

Living For The Wrong Audience

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[0 : 00] Take your Bibles and turn to the Gospel of Matthew, first book of the New Testament, chapter 23. Matthew chapter 23.

We're learning about the religious leaders in Jesus' day called the Pharisees, who Jesus talks about extensively in this chapter.

Matthew 23. Then Jesus said to the crowds and to his disciples, the teachers of the law and the Pharisees sit in Moses' seat, so you must obey them and do everything they tell you, but do not do what they do, for they do not practice what they preach.

They tie up heavy loads and put them on men's shoulders, but they themselves are not willing to lift a finger to move them. Everything they do is done for men to see.

They make their phylacteries wide and the tassels of their prayer shawls long. They love the place of honor at banquets and the most important seats in the synagogues.

[1 : 31] They love to be greeted in the marketplaces and to have men call them rabbi. But you are not to be called rabbi, for you have only one master, and you are all brothers.

And do not call anyone on earth father, for you have one father, and he is in heaven. Nor are you to be called teacher, for you have one teacher, the Christ.

The greatest among you will be your servant, for whoever exalts himself will be humbled, and whoever humbles himself will be exalted.

Let us hear God's word. What audience are you living for?

As Stan said, we have begun just last week a new series of messages on the Pharisees, a revered religious party during the days that our Lord was on the earth.

[2 : 41] And all throughout his three years of ministry, Jesus was constantly clashing and knocking heads with the Pharisees, often exposing their hypocrisy and warning the people, watch out, be on your guard against the yeast of the Pharisees, which is hypocrisy.

But his most scathing warning came just a few days before his crucifixion, and that's what we have here in Matthew 23. His last words to the crowd in the temple.

From this point on in Matthew's Gospel, he's speaking only to his disciples. But here's his last chance to say something to the crowd as they gathered as a large group in the temple.

And he takes that opportunity to warn them against the false religion of the Pharisees. Now they were regarded as the experts in the law.

They were the revered teachers in Israel, the most holy people in Israel as they were viewed. And their reputation and influence, therefore, upon the people made their teaching and example most dangerous to them and to the eternal souls of the nation of Israel.

[4 : 03] So here in Matthew 23, the Lord Jesus pulls off their masks and gives us to see them as they really are. Not at all what they appeared to be.

Now last week we saw this hypocrisy in the way that they, verse 3 says, they say and do not. They were great at laying down the law for others while not doing it themselves.

Hypocrites is Jesus' defining word for them. Saying one thing while doing another. Condemning in others what they excused in themselves.

Or in the words of the NIV. Not preaching or not practicing what they preached. Verse 4 told us last week that they piled all sorts of burdens upon others.

They did this by adding to the laws of God the laws of man. The traditions of the rabbis. An endless list of further rules that ended up being a heavy burden.

[5 : 12] A burden so heavy that it was more restrictive than the law of God itself was. And in this way, the very commands of God which were given to us for our good and for our advantage and benefit actually became something that was burdensome and oppressive to man.

And though they piled these rules on other people, they made their own exceptions to the rules whereby they could get around all these additional rules.

And so, sometimes even their traditions contradicted the very commands of God. Well, since their religion was all law and no gospel, they did not lift a finger to help others then with this load that they were dumping on them.

No gospel of grace to save them from their sins and from its guilt, its power. No gospel motives to move them. No power from God to help them obey.

Just the law, law, law, law that condemned them. Well, we come today to our Lord's next serious charge against the religion of the Pharisees.

[6 : 31] It's found at the beginning of verse 5 here in Matthew 23. And it's simply this line. Everything they do is done for men to see.

Verse 3 told us, they say and do not, but now we're told that even what they do, they do for the wrong reason, for the wrong motive, the wrong end.

It's all for men to see. Now remember, Jesus' favorite word for these men are hypocrites. We'll see that appearing some seven times, I believe, six or seven times in this chapter.

Hypocrites. It comes from the stage whereby men put a mask on and pretended to be a certain character that they really were not. And that's the name that Jesus gives to these Pharisees.

Pretending to be more holy than they really were. Whether they were fully aware of it or not, all that really mattered to them was what men saw them to be.

