

Be Real

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Date: 20 December 2009

[0 : 00] I want to talk today about being real, being real.

And about the subject of hypocrisy.! It's a shame.

It's a shame. It's a counterfeit. It's a fake. We think of a counterfeit currency note. We think of a counterfeit coin or a counterfeit note. So, that's the same picture.

It's a fake. It's a sham. It's a counterfeit. And a hypocrite is someone who is trying to be something that they are not. The hypocrite plays their part.

They put on an act. And we see that where people aren't always what they appear to be. And it's something we need to be very careful about. Something we need to be very wary about.

[1 : 23] There are many that profess to be Christians or even preachers, even churches. But there's hypocrisy there. There's not truth there.

And we see that sadly, as we know, in current affairs and current events where you hear at certain churches where dastardly things have happened. So young people in their care. And it's so gross and vile.

And these are people who are pretending to be Christians. They're not really Christians. They're pretenders. They're play actors. They're hypocrites. They're people pretending to be Christians, pretending to be men and women of God.

But they're not real. They're not the real deal. They're not the real thing. And our Lord Jesus, he teaches much about hypocrisy. It's something that he often condemned in the Gospels.

We see those that were those he poured out his anger, his righteous anger against, were the hypocrites. It was those from the religious scene who were play acting.

[2 : 20] They were pretending to be godly, pretending to be righteous, religious but lost, unsaved, not real, not genuine. And he reserved his greatest contempt for these, the Pharisees, the corrupt religious leaders.

They preached chastity and morality and humility. They were thieves who cared mostly for their own selves instead of the poor, the widows, the children and the faithful.

Hypocrisy. Hypocrisy. It's sin. Hypocrisy is sin. And at its heart is pride. At the heart of hypocrisy is pride.

It's self. It's the self. It's the flesh. It's the ego. And hypocrisy is destructive. We see that in Proverbs 11, 9. It says, A hypocrite with his mouth destroyeth his neighbour.

It's destructive. Deceived people who pretend to be Christians wreak havoc and destruction in their path. We see that, as I say, in some of these dastardly stories you hear of Christian churches and preachers, of institutions that profess to be godly and Christian and they're far from it.

[3 : 33] They're hypocritical. They're not real. They're not the genuine. They're not the real thing. And so we look at hypocrisy. Firstly, hypocrisy is self-righteousness. It's a self-righteousness.

It's a pride problem. It's the heart of man. It's the heart of man. As we know, the word tells us that the heart of man is deceitful. It's sick. It's desperately wicked. It's in a dread state of vile condition. It's desperately wicked. Who can know it? It's a pride of man. It's a pride of man. It's the heart of man. It's at the core of man. That deceitfulness.

That resonant evil that's in everyone. That is the problem. Self-righteousness. And we know the Lord Jesus, he told the account of two men who went up to the temple to pray in Luke 18.

And he tells of one, the Pharisee, and the other, the tax collector, the publican, the sinner, as you could characterize him.

[4 : 40] Of these two contrasting figures. And they went up to the temple to pray in Luke 18. And it says there that the Pharisee, in verse 11, he stood and prayed thus with himself.

He wasn't even talking to God. He was praying with himself. He says, God, I thank thee that I am not, as other men are, extortioners, unjust, adulterers, or even as this publican.

He was as if he was telling God that he was much better than the other guy over the road, over the way in the temple there. But then we know that the sinner, the publican, he was repenting. And he said, God, be merciful to me, the sinner. God, be merciful to me, the sinner. He would not look up. And he just beat his chest in repentance, in contrition, in asking God for forgiveness. And the Lord Jesus says of these two, that only one went home justified. And of course, he was talking about that one. That was contrite. That was repentant. And hypocrites don't admit their own faults, but they look for faults in others.

[5 : 55] They look for faults in others. And instead of seeing the fault that is in themselves, they concentrate on that which is wrong about others. It's a mockery.

It's a pride in the heart. It's a show. When we are so blind that we cannot see our own fault, our own sin, our own lack.

