



Sermon on the Mount
Wk.19 "Being OK with the Real You"
By Pastor Jody May 12/29/2024

[CALL TO HEAR]

Matthew 6:1 ESV

Beware of practicing your righteousness before other people in order to be seen by them, for then you will have no reward from your Father who is in heaven.

**Pastor – "People of God, this is the Word of God."
People – "Thanks be to God."**

Pray

Introduction

Nobody likes a poser! Someone that pretends to be something they are not. That person that tries to look the part but never really plays the part. Whether it is the guy that wears sport clothes or gym gear but never works out, or the young lady that makes cooking or beauty videos they copied from tik tok influencers. Heather and I once knew a guy that when car phones first came out would grab his house phone and use it in his car to make you think he had one. Yeah, that person, we love to tease them, don't we? But then I think we like to point the finger at people like that because it draws attention from us.

You see as much as we say we do not like hypocrites, one of our greatest fears we have is being called one ourselves. It is one of our biggest fears to be found out, to be discovered, that we are not what we really say we are. Some of our most embarrassing moments in our lives is when people have jeered at us or have made fun of us, when we were working so hard in trying to impress people. But there is even a deeper problem to the **root of hypocrisy**, and that is **no one really likes being themselves**. What drives us to put up façades, what makes us risk discovery of being found out to be fake, is we do not really like the version of who we are.



Sermon on the Mount
Wk.19 "Being OK with the Real You"
By Pastor Jody May 12/29/2024

This problem of denial in the modern westernized society has been exasperated by the invention of social media over the last decade. It has become the invite for people of all walks of life to inflate their ego and build the person they wished they could be through fake means.

Heather and I have some friends we follow and every time I look, they are out with special friends, close friends, enjoying a night out on the town. They have more close friends than I do acquaintances! I do not know where they ever get the time and money to be that friendly with so many people! Yet, I keep finding this pattern among people I know, that those that were hard to love and self-absorbed are now loved by everyone!? You see what has happened in social media is that people have created their own positive behavior loop, *you like my stuff, and I will like yours, and in that, we become the versions of the people we want to be.*

You may think so *what*, let people be that way if they want to, let people do that to themselves, if it makes them a happier person. Or perhaps what I described is your story, you found a way to make a better version of you. This is why I care, this is why I fight against it myself, and that is because **hypocrisy when we give into it, like a virus it negates the desire in us to confront our sin**, spreading and propagating at an alarming rate. It tells you that you are really a good person based on what you do not in what you have received from the Lord. Hypocrisy says 'how' you come off portrays your value, and those that do not agree are just jealous. (*Harry Potter and the Mirror of Erised*). That is what hypocrisy does to us, it reflects an image of the thing that we so much desire that it will cause us to waste away for we never worry about the real person that needs Jesus.

Hypocrisy has always been a problem for fallen man, way before social media ever came along.

- In Genesis 4 Cain feigned his goodness with his sacrifice, when God uncovered his sin and offered forgiveness, he was so enraged that his illusion was discovered that he killed his brother.
- Absalom in 2 Sam 13-19, out of fake love for others, lured his brother to his death, betrayed his father with a kiss, and sought to steal the kingdom leading to his demise.



Sermon on the Mount
Wk.19 "Being OK with the Real You"
By Pastor Jody May 12/29/2024

- Joab, David's uncle and leader of Israel's armies, after a peace treaty with the late Saul's (Ishbosheth) military leader Abner, lured him to his death in 2 Sam 3 and did the same thing to Amasa in 2 Sam 20.
- Cannot forget Peter in Mat 26, the leader of the disciples and the one that swore to stay with Jesus to the end but decided to deny Him 3 times instead.
- And what about Judas Mat 26/Luke 22 who betrayed Jesus with a kiss, after living three years as a pretender of someone that loved Jesus.
- We see hypocrisy trying to taint the birth of the church in Acts 5 with Ananias and Sapphira who lied about selling their property for the church and were then dispatched by God Himself.
- Then we have Simon Acts 8 who portrays himself as a Christian to get power from the Apostles.

God has always hated hypocrisy, and it has always been a bane to His people keeping them from a right relationship with Him.

Isaiah 9:17 ESV

Therefore the Lord does not rejoice over their young men,
and has no compassion on their fatherless and widows;
for everyone is **godless** and an evildoer,
and every mouth speaks folly.
For all this his anger has not turned away,
and his hand is stretched out still.

