

Introduction

We are in the midst of a series on the goal is love. Our text has been 1 Timothy 1:5, which says “the goal of our instruction is love from a pure heart, and a good conscience, and a sincere faith.” We began by looking at why we should have the goal of love. Love is the greatest commandment, and the value of love surpasses all the gifts. We are to earnestly or passionately desire the greater gifts, especially the gift of prophecy, but we are to pursue love.

(1 Ti 1:5) "But the goal of our instruction is love from a pure heart and a good conscience and a sincere faith."

Second, we tried to get an understanding of agape love. We found that it is sacrificial and intentional. John wrote, “we know love by this, that He laid down His life for us; and we ought to lay down our lives for the brethren.”

(1 Jn 3:16) “We know love by this, that He laid down His life for us; and we ought to lay down our lives for the brethren.”

We also looked at fifteen characteristics of love that Paul gave in 1 Corinthians 13:4-7. Love is patient. Love is kind, and is not jealous. Love does not brag and is not arrogant. Love does not act unbecomingly, and it does not seek its own. Love does not take into account a wrong suffered, but it forgives and bears with others.

(1 Co 13:4-7) “Love is patient, love is kind *and* is not jealous; love does not brag *and* is not arrogant, {5} does not act unbecomingly; it does not seek its own, is not provoked, does not take into account a wrong *suffered*, {6} does not rejoice in unrighteousness, but rejoices with the truth; {7} bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things.”

Next, we began to look at where this love needs to flow out of. Paul said, “the goal of our instruction is love from a pure heart, a good conscience, and a sincere faith.” We looked at the definition of heart. We saw that our heart represents the seat of our intellect. It represents the seat of our affections. It represents the seat of our emotions. It represents the seat of our will. It represents the character or nature of a person. It can represent the center or core of an object. We also gained an understanding of the importance of a pure heart. Paul said that his teaching came out of love from a pure heart. He had no selfish or impure motives for teaching. His teaching was motivated and flowing out of a pure heart. For us to love one another, as God wants us to love one another, we must have pure hearts.

Fourth, we looked at love from a good conscience. We learned that the conscience is an awareness of a moral standard that we have established in our own lives. A good conscience is when your actions and convictions line up with one another. A bad conscience is when your actions do not match what you believe to be right in your heart. Our consciences are tools to help us, but they are not the ultimate standard that we live by; we live by God’s word. For our consciences to work properly they must be calibrated with God’s word. Then, we must live our lives with a good conscience. If we ignore our conscience, it can become seared and there can be devastating consequences if we sear our conscience or allow it to be defiled. We need to protect our consciences and live our lives with good consciences.

This week, we are going to look at love from a sincere faith. There should be nothing pretentious, fictitious, artificial, or insincere in our faith; it should be sincere. Two of the things that turn people away from the gospel is insincerity and hypocrisy, and they are closely related.

This morning we want to look at love that comes from a sincere faith. Specifically, I want to define sincere or unfeigned faith. Then, I want us to understand the significance of a sincere faith, and then look at some exhortations for our lives.

Love from a Sincere Faith

1. Defining a sincere faith
2. Need for a sincere faith
3. Exhortations for a sincere faith

1. Defining A Sincere Faith

In the NASB and ESV, our love is to come from a “sincere faith.” The KJV renders it this way, “Now the end of the commandment is charity out of a pure heart, and of a good conscience, and of faith unfeigned.” The Greek word used for sincere or unfeigned is *anypokritos* (Strong’s G505), which means without hypocrisy, pretending, or to be sincere or unfeigned. The dictionary defines “sincere” as free of deceit, hypocrisy, or falseness, or earnest. Sincerity must be genuine or real. Our faith must be free of deceit, hypocrisy, or any falseness.

(1 Ti 1:5) "But the goal of our instruction is love from a pure heart and a good conscience and a sincere faith."

(1 Ti 1:5 KJV) "Now the end of the commandment is charity out of a pure heart, and of a good conscience, and of faith unfeigned:"

A year after I became a Christian, I became involved with Campus Crusade. There are lots of good things in Campus Crusade. The Four Spiritual Laws tract has become very famous around the world. Scores of people have been brought to the Lord through the ministry of Campus Crusade, and it is a wonderful ministry. The example that I am going to use is not intended to give a black eye to the ministry. It is intended to illustrate the point of no deceit or deception.

We were taught to go room to room in the dormitories and tell them we are doing a survey. We were to give them an article to read, and to set up a follow-up appointment, where we were to ask them a few questions. The questions we asked created a springboard for sharing the four spiritual laws with the person. I had no problem asking questions, and I had no problem with the gospel message contained in the four spiritual laws. I did have problems with telling people that I was doing a survey, when I was not actually doing a survey. We were not gathering data. We were not doing a demographic or any other type of survey. To me, it was a deceptive and worldly method of trying to create an opportunity to share the gospel. It bothered and troubled me.

