

# Winning the Hard Ones

## **Our Primary Task and Hypocrisy**

Mike Brinkmeier

*“You have nothing to do but to save souls. Therefore spend and be spent in this work. And go not only to those that need you, but to those that need you most...It is not your business to preach so many times, and to take care of this or that society; but to save as many souls as you can; to bring as many sinners as you possibly can to repentance.”*

**JOHN WESLEY**

## ***Questions and Objections to Christianity***

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The Christian is no better than a non-Christian, but he is infinitely better off. It is like two men on a plane, one of whom is wearing a parachute while the other is not. Neither is better than the other, but the man with the parachute is certainly better off than the man who is not wearing a parachute. The difference will be seen when they jump from the plane at 20,000 feet. Jesus warned that if we “jump” into death without Him, we would perish.

Even harsher than the law of gravity is the Law of an infinitely holy and just Creator. Scripture states that sinners are God’s enemy (Romans 5:10) and that “it is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God” (Hebrews 10:31).

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Jesus is loving, and that’s why He had harsh words of warning for sinners. In Matthew 23, Jesus called the religious leaders “hypocrites” seven times. He told them that they were “blind fools,” children of hell, full of hypocrisy and sin. He climaxed His sermon by saying, “You serpents, you generation of vipers, how shall you escape the damnation of hell?” He then warned that He would say to the wicked, “Depart from Me, you cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels” (Matthew 25:41).

**A** lighthouse keeper gained a reputation of being a very kind man. He would give free fuel to ships that miscalculated the amount of fuel needed to reach their destination port.

One night during a storm, lightning struck his lighthouse and put out the light. He immediately turned on his generator, but it soon ran out of fuel—and he had given his reserves to passing ships. During the dark night, a ship struck the rocks and many lives were lost.

At the lighthouse keeper's trial, the judge knew of his reputation as a kind man and wept as he passed sentence. He charged the lighthouse keeper with neglecting his primary responsibility: to keep the light shining.

The church can so often get caught up in legitimate acts of kindness—standing for political righteousness, feeding the hungry, etc.—but our primary task is to warn sinners of danger. We are to keep the light of the gospel shining so that sinners can avoid the jagged-edged rocks of wrath and escape being eternally damned.

Imagine seeing a group of firefighters polishing their engine outside a burning building with people trapped at a top floor window. Obviously, there is nothing wrong with cleaning a fire engine—*but not while people are trapped in a burning building!* Instead of ignoring their cries, the firefighters should have an overwhelming sense of urgency to rescue them.

That's the spirit that should be behind the task of evangelism. Yet according to Bill Bright of Campus Crusade for Christ, "Only 2% of believers in America regularly share their faith in Christ with others." That means 98 percent of the professing Body of Christ is "lukewarm" when it comes to obeying the Great Commission.

Oswald J. Smith said, “Oh my friends, we are loaded down with countless church activities, while the *real* work of the Church, that of evangelizing and winning the lost, is almost entirely neglected.”

We have polished the engines of worship, prayer, and praise and neglected the sober task given to us by God.

A firefighter who ignores his responsibilities and allows people to perish in the flames is not a firefighter; he is an impostor.

How could we ignore our responsibility and allow the world to walk blindly into the fires of hell? If God's love dwells within us, we must warn the lost.

The Bible tells us to “have compassion...save with fear, pulling them out of the fire; hating even the garment spotted by the flesh” (Jude 22, 23).

If we don't have love and compassion, then we don't know God—we are impostors (see 1 John 4:8).

Charles Spurgeon said, “Have you no wish for others to be saved? Then you are not saved yourself. Be sure of that.”

Each of us should examine ourselves in light of these sobering thoughts (2 Corinthians 13:5) so that we won't be part of the great multitude who called Jesus “Lord,” but refused to obey Him. It will be professing *believers* who will hear those fearful words, “I never knew you: depart from me” (Matthew 7:21–23).

A popular episode of the “Andy Griffith Show” is called “Man in a Hurry.”

It tells the story of a businessman who rushes through the quiet town of Mayberry. He is uptight and very hyper and finds the laid-back lifestyle of the locals to be extremely frustrating.

However, in time he begins to enjoy the take-it-easy way of life. While it’s a wonderful lesson on the importance of not rushing through life, the “man in a hurry” should be the Christian’s hero.

We are in a hurry. We should work while it is yet day with a sense of extreme urgency.

We must preach the Word in season and out of season, always abounding in the work of the Lord.

Take to heart these words from Billy Sunday: “I believe that lack of efficient personal work is one of the failures of the Church today. The people of the Church are like squirrels in a cage. Lots of activity, but accomplishing nothing.

It doesn't require a Christian life to sell oyster soup or run a bazaar or a rummage sale.

Many churches report no new members on confession of faith. Why these meager results with this tremendous expenditure of energy and money?

Why are so few people coming into the Kingdom? I will tell you—there is not a definite effort put forth to persuade a definite person to receive a definite Savior at a definite time, and that definite time is now.”

May God give us a renewed sense of urgency and such love for sinners that we will be convicted by our conscience if we walk past any person without a deep concern for his salvation.

May He also work in our hearts so that our prayers will be permeated with a cry for laborers, so that this world may be reached with the message of eternal salvation.