That word for godless in the Hebrew is the same word for **hypocrite**¹, a godless person is a person that has no fear of God, no love for God, and no value in God because they only value themselves, they are hypocrites, they are fake God-fearers. As Isaiah sees the Northern Kingdom destroyed, God states He has no more compassion for those men, leaders of Israel for they have turned their religion into a façade. Yet Isaiah says that the Lord's hand is still stretched out to the true believer. Even then, that warning was not enough for Judah and they fell too.

¹ חָנָף **chânêph**, khaw-nafe'; from [H2610](#); soiled (i.e. with sin), impious:—hypocrite(-ical).



Sermon on the Mount
Wk.19 "Being OK with the Real You"
By Pastor Jody May 12/29/2024

Loved one, is that us today, are we tired of being fake, **can we be ok with the real us**, are we ready to tear down the idols of self, can we see hypocrisy for what it is, a virus that consumes us with delusions of a self that just does not exist? God's right hand was stretched out to us, it is Christ, and if we grasp onto Him, we must let go of our attempts to make ourselves look better and embrace making Him look glorious, even at the cost of ourselves. God wants to heal us from brokenness that comes from our attempts to make ourselves look good, for every time we embrace that, we lie and destroy ourselves.

Over the next several weeks we are going to dive deeper into the SoM, as Jesus teaches us about the Christian disciplines of generosity/giving, prayer, and fasting/mediation but there is a warning that goes along with each teaching. Our Lord fervently warns us against the practice of hypocrisy (vs. 2,5, &16) and not to use our religious life, or the acts of religion in our lives to look better in front of others. That Word for hypocrite in the classical Greek is **hupokrites**² and it is used to describe ancient actors in the theater that were portraying multiple people, it means to play a part that was not you.

So, today we are going to just take one verse and open this important topic for us over the next several weeks. Let me just give you the goal for today's sermon for all of us.

Goal:

Learning to be OK with the real you.

Let's go back to our verse for today.

1. BEWARE - of the work to come.

Beware of practicing your righteousness before other people in order to be seen by them, for then you will have no reward from your Father who is in heaven.

² ὑποκριτής hupōkritēs, hoop-ok-ree-tace'; from [G5271](#); an actor under an assumed character (stage-player), i.e. (figuratively) a dissembler ("hypocrite":—hypocrite.



Sermon on the Mount
Wk.19 "Being OK with the Real You"
By Pastor Jody May 12/29/2024

All right, so Jesus starts out chapter 6 with a foreboding warning, BEWARE³.... The way we translate this word is not to take it as an 'if' you find yourself in this position, or a 'be careful' lest you find yourself in this predicament. No, this word in the Greek here means pay attention to yourself 'when' this happens. It is the same BEWARE as when the Jacob Marley's ghost visits Scrooge, BEWARE when this happens to you, you pay attention to it!

This is one of those times when you read a passage like this, that comes with a warning, that you should ask yourself, *is the author talking to people back then for a specific reason?* For example, Matthew uses the same word for BEWARE in Mat 10:17 when Jesus warns His disciples for the days coming where they would be flogged and chased out of synagogues. That was a specific warning, for a specific group of people, at a certain time. That though, does not negate the principle *you will be persecuted for your faith*, we just saw that in Mat 5:11-12. But here in this context of the SoM it was given not just to the Jews of the day, but it was given to all of Christians for all of time. This is a warning for you that **you must adhere to!** Beware brothers and sisters, of what? That brings us to this next point.

2. PRACTICE - the Righteousness, you did not earn.

Beware **of practicing your righteousness before other people ...**

Beware of what? When you will practice your righteousness. Well first things first, **what righteousness are we talking about?** That was the whole of chapter 5 how a person receives their righteousness. As a matter of fact, I think we see in Chapter 5 the glorious revelation of the **Ordo Salutis** or **Order of Salvation**.⁴

5:3-6 to me was the act of **Regeneration**, that is when people realize they are a sinner and need God.

5:7-10 reveals when God grants Faith leading to repentance, we call that **Conversion**.

³ προσέχω proséchō, pros-ekh'-o; from G4314 and G2192; (figuratively) to hold the mind (3563 implied) towards, i.e. pay attention to, be cautious about, apply oneself to, adhere to:—(give) attend(-ance, -ance at, -ance to, unto), beware, be given to, give (take) heed (to unto); have regard.