Why would this bother me so much? It was because of the deception. It was because it was not truthful and honest. According to the first definition given by the dictionary, it was not sincere. This is exactly what was wrong with the technique that we were being asked to use. Let me give you another reason it bothered me, and it has to do with my testimony.

I spent much of my youth growing up in Iran. My parents took us to the protestant church service. In Iran, we did not have Baptist churches, Methodist Churches, Episcopal churches, Presbyterian churches, and all the other denominations. We had a protestant church and a catholic church. When I was twelve, we were living in Masjed-i-Sulaiman (MIS), which means mosque of Solomon. In MIS, the pastor was from the Church of England. This man was knowledgeable, but he also drank, cussed and smoked. As an unbeliever observing everything that was going on, I saw hypocrisy and it turned me off. When the pastor called me a stupid ass in Sunday School, that was the last straw for me. I told my parents that I was an atheist. I told them they could make me go to church, but they could not make me a Christian.

I went to Texas Christian University (TCU); I did not go for religious purposes, but to play golf. During my freshman year, I wrote letters to the student newspaper, the Skiff, putting down Christians that prayed at their tables before eating. In that same year, a young man attending Southwestern Baptist Seminary, spoke with me a number of times. He shared the gospel message with me, but my heart was too hardened to receive Christ at that time. I saw a love and sincerity in this man's eyes that I had not seen before. It took months before my hardened heart had softened up to the point of receiving Christ. But, it took authentic, sincere, genuine Christianity to draw me to Christ. Hypocrisy drives people away from the church and from God. Authentic, genuine, sincere Christianity softens hearts and draws people to Christ.

Jesus used two related Greek words, hupokrisis (G5272) and hypokrites (G5273), which are normally translated as hypocrisy and hypocrites. These two words were used twenty-eight times, and twenty-four of them by Jesus in the gospels. One of the things that really bothered Jesus was hypocrisy. He came down very hard on the Pharisees and Saducees for their hypocrisy. For example, listen to what Jesus says in Matthew 23:27-30.

(Mt 23:27-28) "Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For you are like whitewashed tombs which on the outside appear beautiful, but inside they are full of dead men's bones and all uncleanness. {28} Even so you too outwardly appear righteous to men, but inwardly you are full of hypocrisy and lawlessness."

He calls the scribes and Pharisees hypocrites. They gave the appearance of being righteous, but they were full of evil. He tells them they are whitewashed tombs, appearing beautiful on the outside, but inside they were full of dead men's bones and all uncleanness. They appeared righteous, but they were full of hypocrisy and lawlessness. If there was something that really bothered Jesus, it was hypocrisy. This is the thought behind Paul's writing in 1 Timothy 1:5. Our love must come out of a pure heart. Our love must come out of a good conscience. It must come out of a faith that is authentic, genuine, sincere, and without any deception or hypocrisy.

2. Need for a Sincere Faith

Now that we understand what Paul meant by the term, sincere faith, let's look at the need for a sincere faith. We will look at three clearly defined needs for a sincere faith. The first need for a sincere faith is for credibility in our ministry. The second reason for a sincere faith is boldness. The third need is for effectiveness in teaching.

A. Credibility in Ministry

The first need for a sincere faith is credibility. In 2 Corinthians 6:3-10, Paul talks about having credibility in ministry, saying that they gave no cause for offense in anything, in order that their own ministry would not be discredited. He lists a number of things that they endured, and then some qualities that they exemplified, including genuine love. His use of the phrase, *agape anupokritos*, meant that his ministry was done in genuine love, without hypocrisy. It was done with authentic and sincere love. There was nothing phony in Paul's ministry; it was done with a sincere love. The first need for a sincere faith is credibility.

(2 Cor 6:3-10) "giving no cause for offense in anything, in order that the ministry be not discredited, {4} but in everything commending ourselves as servants of God, in much endurance, in afflictions, in hardships, in distresses, {5} in beatings, in imprisonments, in tumults, in labors, in sleeplessness, in hunger, {6} in purity, in knowledge, in patience, in kindness, in the Holy Spirit, in genuine love, {7} in the word of truth, in the power of God; by the weapons of righteousness for the right hand and the left, {8} by glory and dishonor, by evil report and good report; regarded as deceivers and yet true; {9} as unknown yet well-known, as dying yet behold, we live; as punished yet not put to death, {10} as sorrowful yet always rejoicing, as poor yet making many rich, as having nothing yet possessing all things."

If we want to have an effective and credible ministry to the people around us, we must have a sincere faith. Our neighbors will be no different than I was as a young boy, they will see the hypocrisy and insincerity and close their hearts to us and our message. We will be stumbling blocks rather than effective witnesses.

