

Publicans and Harlots in the Kingdom of God

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Introduction:

- A. Dealing with Double Standards - Matt 21:28-31
 - 1. An examination of the difference between saying and doing
- B. Matt. 23:2-4 - Jesus begins His condemnation of the Pharisees and scribes by pointing out their hypocrisy
 - 1. They understand enough to tell others what they should do, but they are not willing to bear the same burdens
- C. James 1:22-25 - The contrast between hearing and doing
- D. 2Cor. 10:11 - What we say must be what we do

I. WHAT ARE WE SAYING?

- A. Eph. 4:25 - we are to speak truth with one another
- B. We are to speak God's word as entrusted to us by Him - 2Cor. 2:17
- C. Matt. 12:34; Luke 6:45 - Our mouth speaks out of the abundance of the heart
- C. Therefore, we ought to say what is right and good and holy

II. WHAT ARE WE REALLY DOING?

- A. When we ask this question, we must remember that we are asking what we are really doing, and not what we intend to do or what we think we are doing
 - 1. We judge others by what they say and do; we judge ourselves by what we intend to say or do
- B. Double standard - Matt. 7:1-5
 - 1. In turn, we are judged by others based on our actual performance
- C. Double standard damage
 - 1. It hinders us from being able to help our fellow man
 - 2. It hinders us from helping ourselves - the beam in our own eye
- D. How do we not see the "log"?
 - 1. Some cannot stand to look at themselves honestly and choose to accept a lie about themselves
 - 2. Some are just clueless
 - 3. But the majority of people are not oblivious
 - 4. Instead, they allow self-examinations of themselves to be colored by intentions and what they know they can be as opposed to seeing themselves for who they really are
 - a. We know the right priorities, even if we do not act on them
 - b. We know that we can do better and perhaps at times have done better, and we rest ourselves in that thought
 - c. Yet, all the while, everyone around us sees what we are actually doing apart from our intentions and attitudes
- E. When we look at the speck in others' eyes, we should remember our beam
 - 1. We should be aware that others are also seeing themselves according to intentions which are probably better than their actions, just as we do
- F. Solution: remove the beam - 2Cor. 13:5
 - 1. Only then will be qualified to help our brother - Gal. 6:1-2

III. THE EFFECT OF SAYING AND DOING

- A. Remember: everyone around you sees you for what you actually do, not what you intend to do or hope to do. This is true in every relationship
- B. Marriage
 - 1. Your husband or wife sees what you actually do, and by reason of closeness to you may understand your hopes or intentions, but still sees whatever hypocrisies may exist
 - 2. What are they seeing? What will be the long term spiritual effects?
- C. Parenting
 - 1. Children are great hypocrisy detectors; they know the difference between what you say and what you do
 - 2. Contrary to whatever you may hope or say, they will more likely do what you do than do what you say if you do not do it, and many children are turned off to the faith because of the hypocrisy of their parents
- D. Friends and Family
 - 1. Friends and family are influenced by your conduct, attitude, and words
 - 2. If you are the ambassador to Christ for your family or friends, what message are they receiving? - 2Cor. 5:20
 - 3. Are they learning of the peace that surpasses understanding or do they see that you are no different from anyone else in the world?
 - a. Phil. 4:7; Matt. 5:13-16
- E. Work or School - Do the people around you at work or school know that you are a Christian by what you say or by what you say and do? Eph. 6:5-9
- F. Among brethren
 - 1. Do you keep your commitments to brethren?
 - 2. Do you seek to encourage as you are encouraged (Heb. 10:24), or is it a one way street for you?
- G. Before God and Christ
 - 1. Are you honest before God in prayer, or do you try to fool God?
 - 2. Is He your greatest priority (Matt. 6:33)? Not just ideally, but in reality?
 - 3. Do you affirm that Christ is Lord not just in word but also by doing the will of His Father? - Matt. 7:21-23

Conclusion:

- A. The world has never lacked people who say one thing but do another
- B. The old saying is true for the cynics of this world: "Christians are not perfect, just forgiven."
 - 1. To me, the great act of hypocrisy is someone who dismisses Christianity because there are a few hypocrites among them. I will, and especially God will, take someone who is trying and stumbles along the way, than some gutless wonder just making excuses for not trying
- C. We ought to consider our faults and failings and be humble, granting mercy and understanding to others for their faults and failings as we would like to have the same mercy and understanding for ourselves - Luke 6:31