



## Hypocrite Heaven

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I would like to speak with you about hypocrite heaven. You know that Jesus can deliver us from cheating, lying, swearing, stealing, sin. But, will there be any hypocrites in heaven? Can Jesus deliver a hypocrite? That is the worst kind isn't it. What is a Hypocrite? Well, it's not the real thing. It's somebody who claims to be the real thing, but is not. Acting holy but not holy. Pretending to be perfect, but not perfect. If I were to ask the question "Are there any hypocrites here today?" What would be the response?

Isaiah 32:6, "For the vile person will speak villany, and his heart will work iniquity, to practice hypocrisy, and to utter error against the LORD, to make empty the soul of the hungry, and he will cause the drink of the thirsty to fail."

In other words - profaneness, to cover, to hide, becloud, to be polluted or defiled, to seduce. Hypocrisy - indeed a very bad thing. Jesus used this term frequently in reference to the Pharisees. He called them vipers and snakes. "You old hypocrites." Oh, he hated hypocrites. They were acting or stage playing. They were pretenders. Religion is at its worst when it is led by false, deceptive pretenders. Have we seen hypocrisy at work in the supposed Religious Community? We have only to think of Jimmy or Tammy Baker. And there are even those in our own church that are no longer in the big lime light. How true it is that the bright lights will go out. And they hurt the church. It hurts when formerly outwardly religious people are found to be inwardly insincere. Hypocrites hurt the church and they hurt God's work.

God looks for a people who are without hypocrisy. James 3:17, "But the wisdom that is from above is first pure, then peaceable, gentle, and easy to be entreated, full of mercy and good fruits, without partiality, and without hypocrisy." And in Romans 12:9 it says, "Let love be without dissimulation. Abhor that which is evil; cleave to that which is good." God wants genuine, sincere Christian people. On no class of people did our Lord come down and be so severely critical of as of the hypocrites.

Will all hypocrites be lost? Somehow we picture heaven as an absolutely holy place, which it is, being inhabited by absolute saints, each with a 1000 watt halo shining from the top of their head. We think that none of those who arrive in Heaven at Jesus coming will have been hypocrites on earth because we think that hypocrites cannot be saved. We think that heaven won't have space for hypocrites.

I want you to come back here to Isaiah 9:17 (KJV), I am going to just read one little section in the middle: "for every one is an hypocrite and an evildoer, and every mouth speaketh folly." How many people are hypocrites? Everybody. Everyone is a hypocrite. So if I were to ask us to raise our hands if we were a hypocrite, and we weren't being hypocritical, we would all raise our hands! That is what the Bible says. And there are many well known examples in the Bible of saints who were not entirely saintly, but who will be in heaven. You can read that list in Hebrews chapter 11. It has a long list: Abel, Enoch, Noah, Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, Joseph, Moses, Rahab, Gideon, Samson and David. It goes on and on. Let's look at a couple of these. Look at David. Was David a hypocrite? Was David a saint? Yes. He's on the list of Hebrews 11. Was he a hypocrite? He pretended to be interested in Uriah the Hittite's welfare and gave Uriah a little furlough so that he could go home to be with his wife who was already pregnant and thus cover up David's great sin. Was that being hypocritical? It sure was. Even Saints like David have been pretenders. David was a murderer just like Moses. And Moses tried to cover up his sin just like David. All these sinned. Yet they will be in heaven according to Hebrews 11. They are on the golden roll.

We don't know a whole lot about Able or Enoch but the first name in Hebrews 11 that we know much about is Noah. Genesis 6:9 says: "These are the generations of Noah: Noah was a just man and perfect in his generations, and Noah walked with God." This sounds a lot like Enoch doesn't it? Noah was a righteous man. How did Noah's long 950 year life end? Pretty good? Well after the flood he became a farmer and in his last days ended in drunkenness and nakedness (See Genesis 9). The truth is Noah was a righteous man but he was still human and subject to sin, like all of us. His obedience was partial. As far as we know Noah did not end up very good at the end of his life. But he is on the Golden Roll of Hebrews chapter 11! Isn't that amazing! So, we might know that everybody falls short. That's why these giants are listed in the Bible: so that we might know that everybody falls short. All who are saved in heaven will be saved by grace. None will have earned their way to heaven.

