

What Would Jesus Undo? Msg 4
Hypocrisy
Sermon preached by Dr. Rick Mandl
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(Open w/ Man On The Street – What Is Hypocrisy?)

<https://vimeo.com/6439013>

What we're talking about this morning is **HYPOCRISY** . . .

Which I think you'll agree is something that is really easy to see in everybody else, but not so easy to see in us.

We've been in a series called **What Would Jesus Undo?**

Not **What Would Jesus Do**, but what would he undo

What are the things we're already doing in our lives that would be **disappointing to him** and might even make him angry?

What is it that **when Jesus sees this in our lives he says "I want to undo this so you could have something better?"**

WEEK ONE we talked about **INDIFFERENCE** – spiritual apathy

Jesus would undo a lukewarm spirit

WEEK TWO - - - **EMPTY WORSHIP** – worship that comes from our lips but not our hearts.

Last week **SPIRITUAL PRIDE**

This week it's **HYPOCRISY**

One of the number one reasons you will hear for why people don't want to be a part of church is because the **church is just a bunch of _____**.

When you think about it, that makes about as much sense as saying, **"I don't want to go to a hospital, because hospitals are just filled with a bunch of sick people."**

And that's true, but hopefully they're filled with sick people who are trying to get better.

And if, churches are filled with Hypocrites, I would hope that it's because they're looking for a cure from their hypocrisy.

Hypocrisy is not a fun subject to talk about.

As I said before, it's not easy to see in our own lives.

Which is funny because. . . .

It's very easy to see in other people's lives.

In fact, how many of you would say I know a hypocrite?

Raise your hand, I know a hypocrite.

How many of you say I'm sitting by a hypocrite?

Do not raise your hand because they could point right back at you.

It's really, really easy to see hypocrisy in other people's lives, but it's not so easy to see hypocrisy in our own lives.

But it's something we need to understand because

It's something that can cause people to walk away from the church and to walk away from

God

Living in a Southern California, time spent in traffic is a way of life.

Sometimes when I'm stuck in traffic I'll spend time reading the bumper stickers on the cars around me.

There are plenty of them and they make the journey seem shorter.

It never ceases to amaze me how many have a Christian message on it:

"Jesus Christ — Don't leave earth without Him"

"The Big Bang Theory: God spoke, and BANG, it happened"

"Jesus Loves You"

"God Is Love;"

... and the list goes on.

But here's one that I was saddened to see.

"God Protect Me From Your Followers"

What would Jesus undo?

Jesus would undo hypocrisy.
I like what the author and theologian
Brennan Manning said about this

He was actually writing about ATHEISM and the growing hostility that the world feels toward Christians when he said this. . .

He said,

"The greatest single cause of atheism in the world today is...

Pause there for a moment and let me ask you . . .

What do you think he said it was?

Was it . . .

The **removal of prayer** from our schools?

Was it . . .

Science teachers who teach evolution and mock creation?

Was it . . .

Liberal politicians who lack integrity and pander to the masses?

He says, ***"the greatest single cause of atheism in the world today is***

Christians

Specifically he said, it's Christians who come into a room like this, and

acknowledge Jesus with their lips, and then walk out those doors and deny him by their lifestyles."

Manning concludes his thought by saying,

"That is what an unbelieving world simply find unbelievable."

What would Jesus undo?

Jesus would undo **HYPOCRISY**.

Let's go ahead and build a foundation today in understanding what hypocrisy is.

But **to understand what it is we also have to acknowledge what it is not.**

Let's start with what hypocrisy is not.

If you're taking notes,

Hypocrisy is not the disparity between what we Do and what we Wish we Did.

It's not the **disparity**, or the **difference**, or the **gap** between what we do and what we wish we did.

Sometimes we feel like hypocrites, because ***"I know I should live like this . . . but I'm not doing it.***

Or, ***"Sometimes I have bad thoughts, I wish I didn't but I do."***

That's not hypocrisy.

That's just sin.

Part of our walk of faith

Part of being followers of Christ is that we all wish we were more like the one that we're following.

We wish that the transformation that God is working in us could be instant.

The reality is that we frequently fail.

