

Aren't Christians Just a Bunch of Hypocrites?

Introduction

The Text

³⁹ Jesus said, “For judgment I came into this world, that those who do not see may see, and those who see may become blind.” ⁴⁰ Some of the Pharisees near him heard these things, and said to him, “Are we also blind?” ⁴¹ Jesus said to them, “If you were blind, you would have no guilt; but now that you say, ‘We see,’ your guilt remains. (John 9:39–41)

Ever Wondered?

- A. Every now and then we’re going to add a sermon to our ongoing Ever Wondered? sermon series.
 - 1. In this series, we’re just looking at questions that those skeptical or curious about Christianity might be asking. And we do our best to address them.
 - a. Today’s question, as you’ve likely seen by now is this: “Aren’t Christians Just a Bunch of Hypocrites?”
- B. You go and talk to almost anyone today who’s not a Christian—someone who, in particular, may be skeptical of Christianity—and, undoubtedly, one of the first objections you’ll hear from them is just this. They bring up the issue of hypocrisy in the church . . . and understandably so.
 - 1. Indeed, it’s been said that “one of the greatest arguments against Christianity is Christians themselves.”
 - a. In other words: their lives are so out of step with the supposed claims and values of Christianity that it makes the whole thing seem utterly implausible, unbelievable, false, untrue.
- C. Have you ever heard this sort of talk going around? Have you ever felt as much yourself?
 - 1. I’m a pastor. I’ve made it my lifelong mission to promote the Christian faith, and yet even I have to wrestle with this from time to time—when yet another significant pastor or ministry or denomination is uncovered and publicly exposed in their hypocrisy for one thing or another.
 - a. It almost feels like there’s something new in the headlines every week, doesn’t it?

Hypocrisy . . . in the Headlines and at Home

- A. As we begin to consider this subject, I wonder if there are any examples that come immediately to mind for you?

1. Perhaps you think of the notable apologist Ravi Zacharias and the sexual promiscuity that came out post-mortem. It just took a wrecking ball to that man's legacy. He'd written so many great books in defense of the faith. How are you going to thumb through those pages now, knowing that all the while he was sexually pressuring his massage therapists and things? Makes you sick.
 - a. Makes you question the validity of, not just his own personal faith, but the Christian faith in general.
 2. Maybe you think of Marc Driscoll and what happened there at Mars Hill in Seattle. This is an Acts 29 church after all. He co-founded the network. Christianity Today recently put out a podcast uncovering all the nonsense that man was involved with and the trail of devastation he left in his wake there.
 3. Maybe you think about what happened with Hillsong and some of their pastors; or Bill Hybels over there at Willow Creek—one of the biggest churches in America.
 4. Maybe you think of the sexual abuse cover-ups that recently came to light in the Southern Baptist Convention; or the horrors that continue to be exposed in the Catholic church as investigators look into things.
 5. Or maybe you didn't know about any of this and now you do so you're thinking: "Man, Christians really are a bunch of hypocrites. Is this even real? I thought Jesus changes people. They come in to talk him up on Sunday, but they're out trashing him with their lives on Monday. What is the deal? What are we to make of it?"
- B. But now all of these examples I've given are still a bit far off and distant from most of us. It's happening in the news, but it doesn't affect us at the deepest level. Certainly, it's still painful enough, but it still feels in the abstract.
1. It's nothing like the pain you feel when that hypocrisy gets personal, right? When you're touched by it. When it's leaders you know, so-called "Christians" you know, ministries you're a part of. That hits you at an altogether different level doesn't it?
 - a. I know enough of your stories to know that many of you have had to work through this. You've been burned, you've been hurt, you've been broken, you've been betrayed. People you followed, trusted, opened yourself up to, were taking advantage of you . . . in Jesus' name.
 - i. It might not have ever made the news, but it's all but destroyed your life.
- C. If you've been through that and you're still a follower of Christ, as far as I'm concerned, you're my hero. You're an inspiration for us all. It's a miracle of grace you didn't just walk away.
- D. And if you've been through that, and that's part of why you don't buy into Christianity and you're suspicious and hesitant with the whole thing, listen: that's understandable. It's hard.
1. And let me just say here right at the outset: I'm sorry.