And the Lord Jesus, he tells a story of judging. And he illustrates it by one man trying to pull a splinter, a moat out of someone else's eye, a very small piece of wood, a little fleck of timber, a moat, a splinter.

And the Lord Jesus says, yeah, you've got this great huge log, this great huge piece of timber stuck in your own eye. And that's the contrast there.

Hypocrisy is where you can't see your own sin, but you look at the faults of others. And it's really quite a show. It's a shameful thing. And John 12.43 says, They love the praise of men.

[7 : 05] John 12.43, they love the praise of men. The Lord Jesus, he says, Thou hypocrite, first cast out the being that is in thine own eye, and then shalt thou see clearly to cast out the moat, the splinter, out of thy brother's eye.

Matthew 23.5, it says, Their works were done to be seen of men. Their works were done to be seen of men. All of their praying, fasting, giving, it was all to be seen of men.

All to be recognised, all to be praised, all to be acknowledged, to be seen of men. And hypocrisy is something we all need to be guarded against. That self-righteousness that can rear its ugly head in any one of us.

Even as Christians we can have self-righteousness. And it's something we need to be guarded and careful not to have. Because we know, as our Lord says, that all our righteousnesses are as filthy rags.

Hypocrisy is a self-righteousness. And secondly, hypocrisy is a smoke screen. It's a smoke screen. Some people may say they are Christians and seem outwardly beautiful, but they're inwardly or spiritually dead.

[8 : 24] There's many that can come to church and we might be quite convinced that they are fellow believers. That they are our brothers and sisters in Christ. They might make all the right noises and use all the right terminology and patter all the same words that we might parrot and the same phrases and cliches.

But yet, they are lost. Lost people. It's a smoke screen that isn't, even blinds their own eyes. That they look outwardly like they've got it all together. But inwardly, they're dead spiritually.

They're spiritually dead. It's a smoke screen. It's a smoke screen. We need to be guarded about that. All about putting on an appearance and a pretense, a deception. They look good on the outside, but really are ugly on the inside.

And the Lord tells us of this in Matthew 23, from verse 27. Where in Matthew 23, there's many woes. I think there's eight woes the Lord Jesus gives to the Pharisees in Matthew 23.

And one of them here in verse 27, he says, Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites, for ye are like unto white and sepulchres. He says ye like white kind of tombs, whitewashed tombs, which indeed appear beautiful outward, but are within full of dead men's bones, and of all uncleanness.

[9 : 51] Even so ye also outwardly appear righteous unto men, but within ye are full of hypocrisy and iniquity.

So on the outside, on the outward, they appear to have it all together, to have their act together, to appear to be saved, to appear to be righteous, but within are full of hypocrisy and iniquity.

And outwardly hypocrites can look wholesome. We can be quite conned. We can be quite tricked when some might have that show, that veneer of being a Christian, and yet they're really inwardly corrupt.

Inwardly they are lost. And God doesn't want any of us to pretend. People can make that mistake. They might come to church week in, week out, and still be as lost as hell.

And hell-bound. Christless. Deceiving themselves. We need to be aware of that. Brother, sister today, friends tonight, don't make that mistake of being like the hypocrites, the Pharisees of Matthew 23, outwardly appearing righteous unto men, but yet within being lost, full of sin, of iniquity. [11:07] And God doesn't want us to pretend. He's interested in the real you, the inner life, the heart of man. So hypocrisy is self-righteousness. Hypocrisy is a smokescreen.

And thirdly, hypocrisy is a sham. Hypocrisy is a sham. For some Christians... Sorry, I'll say that again. For some, Christianity is just a kind of lip service. It's just a lip service. It's just token words. Their worship is token. It's tokenistic. It's words from their lips, but not from their heart. And some people can put on a Christian look and say they love Jesus when really they don't.

Matthew 15, 8, the Lord says, This people draweth nigh unto me with their mouth and honoureth me with their lips, but their heart is far from me.

