

COUNTERFEIT CHRISTIANS

TEXT: *Matthew 23:25: Woe unto you, Scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites, for ye make clean the outside of the cup and of the platter, but within they are full of extortion and excess.*

THEME: Pretenders and Fakers and Hypocrites – their hope Shall perish.

CONTEXT:

Job 8:13: *So are the paths of all that forget God; and the hypocrite's hope shall perish:*

Job 13:16: *He also shall be my salvation: for an hypocrite shall not come before Him.*

Job 15:34: *For the congregation of hypocrites shall be desolate, and fire shall consume the tabernacles of bribery.*

Job 20:5: *That the triumphing of the wicked is short, and the joy of the hypocrite but for a moment?*

Job 27:8: *For what is the hope of the hypocrite, though he hath gained, when God taketh away his soul.*

Job 36:13-14: ¹³ *But the hypocrites in heart heap up wrath: they cry not when He bindeth them.* ¹⁴ *They die in their youth, and their life is among the unclean.*

Proverbs 11:9: *An hypocrite with his mouth destroyeth his neighbour: but through knowledge shall the just be delivered.*

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?*

Matthew 6:2: *Therefore when thou doest thine alms, do not sound a trumpet before thee, as the hypocrites do in the synagogues and in the*



streets, that they may have glory of men. Verily I say unto you, They have their reward.

Matthew 6:5: And when thou prayest, thou shalt not be as the hypocrites are: for they love to pray standing in the synagogues and in the corners of the streets, that they may be seen of men. Verily I say unto you, They have their reward.

Matthew 6:18: That thou appear not unto men to fast, but unto thy Father which is in secret: and thy Father, which seeth in secret, shall reward thee openly.

Matthew 15:7-8:

7 Ye hypocrites, well did Esaias prophesy of you, saying,

8 This people draweth nigh unto Me with their mouth, and honoureth Me with their lips; but their heart is far from Me.

Matthew 22:18: But Jesus perceived their wickedness, and said, "Why tempt ye Me, ye hypocrites?"

Now we see what a counterfeit hypocrite looks like in the Bible. Jesus is very clear in stating that a hypocrite is all for show and self-recognition. All their religion is surface to be seen of men. They want the praise of people more than the blessing of God. They give, pray and fast for only one purpose: they love the praise of men more than God's.



To get praises heaped on them they love to be bragged on, to fill up their pride and their self-importance. They are willing to pay for it, pray for it, and fast for it. They invade the sacred things of God and imitate the acts of true saints to accomplish their selfish ends. They use the very means of crucifying the flesh to appear holy and consecrated by disfiguring their faces, and by wearing a long face and a sad countenance. It is all a fake self-denial, for they propose to get sympathy, attention, and satisfaction for that rotten self-nature of carnality. God hates that whiny 'sympathy-seeking' devil which all Pharisees have, some to a greater and others to a lesser manifest degree.

A hypocrite always goes around criticizing, finding fault, judging and condemning all who do not fall for their counterfeit schemes. They did this to Jesus, and often laid

traps to catch Him in His words. God lets the true saint see the sham-pretender, and does not let him be taken in by or deceived by the fakers.

Jesus told the hypocrites in ***Matthew 7:5: ...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.*** In other words: 'Don't point at specks in my life with your big, dirty finger'. Did you notice the word "brother" in this passage? It denotes one who has actually been in the true Body of Christ, the Church of God.



Next, the fakers and pretenders show their disregard for the Word of God. They will not obey it. They resent it and resist it to the extent that they will substitute the traditions of men in its place. Man-made religion is more palatable to the hypocrite. False doctrine is sweet to the false in heart. They choose to build on the sand, and when storms of trouble and winds of false doctrine and waves of distress beat upon the counterfeit's house, it will fall; and great will be that fall.

Next, pretenders show forth deeper deceitfulness because they are worldly and cunning. They know the ways of deceiving, for they have practiced so many of them. Jesus said they could discern the face of the sky, but not the signs of the times.

Look closely at Judas, Ananias and Sapphira, Simon the Sorcerer. Until they were caught up with, how they paraded their sweet selves in the midst of the disciples and the Church.

