

The Remedy for Hypocrisy, Part 1

Luke 12:2-5

I want to welcome you back to our study in Luke chapter 12. And we are looking at the subject of religious hypocrisy. Its danger and its remedy. I've been thinking a lot these days about the need for the fear of God in Christian ministry and I'm thinking a lot these days about the need for moral courage among us Christians, and especially moral courage in ministry. Courage among Christians in these dark days where it seems that there's a spirit of compromise and hypocrisy that has infiltrated and infected the church. I look to dark times, darker times in the history of the Christian church for courage, for examples of courage. where the history of the Christian church has been punctuated by acts of great bravery and sacrifice. Acts of moral courage. Acts of martyrdom, even. To stand firm for faith in Christ.

We need these sound guides today. It was Tertullian who wrote in his work, *Apologeticus*, he said, "The blood of the martyrs is the seed of the church." That is true. Every time a

Christian's blood is spilled, it actually strengthens the resolve of God's people. As we face increasing levels of hostility against Christ and his church at this time, in our country, we will have to count the cost. Will we stand with those who have shown such courage and integrity throughout the annals of church history or will we be swayed by those who wear the mask of hypocrisy?

All the apostles, except John, died a martyr's death. When we stand with Christ, we make a decision where there is no going back. Going back means compromise. It means cowardice. When we stand for Christ, we're all in. They crucified him. They stoned Stephen. They beheaded James. The rest of the apostles followed suit, as John Foxe tells us in *the Foxe's Book of Martyrs*. Philip was scourged, thrown into prison, then crucified. Matthew was killed with a halberd. It's a long spear like thing with an axe on the end. James the less, he was beaten and stoned at the age of 94. And then had his head caved in. Matthias was stoned then beheaded. Andrew, crucified. John Mark, who was Peter's amanuensis, he was dragged to pieces by the people of Alexandria.

Peter was crucified upside down because he considered himself unworthy to die in the same manner that his Lord died.

So he requested and they granted the request. Paul, the beloved apostle, was beheaded. Bartholomew, he was crucified by idolators in India. Thomas, also died in India. He was thrust through with a spear. Luke, the man who's written this text before us today, he was hanged on an olive tree. Simon, the zealot, was crucified as well. The apostle John, as I said, he escaped martyrdom but not persecution. He was exiled to Patmos, but the Lord allowed him to disciple and infuse that spirit of courage and bravery and strength into other disciples in the early church, some of the first martyrs of the church.

Ignatius of Antioch, he was killed around A.D. 108 by the wild beasts in Trajan's persecution. Polycarp, he was a disciple of the apostle John in his youth. Toward the end of his life, he was arrested on charges of atheism during the persecutions of Marcus Aurelius. He was charged with atheism, not because he was an atheist and didn't believe in God, but because he worshiped an invisible God. And he would not bow to the idols of Rome. Roman gods with their man-made idols, he would not bow to them.

And when they said, "Behold, the atheist," he said, "Yes, behold, the atheist." He as standing before the civil authorities an old man and a proconsul pleaded with him, Swear, swear and I will release thee. Reproach Christ. Don't you value

your physical health and well-being? Don't you value your safety? Polycarp responded gently. He answered with the courage of meekness just before they lit the flames on his fire. "Eighty and six years I have served him, and he has done me no wrong. How, then, can I blaspheme my king who has saved me?"

We can scroll all the way through the centuries of church history. And we can speak of John Wycliff, John Huss, William Tyndale, Martin Luther, John Calvin, Lady Jane Grey, died as a teenager. Hugh Latimer, Nicholas Ridley, John Knox, John Bunyan, John Owen, even Charles Spurgeon, the great Charles Spurgeon cast out of his Baptist union during the downgrade controversy, seeing the intrusion of modernism into the church, which we have suffered the penalty of, I can tell you.

Martyn Lloyd Jones, as well, stood against ecumenism. The list goes on and on and on. And today, I think we can safely add the names of very courageous godly men like John MacArthur and Tom Ascol. Men who have lost prominent evangelical friends for taking a stand in the face of great compromise and hypocrisy. It's not popular to say that, is it? Because prophets and godly men are generally despised in their own day.