Honouring with their lips only, their heart is far from me, says the Lord. And hypocrites honour the Lord Jesus with their lips. They may say, Lord, Lord. They may say all the right kind of terminology, but their hearts, their hearts are far from Him.

[12:23] It's a sham. It's a sham. It's a make-believe. It's a pretense. He is not truly their Lord. He's not truly their Master. And our Lord Jesus, He describes hypocrites as blind.

He says, Hypocrites are blind. In Matthew 23, verse 26, He says, They are blind, Pharisee. Cleanse first that which is within the cup and plant of that.

The outside of them may be clean also. Talks of some who just might clean the outside of the cup. And ladies and gents, if you happen to do the dishes, you've got to get inside the cup.

You've got to get inside that bowl to get it really clean. And that's what God wants to do with every one of us, doesn't He? He wants to get on the inside of us. To start that work from the inside out. To transform us from the heart. From the within. From the inner you. To the outer you. The outside will follow the inside. How are you? Are you the real deal?

[13:22] Or are you a fake and a phony? Are you tricking yourself? Trying to trick others? Don't make that mistake. Don't be a cheap imitation Christian. Be the real, genuine, true, blue, dinky-dye Christian tonight.

Be a real, genuine Christian. Is your Christianity true? Or is it just a lie? Is it something you might have grown up with? Or thought you've become a Christian by some kind of ritual or act of your own?

Without it really being God's grace. God's profound work within your soul. His Holy Spirit's drawing. His Holy Spirit's regenerating.

That must be the work that happens. Not a mock, not a sham. And so, what is the answer tonight? What is the answer? The answer to your self-righteousness is to get right.

It's to get right with God. To get saved. To get saved. To repent. To receive His righteousness. Here's a quote. It says, Jesus did not come to reform sinners.

[14:27] His plan was far more radical. He came to turn sinners into saints. He came to bring us a new heart as part of the spiritual birth package when we believe in the Lord Jesus as our Saviour.

You know, some think that becoming a Christian is like turning over a new leaf. It's turning over a new leaf. It's lifting yourself up by your bootstraps. It's putting on some different clothes or making a kind of self-renewal or a transformation of yourself.

Like you're turning over a new leaf. You're making it. You're reforming yourself. Now, in a sense, some of that can happen. It does happen when you become a Christian. But the reforming of your life follows the new birth.

It's the new birth that must happen first. It's getting right with God. And wherever we find hypocrisy, it's when we hang on to our self-righteousness. It's when we think that somehow we've got something to take credit for.

We've got something to get some kind of gold star of God because we deserve His salvation. You don't deserve any bits of it.

[15:36] Not a scurric, not an insie amount of His salvation. You deserve none of it. You deserve none of His grace. And yet, He gives it so truly, so fully, so freely.

And what we need is not this kind of reform of our own doing, but we need the exchanged life. It's called the exchanged life where you exchange your righteousness, which is really your unrighteousness.

You exchange your unrighteousness, you exchange your flesh, your sinful flesh and self, with His perfect righteousness.

It's an exchange. It's a transaction. You hand in. You cash in, as it were. You redeem, as it were, your life with His perfect righteousness.

There's a swap. There's an exchange where you give your unworthy life and receive His worthy life.

[16:33] You receive the worthy lamb as your sacrifice. You receive His righteousness for your unrighteousness. It's a putting off of self and a putting on of Christ. 1 Peter 2.1 it says, Lay it aside.

Hand it over. Get rid of it. All your malice, your guile, your evil, your hypocrisies, your envies, your pride, your evil speakings. Hand it over to Him.

Lay it aside today. Get right. God wants us to be changed from the inside out. The answer for our self-righteousness is to get right. To get right with God. Secondly, the answer for the smoke screen, if you like, of our hypocrisy, of our deceiving ourselves, of our seeking to deceive others, is to forsake our pride and our self-will and to get real.

Get real with God. When you become a Christian, you become the real you. You become the real man or woman that God has created you in His ultimate perfect will to be.

