“The Case For Hypocrisy”

11/12/2017

Luke 6:39-49

Please find with me the second chapter of the Book of Romans. I want to thank you again for the opportunity to preach and teach the Scriptures.

Whenever Jesus spoke, He always spoke the truth. Whenever He made a judgment about someone, He only spoke the truth. Now, there’s only one person in the NT Who uses the word “hypocrite.” And that Person is Jesus Christ. So, since Jesus always spoke the truth, those whom He describes as hypocrites must have been exactly what He said they were.

The early use of the word “hypocrite” goes back to the theater. Hundreds of years Before Christ (B.C.), there was a person known by everyone as a hypocrite. And that person was an actor. A hypocrite was “a stage actor; a pretender.” [www.dictionary.com]. “In Athens during the 4th century BC, for example, the great orator Demosthenes describes his rival [Aeschines](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Aeschines), who had been a successful actor before taking up politics, as a “*hypocrites”* whose skill at impersonating characters on stage made him an untrust-worthy politician.”

This comes from the Merriam-Webster Dictionary of the English language. *“The Greek word took on an extended meaning to refer to any person who was wearing a figurative mask and pretending to be someone or something they were not.”*

So, by the time of Jesus, it came with a tremendous amount of force when He referred to the Pharisees and Scribes as hypocrites. They knew and the people who heard Jesus knew that what He spoke was true. These men were pretenders. They claimed to know the LORD. They claimed to speak on His behalf. And yet, their lives denied what they claimed. So, rightly, Jesus called them hypocrites.

I’ve titled today’s sermon “The Case For Hypocrisy.” Shall we pray?

Now, Jesus might be the only Person in the NT that uses the word “hypocrite.” But someone else in the NT perfectly describes a hypocrite, yet he doesn’t use the word.

Paul is the one Jew in the NT who thoroughly understands the hypocrisy of the Jewish mind; and even more, the Jewish heart. Paul was not only born into a Jewish home. But he was raised a Jew, keeping all the laws as he knew best. Yet, like so many, whether Jew or Gentile, whether then or now, he grew into a hypocrite.

Romans two is Paul’s indictment of the Jews. And he goes way past the outside of the cup. He spills the whole cup onto the floor. You’ve heard the phrase *“It takes one to know one.”* It fits Paul to a “tee.” Remember Paul having once been in the shoes of a hypocrite, he can speak with assurance on the subject. Don’t be surprised if the LORD speaks to you about your own hypocrisy.

I want to be as clear as I can today. I want to say something about the Jews. And I want you to see what the Bible says about them. The Jews are very prominent in history as you are about to see.

This is Paul using his pen like a knife and laying opening the heart of the Jew. And let me say this before we read. What I have to read for you and what I have to say about hypocrisy applies to the Jews. But, as Mr. Vanderbeck would say it “If the shoe fits, wear it.” [Found on <https://www.-phrases.org.uk/meanings/if-the-shoe-fits.html>]. You know your heart better than anyone in this room. So, whether it’s Jesus speaking or it’s Paul describing one, let the LORD do His bidding.

Now, Romans two, verses seventeen through twenty are just one sentence with six descriptions of the Jews. And they’re all connected by the conjunction “and.” And there are five “ands.”

Please follow with me at verse seventeen. Romans 2:17 *“Behold, thou art called a Jew,* ***and*** *restest in the law,* ***and*** *makest thy boast of God, (18)* ***And*** *knowest his will,* ***and*** *approvest the things that are more excellent, being instructed out of the law;*

*(19)* ***And*** *art confident that thou thyself art a guide of the blind, a light of them which are in darkness, (20) an instructor of the foolish, a teacher of babes, which hast the form of knowledge and of the truth in the law.”*

I wonder if part of the reason why Paul wrote to the Church at Rome was to send a reminder to them that if the Jews had all the benefits and advantages and gifts of God; and *they* squandered them; then, the Christians too need to be aware of their own tendency to hypocrisy with all the benefits and gifts God has extended to us.

You see, Paul always wants to separate the wheat from the chaff. By that I mean this. In the first half of Romans two, Paul lays out the majesty of the judgment of God in very clear terms.

Then, in this second half of Romans two, Paul takes on the Jews. Yes, the LORD is the True Judge. And, as the Judge of all men, He’s especially concerned about one group; the ones who should have had the greatest impact on the human race when that group turns its knowledge of God into human pride. So, the Holy Spirit, through the Apostle Paul, doesn’t mince any words.