[7 : 39] They were on a stage and the only audience that concerned them was the people watching them rather than the all-seeing God who alone deserves to be worshipped and obeyed.

Everything they do is done for men to see. Let that sink in. Everything. That's quite a sweeping charge to make.

But remember who it's coming from. It's coming from our Lord Jesus. He's the eternal Son of God who is omniscient, who knows everything about everyone and everything.

His sight penetrates beyond the outward mask right into the thoughts and the motives of men's hearts. Our motives are as clear to Him as our actions are to other people.

So here I am. You see me preaching but you can't see my motive as to why I'm preaching. But the Lord Jesus does.

[8 : 47] I see you here worshipping. I can't see your motive on why you're here. But the Lord Jesus does. And He's the one who says everything they do is done for men to see.

At the end of John chapter 2 in verses 24 to 25 there were many people we're told who professed to believe in the Lord Jesus. Now let me ask you a question.

For those who truly believe in the Lord Jesus does Jesus entrust Himself to those who entrust themselves to Him? Does Jesus commit Himself to those who commit themselves to Him?

Yes, without exception. Whoever comes to Me I will in no way drive off. I will receive and commit myself to them. Well what is said of these people who profess belief in Jesus is this.

But Jesus would not entrust Himself to them. Why not? For He knew all men. He did not need man's testimony about men for He knew what was in a man.

[9 : 58] And He could see that they were claiming more than that which was truly in their hearts. And that's what we find throughout the Gospel accounts.

We find Jesus reading the minds of the Pharisees. Reading their hearts. And in His answers He's answering their thoughts before they even speak them.

He knew what was in a man. Those words from 1 Samuel 16, 7 The Lord does not look at things man looks at.

Man looks at the outward appearance but the Lord looks upon the heart. Did you dress for man's sight this morning?

You need to remember the Lord is looking at the heart. That's something that the Pharisees cared nothing about. So He's the one who says of them everything they do is done for men to see.

[11 : 06] So hold your place here in Matthew 23 and turn with me back to Matthew chapter 6. We've been studying the Beatitudes in Sunday school the adult class.

And this comes from the same sermon the Sermon on the Mount. This is early on in Jesus' ministry. And you remember in chapter 5 and verse 20 Jesus warned the crowd unless your righteousness surpasses that righteousness of the scribes and Pharisees I tell you you will no wise enter the kingdom of heaven.

Your righteousness must go beyond theirs if you're to enter into heaven. One of the damning things about their religion was that it was done for men to see.

And so here in chapter 6 verse 1 He says be careful not to do your acts of righteousness before men to be seen by them because if you do you will have no reward from your Father in heaven. Notice be careful. Do you know Christian that your flesh is no different from the Pharisees' flesh? It's no better than the Pharisees' flesh.

[12 : 34] What the flesh wants is the same. Now whether or not it's raining in us is one thing but the flesh itself is the same and therefore Jesus says be careful because unless you're careful you may find yourself falling into the same pattern as the Pharisee.

So this is not exclusively their problem. This religion is alive and well and we find something of it in our own flesh that remaining sin within.

They did everything to be seen by men. Now notice Jesus gives three examples in which He exposes the Pharisees. First He says they gave to the needy in order to in order for people to see them and to be impressed.

Verse 2 So when you give to the needy do not announce it with trumpets as the hypocrites do in the synagogue and on the streets to be honored by men. There's their motive Jesus says.

You know politicians love photo ops don't they? They love to be on the evening news in the soup line at some mission serving these poor people and I've often wondered do they ever go down there without the cameras without the cameras showing the world how compassionate they are?

[14 : 00] I don't know. I don't know that. I really don't. But the Pharisees didn't do that. If there were no people around they weren't giving. No because they did it to be honored by men.

That's why they did it in the synagogue where everybody gathered or in the streets to be honored by men. Now whether the trumpets it says that they announce don't announce it with trumpets whether they actually blew trumpets before they threw their money into the plate or whether it's just a symbolic metaphor what it's telling us is that when they gave the Pharisees said looky here what I'm doing.

And the people said wow aren't they generous. And Jesus says they have received their reward in full.

Man's wow zero from God. But you when you give to the needy verse 3 don't let your left hand know what your right hand is doing.