Paul gives us an example of hypocrisy in Galatians 2:11-16. He writes that when Peter came to Antioch, he opposed him. Paul opposed Peter because he saw hypocrisy in what Peter was doing, and Paul wanted nothing to do with any hypocrisy. Hypocrisy was a threat to his credibility and the sincerity of his ministry. Let's pick it up in verse 11.

(Ga 2:11-16) "But when Cephas came to Antioch, I opposed him to his face, because he stood condemned. {12} For prior to the coming of certain men from James, he used to eat with the Gentiles; but when they came, he began to withdraw and hold himself aloof, fearing the party of the circumcision. {13} And the rest of the Jews joined him in hypocrisy, with the result that even Barnabas was carried away by their hypocrisy. {14} But when I saw that they were not straightforward about the truth of the gospel, I said to Cephas in the presence of all, "If you, being a Jew, live like the Gentiles and not like the Jews, how is it that you compel the Gentiles to live like Jews? {15} "We are Jews by nature, and not sinners from among the Gentiles; {16} nevertheless knowing that a man is not justified by the works of the Law but through faith in Christ Jesus, even we have believed in Christ Jesus, that we may be justified by faith in Christ, and not by the works of the Law; since by the works of the Law shall no flesh be justified."

Why did Paul oppose Peter? It was because of Peter's hypocrisy. Peter had been eating with the Gentiles, but when the Jews came around, he withdrew and associated only with the party of the circumcision. He said that when he saw that they were not straightforward about the truth of the

gospel, he confronted him. Being sincere, straightforward, and without hypocrisy was extremely important to Paul.

Why did the technique of Campus Crusade at that time bother me so much? It bothered me because it was deceptive. It bothered me because it was not straightforward. Just like Paul, having a sincere faith is something that is very dear to my heart and any ministry that I am involved in. There must be authenticity. There must be transparency and truthfulness. There must be sincerity and honesty. If there is any lack of truthfulness, authenticity, sincerity or if there is hypocrisy, we lose credibility in our witness to other people.

There are some that teach that you should confess what you are believing, even if you do not currently possess it. You confess that you are healed, even though you may not be healed yet. You confess that you have a new car, even though you do not have it yet. They are believing God to provide that healing or that car. However, if you tell someone that God has given you a new car, the person may ask to see that new car. Believing that God is going to give you a new car is not the same thing as having received that new car. Until the car is in your possession, you are believing God to give you a car. To confess that you already possess the car is not truthful or authentic, and we lose credibility. Faith is the assurance of things hoped for. This does not mean that you tell people that you already have something when you don't have it yet.

(Heb 11:1) "Now faith is the assurance of *things* hoped for, the conviction of things not seen."

One year, our family needed a van. Our family was growing larger and was not able to fit in our seven-passenger station wagon any longer. Therefore, we asked God for a van. We shopped around for a van. We also budgeted and diligently saved our money. When we had saved up \$10,000.00 we bought a used fifteen-passenger van. We had prayed for a specific fifteen passenger van, one with a tan bench in the back. Our friends, Ken and Gail Barnes, had a tan van that was missing a back bench. We wanted to give them a tan bench that matched their van. We did not need the back bench; we wanted the back area for strollers and luggage space. When we bought our used fifteen-passenger van, the dealer apologetically said the back bench was missing, but that he had a tan bench that he could give us. This was a maroon van with maroon benches, so the dealer was very apologetic. However, we were rejoicing at the goodness of the Lord and that God had answered our very specific prayer about our fifteen-passenger van. We told the dealer that the tan bench would be great. That is faith. It is believing God to do something and standing in faith until it happens.

Years later, the engine in our fifteen-passenger van blew up after Karen and the children had dropped me off at the Hartsfield International Airport in Atlanta. I was on my way to Mexico to play in a tournament. When I got to registration, they told me to call my wife. I knew it was bad news. Anytime I got an unexpected call in a foreign country, I knew something had happened. Anyway, she explained how the van had broken down in the cold rain in downtown Atlanta, and how a balloon truck had picked her up along with all eight of our children. At that time, we did not have the money to buy a new van. We were committed to being debt free, so we spent \$3,000.00 and replaced the motor. From a business perspective it did not make sense. We spent three thousand dollars to put in a new motor and the van was not worth three thousand dollars. But, we try to live by God's word and by faith. We prayed and asked God for a new van.

Listen to how God worked it out for us. First, I had two back-to-back second place finishes on the Nike Tour and had enough money to buy a new van. Second, I was paired with the Regional Sales Manager for Ford Motor Company in a pro-am in South Carolina. This was obviously no coincidence. I told the manager our story. Ford Motor Company reimbursed me for some of the money I had spent repairing our old van. Furthermore, he gave us a new van at 10% below dealer cost. And, he worked it out with a local dealer to give us a good trade-in on our existing van. I believe we paid around \$20,000.00 for a van that sold for about \$40,000.00. We prayed and God answered our prayers.