Oh those guys are too severe. They're too serious. They're only recognized in the pages of church history books as having

been bold and having stood firm. But in their own generation, they're pilloried and mocked and scorned. Listen, beloved, may none of us be like the Pharisees, the scribes, the scholars, the lawyers, those who built the tombs of the prophets whom their fathers despised and killed.

Our version of that same sin is to honor Christian courage in all of our history books and commend them on our blogs, wear them on our tee shirts. John Owen is my homeboy. But we oppose the living versions of those same people. Those courageous Christians who, for their stance, make us really uncomfortable in real life. Listen, there's a cost, isn't there, to standing up against hypocrisy?

There's no cost for commending yesterday's courage. There's cost for today's courage to stand firm against the actual challenges of our own day and our time. This is where it counts. This is where we need brave Christian men and women. This is why Jesus told his disciples, that religious hypocrisy is dangerous. It's dangerous because religious hypocrites, though they appear to be polite and nice, they really are not that benign because when that mask comes off, it reveals a murderous and violent heart that's been hidden underneath the surface.

When that mask comes off, watch out. Persecution ensues. Murder comes next. The woke social justice protestors, they have war in their hearts. And they have infiltrated the church. They're infecting the ranks of the godly with the leaven of their hypocrisy. Jesus began to say to his disciples first, "Beware of the leaven of the Pharisees, which is hypocrisy." Beware. Even the bold and brave Peter was infected by this same spirit of hypocrisy and leavened by it, so can we. Beloved, we, too, need to guard our hearts against the sin that underlies hypocrisy, which is the sin of the fear of man. Being really concerned with what other people think about us. It's at the root of all hypocrisy.

So now that we've unmasked, or watched Jesus, really, unmask hypocrisy, we see what's beneath the mask of polite civil religion, social appropriateness. Now that we're aware of how it permeates and saturates the world around us and even comes into the church. In light of its danger, in light of its contagious nature, Jesus then provides us with the remedy for hypocrisy, verses 1 to 5.

Luke 12:1 to 5. "In the meantime, when so many thousands of the people had gathered together that they were trampling one another, he began to say to his disciples first, 'Beware of the

leaven of the Pharisees, which is hypocrisy. Nothing is covered up that will not be revealed, or hidden that will not be known. Therefore whatever you have said in the dark shall be heard in the light, and what you've whispered in private rooms shall be proclaimed from the housetops. "I tell you, my friends, do not fear those who kill the body, and after that have nothing more that they can do. But I will warn you whom to fear: fear him who, after he has killed, has authority to cast into hell. Yes, I tell you, fear him!"

As Jesus disciplines his disciples. As he trains them and he trains them in the context and the climate of opposition, of great controversy, of vitriol, of even what culminated in his murder. It was in that climate that he did the best teaching and training. And beloved, we're in such times today. It's time for us to be trained by Christ himself.

So as we said, hypocrisy is dangerous. That's point one. It's also contagious, that was point two. Point number three, religious hypocrisy is fallacious. It's fallacious. It's a fallacy. By fallacious, I mean it's deceptive. It is false. Hypocrisy, it thinks and influences according to what is really a myth, what is really wishful thinking. To imagine that our secret thoughts and motives, our private conversations will

never ever come to light, that is folly. Because the Bible is abundantly clear, "Be sure your sins will find you out."

Notice how Jesus leads us into this point to see how hypocrisy is fallacious. He leads his disciples into the fear of God in this way in verse 2. He's showing them what God does by nature. This is the kind of God that we have is to do things like this. This principle. Verse 2, "Nothing is covered up that will not be revealed, or hidden that will not be made known." So who is behind the passive verbs there? Who is doing the revealing? Who is making the hidden things known? God is, right? He's the only one that can do that. He is the one responsible for the action in those passive voice verbs, covered up things being revealed, hidden things being made known. Who can do such things but God and God alone?

He sees into your heart. He sees into what you do in private, how you think, what you speak, what you say. And he sees it not just for you, singular, but you, plural, and everyone in the whole earth. And why does he do that? Is it because he delights in embarrassing people? No. It's because it is his nature to reveal. God is a revealing God, who makes things known. He loves to bring things into the light. And when

we follow that same pattern of bringing things into the light,
we bring glory to God.

As we read in John 3:21, "Whoever does what is true comes to the light so that it may be clearly seen that his works have been carried out in God. Whoever hates the lights stays away from it." They stay in the darkness, or they put on the mask of hypocrisy, right? God loves light. He loves to reveal. He loves to teach. He loves to explain. He loves to make known. "This is the message," 1 John 1:5, "The message that we have heard from him," Jesus Christ, "and proclaim to you that God is light, in him is no darkness at all."

