**BIBLE TALK Radio Broadcast**

**On KTTR (99.7 FM) Every Sunday at 8:30 a.m.**

**Rolla, Missouri**

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**Errors of the Pharisees (Hypocrisy)**

We are studying a series of lessons on “errors of the Pharisees.” It is not our purpose in this series just to show how bad these people were. Really, the concern is for ourselves. We want to please God, and here are people, the Pharisees, who received strong denunciation from our Lord. Whatever it was about them to merit that denunciation, we want to avoid in our lives.

So far we have considered their legalistic attitude, and their traditionalism. Today we want to observe the hypocrisy of the Pharisees. Jesus called the Pharisees hypocrites.

 Let us first define what is meant by hypocrisy. The Greek word from which we get the word hypocrisy is defined by Thayer in his Greek-English Lexicon, “the acting of a stage-player…” It also means “dissimulation, hypocrisy.” The Greek word for hypocrite is defined as “an actor, stage-player…” also “a dissembler, pretender, hypocrite.” As a play-actor pretends to be someone other than who he is, so a hypocrite presents himself as someone other than who he really is. He is one thing on the outside and something different on the inside. It is like a car that has 200,000 miles on the engine, burns oil, its transmission is giving you trouble, the body is rusted, but someone sands it down, gets some bando and fixes up the dents, gives it a good paint job, and makes it look beautiful on the outside, but it is sick on the inside. And so the religious hypocrite dresses up the outside religiously, but the inside is full of sin, hate and corruption. He professes to believe in and love Jesus Christ, but his heart is far from Him. The hypocrite will attend church services, and no one looks greater. He will sing and pray with seeming sincerity, but if you could see him in his home, or on the job, or if you could see the thoughts of his heart, you would be shocked. He is pretending to be someone he is not.

The Pharisees were hypocrites. On the outside they showed concern for truth and righteousness, but their hearts were full of evil. Look with me in Matthew 23. In verse 23 Jesus said, *“Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For you pay tithe of mint and anise and cummin, and have neglected the weightier matters of the law: justice and mercy and faith. These you ought to have done, without leaving the others undone.* Notice, they carefully tithe mint, anise and cummin. They must be wonderful people. NO! They have no justice, mercy and faith.  Look at verses 29-31, *“Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! Because you build the tombs of the prophets and adorn the monuments of the righteous, and say, 'If we had lived in the days of our fathers, we would not have been partakers with them in the blood of the prophets.' Therefore you are witnesses against yourselves that you are sons of those who murdered the prophets.”* They build the tombs of the prophets and decorate their graves – oh how they love the true teachers of God. NO! They were among those who at this very time were seeking to kill Jesus. Their true picture is described by Jesus in verses 25-28 of this chapter, *"Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For you cleanse the outside of the cup and dish, but inside they are full of extortion and self-indulgence. Blind Pharisee, first cleanse the inside of the cup and dish, that the outside of them may be clean also. Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For you are like whitewashed tombs which indeed appear beautiful outwardly, but inside are full of dead men's bones and all uncleanness. Even so you also outwardly appear righteous to men, but inside you are full of hypocrisy and lawlessness.”*  The Pharisees were one thing on the outside and something different on the inside. They were hypocrites

Now let us consider how the Pharisees’ hypocrisy showed itself in their lives. These are the effects of hypocrisy.

First of all, the hypocrisy of the Pharisees affected their teaching. The hypocrite emphasizes the outward act to the neglect of inward qualities. For example, he may emphasize in his life that he should not kill, nor steal, nor commit adultery. But at the same time he will neglect the conditions of heart that will lead to such sins, such as hatred, covetousness, and sexual lusts. This may also show up in his teaching. He emphasizes in his teaching the outward act, but neglects inward qualities. This was true of the Pharisees. In Matthew 5:20-22 Jesus said in His great sermon on the mount, *“For I say to you, that unless your righteousness exceeds the righteousness of the scribes and Pharisees, you will by no means enter the kingdom of heaven. You have heard that it was said to those of old, 'You shall not murder, and whoever murders will be in danger of the judgment.' But I say to you that whoever is angry with his brother without a cause shall be in danger of the judgment. And whoever says to his brother, 'Raca!' shall be in danger of the council. But whoever says, 'You fool!' shall be in danger of hell fire.”* Jesus is saying to His disciples that their righteousness must exceed the righteousness of the scribes and Pharisees. The righteousness of the scribes and Pharisees consisted of an emphasis on the outward act to the neglect of inward qualities of the heart. They emphasized in their teaching don’t commit murder, but they neglected teaching on hatred and anger that can lead to murder. Hatred and anger in the heart is just as serious as the outward overt act of murder. Look at verses 27 and 28. Jesus said, *“You have heard that it was said to those of old, 'You shall not commit adultery.' But I say to you that whoever looks at a woman to lust for her has already committed adultery with her in his heart.”* Again, the emphasis of the Pharisees in their teaching was do not commit the outward overt act of adultery. But Jesus goes beyond the overt act and emphasizes the condition of heart. Not only is the overt act of adultery sinful, but also the heart that lusts after a woman is sinful. Jesus calls it adultery in the heart.

