hypocritical acts found in the church, where people try to change colors like a chameleon just to keep hidden their personalities to some sets of people in the church. This is what was found in the life of Peter when he was rebuked by Paul. Let's look at exactly what happened there.

Galatians 2:11-14:

"But when Peter was come to Antioch, I withstood him to the face, because he was to be blamed. For before that certain came from James, he did eat with the Gentiles: but when they were come, he withdrew and separated himself, fearing them which were of the circumcision. And the other Jews dissembled likewise with him; insomuch that Barnabas also was carried away with their dissimulation. But when I saw that they walked not uprightly

according to the truth of the gospel, I said unto Peter before them all, If thou, being a Jew, livest after the manner of Gentiles, and not as do the Jews, why compellest thou the Gentiles to live as do the Jews?"

Peter ate with the gentiles who were known to be uncircumcised and why did he eat with them? Because he believed Christ already united them together, since they were already saved. However, when certain Jews came from James to Peter, he quickly stopped those things he was used to doing when the Jews were not around. He withdrew and separated himself; not from the church, but from private conversation with the Gentiles: he did not visit them in their own houses, and sit down at table and eat with them, as he always did. His conduct did not agree with the true sentiments of his mind, which he covered and disassembled; and which must have been very strange to the believing Gentiles, to see so great a man behave in such a manner towards them, as if they were persons not fit to converse with, and as if the observance of Jewish rites and ceremonies was necessary to salvation. And, because of what he did, other Jews that were with him too did likewise and even Barnabas was carried away that he also did the same. This showed how double faced he was to the gentiles which was bad. This is the reason Paul rebuked him for behaving in such a manner. There are many in the church today who pretend to be on fire for God in the church but in their various houses, they are something else entirely. We know those who are known to be **Sis. Ruth** (apologies if you bear Ruth) in the church but **fighter and abuser Ruth or Ruth, the prostitute** in their neighborhood. We also know those who are known to be Bro. Israel (apologies if you bear Israel) in the church but **Israel, the husband of street girls or Israel, the baddest** in their neighborhood. They are all living a hypocritical lifestyle in the church. Some would only work in the

church when they notice their pastors or coordinators are around. They will never do such work if none of these people are around. Some ministers live such lives too. They preach like saints on the pulpits but perform against what they preach when they get home. Some behave like angels in church and act like the devil in their homes. Some women preach against indecent dressings to the females but they themselves use handkerchiefs/towels to cover their laps in church because if they don't do so, the male sitting opposite them will fall into temptation through lust, because of what is opened in front of him. All these are the lifestyles of the Pharisees, which should not be emulated!

3. The area of making long prayers to be noticed: It's not bad. Neither is it wrong to pray long prayers or even pray in tongues, but it's wrong to do so just to be seen by others. That is one of the attributes the Pharisees came up with in the bible.

Matthew 23:14:

"Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! for ye devour widows' houses, and for a pretence make long prayer: therefore ye shall receive the greater damnation."

They pretend by making long prayers in the sight of others just for them to be seen as spiritual beings, whereas they struggle to pray 10 minutes in their closets. All these are done just to deceive others into believing what is not true. It's a hypocritical way of life. Apart from prayers, we have some in the church who pretend to have the gift of the Spirit which is not in them. They form things that were not shown to them and tell it to others just for those people to respect their so-called level of anointing. Sometimes, they say general things just

because they don't want to say what the person won't confirm to be true. They could walk up to a person and say, "I saw you praying and seeking a particular thing from God", then they would ask the person if they are correct or not. They know every person in church will actually have one thing or the other he/she is asking from God, so funny. Through that, they enter into people and make others believe them to be who they are not. All these are hypocritical acts which should be eradicated from the church.

4. The area of misleading others with their wayward lifestyles:

These sets of people can go miles to get a person saved, but after he is saved, they allow the person to get misled through their lifestyle.