So what Jesus is teaching us, right here, in the passage in front of us, that God is light. In him is no darkness at all. And anything that is in darkness will one day be lit up. Nothing currently concealed, nothing currently hidden is going to remain that way, everything comes to light. Back in verse 2, there, those who conceal things, there's an intentionality that's implied in the verb there, *synkalopto*, which means to conceal, to cover up completely.

So it's like an intentionality to make sure it stays covered up. Those who intentionally conceal, like hypocrites, they find themselves opposing the very nature and essence of

God, who by his nature, by his essence, is a revealing God. He loves to show things. They work against him. They act contrary to God's nature. Revealed there is the word *apokalypto*, *apokalypto*. We get the word apocalypse from that. You, usually you think of like nuclear apocalypse, some huge destruction.

We get that from the book of Revelation where we see destruction recorded in the book of Revelation. But revelation itself is an *apokalypto*. It is God revealing. It is called from the very beginning the revelation of Jesus Christ. So *apokalypto* is an unveiling, a revealing, a revelation. That's what we see here. That's God's doing.

Hypocrites are opposing the all-powerful, Almighty God, who intends and will not be stopped, but he intends to reveal what they so desperately try to conceal and to hide. Notice the double negative there. "Nothing covered up that won't be revealed." "Nothing hidden that won't be made known." Double negative there just stresses the certainty of this truth, the certainty of this principle.

Based on that certainty, now look at the implication of this. We know the principle. What does it mean for us? There's a, therefore, in verse 3, which tells us the implication. "Therefore what you've said in the dark shall be heard in the

light and what you've whispered in private rooms shall be proclaimed on the housetops."

In the first case, saying something to somebody under the cover of darkness, this hints at the kind of things that are the subject of the conversation, kind of things being spoken of. Content of these little secrets. The subject for which darkness is a very fitting metaphor, whether it's gossip or slander, or hatred, jealousy, envy, all these things that are spoken. These are done at dark and devious places in the heart. And they come out in private speech.

In the second case, whispered in private rooms literally the expression, whispered, is to speak into the ear. That gives you, as you imagine that, speaking into the ear the right picture, right? And they do this speaking into the ear in the private room, in an inner room. One that's not adjacent to an exterior wall. This is an inner room, a private inner room where people stored their goods, their treasures, hidden from the outside where thieves could not burrow in and get what they wanted. So you have these walled in interior rooms for storing goods and treasures and valuables.

Secretive locations, perfect places for whispering secret things, right. And the darkness provides good cover for speaking

about things you want to keep hidden from the eyes and ears of others. Works well when you're talking about preventing any unwanted human attention, right? What did hypocrites failed to account for? God's listening. God is there. God is all-seeing, all-knowing, ever-present. He's there in the inner room, where you think it's private. You think, oh, I'll escape into my heart. No, he's there. Sin of hypocrisy blinds people.

As I like to tell my kids growing up, hey, kids, sin makes you stupid. That's why you're reasoning this way. So, stop it. Sin makes people stupid, makes us stupid. So hypocrites are stupid. They fail to take God into account that they're whispering here. Think that God doesn't have ears. He who created the ear, does he not hear? He created the eye; does he not see? He who created your mind to process, does he not know?

God is omnipresent. He is omniscient. In plain language that means God is everywhere and he knows absolutely everything. Only a fool can think that he can get away with doing, saying, or thinking anything that God's not going to know about. And not later in some moment of revealing. He knows it immediately. Remember, though, Jesus is not speaking here only to great fools. He speaks, verse 1, to his disciples first.

He delivers this warning to friends, verse 4. And he's giving this warning not in a spirit of rebuke, as if they're doing this right now. He's doing it with a voice of caution, warning, admonition, like us parents telling our kids to stay away from danger. He's thinking of his disciples, his children here, his brothers, sisters. Watch out.

Second person plural there in verse 3, "You, whatever you have said in the dark...whatever you have whispered in private rooms." That's a warning for us Christians. That's a warning for us disciples. It applies to you. Try as you might to keep things quiet, to keep things out of the light, it is in vain because God loves to proclaim truth. He loves to proclaim the truth about all things. Everything in broad daylight. And he turns up the volume to a level ten. "No creature is hidden from his sight," Hebrews 4:13, "But all are naked and exposed to the eyes of him to whom we must give an account."