Think about God’s interest in the Jews from the days of Abraham. Abraham was nine down from Noah; nine genera-tions from the days of the worldwide flood.

Here’s a quick way to remember OT dates.

Adam – 4,000 B.C.

Abraham – 2,000 B.C.

Exodus – 1,500 B.C.

David – 1,000 B.C.

The Jews gave us God; in a manner of speaking. And they gave us the Bible. The entire Bible, every word, was written by the Holy Spirit through Jewish men. And throughout all of human history, the LORD has taken great interest in one nation above all others. And that nation is Israel. The Jews connect us to God.

“Connecting to God is the ultimate form of relationship and that which our soul ultimately yearns for. Every pleasure we experience and every meaningful relationship we make in this world is just a small taste of the ultimate relationship of our soul with our Creator” says one Jewish man. [Found on <http://www.aish.-com/jl/h/cc/>Why\_Study\_History.html by Rabbi Moshe Chaim Luzzatto, *Derech Hashem I: 2:1*].

Every person desperately needs a genuine relationship with God. And yet, we human beings are so deeply entrenched in sin that we’ve lost God. The world, most part, has turned against Him. So, we are in dire need of being restored to fellowship with God.

And since the LORD had such an huge interest in the Jews throughout history, we’d expect to find the answer to our need for the LORD in Judaism. But we don’t. The world turned creatures and creation into something to worship while the Jews turned worship into religion.

The nation of Israel turns fifty in 2018. But look back in history with me. History gave to us these people.

One, David Ben-Gurion, the first Prime Minister of Israel.

Two, Niels Bohr explained quantum physics and the structure of the atom.

Three, Psychologist Sigmund Freud gave us the Id, the Ego, and the superego.

And Albert Einstein gave us E=MC2

Benjamin Netanyahu, Prime Minister of Israel today.

Sergey Brin founded Google.

Elena Kagan and Ruth Bader Ginsburg are present-day Supreme Court Judges.

Mark Zuckerberg created Facebook.

Larry Ellison founded Oracle.

Steven Spielberg gave us 29 movies to watch.

Joe Lieberman was a Senator from CT.

Bob Dylan gave us 500 songs to sing.

And many more well-renowned Jews. Now, with such a divine focus on Israel, you might think that the Jews would have lived on the highest plane in spirituality and that the knowledge of God would be available to all of us through them. But when you read the OT, you see the following illustrated for us by Israel.

Psalm 39:5 *“…verily every man at his best state is altogether vanity.”*

After all that God has supplied to the Jews from the Exodus onward into the Promised Land under Joshua and from David to Solomon all the way to Malachi, you will not find an Israel to with a heart for the LORD.

Well, what *do* you find? We find them clearly described for us by Jesus, a Jew and by the Apostle Paul, a Jew. So, what I have to share with you today is not from the mind and heart of a Gentile, but from the perspective of the greatest converted Jew in all of history.

So, look with me at “The Case For Hypocrisy.”

First, the Jew thinks very highly of the Jew.

Verse seventeen - Romans 2:17 *“Behold, thou art called a Jew,* ***and*** *restest in the law,* ***and*** *makest thy boast of God, (18)* ***And*** *knowest his will,* ***and*** *approvest the things that are more excellent, being instructed out of the law; …”*

Pride plus presumption along with knowledge about God let the Jews down the road to hypocrisy. Being that the Jews had Abraham, the Laws of Moses, and the Prophets, they had a sense that the LORD had elevated them, put them in a position above other nations. And this superiority complex began with the Jewish leaders.

Now, if you think that the Jews of Paul’s day thought they were superior, what about Rabbi Mendel Schneerson (1902-1994). Here’s what he once said. *“The body of a Jewish person is of a totally different quality from the body of members of all other nations of the world. Bodies of the Gentiles are in vain. An even greater difference is in regard to the soul...A non-Jewish soul comes from three satanic spheres, while the Jewish soul stems from holiness.”*

Remember the name Elie Wiesel. He was once described as the “most important Jew in America” (<https://en.wiki-pedia.com>.) He said this. *“Everything about us is different.”*  “*Jews are ontologically exceptional.”* [Found on https:-//www.texemarrs.com/112003/jewish-\_master\_race.htm].

