

THE HYPOCRITE

INTRODUCTION

Who knows where the term red-handed comes from? It's actually quite simple... originally referred to having blood on one's hands after committing murder or after an act of poaching.

It's similar to being caught with your hand in the cookie jar. Those of us with children will know how they try to hide their guilt when they have been naughty, for example, vehemently denying that they ate the chocolates in the cupboard with chocolate still being smeared all around their mouths...

Sometimes as we read the Bible, it speaks to us powerfully and brings conviction. As God's word illuminates our lives we sometimes feel as though we have been caught red-handed. A sin many of us struggle with, and which we are many times caught red-handed with, is the sin of hypocrisy!

MESSAGE

WHAT IS HYPOCRISY?

Hypocrisy is the claim or pretense of holding beliefs, standards, behaviors, or virtues that one does not truly hold. In common usage, "hypocrisy" often refers to a failure to do that which one asks of others.

- The word hypocrisy comes from the Greek *hypokrisis*, which means "jealous", "play-acting", "acting out", "coward" or "behind a mask".

The zoo

The story is told of a zoo that was noted for their great collection of different animals. One day the gorilla died, and to keep up the appearance of a full range of animals, the zookeeper hired a man to wear a gorilla suit and fill in for the dead animal. It was his first day on the job, and the man didn't know how to act like a gorilla very well. As he tried to move convincingly, he got too close to the wall of the enclosure and tripped and fell into the lion exhibit. He began to scream, convinced his life was over...until the lion spoke to him: "Be quiet, or you're going to get us both fired!"

- Nothing is as it seems!

JESUS HAD VERY STRONG VIEWS ON HYPOCRICY

Luke 12:1b (NLT) Jesus turned first to his disciples and warned them, "**Beware of the yeast of the Pharisees—their hypocrisy.**"

The same warning applies to us today... We must beware of hypocrisy!

What did Jesus describe as hypocrisy in Luke 12?

1. Speaking about others behind their backs

Luke 12:1-4 (NLT) Meanwhile, the crowds grew until thousands were milling about and stepping on each other. Jesus turned first to his disciples and warned them, “**Beware of the yeast of the Pharisees—their hypocrisy.** 2 The time is coming when everything that is covered up will be revealed, and all that is secret will be made known to all. Whatever you have said in the dark will be heard in the light, and what you have whispered behind closed doors will be shouted from the housetops for all to hear!

- What are we saying about others?
- If we need to close the door to speak to someone, is it because we are speaking about someone else?
- Is it possible that what we are saying can cause hurt?
- Jesus warned that that which is whispered in a hidden manner will be exposed!
- Would we be embarrassed if what we had to say was exposed?

Are we caught red-handed because in our lives, we have done things like this. Have we closed the door and spoken so people in confidence...about someone else...? If so, we need to repent.

1 Chronicles 4:10 (NKJV) And Jabez called on the God of Israel saying, “Oh, that You would bless me indeed, and enlarge my territory, that Your hand would be with me, and that You would keep me from evil, that I may not cause pain!” So God granted him what he requested.

Part of Jabez prayer was “keep me from evil, **that I may not cause pain**”. If what we have to say will cause pain, how can we expect God to bless us.

We need to apply the Jabez Prayer **as a filter to our words** about others. As the old saying goes “If you don’t have something good to say about a person, rather say nothing”.

2. Being more afraid of man than of God

Luke 12:4-5 (NLT) don’t be afraid of those who want to kill your body; they cannot do any more to you after that. 5 But I’ll tell you whom to fear. Fear God, who has the power to kill you and then throw you into hell.

- How can we say we are Christians and then do what man wants either to impress man or because we are afraid of man?
- We need to do what God wants, regardless of what man says!

If we say we are Christians and then choose to fear man above God, it is a form of hypocrisy.

3. Denying Christ

Luke 12:8-9 (NLT) "I tell you the truth, everyone who acknowledges me publicly here on earth, the Son of Man will also acknowledge in the presence of God's angels. 9 But anyone who denies me here on earth will be denied before God's angels.

- How can we say we are Christians and then be shy or ashamed or afraid to confess who we are before man?
- Paul said : **Romans 1:16** (NLT) For I am not ashamed of this Good News about Christ. It is the power of God at work, saving everyone who believes—the Jew first and also the Gentile.

If we say we are Christians and then choose to deny God before man, it is a form of hypocrisy.

Some other examples of hypocrisy that Jesus identified

Matthew 6:1 (NLT) "Watch out! Don't do your good deeds publicly, to be admired by others, for you will lose the reward from your Father in heaven.

Matthew 15:7-9 (NLT) You hypocrites! Isaiah was right when he prophesied about you, for he wrote, 8 'These people honor me with their lips, but their hearts are far from me. 9 Their worship is a farce, for they teach man-made ideas as commands from God.' "

Matthew 23:27 (NLT) "What sorrow awaits you teachers of religious law and you Pharisees. Hypocrites! For you are like whitewashed tombs—beautiful on the outside but filled on the inside with dead people's bones and all sorts of impurity.

WE NEED TO CLEAN OUR WINDOWS

A young couple moved into a new neighborhood. The next morning while they are eating breakfast, the young woman saw her neighbor hanging her wash to dry. "That laundry is not very clean," she said. "She doesn't know how to wash correctly. Perhaps she needs better laundry soap." Her husband looked on, but remained silent. Every time her neighbor hung her wash to dry, the young woman repeated her observations about the dirty laundry.

About one month later, the woman was surprised to see a nice clean wash on the line and said to her husband: "Look, she has learned how to wash correctly. I wonder who taught her this?"

The husband said, "I got up early this morning and cleaned our windows."

- Are we seeing things through dirty eyes?
- Are our eyes tainted by self-righteous and judgmental attitudes?

We need to clean our windows!

Matthew 7:3-5 (NLT) "And why worry about a speck in your friend's eye when you have a log in your own? 4 How can you think of saying to your friend, 'Let me help you get rid of that speck in your eye,' when you can't see past the log in your own eye? 5 Hypocrite! First get rid of the log in your own eye; then you will see well enough to deal with the speck in your friend's eye."

CONCLUSION

Luke 12:39-40 (NLT) "Understand this: If a homeowner knew exactly when a burglar was coming, he would not permit his house to be broken into. 40 You also must be ready all the time, for the Son of Man will come when least expected."

We love Jesus and we want to spend eternity with Him, and we need to make sure that we are prepared when He comes to fetch us. This is why we need to make sure that we deal with the hypocrisy in our lives, as well as any other areas of sin.

- Whether it's speaking behind someone's back...
- Or saying we're a Christian but denying Christ.
- Or judging others when we ourselves need to remove the plank in our own eye,

Let us humbly confess our sins of hypocrisy and turn from our wicked ways.