- a. I'm sorry the church so often doesn't live up to her ideals.
- b. I'm sorry for when we look nothing like the image of our Savior.
- c. I'm sorry for the ways we use Jesus' name for our own self-promotion.
- d. I'm sorry that you've experienced such trauma from the very hands that should've been there for your help and healing.
- e. I'm sorry for the ways I personally may have added to that mess.
 - i. And I'm just glad you're here today.

E. I hope I can help make some sense of this for you and maybe show us all a way forward.

- 1. I've got three points for us this morning regarding hypocrisy and Christianity: (1) It's Not Excusable, But Neither Is It Unique; (2) It's Not Excusable, But Neither Is It Surprising; and (3) It's Not Excusable, But Neither Is It Hopeless.

- a. If this doesn't make sense to you yet, I trust it will as we go . . .

(1) It's Not Excusable, But Neither Is It Unique

It's a Human Problem

A. One of the ways people respond, again somewhat understandably, to hypocrisy in the church is to leave the church, right?

- 1. 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.

B. But this first point is here to simply say: sadly, that's just not the case. Hypocrisy in the church is not excusable, but it's also not unique.

- 1. Hypocrisy is everywhere—inside and outside the church. You push away from hypocrisy here and you just butt up against it somewhere else.

- a. Because it's not just a Christian thing. It's a human thing.

- i. 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.

C. Let me illustrate what I mean—now taking my examples of hypocrisy, not from the church, but from all the other domains of the human experience.

- 1. So we see hypocrisy in law enforcement, right?

- a. A couple days ago, I saw on the news, a new law suit where nearly 300 boys and girls allege that they were sexually assaulted, harassed and abused by Los Angeles County probation and detention officers while being held in county juvenile facilities.

One guy was being interviewed just weeping because he was told by the officers no one could protect him. That was supposed to be the officers' jobs, and they were the ones abusing him. Who could help now? It's hypocrisy.

2. We see hypocrisy in the schools, with teachers and things.
 - a. I'm just giving you an example I saw in the news recently, but it's everywhere. Here's the headline: "California 'Teacher of the Year' faces 15 charges for 'inappropriate relationship' with 13-year-old student." She's teacher of the year, and she's sending lewd photographs and videos to a kid in her class?
3. We see hypocrisy in the government.
 - a. The Founding Fathers knew this, that's why there's three branches of government, all intended keep watch on the other and hold them accountable. Because they knew we're all prone to twist things towards our own interests and wellbeing—and the only way to balance that out is to pin your self-interested bent against mine. You'll keep me honest, I'll keep you honest.
4. We see hypocrisy in the workplace.
 - a. Again, here's a recent headline from the Guardian: "30 under 30-year sentences: why so many of Forbes' young heroes face jail." You know Forbes' has their famous "30 under 30" list where they try to identify the brightest young minds, and upcoming entrepreneurs, and things like this. And this article is saying: look, a lot of these people highlighted are now facing jail-time—for lying and fudging the numbers; for the fake-it-till-you-make-it stuff. There's hypocrisy.
 - i. And that's especially true in Silicon Valley and the tech sector with all the startups and things. In a similar vein, I just saw another headline yesterday in the New York Times: "The End of Faking It in Silicon Valley." People have been pretending, putting on a front. They're being called out.
5. We see hypocrisy in Hollywood with celebrities.
 - a. Bill Cosby was a big one for me. I used to watch his stuff growing up. He had that squeaky clean image. "America's Dad." And then you find out America's Dad's been doping ladies and taking advantage of them. What is that? How are you going to go back and watch the Cosby show now without being creeped out?
6. We see hypocrisy in other religions. Maybe you think Christianity is the problem, but I still believe in God, so I'll trade it for a different religion.
 - a. Well, again, just another headline from last week, CNN: "Dalai Lama [the spiritual head of Tibetan Buddhism] apologizes after video asking child to 'suck' his tongue sparks outcry." What is that? That's disgusting. You thought the dude was just peaceful, meditating, sitting on a pillow. Now you're thinking: maybe he's a pervert? You don't have to go searching for this stuff. It's all over the headlines.