For many years, Karen and I lived and traveled in a thirty-five foot fifth-wheel camper. When we had Jennifer, our oldest child, the trailer still accommodated us. When Karen got pregnant with our second child, we asked God for a trailer with two bedrooms. A traveling evangelist named Sam Cathey came and stayed at the same campground we were at in Orlando. He had a forty-foot fifth wheel with two bedrooms. He was going to trade in his fifth wheel in the near future. He gave us the dealer number where he was going to trade it in. Karen and I prayed about purchasing that trailer. At that time, I did not have the money to buy that trailer. It was full of extras, like a generator, awning, power jacks, etc. I figured that the value of the trailer, and the extras, was probably going to cost me about \$15,000.00.

I prayed that if this was God's will that they would trade our trailer in for a difference of \$5,000.00 or less. When I spoke with the dealer, he said that he would trade for \$4,900.00. I knew that this was of the Lord. I did not have \$4,900.00, but I did have the \$1,000.00 deposit that he required, and by faith I sent it to him. I believed God would provide the rest in the next few weeks. Well, in the next two weeks, I finished second in both tournaments, and won enough money to buy the trailer, have some work done to it, and to travel on the rest of the summer. It was a step of faith to send that \$1,000.00 deposit. Faith is believing God. It is being convinced of things not seen. It is having the assurance of things hoped for. Karen and I are people of faith. But, we have a sincere faith. We do not say things that are not true or authentic. We stand in faith until we receive the answers to our prayers.

B. Boldness in Ministry

The second reason for having a sincere faith is for boldness in ministry. Look at what Paul writes in 2 Timothy 1:3-8.

(2 Ti 1:3-8) "I thank God, whom I serve with a clear conscience the way my forefathers did, as I constantly remember you in my prayers night and day, {4} longing to see you, even as I recall your tears, so that I may be filled with joy. {5} For I am mindful of the sincere faith within you, which first dwelt in your grandmother Lois, and your mother Eunice, and I am sure that it is in you as well. {6} And for this reason I remind you to kindle afresh the gift of God which is in you through the laying on of my hands. {7} For God has not given us a spirit of timidity, but of power and love and discipline. {8} Therefore do not be ashamed of the testimony of our Lord, or of me His prisoner; but join with me in suffering for the gospel according to the power of God,"

Paul reminds Timothy of the sincere faith that Timothy's mother and grandmother had. He also affirms his confidence in Timothy's sincere faith. In verse six, he says, "and for this reason I

remind you to kindle afresh the gift which is in you through the laying on of my hands.” Then, in verse eight, Paul says, ‘therefore, do not be ashamed of the testimony of our Lord.’”

What was this gift? Some commentaries say it was the gift of the Holy Spirit. I believe Timothy already had the gift of the Holy Spirit. In 1 Timothy 4:14, Paul writes about this spiritual gift that was bestowed upon him through prophetic utterance with the laying on of hands by the presbytery. Usually, the presbytery lay hands on someone to ordain them. I believe that Paul and the elders ordained Timothy for apostolic ministry. Timothy was on Paul’s apostolic team, and Paul had been mentoring and training him to do apostolic ministry.

(1 Ti 4:14) "Do not neglect the spiritual gift within you, which was bestowed upon you through prophetic utterance with the laying on of hands by the presbytery."

In the following verses, Paul exhorts Timothy to take pains with these things and to be absorbed in them, so that his progress will be evident to all. He then talks about Timothy’s teaching.

(1 Ti 4:15-16) "Take pains with these things; be absorbed in them, so that your progress may be evident to all. {16} Pay close attention to yourself and to your teaching; persevere in these things; for as you do this you will insure salvation both for yourself and for those who hear you."

In the passage in 2 Timothy, Paul talks about not being ashamed of the testimony of the Lord. It is evangelism, or the proclamation of the good news in this case. I think it is the ministry gift of apostleship found in Ephesians 4:11 that Paul is talking about. To be effective, an apostle needs to be able to flow in prophetic ministry, evangelism, teaching, and pastoral ministry. Some preachers have said that the apostle is like the thumb, it can touch and work with all the other fingers on the hand. The pointer finger is the prophet. The middle finger is the evangelist. He is in the middle of everything, stirring things up. The ring finger is the pastor. The little finger or the pinky is the teacher, because he is digging up details. The point of it is that the apostle can work with any or all of the other fingers. He flows in all the gifts. It was important for Timothy to flow in teaching, and also in evangelism. If Timothy was going to fulfill his ministry and calling, he needed to take pains with these things, and be absorbed in them.

This exhortation was prefaced by a sincere faith. Since Timothy had a sincere faith, he could boldly and confidently proclaim the gospel. There was not hypocrisy or lack of sincerity. There was no cause for offense. There was nothing that could discredit his ministry. Therefore, he could boldly proclaim the gospel.