Now that's hyperbole that's that's an exaggeration to make a point. don't let your left hand know what your right hand is doing so that your giving may be in secret.

[15 : 22] And then your father who sees in secret will reward you. So that's all you need because you're doing it for him to please him.

That's not enough for the Pharisees. That's not audience enough for them. They find no motivation from God to give. so don't give for the wrong audience.

Do it for God. Don't make sure that your name is on a plaque to be showing the world how generous you are and feeding off of that. Give what you give to please the Lord not man.

So they gave in order to be seen by man. Secondly they prayed for people to see and be impressed. Verse 5 when you pray do not be like the hypocrites Jesus name for the Pharisees for they love to pray standing in the synagogues and on the street corners places where people are. Why? To be seen by men. That's why they pray. Oh I thought they prayed because they saw their need of God's mercy and grace and forgiveness for their sins.

[16 : 32] I thought they prayed to see God's name hallowed and his kingdom come and his will to be done. Well that's just what they wanted you to think about them.

But that's not why they're praying. They pray to impress you. And that's all they'll receive is man's wow. Aren't they spiritual?

Listen to them pray. And that's why private prayer is not something they do. For what good is that if nobody's there to see it and hear it.

So Jesus says of them in Mark 12 and verse 40 they devour widows houses and for a show they make lengthy prayers. Yes everything they do is for a show to be seen by men.

But when you pray go into your room close the door pray to your father who is in heaven. Then your father who sees what's done in secret will reward you. enough to know his eyes are on me.

[17 : 35] His ear is open to the righteous. The audience of one is enough for God's people. Now that's not a condemnation of public prayer.

We've had public prayers this morning. No the Bible teaches public prayer. But it's saying the reason they went public with their prayers is just to be seen by men. so they gave their money and they prayed for people to see. Now thirdly they fasted for people to see and to be impressed. Now fasting is when we temporarily lay aside food or other lesser important things in order to seek the face of God more undistracted as the one thing needful. There's something burning in our heart we want to see and so we fast as well as pray. And so verse 16 when you fast do not look somber as the hypocrites do for they disfigure their faces to show men that they're fasting.

And so they look like they've been through the war. They're all haggard their hair's messed up their face is somber. And you say what's wrong with him?

[18 : 51] Oh don't you know he's fasting. Oh he's really spiritual. He not only prays but he fasts and that's exactly what they wanted you to know.

That's why they look like death warmed over. Just so that you might notice and they're very happy when you do. That's their reward. No but when you fast Jesus says verse 17 put oil on your head comb your hair wash your face splash aftershave on it smile.

Why? So that they so it will not be obvious to men that you are fasting but only to your father in heaven who is unseen and your father who sees what is done in secret will reward you.

You see true citizens of Christ's kingdom live for the unseen audience of one. The Pharisees though they were revered as the most spiritual men in Israel lived not for the audience of one. Gave their money, prayed, fasted, did everything they did for the audience of men. So they do everything for man's eyeballs.

[20 : 09] So we're back to Matthew 23 because Jesus has more things to tell us about examples of everything they do is for man to see. in the fourth place they even dressed for people to see and to be impressed.

Verse 23, 5b, they make their phylacteries wide and the tassels on their garments long. What in the world are phylacteries? We don't wear them, do we?

Well, they were little leather boxes that were worn on the forehead and on the left arm near to the heart.

And inside those little leather boxes were pieces of paper on which were written the laws of God, some of the laws of God. And there are Old Testament passages that refer to writing God's law upon our minds and keeping it near to our heart.

And they super literalize that and so they literally put a little box on their forehead and on their left arm near to their heart. As if by doing so you will think, oh these men are really holy because they've got God's law on their minds and as if the symbol carried along with it the heart meaning that God's law was on their hearts.

[21 : 33] And it says they make wide their phylacteries, the bands that held them, just to be sure you didn't miss it when you walked past them. They had these wide bands to catch your eye so that you would see what it was they were wearing.

And they did much the same with the tassels which they made long. In Numbers 15, God commanded the Jews to have four tassels on their robe to remind them to obey all of God's commands.

So the Pharisees not only kept the law and had these tassels, oh, but they went beyond with extra credit and made their tassels long.