7. Bringing it a little closer to home now, we see hypocrisy in our own relationships, don't we?
 - a. We may think: Okay, the church, Christians, pastors, they're hypocrites, but I'll find what I really want—authentic, open, honest relationships—somewhere else, right? So we look to parents, or friends, or spouses.
 - i. But we get hurt here too—some of us more than others, for sure, but all of us are dealing with it. People don't live up to their ideals. They say one thing and do another.

Not Just Out There . . . Right Here!

- A. So maybe you say, okay, well then the answer is clear: the only way to get away from all hypocrisy is to get away from all people. I'm going to go live out in the woods somewhere.
 1. But then you've got another issue, though, right? Because now, of course, we have to get honest here for a moment, come on down from our high horse, and admit: we don't just see hypocrisy out there in others, we see it right here in our own hearts, in our own lives, don't we?
 - a. It's a human problem. Last I checked: I'm human . . . you're human. And that means we're a part of this. We can't escape it. You run from everyone else . . . it's still in you!
- B. You say I'm not a hypocrite. Really?
 1. One simple way to prove this is to just ask you to monitor your use of social media. What do you post about? Isn't it true we always present our best?
 - a. Here's me on vacation eating lobster by the sea. You post that.
 - b. You don't post a pic of you at home eating top ramen from a cup because you wasted all your money on that vacation and now you're going to be pinching pennies for the next few months. I don't want people to see that.
 - c. Here's me and my wife out on the town looking hot, looking as in love as we were back in high school, holding hands, sneaking kisses, and all this.
 - d. But no one posts the pic of themselves sleeping on the couch because mama kicked me out of the bed and we can't stand each other right now. We hide that. I don't want people to know about that. I want them to like me, even envy me.
 - i. I don't want them to see who I really am, what I'm really like. In other words: I'm kind of a hypocrite.

The Headwaters of Humanity

- A. And, you know, the Bible talks about this issue all the way back in the beginning, with Adam and Eve. It's the fig leaf dynamic.

1. They disobey God there in the garden and what do they do?
 - a. Own up to it? Not a chance.
 - b. They take fig leaves and make a covering for themselves. This will hide what I am on the inside and present a different picture on the outside.
 - i. It's hypocrisy. I look try to look good, when, truly, I'm filthy.
- B. And, of course, Adam and Eve aren't just the first parents of those nasty Christians in the church. They're the headwaters of the human race.
 1. That same murky current of hypocrisy that got started in them, it flows through us all. It's a fallen, twisted human nature.
- C. So this hypocrisy in the Christian church—it's not excusable, but neither is it unique. You don't get rid of it by getting rid of Christianity.
 1. In many ways, as I hope to soon show you, you try that and it's actually only going to get worse.

(2) It's Not Excusable, But Neither Is It Surprising

- A. I say it's not surprising that there's hypocrisy in the church, why?
 1. Well, because the Bible talks about it all over the place. Jesus is always dealing with it. The apostles are constantly warning about it.
 - a. 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.
 - b. In many ways the hypocrisy doesn't so much invalidate what the Bible has to say as much as it actually validates it.
 - i. 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.

Two Quick Observations

- A. I want to quickly draw out two observations from Scripture concerning hypocrisy in the church: (1) The Bible Opposes It; and (2) The Bible Anticipates It.

Observation #1: The Bible Opposes It

- A. You don't like hypocrisy in the church? Jesus agrees with you. He can't stand it either.

1. Jesus, in many ways, we could say is on a collision course with religious hypocrisy. That's why he gets killed.
 - a. Because he's calling out the hypocrites—not outside the church, but inside it. Because he's stripping off the fig leaves, he's pulling off the masks. And the religious folks don't want to be seen for what they really are.

- B. Our English word “**hypocrite**” is just a transliteration of the Greek **hupocritēs**.
 1. It's a theatrical word. It refers to an actor, to one who plays a part, to someone who's putting on a show before an audience. It's presenting something on the outside, that's not true on the inside.
 - a. And it's a word that shows up 17 times in the NT. And, every single time, it's Jesus who's talking about it, confronting it, condemning it.

