



(Leader note: Before the message, take time to ask different people how they are doing, making note of who gives easy answers like “good, fine, ok, etc.”)

Today we’re going to talk about the biggest lie in Christianity. And I say that it’s the biggest lie, not only because of how damaging and hurtful it can be, but also because every single Christian tells it from time to time, and some Christians tell this lie every single day.

(Optional Discussion Question: So let me ask you, what are some of the big lies that you’ve found in church or told by Christians?)

So when we talk about Christians lying, or lies that are within the church and within Christians’ lives, we are reminded about the big issue of hypocrisy. A hypocrite is a person who says one thing and does another. Someone who pretends to do something or be someone that just isn’t true. In the Bible, when it talks about being a hypocrite, the original word that we translate as “hypocrite” actually had to do with actors and acting. A hypocrite is someone who puts on an act to hide who they really are. And so being a hypocrite is directly related to what the biggest lie in Christianity is. Because it’s about how most – if not all – Christians are actors, playing a part and putting on a show, for the whole world to see.

(Optional Discussion Question: What does it mean to be a hypocrite?)

There are tons of reasons why this hypocrisy is so serious, but let’s just say that hypocrisy is probably **the** biggest reason why people are turned off by the idea of “Christianity” and “church.”

Here are some quotes about hypocrisy:

“Sound protestant and evangelical doctrine is useless if it is not accompanied by a holy life. It is worse than useless: it does positive harm.”  
– J. C. Ryle

“A bad man is worse when he pretends to be a saint.” – Francis Bacon

And of course if you know DC Talk you know this quote that's actually from Brennan Manning: "The greatest single cause of atheism in the world today is Christians who acknowledge Jesus with their lips and walk out the door and deny Him by their lifestyle. That is simply what an unbelieving world finds unbelievable."

And so I say all of that to hype up what we're going to be talking about today, because I believe that if we can conquer the biggest lie in Christianity, we will be much stronger at keeping hypocrisy at bay. Furthermore, I also believe that people will want to join us in church, and we will see many come to see Jesus and actually know Him for who He really is.

*Then Jesus said, "Come to me, all of you who are weary and carry heavy burdens, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you. Let me teach you, because I am humble and gentle at heart, and you will find rest for your souls. For my yoke is easy to bear, and the burden I give you is light." (Matthew 11:28-30, NLT)*

And so, what's the biggest lie in Christianity? Some (most?) of you have already said it today:

"How are you doing?" "Good."

"How has your week been?" "Fine."

"What's going on?" "Not much."

This is the worst, most damaging, and most destructive lie that we openly allow into our churches. We tell people that we're fine, even when we're not.

We read in Matthew how Jesus tells us to come to Him when we're burdened, when our lives and hearts are heavy, and when we need help. He will give us rest and peace and ease our loads. But most of us won't even admit we need this. Most of us can't let ourselves be honest enough to tell God and the people around us the truth.

"How was your week?" "Actually, it was pretty tough."

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