C. Effectiveness in Teaching

The third reason for a sincere faith is for effectiveness in teaching. The effectiveness that I am talking about is not just about credibility, even though that is extremely important; it is about having a thorough understanding of the subject matter. In our text today, Paul writes that these teachers, who were teaching strange doctrines, did not understand what they were saying or the matters about which they were making confident assertions. Look at 1 Timothy 1:6-7.

(1 Ti 1:6-7) "For some men, straying from these things, have turned aside to fruitless discussion, {7} wanting to be teachers of the Law, even though they do not understand either what they are saying or the matters about which they make confident assertions."

God tells us in Psalms 111 that those who do His commandments have a good understanding. We gain understanding by doing His commandments. We gain understanding as we become doers of the word, and not just hearers of the word.

(Ps 111:10) "The fear of the LORD is the beginning of wisdom; A good understanding have all those who do His commandments; His praise endures forever."

For example, I could read a book about how to play golf. From that book, I could give somebody some theories about the golf swing. But, if I went out to play golf, I would quickly find out that all I have are a few facts about golf; I do not have an understanding of golf. I would probably not break 100. I would not be able to do anything that I could tell you about from reading the book.

In my case, I played golf for thirty-eight years. I played professional golf for twenty years. I have a thorough understanding of golf. If you want to know about bunker shots, I can tell you how to play bunker shots. I can tell you how to hit bunker shots from soft sand. I can tell you how to play bunker shots from firm or packed sand. I can tell you how to hit bunker shots from a buried lie. I can tell you how to hit short bunker shots, and long bunker shots. I can tell you about the bounce that a sand wedge has, and how you must change the bounce of the club for different conditions. I have a thorough understanding of bunker shots, and nearly every facet of golf. As a former PGA Tour player, I have a very good understanding of golf. Therefore, I can effectively teach golf.

Early in my Christian life, the Lord gave me several life verses. Looking back, I greatly appreciate that, because it has kept my life on course. One of these verses is Ezra 7:10. It says, "for Ezra had set his heart to study the law of the Lord, and to practice it, and to teach His statutes and ordinances in Israel." Notice the progression. First, Ezra read a book about golf. Next, Ezra practiced golf so that he knew how to do the things he read about. He became an excellent golfer. Once he had mastered playing golf, he began to teach what he had learned to other people that wanted to play golf.

(Ez 7:10) "For Ezra had set his heart to study the law of the LORD, and to practice it, and to teach His statutes and ordinances in Israel."

No, Ezra was not studying, practicing, and teaching golf; he was teaching the word of God. To be effective teachers, we must study, put into practice what we are studying, and then teach it. We gain understanding as we become doers of the word, and not just hearers. We become effective teachers after we have become effective practitioners of the word.

Another thing that makes us more effective as teachers is our example. Peter exhorts the elders to shepherd or feed the flock of God. He tells them to do it with a pure heart, not for the money. Then, he tells them to lead by example. We have a far greater effectiveness in teaching and leading people when we lead by example.

(1 Pe 5:2-3) "Shepherd the flock of God among you, exercising oversight not under compulsion, but voluntarily, according to the will of God; and not for sordid gain, but with eagerness; {3} nor yet as lording it over those allotted to your charge, but proving to be examples to the flock."

When Paul taught the Thessalonians about not having an entitlement mentality, he taught by word and by example. He told them that he himself did not eat anyone's bread without paying for it. He said that he paid for it by labor and hardship, working night and day so that he would not be a burden to any of them. Then, he said that they did this to offer themselves as models for them, that they could follow their example. Paul was effective because he practiced what he preached.

(2 Th 3:7-9) "For you yourselves know how you ought to follow our example, because we did not act in an undisciplined manner among you, {8} nor did we eat anyone's bread without paying for it, but with labor and hardship we kept working night and day so that we might not be a burden to any of you; {9} not because we do not have the right to this, but in order to offer ourselves as a model for you, that you might follow our example."

Notice that when we understand the matters we are teaching and are actually modeling those things, we are not only effective, we are also bold and confident. We become bolder and more confident when we have a sincere faith. We know that these things are so. Because we have good understanding and are doing it ourselves, and are bold and confident, we also have great credibility. All three of these reasons for a sincere faith work together, hand in hand.

In Matthew 7:28-29, we find that the multitudes were amazed at Jesus' teaching. Matthew gives us the reason that they were amazed. Jesus taught them as one having authority, and not as their scribes. The Pharisees and scribes were telling people to do things that they themselves were not doing. Jesus was teaching people to do things that He was doing, and He taught with authority. There is a confidence and boldness that comes when we teach with a sincere faith.

(Mt 7:28-29) "The result was that when Jesus had finished these words, the multitudes were amazed at His teaching; {29} for He was teaching them as one having authority, and not as their scribes."