- C. This is especially the case in Matthew's gospel, where 13 of these 17 occurrences are found. Let me do a quick flyover of some of these verses for you . . .
 1. So Jesus says to his disciples in [Matt. 6:1](#): “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.” And he goes on to give a few examples, calling out religious hypocrisy: “² Thus, when you give to the needy, sound no trumpet before you, as the hypocrites do in the synagogues and in the streets, that they may be praised by others. . . .⁵ And when you pray, you must not be like the hypocrites. For they love to stand and pray in the synagogues and at the street corners, that they may be seen by others. . . .¹⁶ And when you fast, do not look gloomy like the hypocrites, for they disfigure their faces that their fasting may be seen by others. Truly, I say to you, they have received their reward.” (vv. 2, 5, 16).
 - a. They're so concerned with getting the applause of people. They want to make sure everyone sees. But they don't care about God. Their hearts aren't pure, however they may appear on the outside.
 2. This is why Jesus will later say to the Pharisees and scribes in [Matt. 15:7-8](#): “⁷ You hypocrites! Well did Isaiah prophesy of you, when he said: ⁸ ‘This people honors me with their lips, but their heart is far from me’”
 3. And all of this really comes to a crescendo in [Matt. 23](#), where Jesus just goes off on the religious leaders, verse after verse, for their hypocrisy. It's what the whole chapter is about. He just keeps repeating this same refrain: “Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites!” (vv. 13, 15, 23, 25, 27, 29). And then he lays out all this evidence he has against them.

- D. You don't like hypocrisy in the church. Jesus agrees with you. But, as we'll see, he doesn't, therefore, leave the church. He still loves the church. He still moves towards the church. He still gives his life for the church.

Observation #2: The Bible Anticipates It

- A. But, of course, the Bible does more than just oppose hypocrisy in the church. It explicitly anticipates it.
1. We may be prone to think: Oh, okay Jesus came and he does away with this, right? His death, resurrection, the Holy Spirit, people are born again—aren't we done with this? No more hypocrisy in the church?
 2. But no, that's not what we see.
 - a. In the book of Acts, from the early days, there's amazing stuff happening. So many are getting saved and coming into the church.
 - b. But then you have people like Ananias and Saphira ([Acts 5](#)), and Simon the magician ([Acts 8](#))—people who are trying to use religion for selfish gain. It's the same kind of junk.
 - i. The Bible talks about tares growing up among the wheat, and it will be that way until the great harvest at the end of the age ([Matt. 13:24-30](#)). There are going to be hypocrites in our midst—people who don't really represent the Savior, though they claim to.
- B. Furthermore, both Paul and Peter, in their very last epistles—as they consider the end of their ministries and their impending deaths—they both decide it's of the utmost importance that they warn the church about hypocrisy that's going to rise up from inside.
1. Let me just read you what Paul writes in [2 Tim. 3:1-5](#): “¹ But understand this, that in the last days there will come times of difficulty. ² For people will be lovers of self, lovers of money, proud, arrogant, abusive, disobedient to their parents, ungrateful, unholy, ³ heartless, unappeasable, slanderous, without self-control, brutal, not loving good, ⁴ treacherous, reckless, swollen with conceit, lovers of pleasure rather than lovers of God, ⁵ having the appearance of godliness, but denying its power.” They have the outside thing going on, but something else on the inside (cf. [2 Pet. 2:1-3](#)).
- C. So hypocrisy in the church is both opposed and anticipated. And as such, again, it doesn't undermine the Christian faith so much as it, in fact, proves it.

We're All on the Spectrum

- A. 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.
1. On the one hand, we have what I'd call recalcitrant hypocrites.
 - a. 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.

2. 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.
 - a. 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.

- B. 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—especially the guy with the mic.
 1. I've got to preach about these things, I'm not always going to live up to this. We're not going to do justice the true beauty of the Christian way. We're going to fall short.
 2. We're going to be growing into these things and making progress, but we haven't arrived . . . and we won't this side of heaven.

- C. And, again, the Bible talks about this sort of thing as well. You see, it doesn't just oppose and anticipate hypocrisy in the recalcitrant sense, it does so in the recovering sense as well.
 1. We know even Christians are to be fighting hypocrisy within themselves, and it's going to be ongoing throughout our lives.