If you find a church without hypocrites you will be in some fantasy land somewhere. There is no such church. Look at Isaiah 33:14, "The sinners in Zion are afraid; fearfulness hath surprised the hypocrites. Who among us shall dwell with the devouring fire? who among us shall dwell with everlasting burnings?" Some versions use "godless." From this verse you can see that sinners are equated with hypocrites. You can also see where sinners and hypocrites are located. They are in Zion. And, Zion is the church. Hypocrites are in the church. That's where they are.

Paul says in Romans 3:23, for all have sinned and fallen short of the glory of God. Romans 3:10 says, ... there is no one righteous, not even one. Romans 3:12 says, all have turned away, they have together become worthless; there is not one who does good, not even one.

So don't stay away from church because there are so many hypocrites, because there's always room for one more hypocrite. There is room for you! Hypocrites in the church? Yes, in the church, and at work and at home. You don't have to hunt through the church for a hypocrite. In fact, you can go home and look in the mirror and probably find one. I think we just need to admit it. The apostle Paul admitted it. In 1 Timothy 1:15 (KJV) he said Here is a faithful saying that deserves full acceptance: Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners--of whom I am the worst. He admitted it. That's why Paul was such a great man. He knew his heart and admitted his sin.

A hypocrite has partial obedience. Come to Matthew 23 in your Bible. Jesus is speaking, and he says in Matthew 23:23 "Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! for ye pay tithe of mint and anise and cummin, and have omitted the weightier matters of the law, judgment, mercy, and faith: these ought ye to have done, and not to leave the other undone." It is good to pay tithe, but you omitted some other things, Jesus said. Do you know what was so bad about the Pharisees? It was not that they were hypocritical, necessarily but they liked, they enjoyed, their hypocritical lifestyle! They were dead in their sins and were proud of it. They did not want to change. In Mark 7:6 Jesus said, ..."He answered and said unto them, Well hath Esaias prophesied of you hypocrites, as it is written, This people honoureth me with their lips, but their heart is far from me."

A hypocrite is a pretender. He says one thing and does another thing. He is a sinner. "A bad man is worse when he pretends to be a saint." - Francis Bacon. A Pastor was at a flea market one day and bumped into a member of his church that he had not seen for over a year. He said, "You know I haven't seen you in church for a long time. I'd really like for you to come and fellowship with us again." The member replied, "Well, the church is full of hypocrites. If you get them cleaned out, I'll come back." This member failed to see that he himself was a hypocrite! I guess he thought he was clean. I will tell you that a man who hides behind a hypocrite is smaller than the hypocrite. You have to hide behind something bigger than yourself, or you can't hide. Oswald Chambers said, "The world is glad of an excuse not to listen to the gospel message, and the inconsistencies of Christians is the biggest excuse."

Unfortunately, at times we all have split spiritual personalities. We swear allegiance to one set of principles and we live by another set of principles. God would want it to be the opposite. We extol self-control and practice self-indulgence. We proclaim brotherhood and we harbor prejudice in our hearts. We laud character but are very quick to climb up to the top at any cost. We erect houses of worship, but our true shrines are at our homes or in our places of entertainment. We are suffering from a distressing cleavage between the truths that we affirm and the real values that we live by -- Melvin F. Wheatley. Our life is a battleground for right choices. John Bunyan described a hypocrite as "a saint abroad, and a devil at home." That's a good definition.

The following words are from an old engraving on a cathedral in Labeck, Germany:

Thus speaketh Christ our Lord to us:  
You call Me master and obey Me not.  
You call Me light and see Me not.  
You call Me the Way and walk Me not.  
You call Me life and live Me not.  
You call Me wise and follow Me not.  
You call Me fair and love Me not.

You call Me rich and ask Me not.  
You call Me eternal and seek Me not.  
If I condemn thee, blame Me not.

In Isaiah 29:13, The Lord says: "Wherefore the Lord said, Forasmuch as this people draw near me with their mouth, and with their lips do honour me, but have removed their heart far from me, and their fear toward me is taught by the precept of men:" We modern Christians are long on talk and short on conduct. We use the language of power but we live the life of weakness. - A. W. Tozer

Titus 1:16 (KJV) says, They profess that they know God; but in works they deny Him, being abominable, and disobedient, and unto every good work reprobate." That's a hypocrite. One time a father sat down with his family and he had the prayer and he said, "Lord, please bless the food. We thank you for it and we thank you for the hands that prepared it. Amen." And they started eating and he complained that the bread was a little bit dry, the potatoes were too hard, that the cheese was too sharp. And finally his daughter said to him after she'd heard a lot of that type of talk, "Dad, do you think God answered your prayer today?" He said, "Well I guess so." Then she asked, "And do you think God heard what you said about the bread, the potatoes, and the cheese?" "Well, I guess so." Then the little girl concluded, "Then which do you think God believed, Dad?" The man's word had left the door open for hypocrisy to come in.