3. Exhortations for a Sincere Faith

A. Beware of hypocrisy (insincere faith).

Having looked at the definition of a sincere faith, doing things without hypocrisy, and the need for a sincere faith, let's look at some exhortations. First, we must beware of hypocrisy. In Matthew 16:5-12, Jesus exhorted the disciples to beware of the leaven of the Pharisees and Sadducees. This went right over the heads of the disciples. They began to discuss the fact that they had not brought any bread. Then, he defines what the leaven of the Pharisees and Sadducees is, their teaching.

(Mt 16:5-12) "And the disciples came to the other side and had forgotten to take bread. {6} And Jesus said to them, "Watch out and beware of the leaven of the Pharisees and

Sadducees." {7} And they began to discuss among themselves, saying, "It is because we took no bread." {8} But Jesus, aware of this, said, "You men of little faith, why do you discuss among yourselves that you have no bread? {9} "Do you not yet understand or remember the five loaves of the five thousand, and how many baskets you took up? {10} "Or the seven loaves of the four thousand, and how many large baskets you took up? {11} "How is it that you do not understand that I did not speak to you concerning bread? But beware of the leaven of the Pharisees and Sadducees." {12} Then they understood that He did not say to beware of the leaven of bread, but of the teaching of the Pharisees and Sadducees."

Luke gives us more insight about what Jesus meant by the teaching of the Pharisees. In Luke 12:1, he tells them that the leaven of the Pharisees is hypocrisy.

(Lk 12:1) "Under these circumstances, after so many thousands of the multitude had gathered together that they were stepping on one another, He began saying to His disciples first of all, "Beware (prosecho, Strong's G4337) of the leaven of the Pharisees, which is hypocrisy."

In Matthew 23:28, Jesus confronted the Pharisees and Sadducees about this hypocrisy. He tells them you "outwardly appear righteous to men, but inwardly you are full of hypocrisy and lawlessness." They were telling people to do one thing and they were doing something quite different. They were trying to give the appearance of one thing, and were living differently.

(Mt 23:28) "Even so you too outwardly appear righteous to men, but inwardly you are full of hypocrisy and lawlessness."

Jesus is saying that we should beware of any hypocrisy in our own lives and ministry. We must not have any insincerity or hypocrisy. We should be watchful of hypocrisy in our own lives. We should be on guard against all hypocrisy. The Greek word is prosecho, which means to hold the mind towards, pay attention, be cautious about, apply oneself to, or beware. This implies that we never get this out of our mind, but we continually keep a guard in our minds against all hypocrisy and insincerity in our lives and ministry.

In a very familiar passage in Matthew 7 on judging, Jesus asks the following question. "And why do you look at the speck that is in your brother's eye, but do not notice the log that is in your own eye? Or, how can you say to your brother, 'Let me take the speck out of your own eye,' and behold, the log is in your own eye? You hypocrite, first take the log out of your own eye, and then you will see clearly to take the speck out of your brother's eye." Jesus has it right. We must beware of hypocrisy, and we must begin by looking at our own lives first. We must deal with the logs in our own eyes, before we start removing the splinters from our neighbors.

(Mt 7:1-5) "Do not judge lest you be judged. {2} For in the way you judge, you will be judged; and by your standard of measure, it will be measured to you. {3} And why do you look at the speck that is in your brother's eye, but do not notice the log that is in your own eye? {4} Or how can you say to your brother, 'Let me take the speck out of your eye,' and behold, the log is in your own eye? {5} You hypocrite, first take the log out of your own eye, and then you will see clearly to take the speck out of your brother's eye."

The church has lost much of its credibility with the world because of hypocrisy. We preach sexual purity, yet as much as 70% of the church is involved in pornography. We preach sexual purity, but 30% of pastors have admitted to committing adultery while in the ministry. We preach sexual purity, but 30% of singles in the church are living together while remaining unmarried. Our lives do not match our message. Jesus is telling us that our lives must match our message. We need to beware of hypocrisy in our lives. We need to be watchful and stand guard against hypocrisy.

We say that we are prolife and we preach against abortion. The statistics do not support this. According to the Center for Bio-Ethical Reform (CBR), 43% of abortions are obtained by protestants and 27% are obtained by Catholics. Together, 70% of the abortions are done by those who profess to be Christians.¹ There are over 1.2 million abortions in the U.S. every year. If roughly 70% of those are done by Protestants and Catholics, that means that 828,000 abortions are being done each year by those identifying themselves as Christians. God tells us in 2 Chronicles 7:14 that if His people will humble themselves and pray, and turn from their evil ways...

(2 Chr 7:14) "and My people who are called by My name humble themselves and pray, and seek My face and turn from their wicked ways, then I will hear from heaven, will forgive their sin, and will heal their land."

B. Put all hypocrisy aside and embrace truth. (1 Pet 2:1-3, Rom 12:9)

The first exhortation is that we must be on guard against insincerity or hypocrisy. And, when we find hypocrisy, we must put it aside or repent. We must put all hypocrisy aside. Listen to what Peter says in 1 Peter 2:1-3.

