

Title: **Aren't Christians Just a Bunch of Hypocrites?**

Text: **John 9:39-41**

Date: **April 16, 2023**

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Big Idea

If you go and talk to almost anyone today who's not a Christian—someone who, in particular, may be skeptical of Christianity—undoubtedly, one of the first objections you'll hear from them will bring attention to this issue of hypocrisy in the church. Have you ever struggled with it? What do you make of it? Does such hypocrisy invalidate the Christian faith? Or does the Bible give us another perspective?

1. It's Not Excusable, But Neither Is It Unique

One of the ways people respond to hypocrisy in the church is to leave the church, right? We think the church is just full of hypocrites and, implicitly, though we may not say it outright, we think if we can leave the church behind we can get away from hypocrisy. But, sadly, that's just not the case. Hypocrisy in the church is not excusable, but it's also not unique. Hypocrisy is everywhere—*inside* and *outside* the church. You push away from hypocrisy here and you just butt up against it somewhere else. Because it's not just a Christian thing. It's a human thing. And that's the first point that has to be made clear from the outset. There's no escaping this. It's a human problem.

2. It's Not Excusable, But Neither Is It Surprising

I say it's not surprising that there's hypocrisy in the church, why? Well, because the Bible talks about it all over the place. Jesus is always dealing with it. The apostles are constantly warning about it. You see, it's not as if hypocrisy is this unanticipated, unexpected thing, and when you detect it in the church it means the whole Christian worldview and faith crumbles with it. No. In many ways the hypocrisy doesn't so much invalidate what the Bible has to say as much as it actually validates it. Because the Scriptures never claimed it would be otherwise. Such is the human dilemma and the insidious nature of sin. It's nasty. It's horrible. It's inexcusable. But it's not surprising.

But there's something else we need to say here when it comes to hypocrisy as the Bible presents it. We have to understand there's a spectrum of sorts in all this.

On the one hand, we have what I'd call *recalcitrant hypocrites*. These are the sorts of people we've seen Jesus and the apostles addressing thus far. They're unrepentant. They're stubborn and doubled down in their hypocrisy. They know what they're doing and they don't care. They're "wolves in sheep's clothing" as Jesus would call them (cf. Matt. 7:15). They're not genuine and they don't want to be.

But you know, on the other hand, the Bible really does see even the greatest Christians among us in this other category I'd refer to as *recovering hypocrites*. We have truly come to know Jesus, we've been born again from the inside out, we have new hearts and new dispositions . . . but we still struggle with sin, we still fight the flesh. Let's be clear: the Bible nowhere presents Christians as perfect. It presents us as people in process. And as such we are all recovering hypocrites.

3. It's Not Excusable, But Neither Is It Hopeless

Only Christianity and the gospel can bring together both truth and grace in such a profound way. The world can't deal with hypocrisy the way the church can. Either there's all grace and no truth—so you never really have to own up to your hypocrisy; you never really face it. Or there's all truth and no grace—so you own up to your sin and then are rejected for it, punished for it, cancelled for it; you never really find forgiveness and restoration and hope. Only Christianity is brutally honest about the horrors of human nature but even more hopeful about the new heights we can reach in Jesus!

Reflection Questions

- It's been said that "one of the greatest arguments against Christianity is Christians themselves." Do you agree with this? How would you respond to such a statement?
- Describe your own experiences of hypocrisy in the church? How have you responded to it, processed it, worked through it?
- In what ways do you see hypocrisy in your own heart and life? How does the Christian gospel provide a solution to this that no other worldview or religion can?

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Our Mission & Values

Mercy Hill Church exists to help restore us to God, neighbor, and city through the good news of Jesus Christ.

FAITH: The Way Back to God | We are redeemed to enjoy intimate relationship with him. This value presses our church *upwards* in love for God.

COMMUNITY: The Way Back to Christ, adopted in the Beloved relationship with his people. This value presses our church *inwards* in love for the

MISSION: The Way the Embassy of Christ, Savior to be his value presses our church *outwards* in love for the

Neighbor | We are the Family of Christ and brought into covenantal relationship with him. This value presses our one another.

Back to City | We are commissioned by the ambassadors. This church *outwards* unbelieving.

Your Next Steps

When approaching the Christian faith and life, it can be confusing to know where to even begin. Come find us at the Next Steps Table after the service—it would be our joy to help you along in the journey! And if you're a visitor, we have a special gift bag for you. Don't miss it!



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Welcome to Mercy Hill Church.
We are so glad you've joined us today!

Announcement Spotlight

Members' Meeting - Sunday, April 30th!

Covenant Members, please save the date for our next Members' Meeting to be held after the service on Sunday, April 30th (lunch provided). More details and a form to RSVP will be emailed directly to you in the next few days. Be on the lookout for that!

If you have any questions, feel free to reach out to us at info@mercyhillchurch.org.

Mercy Hill Youth Hangout!

All Mercy Hill Youth (6th thru 12th grade) are invited for a hangout after service today at 12:30pm! We'll have time for fellowship, prayer, and getting in God's Word. And we even plan to provide some pizza! Our plan, weather permitting, is to meet at the picnic tables in the pavilion around the back of Allen at Steinbeck Elementary. See ya there!

If you have any questions, feel free to contact us at youth@mercyhillchurch.org.

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