Perhaps the worst counterfeit was Judas. He so bluffed his way along that none of the disciples knew he betrayed the Lord Jesus to be crucified until after the resurrection. They knew nothing of his real heart at the last supper. After six showings of Himself to His followers, John asked Jesus:

John 21:20: Then Peter, turning about, seeth the disciple whom Jesus loved following; which also leaned on His breast at supper, and said, Lord, which is he that betrayeth Thee?

John 6:64: But there are some of you that believe not. For Jesus knew from the beginning who they were that believed not, and who should betray Him.

That cruel deceiver could parade himself within the ranks of the closest to Jesus, undetected. Full of guile and trickery, a snake in the grass sought opportunity to betray Jesus by crafty schemes. Finally, he accomplished his schemes with Satan's help. Satan is always ready to help counterfeits. He trains them.

Satan is always ready to help counterfeits.

Judas sought opportunity to betray Jesus. He fought against Him without a cause, and rewarded Him evil for good and hatred for His love. He showed no mercy in seeking to slay the spotless Son of God. He didn't delight in blessing, but spoke evil against Christ and His own. His mouth was full of cursing, and with the combination of all these wicked attributes, no wonder it sent him to his doom and to a suicide's death.

Friend, consider your ways and examine your heart so you don't become so blinded by the devil and deceived in your heart that you get beyond being convicted by the Holy Ghost. The only hope for a hypocrite or faker to look forward to is in **Job 20:5-9**.

Job 20:5-9:

⁵ That the triumphing of the wicked is short, and the joy of the hypocrite but for a moment?

⁶ Though his excellency mount up to the Heavens, and his head reach unto the clouds;

⁷ Yet he shall perish for ever like his own dung: they which have seen him shall say, Where is he?

⁸ He shall fly away as a dream, and shall not be found: yea, he shall be chased away as a vision of the night.

⁹ The eye also which saw him shall see him no more; neither shall his place any more behold him.

That is exactly what happened to Judas. It also happened to Ananias and Sapphira, in like manner. They, too, were caught up in deception and hypocrisy. They did not realize there had been a real prayer meeting just a few days before, and the pastor, Brother Peter, and all the saints got a refilling of the Holy Ghost. There was so much of the Presence and the Power of the Lord there that Sunday that the deceivers and hypocrites could not remain covered. Hallelujah!

Ananias talked one thing, but he said: "He sold the land for a certain amount." But

God showed Peter that the true sale price was much more. Very quickly the actor is cut short, and he paid for his deception with his own soul, for the devil took over - and to the devil he went.

It's time for us to check up on ourselves. If we are genuinely born-again Christians, washed in Jesus' precious Blood, we have a new nature in us; the old heart and spirit is gone, and all things are become new. We are now living after the spirit and not after the flesh. You now hate sin and not just act like you hate it. In church and out, we are the same. We do not dabble and flirt with sin in secret. We don't pretend to be good before the saints on Sunday, like Ananias did. For the real Ananias was what he was outside, and God judged him according to how he acted outside of the church.

You don't have to pretend you are good when you are saved; you just become naturally Christlike and behave yourself because you are right inside. If you feel uncomfortable, uneasy, out of place around Holy Ghost meetings, better check up on yourself. **A hypocrite is a counterfeit. He skulks off to hell, garbed in the robe of the righteous.**

There is no different standard for women. What happened to Ananias happened to his wife. Also, a hypocrite may hope to fool the church into thinking they are spiritual; but the church is the house of God, and not of man. The Bible says in:

Job 8:13: So are the paths of all that forget God; and the hypocrite's hope shall perish.

The hypocrite's hope shall perish and be cut off like a spider's web. He shall lean upon his house, but it shall not stand; he shall hold it fast, but it shall not endure. A hypocrite shall not appear before Christ at the Judgment Seat of Christ as his Redeemer, but only as his Judge.

Job 13:16: He also shall be my salvation: for an hypocrite shall not come before Him.

Only Judgment awaits all who fake their way through this life. Jesus asked the fakers of His day:

Matthew 23:33: Ye serpents, ye generation of vipers, how can ye escape the damnation of hell?