Why would anyone do that? To be seen by men. You might know just how serious they are about keeping God's commandments.

So they dressed for people to see and being impressed. Fifth, they also chose seats for people to see and being impressed.

[22 : 42] verse 6 says they love the place of honor at banquets and the most important seats in the synagogue. Now I don't believe that certain seats are necessarily in and of themselves sinful but what is sinful is that they love those seats.

They love those seats of honor. The most important seats. Why? Because it made them look important to others. If you see us sitting on these important seats well then you know where you stack up in comparison to me.

It was all for men to see. Remember image is everything to these men. What they look like to others. Jesus says they love honor from men more than honor from God.

God. So the important seats fed their egos and that's why they chose them. And then lastly they took titles of honor to impress people.

Verse 7 says they love to be greeted in the market places and to have men call them rabbi. They love to hear others acknowledge their superior knowledge and holiness.

[23 : 57] Rabbi or teacher literally lament my Lord. And that sounded so good to their ears that it was worth a walk in the marketplace just to hear it. My Lord.

My teacher. My rabbi. But you verses 8 to 10 you're not to be called rabbi for you have one master and you're all brothers and do not call anyone on earth father for you have one father and he's in heaven nor you to be called teacher for you have one teacher the Christ.

who's speaking to Christ. You see what he's saying? He's not saying that it's wrong to acknowledge that the guy that married your mother and fathered you is your father.

It's not wrong for you to call him father. That's not the point at all. Leader. The Bible calls the leaders of the church. The leaders. So that's not the problem.

No the problem is elevating men as if they're the last words on religion. Oh father. Father.

[25 : 15] You're at the top. No. We have one father and we're all brothers. That's brothers and sisters.

That's the leveling field. And there's just one ultimate teacher. And he is the Christ. He came to bear witness to the truth.

He is the truth. So don't be seeking these elevated names to make yourself out to be something special above your brothers and sisters. Well, they took titles of honor to impress people.

Their whole outlook reveals a wrong view of leadership doesn't it? it's a leadership of self-exaltation instead of humble servant leadership to God and to others.

And so Jesus says the greatest among you, verse 11, will be your servants. The greatest among you will not be these who are sitting in their most important seats. That's not how you find the greatest among you.

[26 : 17] You find those who are serving others and serving God. And that kind of greatness was completely foreign to the Pharisees. They were all about lifting themselves up.

Why? So that others would see them and think more highly of them. But Jesus says in words aimed more than once at the Pharisees, verse 12, whoever exalts himself will be humbled, but whoever humbles himself will be exalted.

So we'll pause there this morning. And I trust you can see from this why I said that when walking through the state park and seeing a sign, Tyrannosaurus Rex, and you say, oh, somebody's playing games, that critter's been extinct for centuries.

That we don't read Jesus' warning here in scriptures, beware of the Pharisees, beware of their teaching, beware of their hypocrisy, and have the same reaction.

Oh, come on. They were extinct long ago, back in the first century. Know the teaching, the hypocrisy. It's still with us, and that warning is for us as well.

[27 : 35] It's still a danger, both around us, and worst of all, within us. So let me draw some lessons from Jesus' words to us this morning.

Number one, why we do what we do matters greatly to God. Why we do what we do matters greatly to God. In fact, it makes all the difference in the world.

Haven't we seen that? It's not enough to content ourselves. We're doing the right thing. We're in the right place with the right people, and we're doing the right thing.

Well, that's not the end of the search by God. He wants to know why you're doing it, and he looks right at your heart and sees and reads it.

Our worship, our life, whatever we're doing, is only right when it's done for God to see. And that means that indeed, not just our worship, but everything we do is to have this God word orientation to it.

[28 : 41] We're doing it because of God. We're doing it for God. Whatever we do, whether we eat or drink or whatever we do, we're to do it for the glory of God.

1 Corinthians 10, 31. For his honor, not mine. And to do it to receive his praise, not the praise of men. And whatever we do is to be done to please God and not to please men.

So we're told, find out what pleases the Lord. Lord. Make it your goal to please the Lord. That you may live a life worthy of the Lord and may please him in every way.