Proverbs 28:13 says that, "Whoever conceals his transgressions will not prosper, but he who confesses and forsakes them, he'll obtain mercy." For those who are concealing sin, this is a very clear warning to repent. It's a warning to confess and forsake your sins. Paul says, Romans 2:15-16, that "The work of the law is written on your heart, and your

conscience bears witness to the law of God." On that day of reckoning, your thoughts are going to serve as a witness for the prosecution, not the defense.

"On that day when," according to my gospel, "God judges the secrets of men by Christ Jesus." It's all going to come out. When Christ returns, there will be a day of reckoning. And he will bring to light the things now hidden in the darkness. 1 Corinthians 4:5. He will disclose the purposes of the heart. There will be no escape from that Great White Throne of judgment. Revelation 20:11 to 12, where there will be a general resurrection of all mankind. Every human being, unbeliever and believer will all be raised. "The dead, great and small, they will all be standing before the throne.

That day of reckoning is coming. So now before it's too late, I plead with you, confess your sins, forsake your sins. Put your faith in Jesus Christ as Savior and Lord. Trust him. Trust him. He's reliable and trustworthy. He's altogether beautiful and glorious. There is no greater savior. He's the only Savior, the only king, really, who would die for your sins.

He died on the cross, suffering a terrible death at the hands of sinners. He suffered the full wrath of his Father. Follow him as the one true Lord who will never fail you, whose

word itself is truth. He demonstrated his love by dying for you. Give up trying to conceal your sins from an all-seeing God. Confess your sins. Forsake your sins. And trust in Jesus Christ. That's what God would have you do.

For those who are confessing and forsaking sins, this is what Christians do, we're gonna steer clear of hypocrisy. If we confess our sins and make it a regular habit to confess and forsake our sins, we will steer clear from hypocrisy. Cleaning out leaven from our lives is a regular habit. This is what Christians do. We are repenters. We are continually repenting. We don't become self-satisfied and say, yesterday's repentance and confession is enough. We say it happens every single day.

We confess our sins to one another. We confess our sins to God. He's pleased to forgive. Why do we do this as a regular habit of our Christian faith? Because at one time, we were darkness. But now we are light in the Lord and so we walk as children of light. Ephesians 5:8. Just as it's God's nature in his essence to reveal and to bring things to light, now as his children, we reflect the image of our Creator, right? And so we walk as children as light. We don't, we don't walk in darkness. We walk in the light. We pursue the light.

We sincerely believe what Jesus says here in verses 2 to 3 that everything will be revealed. Everything will be made known. We know that everything we've said in the dark it will be heard in the light. What we've whispered in private rooms is gonna be the subject of a sermon from a housetop. So instead of hiding the sinful things we say, we confess those things as sins and we repent and we forsake them.

As believers, we're confessing our sins all the time. We know, 1 John 1:8, that "if we say we have no sin, we deceive ourselves," greatly. "The truth is not in us." So we don't do that. We know before God, we know before Christ. We admit our sin. We refuse to hide it, refuse to conceal it. And we embrace, instead, the promises of 1 John 1:9 that "if we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us of all unrighteousness."

So what's the promise of 1 John 1:9 is that you confess the sins that you know. He's faithful to his word to forgive those who come to him. He's just, that is he doesn't let that sin go. He doesn't sweep it under the rug. He doesn't say, I don't pay attention to that anymore. He actually is just to punish it. Where'd he punish it? In Christ.

So God is faithful, he's true to his Word. He's just. He never lets one sin go, but every single sin paid for by the shed blood of Jesus Christ on the cross. So God is faithful and just not only to forgive us of the sins we do know, but to cleanse us from all unrighteousness. That's comprehensive. And at that moment, whatever we don't know, he's cleansing us from it. Isn't that a good word? That's full complete relational reconciliation with our God. That's what's promised there.

The God who knows all, sees all, is everywhere and can hear our hypocrisy, he can hear our comments spoken in the dark. He can see our deeds done where we don't want anybody else to see them. He'll forgive even those things that we're not aware of. Good news. Good news. That's why it's called the Gospel. It's good, good news.