Another pretender who was caught up is Simon as recorded in the book of **Acts**. He

pretended he was saved. He even bluffed his way past Philip. He even got baptized in water. The right ceremony was said over him, but that didn't make him right. It was the right ordinance, but the wrong man.

Baptism does not make us right and it has no saving power. Only repentance, turning from sin, and trusting faith in the Blood of Jesus can save a lost sinner. We are born with our backs toward God, and we live all our life that way until the Holy Spirit convicts us deeply of our sins and we repent, or turn around and come to Jesus for mercy and pardon. When we turn, we come face to face with Jesus. He is ready and waiting to save those who turn to Him. Crying, reforming, or joining a church cannot separate us from our sinful nature; only Christ can change the heart and redeem us from all iniquity.

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Simon didn't have this kind of conversion. He didn't have the true conviction of sin. The Holy Spirit faithfully shows us our lost condition, helps break our stubborn wills, our proud minds, and that we cannot save ourselves. But Simon trusted in water baptism. He did not turn over a new leaf like many of you have not. But that won't work. You are fooling yourself, as Simon did, and you will be found wanting, with a heart still chained by sin in the bonds of iniquity, and in the gall of bitterness.

The instruction was very simple and plain. It was the thing Simon had failed to do. Peter had told him to “repent” and to pray to God that the very thoughts of his heart may be forgiven.

Acts 8:22: Repent therefore of this thy wickedness, and pray God, if perhaps the thought of thine heart may be forgiven thee.

So today, many counterfeit Christians have never fully repented of their sins. They still love them. They still live for self and pet all the lusts of the flesh. They are full of greed and covetousness. They break the first commandment every day. When we truly love the Lord we will keep His commandments.

1 John 2:5: But whoso keepeth His Word, in him verily is the love of God perfected: hereby know we that we are in Him.

1 John 4:9: In this was manifested the love of God toward us, because that God sent His only begotten Son into the world, that we might live through Him.

1 John 4:19: We love Him [God], because He first loved us.

Revelation 1:5: . . . washed us from our sins in His Own [precious] Blood.

Hallelujah!

Because we love Him, we love His Church — the saints, which are His Body. Jesus calls it "My Church". When we love the Church, we won't stay away from it. The devil wants you to stay away. He tells us not to support the church, and you obey him because you are in tune with him and out of touch with Jesus. The devil tells you not to get too deep in religion; not to read the Bible too much; not to take everything too seriously, and you obey him because you are his servant.

When you know Jesus in truth, you will love Him and do those things that are pleasing in His sight. This, and only this, proves whether you are a counterfeit Christian, or a real, born again child of God.

A true child of God is not a deceiver.

In closing, I would like to relate to you the experience of a holiness-hypocrite man. He was house hunting. When light is sinned against, it turns to darkness – worse than the darkness a never-born-again sinner is in. They become cruel, stubborn, and obstinate, want their own way, become petty, whiny, complaining fault finders.

Well, this so-called holiness man had a large family. God pity those poor children caused to be soured on the Gospel by such a one. This man tried to get a house everywhere, but God gave him no favor with the landlords.

Finally, he hit on a scheme to overcome his difficulties. He took all his children out to the cemetery and told them to stay there until he returned. Then, he went to the next property owner and asked to rent his big house. The man inquired of his family and the size of his children. He told that all his children were in the graveyard, with a pretended sorrowful face.

This left the householder with only one impression and you know what it was. He said he had been screening applicants, for he had been having lots of trouble with children tearing up his place; but, he would let him have the house. So, he went out to the cemetery and said to the children: "Come on kids. We have a house now, and

did I ever fool him!”

This lying trick did not get by God, and worst of all, it gave the devil right-of-way into taking him captive at his own will. This Pentecostal hypocrite was teaching his own children to sin and be deceitful, and to lose their very souls. Jesus said:

Matthew 23:25: Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! for ye make clean the outside of the cup and of the platter, but within they are full of extortion and excess.

Matthew 15:19: For out of the heart proceed evil thoughts, murders, adulteries, fornications, thefts, false witness, blasphemies:

All these evil things come from within and defile a man. It is who we really are within which counts.

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