That one who is saved and in His service. That one who is a son, a daughter of the living God. And you forsake your pride, your self-will. You get real. You get honest with God.

[17:51] You get serious with God. You get genuine with God. You seek His help. You ask His help. And that might be, you might ask for others to help, to pray for you. Now when you become a Christian, you acknowledge that you're unworthy.

You acknowledge that you're not. as the ultimate that you should be, that we can be. There's always more, isn't there? You're pressing towards the mark.

There's always another step. There's always another forward motion to get to that mark until the final graduation. It's a continuous walk. It's a continuous progressive sanctification as you press towards the mark.

And on that way, it's good for you to be real. For me to be real. I'm human. I've failed. I've got many faults and failings and I could give you a big long list afterwards of them.

But, you know, the Bible says to get real. You know, we need to get real. Get real with one another. And it says in the Word, James 5, 16, confess your faults one to another and pray for one another that you may be healed.

[18:56] You know, there's a wonderful truth where we've got prayer needs. I know folk have been telling me today, various folk have been telling me, pray for me, pray for me, pray for me. I've got this happening and that happening.

I've got concerns for family, for my life, for my home, for my walk with God. Pray for me. That's a beautiful thing to do.

Thank you. We want to pray for one another. But maybe times I might come to you and say, Sister, pray for me. I've got this need. Brother, pray for me. Let's get real with one another.

Let's get prayerful for one another. Being a Christian means that we're real. We're not putting on a pretense or putting on a performance. We're real with one another that we can seek prayer from one another.

And when we get real, we ask the Holy Spirit for His empowerment. We learn to walk in the Spirit. We learn to walk in the Spirit. Get that word walk.

[19:52] That word walk. Walk in the Spirit. Don't just stay stagnant and stationary. Get those walking shoes on. Get those shoes on. And start walking in the Spirit.

Romans 8.1 it says, There is therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit.

Now some modern versions take out the latter part of that. It's important to get that. So walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit. That's important. Not to walk after the flesh, but after the Spirit. Stop working and walking in your own flesh. Brother, sister, get a hold of that truth that it's God who worketh in you. He's doing an inward work in your heart. Get real with God.

Get real with other people. Our Christianity is most evident by how we treat other people. Be real in your love. In Romans 12.9 it says, Let love be without dissimulation, or in other words, let love be without hypocrisy.

[20:55] Abhor that which is evil, or hate that which is evil, cleave to that which is good. Cleave to that which is good. Abhor means a hatred.

We should hate evil with a hatred. It's got a very strong sense to it here, this word, abhor. Abhor means utterly detested. Hate it.

Hate that which is evil. It speaks of a hatred that is so strong that it would make us shudder. That's the sense of that word. To hate evil. And secondly, to cleave to, to cleave to, that which is good.

To cleave to it. To cling to it. It's got the sense of joining fast to it. I know we've got a welder in our midst tonight, a professional welder. He knows how. To make pieces of metal.

There's a couple of them here. They know how to make pieces of metal join fast together. Weld it together. That's the sense of what we should be with that which is good. We should be welded.

[21 : 56] Weld it together with that which is good. Weld it. Fasten to it. Join fast to it. So that which is good to those that are good. To the godly. Be welded to it.

Be joined to it. When we are a real Christian, it will show. We'll get real. Lastly, think of the sham life of hypocrisy. Think of that sham that is a hypocrite's life.

Instead of that kind of sham life, seek God for real fruit. Seek God to have fruit in your life that will remain. Matthew 7.20, the Lord Jesus, he talks about the evidence that we'll see from a life that will help us realise where that person is at.

And it says that by their fruits you shall know them. By their fruits you shall know them. Matthew 7.20, you're going to know them by the fruits. It's going to be evident.

It's going to show. It's going to be clear. We can discern the real from the false by the life. How they live, what they do in the day by day. Now it's interesting, the Lord Jesus, he talked to the Pharisees of all the things they did, many good things they did, but he says that they missed the point, they missed the boat.