And Rabbi Chanina all the way back in the second century A.D. wrote this. “*He who strikes an Israelite acts as if he slaps the face of God's Divine Majesty.”*

So, from then till now, many Jewish leaders believed and taught that they were quote “not as other men are…”

Luke 18:11 *“The Pharisee stood and prayed thus with himself, God, I thank thee, that I am not as other men are, extortioners, unjust, adulterers, or even as this publican.”*

They had a name; Jew, which comes from Judah, which means “praise.” Genesis 29:35 *“And she [Leah] conceived again, and bare a son: and she said, now will I praise the Lord: therefore she called his name Judah; and left bearing.”*

They had Moses and his law. They had God. They boasted that they had God. They even had His will shown to them by the Prophets. And they approved things that were more excellent because they were taught things out of the Law of Moses. Romans 2:17 *“Behold, thou art called a Jew, and restest in the law, and makest thy boast of God, (18) And knowest his will, and approvest the things that are more excellent, being instructed out of the law; …”*

So, the Jews of Paul’s day thought very highly of themselves. Now, let me remind you here of how easy it is to be hypocritical and see yourself as better than those at your job, those in other religions, or even those in your home. You are just exactly the same as those around you; except for one thing. You have Christ living in you. And, apart from His life being lived out through you, you are, along with a whole lot of other sins living in you, a hypocrite.

So, yes, the Jews thought very highly of themselves. But, where do you stand on the hypocrisy scale?

*“Hypocrites are people who implicitly or explicitly endorse principles that their behavior contradicts.”* [Found on <https://philarchive.org/archive/ALIHWC> “Hypocrisy: What Counts?” by Mark Alicke, Ellen Gordon, and David Rose].

Does anyone here remember Uriah Heep? Charles Dickens described him in “David Copperfield.” Forty-eight times you’ll find the “umbleness” of Uriah Heep. For example, *“My Uriah,” said Mrs. Heep, ‘has looked forward to this, sir, a long while. He had his fears that our umbleness stood in the way, and I joined in them myself. Umble we are, umble we have been, umble we shall ever be,’ said Mrs. Heep.”*

And, for those of you who know the story of “David Copperfield,” Uriah was anything but humble. Folks, the Jews had a lot to be humble about. But we too, like the Jews, are just as prone to hypocrisy as they were.

First, the Jew thinks very highly of the Jew.

Second, the Jew is very confident in himself; verse nineteen.

Romans 2:19 *“And art confident that thou thyself art a guide of the blind, a light of them which are in darkness, (20) an instructor of the foolish, a teacher of babes, which hast the form of knowledge and of the truth in the law. (21) Thou therefore which teachest another, teachest thou not thyself?*

*Thou that preachest a man should not steal, dost thou steal? (22) Thou that sayest a man should not commit adultery, dost thou commit adultery? Thou that abhorrest idols, dost thou commit sacrilege? (23) Thou that makest thy boast of the law, through breaking the law dishonourest thou God?”*

The Jews, especially men like Paul and the other Pharisees he’d once associated with believed they were the one with all the light; that they could guide other people to God; that they were the ones who the fools needed to listen to.

But, what was really going on was this. They had a form of knowledge and of the truth.

And here’s now Paul describes people who have a form of knowledge and a form of the truth. They preach one thing and they practice another. They preached against stealing, against adultery, against idolatry. And yet, they broke those very same laws in their personal lives. And so, they were dishonoring the LORD in their homes and with their friends and family.

Folks, just like the only humility you have is the humility of Christ living in and through you, the only confidence you have is the confidence of Christ Himself living in and through you. You see, the only confidence you have is the LORD Himself. Paul speaks about this confidence later in the Book of Philippians. Here’s what he writes in Philippians 1:6 *“Being confident of this very thing, that he which hath begun a good work in you will perform it until the day of Jesus Christ: …”*

And the Apostle John adds this. I John 5:14 *“And this is the confidence that we have in him, that, if we ask any thing according to his will, he heareth us: (15) and if we know that he hear us, whatsoever we ask, we know that we have the petitions that we desired of him.”*

Confidence in yourself will lead you down the exact same road it led the Jews; to pride, self-trust, and self-glory.