Ephesians 5, 10. 2 Corinthians 5, 9. And Colossians 1, 10. Whatever we do is to be done by faith in God. Romans 14, 23.

Because everything that does not come from faith is sin. Here, faith is spoken of as that conviction of what we know to be true. And I am to do whatever I do out of a conviction that this is what God wants me to do.

[29 : 46] I do it because he says so. I don't do it just to have you see me or some lesser reason. It must be with an eye of faith to God who commands it and requires it.

It's to be done in love and gratitude for God's boundless mercies to me. Romans 12, 1. So true religion is a Godward orientation to life.

It is done primarily for the audience of one. For him and his authority. And his approval.

So the contrast could not be sharper with the Pharisees. Everything they do is done for men to see.

Everything we do is to be done for God to see. So is that why you do what you do?

Are God's eyes enough to motivate everything you do just because he's watching and you know what he wants from you and you want to please him and you want to glorify him because he's done so much for you?

[31 : 02] Is that why you're here this morning? It's a fair question to ask. The Pharisees were in synagogue every time it was open.

But they were only there for men to see. Why are you giving money in the offering boxes? Why worshipping? Why paying attention to the preached word?

Why praying? Why singing? Why serving? Why working? Why going to work tomorrow? Why parenting? Why doing everything that you do?

Children, listen up. Listen up. Is that why you obey your parents? Because you know God wants you to and you know it pleases him.

Colossians 1 or 321 says, children, obey your parents in everything for this pleases the Lord. That's the reason.

[32 : 01] That's the motivation. You know, many children don't care what pleases the Lord. That doesn't motivate them to obey. They couldn't care less about what pleases the Lord.

No, some children obey their parents just so they don't get in trouble. They don't want to get punished. That's all that's in their mind. Mom and dad.

Punishment there. There's not a thought at all, God, in their obedience to their parents. But you show that Jesus is your Lord and Savior, children, when you obey mom and dad because this pleases the Lord.

And that weighs in heavily for you. You want to please the Lord. You want to honor him. So some people, when their parents are present, they obey.

But when they're absent, they don't. Because that's all that they care about. They're living for men's eyes, not for God's eye. You see, you may not feel like doing what mom and dad say.

[33 : 07] Oh, but if it pleases the Lord, I will do it. That weighs in big time with you if you're one of God's children, young people.

Pleasing God because he wants it done. That's the, that's, that's what separates the Pharisee from the true child of God. So why you do what you do matters to God.

Motives matter. Secondly, this is why Jesus Christ alone is judge in the final day. No one else is qualified to punish or reward.

Why not? Because only he knows why we did what we did. Right? So are you to be rewarded this morning for coming and worshipping him?

Not earned. It's, it's all rewards of grace. If anything we do is pleasing to the Lord, it's, it's his grace. We give him the praise, but, but is there true worship this morning?

[34 : 12] Only the Lord Jesus knows that. Only he knows why I'm preaching this morning. And so only he is qualified to judge man's deeds in the final day.

And what we, and why we've done what we've done makes all the difference in assessing what we've done while in the body. So he sees the full picture.

Nothing in all creation is hidden from him. Everything is uncovered and laid bare before the eyes of him to whom we must give an account. Account for what? For the deeds done while in the body.

But only Jesus can really evaluate in a way whether it was worth anything or whether it was like the Pharisees. They've got all that they had coming, which was man's wow. Well, nothing left from me.

So, you see, we ourselves are not even the best final judge of why we do what we do. You know our hearts can be deceived. And you know they can deceive themselves.

[35 : 18] I can deceive you, make you think better of me than what's really in here. And I can even deceive myself. And so Jeremiah 17, 9 and 10 says, the heart is deceitful above all things and beyond cure.

Who can know it? I, the Lord, search the heart and examine the mind to reward a man according to his conduct, according to what his deeds deserve.

He alone knows that, you see, because he searches the hearts and the minds. Do you care more about what man thinks or what God thinks?

Jesus says the Pharisees live for man's eyes, for man's praises, for man's honor, for man's approval. That's priority number one. True Christians live for God's eyes, God's praise, God's honor, God's approval, God's glory.

But I want to hasten to say that even true Christians still struggle with the sin of hypocrisy. In that sense, we are recovering Pharisees.

