

So What About...?: Part 5- Hypocrisy

I. ME

- A. Welcome/online
- B. Part 5/6 conversation about/look at the problems many people have with God and Christianity
 - 1. Conversation through cards or email
 - 2. Problem of God- Mark Clark
 - 3. Ground rule: follow the evidence! Also, be respectful.

II. WE

- A. **For many people the greatest proof against God's existence is the behavior of Christians!**
- B. Hypocrisy is one of the top issues people have with the Church.
 - 1. 2007 Poll by Barna Group- "Why have you rejected Christianity?"
 - 2. None of the top 6 answers were about evidence.
 - 3. Top 3 Christianity is... 1) Anti-homosexual 2) Judgmental 3) hypocritical
 - 4. "Jesus is cool... but look at his followers... I don't want to have anything to do with them."
 - 5. The way Christians they either know or see in the media act has shown them that what Christians say they believe just isn't true.
 - 6. Even worse by public scandals of abuse and hypocritical church leaders.
 - 7. Report just came out this week that the reported misconduct by one of the pastors I looked up to are credible.
 - 8. Maybe this is the big reason why you've been hesitant to come to or back to church. Why you left in the first place.
 - 9. Someone who said they were a Christian or a leader or leaders in a church hurt you in some way.
 - 10. I don't blame you.

- C. Now that's just individuals but what about all of the atrocities committed in the name of the Church and Christianity throughout history?!
 - 1. Crusades/Inquisition/Witch hunts
- D. **The hypocrisy of Christians and the Church is one of the biggest problems of Christianity.**
- E. So what do we do with all of this?
 - 1. Why would anyone want to be a part of this?
- F. Good question
 - 1. Let's look at the evidence.
 - 2. And see if we can clear this up a bit.

III. GOD

- A. **The first step in dealing with the problem of hypocrisy is admitting it's true.**
 - 1. Many people who call themselves Christians throughout history and even today, have done, and are doing, horrible things... in the name of Jesus.
 - 2. And if you have been hurt or victimized by a Christian or a church... I and the leadership of Crosscreek Community Church sincerely apologize and ask for your forgiveness.
 - 3. We need to take responsibility for the institutions that carry the name of Jesus.
 - 4. We also need to take a step back and look at why this happens.

B. **First- There are many people in the church who are not actually Christians.**

1. It might seem obvious but we need to really get this... there are people in churches and that lead churches who are living a lie.
2. Jesus even taught this was the case- **Matt 7:15-23**
3. Jesus said there would be false teachers and false followers.
4. There are many people who say they are Christians who attend every Sunday, never watch those bad shows or movies, never drink smoke or chew, and even serve or give to their church... who actually don't know, follow, and love Jesus at all.
5. They have simply put on the mask of cultural Christianity.
6. Which is why Jesus will tell them... "Get away from me. I never knew you!"
7. The point is that many (most?) of the hurt and pain caused by "Christians" are not done **because** they follow Jesus but b/c they only **pretend** to... they don't even know Jesus.
8. **Simply saying you believe in God** or even Jesus **is not the same as knowing and following him**- **James 2:19**
9. The proof of a true Jesus follower is... love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control.
10. So it would be a mistake to judge Christianity and Jesus based on the actions of people who simply claim the name but don't even know what it means to be like Jesus.
11. I went to a gym once... but you probably shouldn't judge the quality of that gym on me.

12. **If you want to fairly judge Christianity look at its founder.**

- a. What did Jesus teach?
 - b. How did Jesus live?
13. There's another reason hypocrisy seems so common in the church

C. **2nd- People often misunderstand the message of Christianity**

1. Seen in the question... If Christianity is true then shouldn't Christians be better/more moral than everyone else?
2. It's based on the assumption that Christianity is about getting people to stop doing bad things.
 - a. Once you're a Christian you follow all the rules and you have your life all together.
 - b. New Christian- "Guess I have to stop chewing now."
 - c. But that's not the point of Christianity.
3. See **Christianity is not about what we can do FOR God.**
 - a. **It's about what God, through Jesus, did FOR us.**
4. Jesus came a lived a perfect life precisely b/c we can't.
 - a. He earned that perfect standard before God FOR us and then died to wipe our slate clean.
 - b. And then out of that new life, through his empowerment, we begin showing his love to the world.
 - c. **Ephesians 2:8-10**
5. So if that's the case... what should we expect the church to look like?
 - a. A country club of clean/tidy people who always smell of lavender?
 - b. Or more like a hospital of hurting people learning that they are loved, admitting they aren't perfect,

- continually messing up though they don't want to, and relying on the grace of God to make them new?
6. Christians aren't instantly good after going to a church service.
 - a. I'm not instantly in shape after going to the gym
 - b. Everyone in the church is at a different place in their life and relationship with Jesus.
 7. **Mark's story** of new guy parking on someone's lawn late for church...
 - a. "Screw You! I'm late for church."
 - b. Judge all Christians by that experience or realize this guy is just trying to figure things out?
 8. So don't judge the merits of Christianity on, "How good is this person at this moment?"
 - a. But look "from where did this person start?" How has their life changed since starting to follow Jesus?
 9. Review... So why is there hypocrisy in the Christianity...
 - a. Either those claiming to be Christian are not actually Jesus followers or they are ignorant of what it means to follow Jesus.
 10. We can look at the atrocities in the history of the church through the same lens... only time to look at the most famous example...