And **that's not being a hypocrite, that's sin.**

There's a difference between sin and hypocrisy.

Hypocrisy is not - - ***"I know what I should do and I don't do it as well as I should. . . I wish I was better"***

Here's what hypocrisy is . . .

Hypocrisy is the gap between what we Show and Who we Are.

Hypocrisy is **about the SHOW**

Hypocrisy is **about pretending**

It's **about the difference** between **what we SAY** and how we LIVE

When we **talk the talk** but don't live it, that's hypocrisy.

The Apostle Paul defined hypocrisy like this . . .

"Such people claim they know God, but they deny him by the way they live." Titus 1:16

It's **the difference between public persona** and **private character**

What are you like when everyone sees you, and what are you like in private when nobody is looking.

What's interesting is that whenever Jesus would rail against hypocrisy there was a Greek word that he used –

It's the word **hupokrites**.

It even sounds like hypocrite, hupokrites.

And what this word literally means is it means **an actor** or a **stage player**.

It means one who hides behind a mask.

In fact, if you've ever seen the Greek plays, you've probably seen these masks that the actors would wear.

Masks

Different masks to demonstrate different emotions

Actors would wear masks to portray how they were supposed to be feeling

Some masks are happy

Some masks are sad.

The actor stands behind the mask, playing a role – pretending to be someone who they are not.

If we're not careful we can do the same thing as Christians . . .

Sometimes we wear the **INDIGNANT** mask

"Isn't that awful . . ." (what they did)

We don't really think it was awful, but we want the people around us to think we do – so we wear the indignant mask.

Sometimes we wear the **HAPPY** mask

How's it going brother?

It's all good!

It's really not.

What I'm really feeling right now is . . . anxiety or fear or depression - - I'm having doubts and I'm struggling but I feel like I need to portray something different.

Read through the account of Jesus ministry and you'll see that the harshest words he levelled were against hypocrites.

Read Matthew 23:27-38

"What sorrow awaits you teachers of religious law and you Pharisees. Hypocrites! For you are like whitewashed tombs—beautiful on the outside but filled on the inside with dead people's bones and all sorts of impurity." Matthew 23:27

With those words he paints a vivid picture.

He says you're like a tomb. . .

Or a mausoleum that is beautiful

Made out of marble . . . beautifully sculpted . . .

On the outside you look amazing.

Inside - - it's a very different story

Inside there is death and all sorts of impurity

He continues on in verse 28 where he says. . .

Outwardly you look like righteous people, but inwardly your hearts are filled with hypocrisy and lawlessness...

This is what hypocrisy is . . .

Outwardly you look righteous. . .

But inside you're not.

You're an actor – you're putting on a show – you're pretending.

Now, don't misunderstand me here

I know that **none of us want to air our dirty laundry and advertise all of our faults.**

But the problem comes when you're fake.

When we're pretending to be something that we're not.

When we're pretending like we've really got it all together while we don't.

Just as a side note - - -

I believe that **Social Media** can be the perfect breeding ground for hypocrisy.

Because **We Post The Best** and we **Hide The Rest**

In fact I'm surprised that that hasn't caught on as a slogan for Facebook, Instagram, Snap Chat,

Tik Tok

Post The Best and Hide The Rest

Social media is the place where you can, all day long, show what you want other people to see when in reality you're so much different from that.

We see it all the time.

A person posts a picture of her spouse and it says,

"I love this man so much.

He's the man of my dreams

I can't wait to see what adventure is next!

#10years and counting."

But then they're sleeping in separate bedrooms, they don't even talk anymore...

Happens all the time.

Or you're having your Daily Devotions and so you post a picture of

You with your coffee and your Bible . . .

"Here I am, having my daily devotions"

'Cause it's not godly without a coffee cup in your devotion Instagram picture.

Here's my coffee, and here's my Bible, here's my journal.

You post that picture online in the morning and you caption it, ***"spending time with my Jesus..."***

But ***what you don't mention*** is that you spent more time getting the perfect picture, than you did actually engaging with God.

It's easy to portray ourselves as one thing, when the reality is that we're not.