**Luke 10:2** *And he said to them, "The harvest is plentiful, but the laborers are few. Therefore pray earnestly to the Lord of the harvest to send out laborers into his harvest."*

**And Now,**

**What about the .....**

**G.O.V.**

# Generation Of Vipers

## The Hypocrite

*“You hypocrites, well did Isaiah prophesy of you, saying, This people draws near to me with their mouth, and honors me with their lips; but their heart is far from me.”*

**MATTHEW 15:7, 8**

*“I am told that Christians do not love each other. I am very sorry if that be true, but I rather doubt it, for I suspect that those who do not love each other are not Christians.”*

**CHARLES SPURGEON**

It seems that no one likes any kind of hypocrite. However, there is something particularly distasteful about those who profess to love God, but whose lives don't match their claims.

A great preacher once said that if a man's life didn't correspond with what he professed, and he wanted to preach the gospel, he should go a great distance from his home, and when he stands up to preach he should say nothing.

One of the greatest hindrances to people coming to Christ is the view that the church is "full of hypocrites."

Some maintain that it is full to the brim; others will admit that there are genuine Christians in the church among the false.

Whatever the case, those who present this argument usually do so because they themselves love the darkness and hate the light. (**John 3:19** *And this is the judgment: the light has come into the world, and people loved the darkness rather than the light because their works were evil.* )

While they may have a genuine grievance about the issue, the hypocrisy of others will not be a legitimate excuse for them on the Day of Judgment.

*Hypocrite* comes from the Greek word for “actor,” or pretender. Hypocrisy is “the practice of professing beliefs, feelings, or virtues that one does not hold.” Hypocrites may show up at a church building, but in reality there are no hypocrites in the Church. In its ignorance, the world thinks that the Church is the building, and that those who sit within its confines are Christians. However, the Church is the Body of Christ, which consists only of true believers; hypocrites are “pretenders” who sit among God’s people. They dwell as goats among the Lord’s sheep, bad fish among the good, tares among wheat until the day God separates them.

It is interesting to note that the human body will reject any foreign transplant—even down to the single root of a transplanted hair.

The false convert (the hypocrite) is not part of the Body of Christ. He has never truly repented, and because of his sin he is therefore rejected as part of the Body.

God knows those who love Him, and the Bible warns that all hypocrites—those merely pretending to be Christians—will end up in hell (Matthew 24:51).

The root of hypocrisy is idolatry, which easily takes root in the soil of a sinful heart. The false convert has created a god that he doesn't fear. The tree that grows from the root bears fruit that is visible for all to see. That's why we are cautioned to examine ourselves to ensure that we are in the faith, that Jesus Christ lives in us (2 Corinthians 13:5).

Jesus said, "Every good tree brings forth good fruit" (Matthew 7:17).

We must follow Paul's example and strive to be devout, just, and blameless in the sight of a sinful world (1 Thessalonians 2:10).

God forbid that any soul should stumble because he sees what he perceives to be hypocrisy in our lives. Do our coworkers ever hear us laughing at a smutty joke? Have we been seen going into an "adult" movie? Is there anger or bitterness, or any bad fruit in our lives for the world to see?

Then we must lay the axe to the root.

If there is any pretense in anything we do, we evidently don't fear God. Our concept of His character is erroneous, and we must therefore cultivate a biblical understanding from which we will acquire a proper fear of God.

Judas Iscariot was a hypocrite, a pretender. He had no idea who Jesus was. He complained that an act of sacrificial worship was a waste of money; the expensive ointment with which a woman anointed Jesus should have been sold and the money given to the poor. Jesus of Nazareth just wasn't worth such extravagance. In his estimation, He was worth only thirty pieces of silver.

The Bible tells us that Judas was lying when he said that he cared for the poor. He was actually a thief, and so lacked a healthy fear of God that he was stealing money from the collection bag (see John 12:6).

**John 12:6** *He said this, not because he cared about the poor, but because he was a thief, and having charge of the moneybag he used to help himself to what was put into it.*

It's interesting to note that the world hates hypocrisy in the church. They detest the "pretender." Does that mean that they want the Christian to be genuine?

Do they *want* us to be true and faithful in our witness and therefore speak of sin, righteousness, and judgment? Do they *want* us to live in holiness rather than in compromise? Does the world really want us to speak up against pornography, greed, adultery, abortion, homosexuality, fornication, and other sins they so love?

In their eyes we are damned if we do, and damned if we don't.

The way bank officials train tellers to recognize counterfeit bills is to have them study the genuine article. When they see the false, they can spot it because their eye is trained to know the real thing.

The real thing in Christianity is someone who is faithful, kind, loving, good, without hypocrisy, gentle, humble, patient, self-controlled, and who speaks the truth in love.

So the next time you're watching TV and see a black-hatted, Abraham Lincoln-style bearded, booze-sodden, Old-English-speaking, Bible-quoting hypocrite plunge a pitchfork into his neighbor's back "in the name of the Lord," ask yourself, "Is this a genuine Christian?"

Does he love his neighbor as himself? Is he kind, gentle, good, generous, self-controlled? Does he love his enemies? Does he do good to those who spitefully use him?" If not, then what you see is another non-Christian who is pretending to be a Christian.