[36 : 29] We too once lived for men's praises, didn't we? Are you honest enough to acknowledge that I had my back to God and I was going my own way? That's how I came into the world.

I wasn't thinking about him. I was thinking about me and about others and winning others' praises and puffing up my image. So we all live for the praises of men.

We all live to have others think better of us than what we knew was the case. We're still tempted to drop hints of our good deeds that we've done just so that others might know about it.

I mean, after all, nobody saw that. Yes, the fleshly desire still dwells within us and wars within us. And if it's any comfort to you, in Galatians chapter 2, you can read it. The apostle Peter fell to the sin of hypocrisy. He's up there in Antioch and before certain Jews came from Jerusalem, the Jews that believed that the Old Testament law had to be obeyed by New Testament Christians, before they came up and visited, well, there's Peter and he's hobnobbing and eating with the Gentile believers.

[37 : 43] Not a problem. And as soon as these legalistic Jews arrived, Peter withdrew from the Gentile believers. Why? Because he was living for man's eyes.

What will they think? What will they take back to the Jerusalem church and say about, you know, Peter's gone off the beam? And Paul saw that it was an affront to the gospel that brings us all in on the same footing.

Jew, Gentile, whatever kind of sinner we are that we're forgiven in Christ and we become equal brothers and sisters. Jews, Gentile, doesn't matter anymore. We're all one in Christ Jesus.

And so Paul confronted him in public with his hypocrisy. And so great was the hypocrisy that other Jews did the same thing.

They too were eating with the Gentiles. And as soon as they saw Peter separated, they followed Peter in his hypocrisy. And then there's this statement that it was such a powerful thing that even Barnabas fell into the sin of hypocrisy.

[39 : 00] If you know anything about Barnabas, we've been studying on Wednesday night in the men's encourage. He was a giant in faith and he encouraged people. And no doubt he was encouraging these Gentile believers by fellowshiping with them.

Even Barnabas withdrew. Why? Because hypocrisy is like yeast. It's very contagious. Because when our eyes are on men, we can be pulled to act in ways that we otherwise wouldn't.

So I say, true Christians, Paul, Peter was a true believer. Barnabas was a true believer. But even they fell prey to the sin of hypocrisy.

So how do you know the difference between a real hypocrite, thoroughgoing hypocrite, and a real Christian who's fallen into the sin of hypocrisy?

There's a difference. How do you know the difference? Well, it's by what you do about it. What do you do about the hypocrisy? The hypocrite perhaps denies it, but in the end, he's content.

[40 : 09] Content to continue just keeping up appearances. The true believer prays, search me, O God, and know my heart. Test me and know my thoughts.

And see if there is any offensive way in me and lead me in the way everlasting. You see the difference? I know my heart is deceitful, so I want you to search me.

I want you to show me what you find. And when you show me hypocrisy, I will own it. I will confess it. I will renounce it.

Now that's the glorious freedom of the gospel, friends. Do you know the gospel frees us? It allows us to own our hypocrisy for what it is.

Why? Because we have a Savior for that. A Savior who promises full and free forgiveness for that. [41 : 08] Our standing before God does not rest on our performance, but upon Christ's perfect obedience to every command and His atoning death in the place of sinners who deserve damnation.

And so, we're free to confess. And as I stand before God confessing, He is faithful and just to forgive me my sin and to cleanse me from all unrighteousness.

And not just that, but to empower me to guard against hypocrisy and to be more concerned than just what I do, but to be concerned about why I do what I do.

I find in the gospel motivations to fight against the sin of hypocrisy. I find strength in the Spirit of Christ to not go on pretending to be better than what I am.

So that's how you know a true disciple of Christ. He confesses his hypocrisy and turns from it. A true hypocrite doesn't. He's pleased with his claim and it keeps people under him and under his control.

[42 : 22] And so we pity them. We pity the true hypocrite. Why? They don't have a Savior to go to. You see why they cling to this high esteem of people? Why they've got to convince themselves that they're so holy and sinless?

because they don't have a Savior to represent them in the day of judgment and to show his blood that atoned for all of their sins. They don't have a Savior's perfect obedience put to their record.