(1 Pe 2:1-3) "Therefore, putting aside all malice and all guile and hypocrisy and envy and all slander, {2} like newborn babes, long for the pure milk of the word, that by it you may grow in respect to salvation, {3} if you have tasted the kindness of the Lord."

He said that we must put aside all malice and all guile and hypocrisy and envy and all slander. We must get rid of the sin; we must put aside all hypocrisy in our lives. Our focus today is hypocrisy, but Peter mentions malice, guile, hypocrisy, envy, and all slander. We are to put aside all sin in our lives.

How do we put it aside? We confess it as sin to the Lord. Second, we repent. We stop what we are doing, and start doing what is right. We must aside sin and embrace truth. Notice that Peter said that we are to put these things aside, and like newborn babes, long for the pure milk of the word, so that we can grow in respect to salvation. We are to embrace truth. It is not just to long for the word, but to feed on the word. We must take in the word of God. We must look intently at the word and become doers of the word, not just hearers. A doer of the word has a sincere faith, a faith without hypocrisy. Throughout the New Testament we have a common message. We are to lay aside the old self and put on the new self. The old self has malice, guile, hypocrisy, envy, and slander. It has the deeds of the flesh. We are to lay aside these things and put on the new self. We

¹ <http://www.abortionno.org/abortion-facts>

are to set our minds on things above. We are to set our minds on the pure milk of the word. This is how we grow in our faith.

A few verses earlier, Peter tells us that since we have purified our souls for a sincere love of the brethren, we are to fervently love one another from the heart. This sincere love, this *anupokritos* love, this love without hypocrisy, comes from a pure heart. This purifying of our souls is necessary so that we get rid of all hypocrisy in our lives and ministries. This purifying comes about as we are on guard against it, and then lay it aside when we detect it.

(1 Pe 1:22) "Since you have in obedience to the truth purified your souls for a sincere love of the brethren, fervently love one another from the heart,"

Paul said something very similar in Ephesians 4. He said, laying aside falsehood, speak truth each one of you with his neighbor. We lay aside falsehood and speak truth. That is repentance. He continued, saying, He who steals must steal no longer, but rather he must labor, performing with his own hands what is good, so that he will have something to share with one who has need. Instead of stealing, we give. That is true repentance. We must lay aside hypocrisy and embrace truth.

(Eph 4:25–28) "Therefore, laying aside falsehood, speak truth each one of you with his neighbor, for we are members of one another.... {28} He who steals must steal no longer; but rather he must labor, performing with his own hands what is good, so that he will have something to share with one who has need."

In Colossians 3, Paul wrote to put aside anger, wrath, malice slander, and abusive speech and not to lie to one another since we have laid aside the old self with its evil practices. Then, we are to put on the new self. As those who have been chosen of God, holy and beloved, we are to put on a heart of compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness and patience. We lay aside our old self and put on the new self. We lay aside hypocrisy and other sins, and began to embrace truth and to walk in truth.

(Col 3:8–12) "But now you also, put them all aside: anger, wrath, malice, slander, *and* abusive speech from your mouth. {9} Do not lie to one another, since you laid aside the old self with its *evil* practices, {10} and have put on the new self who is being renewed to a true knowledge according to the image of the One who created him... {12} So, as those who have been chosen of God, holy and beloved, put on a heart of compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness and patience;"

In Romans 12, Paul wrote, "let love be without hypocrisy." Again, it is this term, *anupokritos*. It could also be translated, "let love be sincere." The King James translates it "let love be without dissimulation." Dissimulation means to conceal, disguise, or pretend. There cannot be any hint of falseness, deception, disguises, or hypocrisy. We are to abhor or hate what is evil and cling to what is good. We lay aside hypocrisy and embrace and cling to truth, that which is good.

(Ro 12:9 NASB) "Let love be without hypocrisy. Abhor what is evil; cling to what is good."

(Ro 12:9 KJV) "Let love be without dissimulation. Abhor that which is evil; cleave to that which is good."

In Romans 16:19-20, he wrote to be wise in what is good and innocent in what is evil, and the God of peace will soon crush Satan under your feet."

(Ro 16:19-20) "For the report of your obedience has reached to all; therefore I am rejoicing over you, but I want you to be wise in what is good, and innocent in what is evil. {20} And the God of peace will soon crush Satan under your feet. The grace of our Lord Jesus be with you."

When we live uprightly, Satan has no foothold in our lives. We have the ability to overcome evil with good by living uprightly. The Greek word used for overcome here is nikao, which comes from nike. Nike was the Greek god of victory, and the word means victorious. We are to be victorious over evil, and we are victorious by doing what is good. God will crush Satan under our feet when we abhor what is evil and cling to what is good. When we live lives that are sincere, and without hypocrisy, we will be effective and victorious in our lives and ministries.

