

A Lesson on Hypocrisy

- Pastor & wife invited; calendar: “Dust off Bibles” (funny). Hypocrites at church; “room for one more” (funny). Pastor gives family seminars on marriage, parenting; has affair (not funny).
- What is hypocrisy, essentially? Greek, from language of theatre, stage: “behind the mask.” Actors wore masks to cover face; what word meant. So over time: “to create a public impression that’s different from the reality.” Pretend, pretension, wear mask so people see one thing, even if different from truth. So, pastor’s hosts; man thinking people in church faking it; guilty pastor, living lie. That’s hypocrisy, wearing mask. To extent, all wear masks; things we don’t want people to know about us: what we think about, whom think about, what want, feel, what lies deep within – real you. Who knows real you? Spouse, maybe, not? Who are you deep inside, and what masks do you wear to cover up what’s deep inside? When who really are and what impression want to give don’t line up – hypocrisy, wearing mask.
- Today, AW, see man wearing mask. Not any man but King David, **“man after [God’s] own heart” (1 Sam 13:14; Ac 13:22)**; God chose from among shepherds, youngest brothers, to be king; while Saul (trying to kill him) resting in cave, cuts corner of robe, conscience-stricken; fought Goliath; wrote many Psalms. King of Israel, commander-in-chief of army, spiritual leader of God’s people. Look at him now: married man, checking out woman. **11:3, “David sent someone to find out about her. The man said, ‘She is Bathsheba, the daughter of Eliam and the wife of Uriah the Hittite.’”** Married woman, wife of respected soldier. Should have ended there! How think unnamed messenger felt about his godly king, man after God’s heart, when David brought Bathsheba into his bedroom, made love. Probably thought: “Hypocrite!” Then, when finds out pregnant, concocts plan to have husband Uriah killed in battle. Even sends to Joab (commander of army) this death memo with Uriah himself! Joab follows orders. But how think he felt about com-in chief? Same as messenger; probably thought: “Hypocrite!” Were they right? Was David hypocrite? Better believe it! Put on mask of piety, godliness to hide wickedness inside.
- Before come down too hard, don’t we do same thing? Wear masks? May not want to admit, but we want world to see good person, so we cover wickedness. We wear masks, every one of us. Masks different. I: godly pastor. You: faithful church-going parishioner. When people look at us, want them to see person with pure heart; holy desires; never doubting God; eager to serve; ready to defend Word; sinful, yes, but pretty in-control re temptations; loving mother, super-mom; father, stable captain of household; perfect marriage; patient parent. Isn’t that how we want people to think about us? Always reality? We put on mask, pretend, but know what’s inside. Know what we’ve done, do, like, who are. We lust same lusts as David; plot same evil as David. Maybe haven’t acted on those lusts, plots in same way as David; not because didn’t want to. We have same evil heart, same sinful nature, and we know it, even if others only see a mask.
- So on AW, God calls us to repent: turn from sin, to God; another way to define: come before God, rip off mask, show God who we really are, lay all before him. Hymn we’ll sing: *“In hopelessness and near despair, I cry to you my Savior! My guilt is more than I can bear, I have not earned your favor. You know me as I really am: how much it truth, how much is sham”* (CWS 738:1). What means to repent, not just on AW but every day: honest with ourselves, with God, repent.
- Called David to repent. Sent prophet Nathan; told story. As tells, David’s anger builds: **“As surely as the Lord lives, the man who did this must die! He must pay for that lamb four times over, because he did such a thing and had no pity!” (2 Sam 12:5-6)**. Nathan looked David in eye: **“You are the man!” (vs. 7)**. That’s you, real you! Then David stopped pretending, took off mask. *“I confess to God Almighty, before the whole company of heaven, and to you, my brothers and sisters, that I have sinned in thought, word, and deed, by my fault, by my own fault, by my own grievous*

fault; wherefore I pray God Almighty to have mercy on me, forgive me all my sins, and bring me to everlasting life.” Nathan: **“The Lord has taken away your sin” (vs. 13).**

- Today on AW, God calls on us to stop pretending, take off mask, because only when confess depths of our heart can we truly appreciate the depths of God’s heart. Only when we rip away mask, show God who we really are can we see who God really is: the God who loves you, not mask, real you. Loves you so much, sent Son to suffer fate of damned to save bunch of hypocrites, like David, me, you. When, for sake of death & res of no one less than Son of God, God says, “I forgive you,” he’s not just forgiving silly little things you’d like people to think you’re guilty of; he’s forgiving everything.
- That right there is what AW is all about and what God wants to teach us with this lesson on hypocrisy. Not going to stand here, say you’re hypocrites. Not fair. You/we are Christian people, know our sin, know Savior. But I will say that sometimes we wear a mask, before other people, even before God. And today God urges us to come before him and strip mask away, truly repent, so that we can truly understand, appreciate the grace of God in person of Jesus Christ, whose bitter passion washes us completely clean, whose love for us drove him to hell and back to make us his redeemed, forgiven people.