[23 : 16] Matthew 23.23, he says in the part there of that verse that they missed the weightier matters, the weightier matters, the heavy stuff, the important stuff, the real, where the rubber hits the road stuff, the weightier matters they missed.

They missed it completely of judgment or justice, of mercy and faith. Justice, mercy, faith. They're things that are dealing with other people.

That's where they missed the boat. They missed the, that life that is lived with people. People will realise whether you're a Christian by your fruits.

He says that you'll know my disciples by their love, by how you interact, by how you relate, by your relationships. The real will show through.

And friends, tonight, to wrap up, you can't fool God. You might fool others. You might fool other Christians. You might fool me. You might fool friends and family that you're a Christian tonight.

[24 : 22] But God knows where you're truly at. He knows your very heart. He knows that inner heart. Whether that heart has been replaced or not yet. You might still have that old stony heart that the Bible talks about.

Where you've really not had your heart changed by the Holy Spirit. You're not saved tonight. What a terrible tragedy it would be for you to think that you're saved when you're not.

You haven't had that heart transformation. You haven't had that heart operation. Your heart has not been replaced by that heart of flesh, that heart renewed. Friends, tonight, that would be a terrible, terrible mistake to make.

I pray tonight that you don't make that mistake, that you'll seek God and be truly saved, that you'll truly trust Him. And when you do truly trust Him, as you repent, as God turns your life around, as you start that new way of walking, that new way of living, that walking in the Spirit instead of walking in the flesh, as you start, as your mind is renewed, as your life is transformed, as many of you in Christ, they are a new creature.

Old things are passed away. Behold, all things have become new. That's the transformation that happens and there's a new way of living. There's fruit that will be evident. There will be fruit evident.

[25 : 41] You'll live the life you'll walk the tour. And one area of fruit that we could reflect upon tonight that should be consistent is how we speak.

Blessing and cursing coming out of the same mouth. James speaks of that in James 3.10 and 11. He says, Blessing and cursing coming out of the same mouth.

He says, this should not be. It should not be. How can a fountain send forth bitter and sweet out of the same fountain, out of the same channel? Use that mouth for blessing.

Use that mouth for blessing, not for cursing. We all can be challenged of that. When you are saved, God changes your language. We speak with a new tongue. You speak a language of blessing, not

cursing.

You speak a language of love, of care, of witness. And when cursing and gossip and slander flow from the same mouth, I'm quoting here, it could indicate that a person has not been born again. [26 : 47] It could be an indication. This writer goes on, he says, a drink of the living water, believing on the Lord Jesus as Saviour, is the only way to turn bitter waters into fresh spring waters.

Jesus. It's referring back to that meeting time of Christ and the woman at the well, that rivers of living water. He says, I'm going to give you everlasting water.

And he says, he is that water, effectively, to you today. And when you say, God renews you from the inside out, it's going to affect the way you walk, it's going to affect the way you talk, it's going to affect every bit of your life from the day by day where you live.

And ask God, by his Holy Spirit, to give you the fruit of the Spirit. Ask him to give you the fruit of the Spirit. We see that referred to in Galatians 5 there.

I might just flick there briefly. Think of these things as we close. Are these the fruit that are evident in your life? Galatians 5, we read there, from verse 22, but the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, long-suffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance, against such there is no law.

[28 : 10] What a wonderful truth that is, that the fruit of the Spirit can be evident. And we see that in James 3, 17, it talks about the wisdom that is from above, it's first pure, peaceable, gentle, easy to be entreated, full of mercy, and good fruits, good fruits without partiality, without hypocrisy.

There's going to be good fruits. When you haven't got hypocrisy, there's going to be good fruits. So, friends, tonight, ask the Lord to help you with your Christian walk and talk and life, not just while you're around Christians or in the church, but it's going to happen when you're in the world, when you are in the world.

That's when it really is going to be tested, isn't it? It's going to be tested. Some might make some glib, token, gesture of becoming a Christian in an atmosphere of challenge and decision, and yet, when the test comes, when you're in the workplace, when you're face to face with unbelieving people who are mocking your Saviour, who are cursing his name, who are using dirty jokes, and all about you is a godless spirit.