- D. Paul the apostle, as amazing as he was—he was once a recalcitrant hypocrite as a Pharisee of Pharisees—but he's brought to repentance, there's been a great change in his life. Nevertheless, he goes on to describe his experience as a Christian, I think, in this way: “¹⁵ I do not understand my own actions. For I do not do what I want, but I do the very thing I hate. . . . ²² For I delight in the law of God, in my inner being, ²³ but I see in my members another law waging war against the law of my mind and making me captive to the law of sin that dwells in my members. ²⁴ Wretched man that I am! Who will deliver me from this body of death?” (Rom. 7:15, 22-24).
 1. He sums this whole matter up in a single verse when he writes in Gal. 5:17: “[T]he desires of the flesh are against the Spirit, and the desires of the Spirit are against the flesh, for these are opposed to each other, to keep you from doing the things you want to do.”
 - a. Any Christian in this room ever felt like this? I want to do this, but I keep doing that. Why can't I grow like I want? Why can't I make more advances in holiness like I want? Why do keep going up and down? Well, we have a new nature now in Christ, but there's still a battle with the old man in Adam.
 - i. This is not a wolf in sheep's clothing, it's a genuine sheep trying to shrug off the old wolfskin.

- E. We talked about the Apostle Paul, it's the same thing for the Apostle Peter (cf. Gal. 2:11-14). These are two most significant pillars in the early church, right? Between them both, these guys wrote 15 books in our Bibles. And yet even they are still in process. They're recovering hypocrites.
 1. If it was this way for them, it's going to be this way for us. It's not excusable, but neither is it surprising.

(3) It's Not Excusable, But Neither Is It Hopeless

The Gospel's Unique Offering

- A. At this point in the sermon, you may be thinking: "My goodness, what a downer!" Right?
1. This hypocrisy, it's not just in the church, it's everywhere.
 2. And it's not just in a few bad apples, it's in us all in varying degrees.
 - a. So what are we supposed to do with this? Thanks for ruining my Sunday, Nick. Let me get home watch some NBA playoffs and forget I ever heard this.
- B. Well, hold up. Because here's where it actually starts to get good. Here's where Christianity and its gospel really shines. Here's where we see, though hypocrisy in the church is not unique nor surprising, we also come to find that it's not hopeless.
1. Our God is doing something about it. Our God is here to help. Now we come to consider the unique offering of Christianity in the person and work of Jesus Christ. You see, in Jesus, God steps into the human dilemma and he's going to deal with our hypocrisy.
 - a. And he's going to deal with it in at least two ways: (1) He Will Bring Judgement Against It; (2) He Will Be Judged for It.

Way #1: He Will Bring Judgment against It

- A. This is what we already saw beginning to take place with his opposition of the Pharisees and others. But it's going to culminate ultimately in his uncovering and exposing of all hypocrisy at the end of the age.
1. No one is going to get away with it. He sees the heart. He knows what's in man. He will judge. He will make all the wrong right.
- B. In [Luke 12:1-3](#), he says this to his disciples: "¹ Beware of the leaven of the Pharisees, which is hypocrisy. ² Nothing is covered up that will not be revealed, or hidden that will not be known. ³ Therefore whatever you have said in the dark shall be heard in the light, and what you have whispered in private rooms shall be proclaimed on the housetops."
1. There will come a day when the sheepskin will be torn off and the wolves will be exposed; when the tares will be pulled up from among the wheat and thrown into the fire; when the fig leaves will be removed and people will be seen for what they really are.
- C. I want you to realize how important this is. It means, if you've been hurt by hypocrisy in the church, if you're one of the victims, just because God is gracious and patient doesn't mean he's not going to do something about it. He will.
1. This is one of the most significant promises Christianity offers. When you've been really hurt, you can lose your mind trying to protect yourself, keep yourself safe, get vengeance,

etc. But this says you're not alone. He's got you. And that allows you to stay sane and even love those who've wronged you.