The trouble with the hypocritical Pharisees was that they were interested in actions rather than motives; they were interested in outward appearance rather than proper inward qualities. And that had its effect in their teaching.

That can be true of us today. The hypocrite who is more concerned about outward appearance may emphasize in his teaching the outward act of worship, the outward act of singing praises, and neglect inward motives. He teaches that we all must sing, but neglect true praise in the heart. He will emphasize that we must give of our means for the work of the church on the first day of the week, but neglect the fact that we must give cheerfully, and not grudgingly (read 2 Cor. 9:7). The point is we must in our teaching emphasize both the outward act plus the proper condition of heart in doing what God says.

Also the Pharisees’ hypocrisy affected their benevolence. On the outside they appeared to be concerned for the poor, but not really. What they wanted was the praise of men. Look with me at Matthew 6:1, *“Take heed that you do not do your charitable deeds before men, to be seen by them. Otherwise you have no reward from your Father in heaven.*

It affected their praying. Jesus said in verse 5 *“And when you pray, you shall not be like the hypocrites. For they love to pray standing in the synagogues and on the corners of the streets, that they may be seen by men. Assuredly, I say to you, they have their reward.*

It affected their fasting. Look at verse 16, *“Moreover, when you fast, do not be like the hypocrites, with a sad countenance. For they disfigure their faces that they may appear to men to be fasting. Assuredly, I say to you, they have their reward.*

This is a good place to point out the primary cause of hypocrisy. It is PRIDE – the desire to impress men without going to the trouble to be what we ought to be through and through. The hypocrite is more concerned with what men think of him than what God thinks of him. It is like the man who went into the liquor store to buy liquor. He left his son in the car. He bought his liquor and before he came to the car he look this way and that way to see if anyone whom he knew was around. When he got in the car his son said, “Dad, you looked every which a way, but you didn’t look up.” Well, the hypocrite is not concerned about God. He is only concerned about impressing men. And Jesus says, the hypocrite will receive his reward -- the praise of men, and that is his only reward. He will have no reward from God, only condemnation.

Let us talk about the cure for hypocrisy. What is the cure? Well, it is not sinless perfection. Some people see only two types of people – either you are sinlessly perfect or you are a hypocrite. In their mind whenever a Christian sins, he is a hypocrite. This is not true. All of us sin at some time or another. John says, *“If we say that we have not sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us.”* (1 John 1:8) The true Christian, who is not a hypocrite, is not one who never sins, yes, he strives not to sin, but when he does sin he acknowledges his sin, genuinely repents of his sin, and seek God’s forgiveness. The hypocrite, on the other hand, is only concerned whether the sin was seen by his fellow man. He is not concerned about the sin and its effect on God and his relationship with God.

Therefore, the cure for hypocrisy is to have a genuine and sincere heart that is directed toward God. He does not claim sinless perfection, but he genuinely is striving for perfection. When he comes to periods of worship, he does not claim always to be perfect as a worshipper, but as he sings and prays he is sincerely striving to worship God in spirit and in truth. When he sins he genuinely repents, seeks God’s forgiveness and strives to do better. You know the story of David and his sin of adultery with Bathsheba and of the murder of her husband. After the murder of her husband David takes Bathsheba to be his wife. Nathan, the prophet, comes to David and tells him the story of the poor man’s ewe lamb. He tells of how a rich man who had exceedingly many flocks and herds, took this one ewe lamb from the poor man, the lamb who was like a daughter to the poor man, and he killed it and prepared it for a visitor who came to him rather than taking a lamb from his own flocks. David was angry and said that the man who had done this shall surely die. (2 Sam. 12:5) At this moment David is a hypocrite. Nathan says to him, “You are the man.” But David’s role as a hypocrite ends when he comes to grip with his sins. He acknowledges his sins, repents of them and seeks God’s forgiveness. He is no longer a hypocrite.

To rid ourselves of hypocrisy we must strive to be what GOD wants us to be from the inside out. We must be aware of the fact that God sees our hearts. Man only sees what is on the outside, the outward appearance, and man, therefore, can be deceived into thinking one is righteous when he is not. But we cannot deceive God. In 1 Samuel 16 we read of Samuel being sent to Bethlehem to anoint one of the sons of Jesse to be king. Samuel thought that Eliab was the son that God had chosen. But God said to him, *“Do not look at his appearance or at his physical stature, because I have refused him. For the LORD does not see as man sees; for man looks at the outward appearance, but the LORD looks at the heart.”* (1 Sam. 16:7) God knows exactly the person you are. You cannot deceive Him. If we will fill our hearts with genuine love for God, genuine faith in Him, genuine repentance of sin, then the outside will take care of itself.

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