No, all they have is their performance and so they've got to keep up the appearance both for themselves and for others. Oh, how sad they will look in the day of judgment when they stand before him of whom it's said that nothing in all creation is hidden from his eyes and he sees their motivation and it all just crumbles before the all-searching eye of Christ in the day of judgment.

We pity the hypocrite. Jesus asks how can you believe? Talking to these Pharisees these rulers how can you believe if you accept praise from one another?

If that's your interest how can you ever believe on me? You accept praise from one another yet you make no effort to obtain the praise that comes from the only God.

[43 : 44] They love praise from men more than the praise from God and you see the praise we love is the praise we live for and so Jesus exposes their heart love for men's praises behind all that the hypocrite does.

So what are you this morning? What are you? Are you a hypocrite? Are you just going along with this whole game because of your wife your husband your parents?

But it's not the real thing with you. Jesus sees and if that's you cry out to him for mercy. Do you know Jesus saved two of the worst hypocrites two of the worst hypocrites two of the I think that must have been the top Pharisees of the day Saul of Tarsus Jesus loved him and saved him Nicodemus the teacher in Israel didn't even know there was such a thing as a new birth leading hundreds astray with his teacher and Jesus saved them this is our savior he has grace for hypocrites full-fledged hypocrites so come to him trust in him believe that he is so free of hypocrisy and has promised to put that record to your record if you'll just come and acknowledge your sin and renounce it and trust in his righteousness he's just that good and he welcomes you and will give you not only pardon but power over that sin and then dear Christian how do we thirdly be on guard against the hypocrisy of the Pharisee let me just give two helps as we conclude the first is remember how fickle man's praises are they may be shouting your praises on Sunday and crucifying you on Friday now are you going to live for something as passing and fickle as that remember the day of judgment that determines your eternal destiny what men think about you there will mean zero to you what God knows about you will mean everything to you drop your hypocrisy live for the eye of God and that's our second point live coram deo the Latin that means just live before the face of God you know the Lord Jesus

Psalms 16 is a messianic psalm and in verse 8 he says I have set the Lord always before me because he's at my right hand I will not be shaken I believe the Lord Jesus did that he set the Lord his God before him and he saw him there always at his right hand that kept him from being shaken by whatever was happening but it also kept him living Godward he lived in the presence of his father and that's so key to us shattering this hypocrisy root that still wants to sprout in our hearts from time to time I live before the face of God he's watching me so don't let much time pass during the day without remembering that fact talk to him throughout the day pray without ceasing so that

everything you do you do with him present you know he's right there with you you've just been talking to him now the temptation comes to pretend something you're not no no he sees me and so I'm walking and I'm talking and I'm living before him you know that's just another name that's another expression of the fear of God that we studied in the Sunday school one man defined the fear of God as the pressing realization that I am always under the eye of God and I'm heading to the judgment of God and therefore nothing matters more than pleasing God that's what it means to fear him unite my heart to fear your name let that be the uniting factor of my life that whether I'm in private in my room with my computer my phone or whether I'm in church in Sunday school I'll be one in the same not one person here with my friends at church and another with my friends at school or wherever you have them but I have this integration of life an integrity a oneness about me why what gives me that because I'm always living under the eye of God and I'm heading to the judgment of God and therefore nothing matters more than pleasing him so walk Coram Deo practice the presence of God by faith setting him before you that you learn more and more to live with him to walk with him what a privilege to walk with God it will help us in curing this sin of hypocrisy in younger years we used to sing a song that went like this friend how would you feel if your heart were made with a window on each side so that all could see not just outward charm but detect if inward harm people often see you as you are outside

[49 : 19] Jesus really knows you for he sees inside how about your heart is it right with God that's the thing that counts today let's pray father we we find that your word searches us and tries us just as we need to be searched and tried and we sang at the outset we have not feared you as we ought we've not lived with a sense of you watching everything we do and we thank you that we can come and confess that and know that in Jesus Christ we have the promise of forgiveness the promise of help thank you for the gospel help us to live upon it to live upon our savior to walk before him all the day long teach us that and if there's those that are just living for the eyes of men and not a godward life we pray save them even today and bring glory to yourself and everlasting good to them we ask in

Jesus name amen