“In January 2000, leaders of Charlotte, North Carolina, invited their favorite son, Billy Graham, to a luncheon. Billy initially hesitated to accept the invitation because he struggles with Parkinson's disease. But the Charlotte leaders said, “We don't expect a major address. Just come and let us honor you.” So he agreed.

After wonderful things were said about him, Graham stepped to the rostrum, looked at the crowd, and said, “I'm reminded today of Albert Einstein, the great physicist who this month has been honored by *Time* magazine as the Man of the Century. Einstein was once traveling from Princeton on a train when the conductor came down the aisle, punch-ing the tickets of each passenger. When he came to Einstein, Einstein reached in his vest pocket. He couldn't find his ticket, so he reached in his other pocket. It wasn't there, so he looked in his briefcase but couldn't find it. Then he looked in the seat by him. He couldn't find it. The conductor said, “Dr. Einstein, I know who you are. We all know who you are. I'm sure you bought a ticket. Don't worry about it.” Einstein nodded appreciatively.

The conductor continued down the aisle punching tickets. As he was ready to move to the next car, he turned around and saw the great physicist down on his hands and knees looking under his seat for his ticket. The conductor rushed back and said, 'Dr. Einstein, Dr. Einstein, don't worry. I know who you are. No problem. You don't need a ticket. I'm sure you bought one.” Einstein looked at him and said, “Young man, I too know who I am. What I don't know is where I'm going.” [Found on <http://www.preaching-today.com/illustrations/2002/october/13942.html> “Billy Graham Confident of Final Destination” by John Huffman,

Your only confidence is the LORD Himself living in you.

If the Jews had only thought much less of themselves and more of God; if they’d not been so self-confident, they may have had a deeper impact on the world.

First, the Jew thinks very highly of the Jew.

Second, the Jew is very confident in himself.

Third, the Jew chose the praise of man over the praise of God; verse twenty-four.

Romans 2:24 *“For the name of God is blasphemed among the Gentiles through you, as it is written. (25) For circumcision verily profiteth, if thou keep the law: but if thou be a breaker of the law, thy circumcision is made uncircumcision. (26) Therefore if the uncircumcision keep the righteousness of the law, shall not his uncircumcision be counted for circumcision?*

*(27) And shall not uncircumcision which is by nature, if it fulfil the law, judge thee, who by the letter and circumcision dost transgress the law? (28) For he is not a Jew, which is one outwardly; neither is that circumcision, which is outward in the flesh:*

*(29) But he is a Jew, which is one inwardly; and circumcision is that of the heart, in the spirit, and not in the letter; whose praise is not of men, but of God.”*

Paul, in his final criticism of the Jews turns to the topic of circumcision; the symbol of the Old Covenant God made with Abraham. The Jew had turned circumcision into a religious rite and a symbol of their pride as Jews. So, in essence, they’d lost the purpose and the meaning of it.

So, Paul uses the one thing they prided themselves in as Jews to address what the true problem was; their hearts were far from God. They were Jews outwardly, but not inwardly.

And, by way of application, let me say this. You too may look, act, behave, and convey to others that you know the LORD and are His child. But if you are not a Christ-centered Christian, you are in the same boat as these Jews; lost and in need of a Savior.

So, where are you on the hypocrisy scale? How high do you think of yourself in comparison to others? How high is your level of self-confidence? And how deep does your Christianity go?

You come Sunday after Sunday and listen to God’s word. But, have you taken any of those sermons to heart? Dietrich Bonhoeffer once said this “One act of obedience is better than one hundred sermons.”

Are you more like the Jews because of who you see yourself to be or are you among those who have no confident in the flesh and seek only to let Christ live His life through you?

Only you can answer those questions.

Today is the day of surrender. Today, you need to deal with yourself, your sins, and the Savior today. What do you need to do? Christian, what you need to do is to Repent and to Believe.

* To Repent = I change my mind about God, Christ, my sin, and God’s free gift of salvation.
* To Believe = I simply trust Jesus Christ alone as the One Who paid the entire penalty for my sins.

Here’s the Salvation Prayer*. “LORD, I admit that I am a sinner and deserve judgment for my sins. I believe Jesus died in my place on the Cross to remove that judgment. Please save me and give me that gift of righteousness. In Jesus’ Name, Amen.”*

Shall we pray?

Now let’s sing Hymn # 153 “Worthy Of Worship”