Hypocrisy is about ***pretending, acting, showing one thing and being another.***

Saying one thing, but not living a life that matches.

How did Jesus feel about hypocrisy?

The harshest words Jesus ever spoke were toward hypocrites

He called them white-washed tombs. . . snakes . . . sons of vipers.

He told them ***they were going to hell.***

The only time you see Jesus demonstrate physical violence, was in the temple, in reaction to those who were using it to make money selling animal sacrifices.

He over-turned their tables

He took a whip and drove them out

At the top of Jesus' list of things he hated most was hypocritical behavior

Jesus hated this and he spoke about it A LOT throughout his ministry.

He said ***if you're giving*** so that everyone knows how generous you are, that's hypocrisy.

He says that ***if you pray*** so that everyone knows how spiritual you are, that's hypocrisy.

Jesus hated hypocrisy.

But at the same time he was gracious and kind toward those who were seeking mercy and forgiveness.

Jesus has no tolerance for Hypocrisy,

It turns his stomach.

but has Unlimited Grace for a sinner in need of forgiveness.

On the one hand HARSH - - ZERO TOLERANCE

Calls them snakes and told them how it was

But on the other, he had unlimited grace for sinners in need of forgiveness

This is why I made the distinction earlier between our struggles with sin, versus hypocrisy

Hypocrisy is not just ***"I wish I was doing better than I am"***

Hypocrisy is ***"I'm showing the world this fake side of me, and trying to get them to believe that I've got it all together."***

Jesus cannot stomach the show, but when anyone who's hurting drops the mask and says ***forgive me, heal me, redeem me, save me, change me***, Jesus' answer is always yes.

Because he did not come for those who appear to be righteous, but he came for sinners.

He didn't come for those who are healthy on the outside, he came for those who knew they were sick.

He has no tolerance for the show, but he has unlimited grace for a sinner in need of grace and repentance.

He warned his followers about hypocrisy in Luke chapter 12:1-3

Jesus turned first to his disciples and warned them, “Beware of the yeast of the Pharisees—their hypocrisy

What he’s saying is that **their hypocrisy is like yeast in bread.**

You **mix it in, and you give it a little time and it spreads through the whole loaf.**

He warns his disciples that . . .

The time is coming when everything that is covered up will be revealed, and all that is secret will be made known to all.

He says, “If you’re a hypocrite, the time is coming when you will be found out.

He says . . .

Whatever you have said in the dark will be heard in the light, and what you have whispered behind closed doors will be shouted from the housetops for all to hear!” Luke 12:1-3

Jesus warned his disciples that hypocrisy is contagious.

It will take over your life.

You begin with a little pretending and before you know it you’re just faking everything.

And hypocrisy is attractive, because who doesn’t want to be seen as good and righteous?

We all want to others think well of us.

But the **problem is that hypocrisy changes our hearts.**

Our focus is on how we look

How others see us

When **our focus should be on guarding our hearts** and giving them to the Lord.

When all your focus in on what you look like, you have a hard time focusing on your heart and that’s why hypocrisy is dangerous.

That’s why Jesus challenged the hypocrites of his day - - as he explained the sorrow of hypocrisy to them, he also gave them the solution. . . .

Matthew 23:25-26

“What sorrow awaits you teachers of religious law and you Pharisees. Hypocrites!

Then he tells them what they’re doing and how to fix it.

For you are so careful to clean the outside of the cup and the dish, but inside you are filthy - full of greed and self-indulgence!

Just like the tombs he referred to - - looking good on the outside, but very different inside.

You blind Pharisee! First wash the inside of the cup and the dish, and then the outside will become clean, too.” Matthew 23:25-26

First wash the inside, then the outside will take care of itself

That’s how you break the cycle of hypocrisy

Focus on the inside, because when the inside is clean, the outside will be clean too.

Instead of trying to look good and make people think we’re good on the outside, our focus should be on our heart, and allowing Jesus to transform us.

How do we do that?

What hope is there

Hope For The Hypocrite

1. Start being an Honest Sinner, rather than a Lying Hypocrite.

In other words, drop the mask

Stop pretending like you’ve got it all together when you don’t and come clean.