D. Crusades

1. Often described as religious wars... when in fact they were nationalist or geopolitical wars draped in the trappings of Christianity.
2. They had absolutely nothing to do with the teachings of Jesus.
3. They were not fought to spread Christianity at the edge of a sword but for the expansion and/or defense of European rule.

4. Idea goes back to the 300's when Christianity was absorbed and hijacked by the Roman Empire.
5. Though the empire "became Christian" it did what it had always done... fight wars to expand its rule. Only now they could say it was for God.
6. Which goes completely against what Jesus said about his kingdom
 - a. **John 18:36**
 - b. **Matt 5:44**
7. **Jesus' kingdom is about transforming lives through his love**
8. Killing people in order to get them to become Christians is the most anti-Christian thing I can think of. It's the opposite of Jesus' expectation that His followers love neighbor like self.
9. The crusades were not about spreading the love of Jesus... They were about spreading European power under the guise of Christianity.

IV. YOU

- A. So where does this lead us?
- B. If you have a problem with hypocrites... you're in good company
 1. **Matthew 23:27-28 and 33**
 2. **Jesus hates hypocrisy.**
 3. **But he died for sinners**
- C. Hypocrite = Greek for actor = wearing a mask
 1. Pretending to be something we aren't
 2. Pretending everything is ok, when inside you know that you aren't

3. Pretending to be religious and holy in order to fit into some mold you think others want you in
4. Hiding our brokenness... sin
5. Jesus hates hypocrisy b/c he wants you to be free to be the 'you' he made you to be.
6. But we are too ashamed of our sin and don't know what to do with it.
7. Or too proud to admit we aren't as good as we want to think we are.
8. That's why he made a way through it... a way to release us from it.
9. He made a way to not just wipe your slate clean but give you a new slate... his slate... his perfect life in exchange for your screwed up life.
10. It won't always be over night... but there will be ongoing transformation... and you'll see it when you look back at where you started.
11. So yes the church has some hypocrites... but more importantly it is full of sinners... b/c that's the point of it.
12. Not to make bad people good but to change ashamed sinners into free and transforming children of God.
13. It's about coming to a place in your journey where you choose to trust Jesus to save you, not because you are perfect but precisely because you are not.
14. Taking off the mask and letting the real you be forgiven and made new

- D. So the question you have to ask answer is not... "what did hypocrites do with the message of Jesus"
 1. Whether you've grown up in the Christian culture or not...
 2. The question is "what will you, a sinner (someone who has fallen short of the law of love, missed on loving neighbor as self), do with the message of Jesus?"
 3. Will you simply wear the mask of Christianity but never truly follow Jesus?
 - a. You can add to the problem of hypocrisy or be part of the solution.
 4. Will you reject Jesus b/c someone who pretended to be Christian was a jerk?
 - a. How they distorted the truth has nothing to do with actually following Jesus
 - b. Remember our challenge of reading the book of John... what did Jesus teach and how did he live?
 5. Or will you admit that you are broken. Will you trust Jesus to forgive you and transform you and will you throw away your mask for a new identity as a loved and free child of God?
 6. It's your choice...
 7. Just b/c other's have manipulated or hijacked the message of Jesus doesn't mean it's not true.
 8. Look at the evidence where does it lead?

V. WE

- A. So what if we judged Christianity, not by what ignorant hypocrites have done with it... but by what Jesus taught, did, and promised to do?
- B. Whether you've been in the Christian culture your whole life or you're just now checking things out-- What if instead of

hiding who we really are, we admitted our brokenness and hypocrisy and simply trusted Jesus to transform us into who we were always meant to be?

- C. Can you imagine the freedom? The change in your life/family?
- D. Sure your past is broken but you don't have to pretend you're fine and stay there.
- E. You can take off the mask and be forgiven and loved.
- F. B/c... **Jesus came to destroy hypocrisy**

Questions (Here's a start)

1. Have you ever had the pleasure of experiencing a hypocritical Christian?
2. Jon said, "There is hypocrisy in the church because either those claiming to be Christian are not actually Jesus-followers or they are ignorant of what it means to follow Jesus." From missing the paper of the target altogether to hitting the bullseye in the middle of it, where does this quote hit in your view?
3. You may have heard references at Crosscreek or elsewhere to both 'Christians' and 'Jesus followers'? What's the difference in your mind, if any? Does it have anything to do with this message and/or you?
4. Read 1 John 1:8-9 and 2:3-11. In your mind, how do these two passages connect? What do they leave you wondering?
5. A couple of weeks ago Jon challenged all of us to read John's account of Jesus' life. Have you accepted that challenge? Why/why not? If so, what's your take so far?

If we claim to be without sin, we deceive ourselves and the truth is not in us. 9 If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just and will forgive us our sins and purify us from all unrighteousness.
1 John 1:8-9

3 We know that we have come to know him if we keep his commands. 4 Whoever says, "I know him," but does not do what he commands is a liar, and the truth is not in that person. 5 But if anyone obeys his word, love for God[a] is truly made complete in them. This is how we know we are in him: 6 Whoever claims to live in him must live as Jesus did. 7 Dear friends, I am not writing you a new command but an old one, which you have had since the beginning. This old command is the message you have heard. 8 Yet I am writing you a new command; its truth is seen in him and in you, because the darkness is passing and the true light is already shining. 9 Anyone who claims to be in the light but hates a brother or sister[b] is still in the darkness. 10 Anyone who loves their brother and sister[c] lives in the light, and there is nothing in them to make them stumble. 11 But anyone who hates a brother or sister is in the darkness and walks around in the darkness. They do not know where they are going, because the darkness has blinded them. 1 John 2:3-11