Matthew 23:15:

"Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! for ye compass sea and land to make one proselyte, and when he is made, ye make him twofold more the child of hell than yourselves."

The moment these people get saved, they begin to look at those who led them to Christ as mentors, not knowing that they are making hypocrites as their mentors. And as such, they also move in the path of destruction just as they imitate those they are following who are on the path of destruction too. Just as we know that getting people saved is not all that matters, but mentoring and monitoring their growth. And, whosoever gets saved but still gets into wrong mentoring will most likely end in hell fire. That is how these hypocrites mislead a lot of people with their hypocritical lifestyles.

5. The area of having an unclean heart: This set of people may pretend to be good outwardly but inwardly, they are wicked and bad. They are pretenders in the church of God.

Matthew 23:27-28:

"Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! for ye are like unto whited sepulchres, which indeed appear beautiful outward, but are within full of dead men's bones, and of all uncleanness. Even so ye also outwardly appear righteous unto men, but within ye are full of hypocrisy and iniquity."

These kinds of people appear humble in the sight of the brethren but go at their backs to spoil them in the sight of others. They say what they cannot in the presence of people at their backs. The moment a person prospers in any way or shares testimony of the goodness of God in his/her life, this set of people congratulates the person even though they keep abusing and insulting the person in their hearts. Their hearts are evil and their hearts act contrary to their actions. Instead of them walking on themselves to be able to have control over their hearts, they keep nurturing evil in their hearts towards others and pretend to be right towards them. When you approach this set of people for help, they pretend like they feel for you but in their heart, they keep saying "good for him, good for her". They pretend to do what they are asked to do joyfully, but inwardly, they are grumbling and speaking against the person who gave them such work. You might see them smiling, it is never from their hearts because of the fake life they live. This type is very wicked because they can pretend to love you, yet they are wishing you evil. They are hypocrites who camouflage in the midst of the brethren.

6. The area of going against the leaders: This is one of the major reasons the Pharisees stood against Jesus. It was evident that Jesus knew more than them and He did more than they did, so they stood against Him. Even amongst pastors and leaders in the church, there are hypocrites who behave so good to the head, yet they plan their downfall at their backs because of envy and jealousy. May we not fall victim to these kinds of people. So, we have looked at some of the activities of hypocrites in the church of God. Let's now look at the effect of hypocrisy in the church of God.

Effects of hypocrisy in the church of God

1. It brings about division which causes the devil to penetrate.
2. It brings about the misleading of baby christians.
3. It stirs up the wrath of God against the hypocrites.
4. It is capable of restricting the presence of God.
5. It destroys godly relationships amongst the brethren.
6. It brings about spiritual death.
7. It destroys brotherly love among the brethren.

These and many more are what hypocrisy causes to the church of God.

How to reduce the rate at which hypocrites are found in the church of God:

Hypocrisy **might** not be totally eradicated but reduced to the minimum. Why? Even when it is dealt with generally, each person would have to deal with it on his own else, it will still showcase in the

life of some which no one would know. The reason people were aware of that of the Pharisees was actually because they acted it out. Some might decide to keep it within and only God who sees the heart is capable of knowing. This shows that, even if it's tried to be dealt with as a group, those whose minds are not renewed will still tend to keep allowing it in them. However, it can only be totally eradicated only if we intercede strongly for the brethren, and there is a change in heart in every single person battling with this deadly thing inwardly.

Here are ways hypocrisy can be reduced or eradicated in the church of God:

1. Interceding for the brethren strongly that God would purge and renew their mind.
2. Rebuking any form of hypocrisy noticed in the church, just the way Paul rebuked Peter.
3. Teaching the undiluted word of God and grooming the hearts of the brethren.
4. Not giving room to division amongst the church.
5. Avoiding situations that can lead to gossip, backbiting and other forms of activities that can tarnish the image of others.
6. Correcting in love.
7. Growing more in the place of the word and prayer.

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