

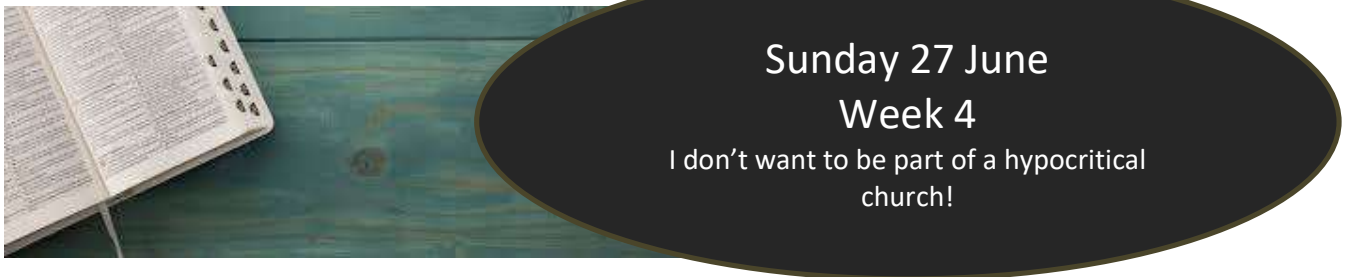


Daily Bible readings, a memory verse and a prayer for individual contemplation
Weekly worship song, reflection and small group questions

ARE YOU GOING THROUGH A MID-FAITH CRISIS?

CONTENT:

Sunday 27 June	Week 4	I don't want to be part of a hypocritical church!
Sunday 4 July	Week 5	The church has lost the plot.
Sunday 11 July	Week 6	The church will never fulfill God's mission!
Sunday 18 July	Week 7	God sees me as a disappointment.
Sunday 25 July	Week 8	God don't call me



BIBLE READING:

Sunday 27 June Hosea 4:1-10; Mt 23:1-12; I John 3:8-10

PRAISE AND WORSHIP:

 Await song Tony

Reflection By Mr Tony Mattee
 I don't want to be part of a hypocritical church!

Some bad things we do are euphemized by terms such as "Affair", "Shacking-up", etc., but some words do not have an alternate "nice" word. Words such as rape or murder fall into this category. Another word that falls into this category is "hypocrite", and that is what Jesus likened the Pharisees to. The harshest criticism ever spoken by Jesus is directed at this group of people. In Matthew 23 he called them

“Hypocrites” 7 times, “Fools” 2 times, “Blind Guides” 5 times and “Serpents and brood of vipers” once. We need to study this term “Hypocrites” very carefully as it may apply to us.

People have often been heard to say: “I don’t go to Church because there are so many hypocrites there”! The standard answer to this is: “Well that’s okay, there is always room for one more”! But what do we mean by the term “Hypocrite”? Dictionaries will define it as meaning counterfeit, pretender or one who professes what he is not. I personally like the expression: They wear a mask. What you see on the outside does not reflect what is inside.

The first thing to say about hypocrites is that they CHOOSE to speak one thing and live another. Ananias and Sapphira were hypocrites as they chose to say one thing but do another. Secondly hypocrites are normally found among the religious because the unchurched feel no need to pretend. Peter wouldn’t eat with Gentiles anymore because he was afraid of what the legalists would say. Thirdly they are full of greed and self-indulgence. Such a person wants to look like they are pleasing God when in actual fact they are really pleasing themselves. A fourth characteristic about hypocrites (and there are many more!) is that they have a very poor knowledge of who God is and how he works. I mean, do they honestly think that God doesn’t know what is going on in their mind? Do they really think that God will see what they do on a Sunday and not see how they live on the remaining days of the week?

In a Church there may well be hypocrites, but there are also people who are starting out on their Christian walk who may make the same mistakes as hypocrites. If their mistakes are pointed out, the new Christians will immediately take it to heart and resolve to change. The hypocrites however will try to justify themselves.

It is interesting that while Jesus is hard on hypocrites, he never condemns sinners. John 3: 17 says that “The Son did not come into the world to condemn the world, but to save it through Him.” In fact, Jesus embraces those who own up to their mistakes and moral failures. We think we need to put on a mask and act religious in order to gain God’s favour. Jesus says, “Take off the mask. Be real. Own up to your mistakes. If you do, I will forgive you.”

SMALL GROUP QUESTIONS:

1. Does being a hypocrite refer to a person or to a type of behaviour? Discuss.
2. The story of Ananias and Sapphira is a difficult situation to understand. Read their story in Acts 5 and discuss the merits of the story.
3. Four characteristics of hypocrites have been given in the Reflections section. What other characteristics could you add to this list?
4. How often do we wear masks in our daily living? What will be involved in us taking off the masks?



DAILY BIBLE READING:

Monday Romans 2:17-24

Memory verse:

Rom.2: 24 “God’s name is blasphemed among the Gentiles because of you.”

Prayer: Dear Lord, help me that the things I say and the actions I do may bring honour to your name.

Tuesday Mt 23:27-28

Memory verse:

Matt. 23: 28 “On the outside you appear to people as righteous but on the inside you are full of hypocrisy and wickedness.”

Prayer: Create in me a clean heart, O God, and renew a right spirit within me.

Wednesday Acts 5:1-16

Memory verse:

Acts 5: 4 “You have not lied to men but to God.”

Prayer: May the words of my mouth and the meditations of my heart be acceptable to you, O Lord, my Strength and my Redeemer.

Thursday Mark 11:12-14

Memory verse:

Mark 11: 13 “When he reached it, he found nothing but leaves.”

Prayer: O Gracious God, grant that my life may bring a harvest of good fruit that I may be a blessing to those I come into contact with.

Friday Luke 11: 37-48, 52-54

Memory verse:

Luke 11: 43 “Whoever wants to become great among you must be your servant.”

Prayer: Dear Lord, I surrender my life to you. I make you my Lord and Saviour and I will be your humble servant.

Saturday Mark 12:35-44

Memory verse:

Mark 12: 38 “Jesus said, ‘Watch out for the teachers of the law. They like to walk around in flowing robes and be greeted in the marketplaces.’”

Prayer: O Lord, help me to see you more clearly, to love you more dearly and to follow you more nearly.



It is important for parents to take time to lead the conversations of family time and to be honest with their children in these conversations.

BY JENNY BLAKE – CHILDREN’S PASTOR
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Sunday 27th June

Pray daily: Set up family time for prayer and devotions and stick to this arrangement. All devotions should always begin by with a prayer. Ask a family member to pray or one of the children.

Scripture Reading:

Allow children/teens to read out loud for the family.

Activity/Family Moment:

Think about church. On a piece of paper write down what the perfect church would look like or be like.

This might include things like an amazing band, comfy chairs, snacks and sweeties, friends and family, cool technology, stained glass windows etc.

What is a church? Yes, it is a building, but this past year we couldn’t attend church because of the pandemic, but we still had church. Church is more than a building. Church is actually people.

On the other side of the paper write down your flaws of each family member on one half. And the other half all your good qualities. Flaws might be being very stubborn, or you like to exaggerate stories, maybe you are impulsive or get angry very quickly. Good qualities might be that you are generous, kind, funny etc.

When we go to church, we should not expect to meet people who are similar to us. We go to church to learn about God, and we try to be better people. Church people can sometimes seem one way on a Sunday than a different way on Monday. Have you ever been like that? Is it fair to say these people are pretending to be Christian when we slip up too?

Have a discussion around that church seems like a place where everyone is good and godly where in fact people are just like you and me, with problems and flaws. Does this change your view on the church as a whole? Have a look at your paper and remember you are still loved and adored by God and a part of the church family.