

Reading: Matthew 23:23-33

***“First clean the inside of the cup and dish,
and then the outside also will be clean” (Mt 23:26)***

Hypocrisy means contradiction. That is, the difference between thoughts and words— keeping something in mind and saying something else. It is also a contradiction between words and deeds (Mt 23:2,3); a difference between life inside home and outside. There are some who behave themselves excellently outside, but their behaviour at home will be awful. They will be like angels on Sundays and the devil during weekdays.

How does hypocrisy arise? Many think that it is alright to be hypocritical. They find fault with others and justify themselves (Mt 7:4,5). One reason is that they simply ‘act’ desiring public applause (Mt 23:27,28). Another reason is that they give undue emphasis to the external things rather than the inward life (Mt 23:25,26). Covetousness (Ezek 33:31) and emphasizing minor things rather than the fundamentals are also the other reasons (Mt 23:24). Jesus did not say, “Woe unto you, adulterers...thieves...murderers...,” but He repeatedly pronounced, “Woe unto you, hypocrites.” Hypocrisy is that grave a sin.

Hypocrisy is mostly seen in spiritual matters. Some praise and worship God with their mouths, but their hearts are not one with Him (Mt 15:7-9). They will be eager to listen to His Word but they do not do what it says (Ezek 33:31,32). Some will be preaching to others only (Rom 2:21-23; Psa 50:16). These people will be active in even religious exercises such as almsgiving, praying in a flowery language and fasting (Mt 6:2,5,16). These hypocrites will act as though they are nice to others but in their hearts they will set traps for them.

The Bible teaches that the hope and happiness of hypocrites will not last long but will perish soon (Job 8:13-15). If God says “Woe” to the hypocrites, we can guess their future. The first sin judged in the infant Church was hypocrisy (Acts 5:1-11).

Hypocrisy retards spiritual growth (1 Pet 2:1-3). God’s children should never give place to hypocrisy. God knows every one of our thoughts, actions and whereabouts (Psa 139). The fear that we would have to stand in front of God’s judgment seat should never leave us (2 Cor 5:10-12).

*All light is no light;
for noblemen the light of truth is the true light!*
(Thiruvalluvar, an ancient Tamil poet)

O Lord, our God, from whom nothing is hidden,

We worship You as the One who searches the minds and hearts. Your eyes are running to and fro throughout the whole earth to show Yourself mighty on behalf of those whose heart is perfect towards You. Your eyes are like a flame of fire. We thank You that Your seven eyes rejoice to see our ways when they are straight and not crooked. You are the Father of Lights and Your Son is the Light of the World. We thank You for Your Word which is light to our path and lamp to our feet.

Help us, O God, to walk in the light as You are in the light. How foolish we are, O Lord, that we try to hide ourselves from Your all-seeing eyes! We realize now that most of the curses in our lives are due to our hypocrisy. Hypocrisy has become the way of life for us. Grant us, O Lord, repentance from this horrible sin. May Your Holy Spirit work deeply in our hearts so we may hate hypocrisy with perfect hatred. We cannot help ourselves because we are born-hypocrites. Forgive us and cleanse us by the blood of Your dear Son! Let there be no more compromise in our lives.

Dear Father, turn Your searchlight into the dark chambers of our life. Let our deeds agree with our words. Let the words of our mouth and the meditation of our heart be acceptable and pleasing in Your sight. We cannot hide ourselves from You because even darkness is light to You. Everything is naked before You.

Your Word says that You would judge the secrets of men by Jesus Christ on the Day of Reckoning. Let our thoughts, words and deeds be influenced by this realisation. Let truthfulness, honesty, sincerity and integrity rule our lives. We believe that You are delivering us right now from the spirit of hypocrisy. We decide that we would not limp between two opinions any longer. Always yes to You, and always no to Satan!

Dear Lord, give us backbone to say no to the devil's majority, especially in our workplace and the society all around us. Strengthen our muscles to swim against the tide. Help us accept the losses we incur due to our stand for righteousness. We pray especially for our sons and daughters that they might not buckle under peer pressure.

In the Name of Jesus who is the Truth, Amen!

*(Heb 4:13; Prov 28:13; Psa 19:14; 119:105; Heb 4:13; Rom 2:16; 8:27; Mt 23:23-33; 1 Jn 1:5,6,7;
2 Chr 16:9; Rev 1:14; 5:6; Js 1:17; Jn 8:12; Zech 4:10; 1 Ki 18:21)*