It's when you're in the workplace that you have to live the life, you have to be the witness, be the witness to them. And that means when we're out and about, it doesn't mean that your Christianity is something you clock on and off of.

Some make that mistake. When I first made a profession of faith in Christ, there was a time that I lived a double life myself. I was still at school at the time, and there was a degree where I was living a bit of a split personality, a double life, where you're one thing in one environment, and you're a different thing in another environment, in a different atmosphere.

[30 : 09] You change like a chameleon, where it changes colours. God doesn't want us to live like that. You need to be an open book, above reproach, transparent, so that the life that you live in your home is such that you wouldn't be ashamed of it.

If I set up a little secret camera, a little spy camera, in your car or in your home, and took some video footage of how you speak to your family, how you speak to your friends, your work colleagues, how you act in the day by day in the nitty gritty, that there would be nothing that you would be ashamed of, that you're not being a hypocrite there, by being one thing there and another thing when you're amongst Christians.

Because, if anything, that is the place that you should be, even stronger than amongst Christians, don't you think? But there is the place where it counts so much, because you're being measured, and when they're measuring you, they're measuring the gospel that you profess, they're measuring the saviour that you profess to follow, and friends, if you've failed him in that regard, then take time tonight to seek God, and ask his forgiveness about that, ask him to forgive you, if you've uttered words that you shouldn't have uttered, amongst family, amongst friends, in workplace, or you've not been the testimony and witness that you, you know you ought to be, you know that you ought to be, be honest tonight, be real tonight, just to close, is it the reality for you, is Christ a reality, do our Lord's words apply to you today, that maybe there's an uttering of cursing and blessing from the same mouth, maybe it's a

Lord, Lord, but it's not a worship from the heart, maybe you've not even been saved yet tonight, I urge you, not that I'm asking you to doubt your salvation, if you are truly saved, it's something that you can rest on his promises for, but if you've never been saved, or if you've just got a kind of impression that you're saved, then that's not going to be good enough when the time comes, when

judgment time comes, it says of hypocrites in Matthew 24, 51, that where they are, it says, there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth, hypocrites are going to have weeping and gnashing of teeth, Matthew 24, 51, and it says in Revelation 21, 8, that all liars, all liars are going to have their part in the lake which burneth with fire and brimstone, which is the second death, you can say hypocrisy is a lie, isn't it?

It says in 1 Timothy 4, 2, speaking lies of hypocrisy, hypocrites are liars, they're pretending to be something they're not, they're going to end up in the lake of fire, and lastly, Job 8, 13, it says the hypocrite's hope shall perish, what's your hope tonight?

[33 : 05] I pray it's not the hypocrite's hope, I pray it's the hope, that living hope, that lively hope, that hope that is Christ in you, the hope of glory, let us pray, Lord, we love you tonight, dear Saviour, we thank you that those you reprimanded were those that pretended, those that were real, those that were whilst unworthy, whilst sinful, whilst repenting, they were received, Lord, we thank you for that wonderful joy that we can know that whilst unworthy as we are, whilst our righteousnesses and all of them are just really just as dirty rags in your face, Lord, we know that we can know that transfer, that exchange of your life with ours, help us, Lord, each one to make that step of trusting you, to let go of our own way of living, to hang on to you, to hold on to you, to trust you, to cleave to you, to cling to you, to be welded to that which is good, to weld our hearts to your heart,

Lord, help us, Lord, to make that step, and for Christians here tonight, Lord, we thank you that whilst we may have failed, Lord, and it's likely that we all have slipped in some regard, we know that we can ask you, Lord, forgive us for that, cleanse our hearts, Lord, help us to be guided back to that place, that walk, help us to be a testimony to our families and folk about us, that we might be a wonderful testimony, that you can work in those most unworthy, yet, Lord, it's your grace that does that work, we thank you, Lord, in Jesus' name, Amen.

Amen. Amen.