⁴ <https://www.monergism.com/ordo-salutis-order-salvation-0>



Sermon on the Mount
Wk.19 "Being OK with the Real You"
By Pastor Jody May 12/29/2024

5:13-16 You then have the call to **Evangelize** to be the Salt and Light of the Earth, for anyone that receives the good news of the Gospel wants to share it as well.

5:17-20 Shows **Justification** will comes thought Christ and the fulfillment of the law, and it shows those who receive the work of Christ as **Adopted** heirs, now in the Kingdom as sons of God, portraying their new Lord.

15:21-48 We have **Sanctification & Perseverance**, people working out the intent of the law to show mercy and grace even to one's enemy, to be perfect as the Father is perfect, pointing to a future **Glorification**.

First, BEWARE, what you will be going through, make no mistake it will happen.

Second, for it has to do with RIGHTEOUSNESS, something that was done to you, given for you, imputed to you, that right standing with God that He has worked out through His perfect Son. It is nothing you did to make yourself better!

Third, now Jesus says you have to do something with it. – PRACTICE.

1 John 2:29 ESV

If you know that He is righteous, you may be sure that everyone who **practices righteousness has been born of him.**

The point is family you will practice righteousness if you have truly been born again. But along with that fact Jesus warns us to be careful when we practice living out our faith in front of others.

If you are ever to be OK with the real, you then you will have to become ok with the idea that you will need to live out your faith in front of others.

3. AVOID – the desire to have your practices seen.

Beware of practicing your righteousness before other people **in order to be seen by them...**



Sermon on the Mount
Wk.19 "Being OK with the Real You"
By Pastor Jody May 12/29/2024

Jesus was confronting a specific group of people at that time, the Pharisees. While at the same time, we know the SoM was for all Christians for all time. Well, first I want you to see to the specificity of who He was talking to.

Matthew 23:1-5 ESV

23 Then Jesus said to the crowds and to his disciples, ²"The scribes and the Pharisees sit on Moses' seat, ³so do and observe whatever they tell you, but not the works they do. For they preach, but do not practice. ⁴They tie up heavy burdens, hard to bear, and lay them on people's shoulders, but they themselves are not willing to move them with their finger. ⁵They do all their deeds to be seen by others.

The Pharisees had devolved into a religious group of people, that were all about the external workings of their righteousness, not God's. Their version of social media back then was word of mouth, and the more they could add to their reputation of being righteous the more their worldly standing improved. You see in the end the Pharisee's goal was not to see their God face to face when they died, even though they believed in an afterlife. Their goal was to get as many earthly rewards as possible now, for that was the predictor of what type of afterlife they would live out!

In Matthew 23 though there is a warning for everyone, that includes the Pharisees and us, that heeds not the words of Christ. The warning is for those that succumb to the lure of hypocrisy and doing things for the good of others to see.

Matthew 23:29-33 ESV

²⁹"Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For you build the tombs of the prophets and decorate the monuments of the righteous, ³⁰saying, 'If we had lived in the days of our fathers, we would not have taken part with them in shedding the blood of the prophets.' ³¹Thus you witness against yourselves that you are sons of those who murdered the prophets. ³²Fill up, then, the measure of your fathers. ³³You serpents, you brood of vipers, **how are you to escape being sentenced to hell?**

This is where that clause in 6:1b now comes into play:



Sermon on the Mount
Wk.19 "Being OK with the Real You"
By Pastor Jody May 12/29/2024

"for then you will have no reward from your Father who is in heaven."

The **'biggest'** reward of the Father is to be received into the Father's presence for all time, that is the opposite of Hell which is to be cast out of the Father's presence for all of time.

How are we to escape hell if we spend our days comparing ourselves to others, judging that we have done enough good to be saved? How are we to escape hell if we are always the one's that fail to understand how people sin, showing we don't understand the lure of sin? How do we escape Hell if the only reason we go to church is to confirm how good we are instead of seeking our Lord and His help to change? Woe to us, if all we do is go to church to associate with others so we can look better to ourselves. If so, we have then fallen into the trap of seeking approval and it is leading us away from God.

To be ok with the real you is going to take us all to stop desiring the approval of man and instead desire the approval of God and the eternal reward of being in His presence with all that it entails, forever!