The church today is very carnal, so we are not being victorious. Paul has given us much insight into how to be victorious over evil. In verse 9, he told us to abhor what is evil. Abhor means to hate or detest. We like our sins. We enjoy our sins. Therefore, we do not forsake what is evil. We cling to what is evil because we think it is fun. God wants us to hate or abhor what is evil. If we hate the sin, we will forsake it. When we abhor what is evil and cling to what is good, we will be victorious. We will cling to the things that we love, so we must love what is good.

Conclusion and Applications

Today, we have looked at what it means to have a sincere faith. It is a life of sincerity, integrity, and without hypocrisy. We have seen how our sincerity in our faith affects our effectiveness as believers. When we begin to do the things that we profess, we will gain greater understanding and become more effective. We will become bolder. And, our example will have a greater influence on others.

How do we get there? How do we grow in the sincerity of our faith? We must beware of insincerity or hypocrisy in our own lives and ministries. We need to start taking the logs out of our own eyes. When we find hypocrisy in our lives, we must repent. We must put all hypocrisy aside. We must renew our commitment to be doers of the word, and not merely hearers.

There may be someone today that was like me, turned off by the hypocrisy in the church. Let me encourage you to consider Jesus. He, like you, was turned off by the hypocrisy that He saw. He came down hard against hypocrisy. Let me encourage you to take your eyes off of those who have not had a sincere faith, and turn to Jesus. Jesus came and died for our sins, and was raised from the dead on the third day. He did that because He loves us. He loves you, and wants to have a relationship with you. He wants you to believe and to have eternal life. He wants you to be His representative here on earth. He wants you to be the light of the earth and a witness to those around you. If you believe that Jesus is the Son of God, died for our sins, and was raised up on the third day, and you would like to have a relationship with Him, I encourage you to receive

Him this morning. Ask Jesus to come into your life, and to forgive you of your sins. Tell Him that you are submitting and yielding your life to Him. When you do this, He promises to come into your life, and to give you eternal life.

For those that already believe, the message today is not meant to bring condemnation, but conviction. It is meant to encourage us to make a new and fresh commitment to having a sincere faith. A prayer for a sincere faith may go something like this.

Father, I confess that my words and my actions have not always lined up. They have not lined up with each other, and they have not lined up with Your word. Father, forgive me for the hypocrisy in my life. Father, help me to be a doer of Your word, and not just a hearer. Give me understanding as I obey Your commands. Cleanse my heart. Renew my mind. And help me to be a light set on the hill. Help me to become an effective witness for You. I ask these things in Jesus' name.

Closing Prayer

Father God, we want to love from a pure heart, good conscience, and a sincere faith. Help us to be constantly aware and on guard against hypocrisy in our lives. Help us to live sincere and authentic lives before You and before others. Help us to be lights that are shining in a dark world. Help us to be the salt of the earth. Help us to have be excellent representatives and ambassadors for You. Lord, help us to be humble and contrite, and to repent when our lives miss the mark. Help us to abhor evil and cling to that which is good. I pray this in Jesus' name. Amen.

Discussion Questions

- Have you ever heard someone reject Christianity because of “all the hypocrites” in church?
- What response have you found to be effective to that statement?
- What did John the Baptist tell the hypocrites to do?
- How does having a sincere faith give you a platform to speak to others?
- The Pharisees told people to do things that they were unwilling to do themselves. How does this compare with what Ezra set his heart on doing? (See Ezra 7:10.)
- Peter charged pastors not to lord over people but prove to be examples? Why is leading by example so important for pastors? What does the Greek word, tupos, translated as example mean?
- Why did Paul come down so hard on Peter in Antioch? (See Galatians 2:11-14.)
- Why is it critical to take the log out of our own eye first?
- Why is a sincere faith necessary for us to love others?

Love from a Sincere Faith (1 Ti 1:5)

Introduction (1 Ti 1:5, 1 Jn 3:16, 1 Cor 13:4–7)

1. Defining A Sincere Faith (1 Ti 1:5, Mt 23:27-28)

2. Need for a Sincere Faith

A. Credibility in Ministry (2 Cor 6:3-10, Ga 2:11-16, He 11:1)

B. Boldness in Ministry (2 Ti 1:3-8, 1 Ti 4:14-16)

C. Effectiveness in Teaching (1 Ti 1:6-7, Ps 111:10, Ez 7:10, 1 Pe 5:2-3, 2 Th 3:7-9, Mt 7:28-29)

3. Exhortations for a Sincere Faith

A. Beware of hypocrisy. (Mt 16:5-12, Lk 12:1, Mt 23:28, 7:1-5, 2 Chr 7:14)

B. Put all hypocrisy aside and embrace truth. (1 Pe 2:1-3, Ro 12:9, 1 Pe 1:22, Co 3:8-12, Eph 4:25-28, Ro 16:19-20)

Conclusion and Applications