Luke 6:46 "And why call ye me, Lord, Lord, and do not the things which I say?" That's a hypocrite. We are all hypocrites! God wants followers who love Him enough to follow him and not just talk about it.

On May 3, 1987, the story of Gary Hart's fling with blond model and actress Donna Rice finally erupted into a national scandal. As it unraveled, there was a long tale that I won't go into. But about three days later Gary Hart admitted he'd made a "big mistake" but said, "I didn't do anything immoral" - The Star. God wants us to admit our sin. David admitted his sin. David did a lot of good things. President Clinton. They asked, "Did you really do something with Monica? And he said "well.... you know." Nixon would have probably done better if he'd said "I admit it". Why do we tend to cover up things? God wants total commitment. Luke 14:33 says, "So likewise, whosoever he be of you that forsaketh not all that he hath, he cannot be my disciple."

Years ago in Germany there was a young Jewish boy. He thought the world of his daddy. He thought his daddy was like God. He had a devout, pious Jewish father. They were in the synagogue every Sabbath. The father was zealous. He instructed his children in the proper way and demanded obedience from his children. While the boy was a teenager the family was forced to move to another town in Germany where there was no synagogue. The town consisted of many Lutherans. The pillars of the community all belonged to the Lutheran church. One day the father came home. He said, "we are going to be Lutherans. We are going to quit the Jewish faith and abandon our Jewish traditions." The stunned family asked, "Why?" "Well, it is necessary to keep my business going that we become Lutherans." And the youngster was bewildered. He was confused. He didn't know what to think. His deep disappointment soon gave way to anger and bitterness that plagued him throughout his life.

He left Germany and went to England to study. He studied thoroughly. He had a brilliant mind. He wrote a book that was destined to change the world. In the book he described religion as an "opiate for the masses" that could be explained in terms of economics. Millions of people began to follow his teachings. His name, was of course, Karl Marx. And Karl Marx was who he was because of his hypocritical dad.

Let's not stay hypocrites. Let's get right with God. "The greatest want of the world is for men. Men who will not be bought or sold. Men who in their inmost souls are true and honest. Men who do not fear to call sin by its right name. Men whose conscience is as true to duty as the needle to the pole. Men who will stand for the right though the heavens fall." - E.G. White. That's what God wants. Let's get right with God.

So, what shall we do? Well, first of all, God will accept us as sinners. Romans 5:8, "But God commendeth his love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us." He died for the pharisees. He died for hypocrites. Did Jesus die to try to save the Jews? Yes he did! 2 Corinthians 5:21 says "For he hath made him to be sin for us, who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in him."

Jesus does not treat us as we deserve. Our counterfeit life merits condemnation but what we get is His love and grace and mercy. Everybody who gets to heaven will ride to heaven on the blood-stained back of Jesus Christ. You are going to be in heaven, courtesy of Jesus. Eternal life is not a reward for our living, but a reward for His living. Year after Year Jesus bears with our weakness, hardness of heart and faulty performance. Eternal life is courtesy of Jesus. Your imperfect life can never earn eternity, but it is that very imperfection that attracts God's grace and mercy toward us. Our only claim to His great mercy is our great need.

God loves sinners and he even loves hypocrites. And he wants to save them. He wants them to be in his Kingdom. And they can be in his Kingdom. I don't want to stay a hypocrite. When we get to heaven everybody that we see will once have been a hypocrite on earth. But through the power of Jesus we can change. We can grow more and more like Jesus! Every day a little bit closer. We all stumble. We all fall. But get up, get back on the path that leads to life, and someday you will be in heaven with David, with Noah, with all the others. Praise God for His great grace. I want to read you the final text, which was one of our first texts this morning. Isaiah 9:17 (KJV), ...for every one is an hypocrite and an evildoer, and every mouth speaketh folly. For all this his anger is not turned away, but his hand is stretched out still.

Praise God that he reacts in such a way to our hypocrisy! He still wants to save us. Can a hypocrite be saved? Absolutely! Not in his hypocrisy, but by reaching out to that hand and clasping it and being lifted from the hypocrisy. Let's be true. Let's be what Jesus wants us to be.