Now the 'HOW' we do that is coming to come out over the next several weeks. I have been telling you not to take Chapter 5 as the 'how', it is the description of the person that has been saved. But here in chapter 6, in the first half is the 'how' we practice or pursue our righteousness. We will all discover that the characteristics of Christianity are displayed when we practice the disciplines of Christianity.

[CALL TO OBEY]

Beware that the call is to publically practice while not desiring to be seen. The scripture has an answer for this.

Hebrews 10:24-25 ESV

²⁴ And let us consider how to stir up one another to love and good works,²⁵ not neglecting to meet together, as is the habit of some, but encouraging one another, and all the more as you see the Day drawing near.



Sermon on the Mount
Wk.19 "Being OK with the Real You"
By Pastor Jody May 12/29/2024

1st take time to consider here in the New Year how we will take responsibility for the welfare of others in the body.

The body is dependent on each other for growth; the hand feeds the mouth, the feet take us to the source, and the head gives direction - ALL have a place here and all have responsibility. Give thought to how you care for others in this room.

2nd take time to make it a point to meet more often for the sake of practicing Righteousness together.

Working out one's practice of righteousness is a commitment to doing it front of your family, there is no way around that. For the body that recognizes its' righteousness as a gift will let the members know when they get too high on themselves or think too much of their personal works. Meet more in each other's homes, start to meet in DNA groups again.

3rd practice encouragement, when you see someone practicing their faith praise them for their specific sacrifices.

As you will see over the next month practicing your righteousness is hard, a lot of it is not seen, so inquire with each other how it goes. Ask specifics connected to giving, prayer, and fasting/meditation.

In these ways family I think we can strive together **towards becoming ok with the Real us**. By living in committed community, we will be better able to practice our gift of righteousness, and we will be encouraged to throw off our desires for hypocrisy. May God bless us in this work this year.

Prayer

Communion

Matthew 26:26-29 ESV

²⁶ Now as they were eating, Jesus took bread, and after blessing it broke it and gave it to the disciples, and said, "Take, eat; this is my body." ²⁷ And he took a cup, and when he had given thanks he gave it to them, saying, "Drink of



Sermon on the Mount
Wk.19 "Being OK with the Real You"
By Pastor Jody May 12/29/2024

it, all of you, ²⁸ for this is my blood of the covenant, which is poured out for many for the forgiveness of sins. ²⁹ I tell you I will not drink again of this fruit of the vine until that day when I drink it new with you in my Father's kingdom."

Today when you eat of the bread remember the life of Jesus. He practiced His righteousness publicly for all to see through His giving to mankind selflessly, praying continually to the Father, and by fasting and meditating on the Word overcoming all temptations. Praise be to Him for His wonderful love.

Today when you drink the juice remember the cost of our sin displayed by His blood. His blood purchased our justification and paid for our adoption so we may receive a righteousness that was not our own. He has covered our hypocrisy by offering His sacrifice outshining our attempts to praise ourselves. Praise be to Him for His wonderful Love.

[CONFESSION OF FAITH]

* The Congregation will stand

Elder – "Christians, what do we believe?"

Psalm 33:1-5 ESV

The Steadfast Love of the Lord

Shout for joy in the Lord, O you righteous!

Praise befits the upright.

² Give thanks to the Lord with the lyre;

make melody to him with the harp of ten strings!

³ Sing to him a new song;

play skillfully on the strings, with loud shouts.

⁴ For the word of the Lord is upright,

and all his work is done in faithfulness.

⁵ He loves righteousness and justice;

the earth is full of the steadfast love of the Lord.



Sermon on the Mount
Wk.19 "Being OK with the Real You"
By Pastor Jody May 12/29/2024

[OFFERING+LAST SONG]

[BENEDICTION]

Go in the name of the Father, that while He despises the sin of Hypocrisy continually extends to His people His strong right hand of Salvation.

Go in the name of the Son, that not only warned us not to live as hypocrites but gave a life worthy to model in Him, showing us how to practice our righteousness.

Go in the name of and power of the HS, that convicts us of when we seek the approval of men and encourages us to live our faith in front of others. Now go and be the Salt and Light of the world.



Sermon on the Mount
Wk.19 "Being OK with the Real You"
By Pastor Jody May 12/29/2024

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