- D. As we've seen, he's passionate about protecting his people. He's more opposed to hypocrisy in the church than even you are.
1. Yeah, Jesus is not just petting sheep and holding little children in his arms. He's also flipping tables over in the temple courts and cracking whips to drive out the moneychangers, right?
 2. He's not just gentle and lowly. He's ferocious.
 - a. And nothing gets him hotter than religious hypocrisy. So he says in [Matt. 18:6](#):
"[W]hoever causes one of these little ones who believe in me to [stumble], it would be better for him to have a great millstone fastened around his neck and to be drowned in the depth of the sea."
 - i. That's savage. Someone damaged you, manipulated you, deceived you in Jesus' name? Listen, Jesus is coming for that brother, and you aren't going to want to be within a hundred mile radius when he does. He hates hypocrisy more than you do.
- E. What this means is: Don't turn from God because those who claim his name hurt you. He's the one who will ultimately defend you. Don't push away from the church. Hold your ground and trust. He'll make it right.

Way #2: He Will Be Judged for It

- A. But, now, if you've been listening to what I've said to this point, you realize: if we're all on this hypocrisy spectrum, he isn't just coming for people out there, he's coming for me.
1. Nick, I thought you said there was hope?
- B. Here's where we realize that Jesus will not only someday soon come and bring judgement in full against all hypocrisy, he already came and was judged for it in our place.
1. Jesus doesn't just critique and stand against hypocrites. He lays his life down for them.
 2. He doesn't just die at the hand of hypocrites. He dies for the sake of hypocrites.
- C. That's what the cross is.
1. The only truly authentic person—honest, caring, God-honoring; the only one who never was a hypocrite . . . dying the hypocrite's death—the fury of a holy God poured out on him.
 - a. He hears the crack of his Father's whip.
 - b. He's got the millstone around his neck, sinking into the depths of the sea.
 - c. He's being treated as the wolf, the tare, the hypocrite.
 - i. But it should be me! He's doing it for me!

D. You know, there's this powerful exchange between Jesus and the Pharisees in [John 9](#). I read it to you at the start of this sermon.

1. Jesus has just healed a man born blind and he's using that miracle as a metaphor to push toward deeper spiritual realities. And he brings together both the fact that he's come to judge hypocrites but also that he's come to save them as well.

a. Here, again, is what he says: “³⁹For judgment I came into this world, that those who do not see may see, and those who see may become blind.’⁴⁰ Some of the Pharisees near him heard these things, and said to him, ‘Are we also blind?’⁴¹ Jesus said to them, ‘If you were blind, you would have no guilt; but now that you say, “We see,” your guilt remains” (vv. 39–41).

E. Do you hear what he's saying there? It's a bit of a riddle at first, but once you get it, it's amazing. He's saying:

1. “Listen Pharisees, the people like yourselves who are so confident they see, and they're unwilling to own up to their own sin and hypocrisy and need for a Savior, for grace, they're blind spiritually, and they remain in their guilt.

2. But for those who finally start to get it, they see that they don't see, that they aren't pure, that they're spiritually destitute and in need. These are the people, who see, and they're forgiven, healed, their guilt is removed . . . ultimately at the cross.”

a. He's talking about the two judgments against hypocrisy we just looked at and he's saying which one do you want?

i. Do you want the one where judgement falls on you—because you double down on your hypocrisy and I have to come at the end and rip the mask off?

ii. Or do you want the one where judgement falls on me—where you take off the mask now, you own up to it, you admit that you're a sinner in need of grace and you come back to God?

(1) Are you going to be the recalcitrant hypocrite, or are you going to be the recovering hypocrite? You only have two options.

F. It's the same sort of thing the Apostle John would later refer to when he writes this in [1 John 1:8-10](#): “⁸ If we say we have no sin [‘we see’], we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us.⁹ If we confess our sins [‘we're blind’], he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.¹⁰ If we say we have not sinned, we make him a liar, and his word is not in us.”

G. 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.

1. Either there's all grace and no truth—so you never really have to own up to your hypocrisy; you never really face it.

2. 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.

a. Only Christianity is brutally honest about the horrors of human nature but even more hopeful about the new heights we can reach in Jesus!

i. So even though our hypocrisy is not excusable, neither is it hopeless!

H. So . . . aren't Christians just a bunch of hypocrites?

1. In one sense, yes!

2. But that's no reason to punt on Jesus. That's all the more reason to come in. Because he welcomes people like me, people like you. And he helps us little by little to grow. We can be honest about who we really are and still he embraces us, forgives us, loves us.