Come clean before God and come clean before others.

Now, remember when you come clean before God you’re not telling him anything he doesn’t already know.

Masks don’t work with him anyway.

But drop the mask with others.

Proverbs 28 says . . .

“People who conceal their sins will not prosper,

Whoever lives life this behind the mask never finds the blessings of God.

Whoever conceals their sins, whoever shows the false life on the outside, hiding the truth on the inside.

“Whoever conceals their sins doesn’t prosper.

but if they confess and turn from them, they will receive mercy.” Proverbs 28:13

The one who asks for help finds mercy.

None of us are perfect people, living a perfect life, pleasing God in a perfect way.

We're sinners, we're strugglers.

We've all messed up, we all fall short.

We all have battles, we all have struggles, we're all afraid sometimes, we're all inconsistent.

We want to do one thing, then we do something else.

We don't want to have those thoughts and then we do.

We don't want to go back to that old life, but we do.

But when we come together with other people and we open up, and we say *"I'm about to tell you something I've never told anybody before."*

Suddenly in that moment of truth the truth will set you free.

We're always in bondage when we hide.

Whoever hides their sins, conceals their sins doesn't prosper.

Whoever drops the mask and renounces it, we find mercy in the presence of God because Jesus has zero tolerance for hypocrisy.

But he has unlimited grace for a sinner in need of forgiveness.

Make the commitment to start being an Honest Sinner rather than a Lying Hypocrite.

Second thing you can do . . .

2. Stop trying to close the gap with Perfection

What do I mean by that?

What I mean is that when we realize that there is a gap between what people see on the outside and what's really going on, on the inside, a very natural reaction is to think, *"I can close that gap by trying harder."*

"If I just work harder, If I'm just a better Christian I can eliminate the disconnect from what people see on the outside and what's going on, on the inside."

The problem with that is, we don't even know our own hearts.

We might think we do, but we don't.

God speaking through the prophet Jeremiah said it this way. . .

"The human heart is the most deceitful of all things, and desperately wicked. Who really knows how bad it is?" Jeremiah 17:9

Our hearts are deceitful.

They even deceive us.

We might think we know our own heart, but we don't.

You don't know your heart.

I don't know my heart.

We might think we do, but we don't.

That's why we need God's help to search our heart.

Our memory verse for this week is Psalm 139:23-24 says . . .

Memory Verse

"Search me, O God, and know my heart; test me and know my anxious thoughts. Point out anything in me that offends you, and lead me along the path of everlasting life." Psalm 139:23-24

Each week we give you a memory verse with a challenge to commit that verse to memory.

It's usually one of the next steps on your notes and your connection card.

This week, we're giving you another challenge and that is to make that verse your prayer this week.

If our hearts are deceitful, and if we can't really fully know them, then we can ask God to search us, and point out anything in us that is displeasing to him.

And then . . .

As God reveals to us the gap between what we show and who we are.

What do we do with that gap?

What I hope you understand is we don't close the gap with perfection.

What you do is

3. Focus on closing the gap with Jesus

We don't close the gap with our outward behavior.

"If I just can get this one thing under control, now I'm pleasing to God."

We close the gap with Christ. He is our righteousness, he is our source.

He is our healing, he is our redemption. He is the one who brings forgiveness.

We don't close the gap with outward behavior. We let Jesus do an inward work.

Then inwardly as we're transformed over time, our outward behavior will be a reflection of the inward healing work of the grace of Jesus.

The last verse on your notes is a call to draw near to God.

Hebrews 10:22-23 says . . .

“Let us draw near to God with a sincere heart and with the full assurance that faith brings, having our hearts sprinkled to cleanse us from a guilty conscience and having our bodies washed with pure water. Let us hold unswervingly to the hope we profess, for he who promised is faithful.” Hebrews 10:22-23

God is faithful.

And He who began a good work in you will be faithful to complete it.

No matter where you are in your walk with Christ right now, you need to know that God isn't finished with you yet.

He'll meet you where you are, but he won't leave you there, he'll lead you forward on a journey toward becoming more and more like Him.

Let's pray . . .