

## Take Off That Mask

**Matthew 7:15** – NKJV - You Will Know Them by Their Fruits

<sup>15</sup>“Beware of false prophets, who come to you in sheep’s clothing, but inwardly they are ravenous wolves.

### Inwardly

- Who they really are...
- They say they are one thing but,
- They turn out to be something else.

There is a danger in aligning yourself with someone who is not who they say they are.

**Jesus said watch out** for these people because who they really are is something far different then who they appear to be.

- I understand that a sheep is a harmless animal.
- They do not prey on other animals.
- They eat grass and not meat.
- **A wolf** on the other hand is something that kills and eats whatever it can, whenever it can.
- **The wolf** is obviously something that is very dangerous.

**You can be injured very quickly** when you hang around people who appear to be one thing but turn out to be something far different.

**Jesus told us** that there are some people, who appear to be very religious,

- They look like they are **one of the sheep**.
- They dress the part
- They look the part
- They may even sound like a sheep.

But given time and opportunity - - -

**WHO they really are** will be revealed and you may not like what you see.

## Warning Against the Teachers of the Law

**Mark 12:38-40** – NIV - <sup>38</sup> As he taught, **Jesus said**, “Watch out for the teachers of the law. They like to walk around in flowing robes and be greeted with respect in the marketplaces,  
<sup>39</sup> and have the most important seats in the synagogues and the places of honor at banquets.  
<sup>40</sup> They devour widows’ houses and for a show make lengthy prayers. These men will be punished most severely.”

*When you read the Gospels, you will find a common thread with Jesus.*

He **does not like** people who say they are one thing but are actually something else.

**Jesus didn’t like people who wore masks.**

- Here’s why - - -
- People who wear masks **create confusion** in the Church.
- They **misrepresent to the world** who Jesus is and **what living for Him is really all about**.

**This confusion causes** those people who need salvation

- ***To be turned away from the Church***
- Because they find there **something worse** than their own situation.
- **Hypocrisy!!!!!!!!!!!!**

Jesus told a parable one day... He said....

**Luke 6:41-42** - NIV

<sup>41</sup> “Why do you look at the **speck of sawdust** in your brother’s eye and pay no attention to the **plank in your own eye?**

<sup>42</sup> How can you say to your brother, ‘Brother, let me take the speck out of your eye,’ when **you yourself fail to see** the plank in your own eye? **You hypocrite,** first take the plank out of your eye, and then you will see clearly to remove the speck from your brother’s eye.

Can you imagine a person walking around with a beam in their eye - trying to help other people get the little splinters out that they may have.

***I hear Jesus saying to us today.***

- **Take off the mask.**
- Stop pretending to be something that ***you are not***.
- It is better to be real.
- It is better to be honest.

This is why you hear **Jesus** over and over telling people to **not judge** one another.

- He knew that if people in the church were to **judge one another**
- The person being judged **may start acting like nothing was wrong**
- To keep other people from judging them.

Listen if we act like nothing is wrong, **we'll never get healed**.

- If we pretend like everything is honky dory in our lives - - -
- When really we need the church to **pray for us and support us**
- We will never be **benefitted by the love of the family of God**.

Can I say today, "***There is a beauty in being who you really are.***"?

- When you are **genuine**, God can use you!!!!!!!!!!!!
- If ***who you really are*** would prevent Him from using you - - -
- He now can work on you and heal you to the point that **He can then use you**.

Hear me... ***your life doesn't have to be perfect for God to use you.***

- It just has to be honest.
- It just has to be real.

When I read the scriptures, I find **God using** some pretty savory individuals.

- Some of them are liars - Some of them thieves - Some were drunks - Some adulterers - Some murderers.

One man who God used to write most of the New Testament had actually been a murderer and torturer of **Christian men, women and children**.

- I'm not sure it gets any worse than that.
- But in the day that **Paul had a coming to God moment** where he took off his mask of religious piety, God said, "Now I can use him."

You see, at some point it's time to take off the suit and tie and **show them who Jesus really is**.

- Or maybe for you it's not a suit and tie.
- Maybe it's your pride.
- Or maybe it's your pain.
- Or your prosperity.
- Or your education.

At some point it's time to **take off the mask** that the real you hides behind **so the Holy Spirit can heal you** so you can show your family and your neighbors **who Jesus Christ really is!**

- I don't know about you, but I want to be real.
- I want to be honest with God and with you.

### **1 Timothy 3:16 - NKJV**

<sup>16</sup> And without controversy **great is the mystery of godliness:**  
God was **manifested** in the flesh,  
**Justified** in the Spirit,  
**Seen by** angels,  
**Preached among** the Gentiles,  
**Believed on** in the world,  
**Received up** in glory.

I don't know if everybody knows this or not, but 1 Timothy 3:16 tells us - - -

- The Great God of the Universe - - -
- Stepped down off of the throne of Heaven - - -
- Took off **His royal robes**
- And clothed Himself in the weakness of human flesh
- So He could reach people!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!1

**We want this church to be approachable.**

We want to be accessible to anyone who would walk through our doors.

**Masks you see come in many forms.**

Jesus mentioned the scribes and their long clothing...

- They loved to dress up and ***put on the image of religion***.
- They thought what they wore ***made them Holy***.
- They thought how they looked ***told people who they were***.

**Inwardly Jesus said**, “they devour widows houses”, but ***outwardly they pretended to represent*** the Kingdom of God.

***That’s what I love about Jesus:***

- I ***don’t*** have to ***put on some mask*** in order to be loved by Him.
- ***He loves me*** just the way I am.
- ***He died for me*** when I was at my worst.
- ***He cared for me*** when what I looked like and what I acted like ***was completely reprehensible to Him***.

***That’s why I love Him - - -***

- You ***don’t*** have to put on some act ***to be accepted by Him***.
- You ***don’t*** have to wear a mask for ***Him to love you or use you***.
- You just have to be real.
- You just have to be honest.

**You see if we are not real, we never will reach people with the love of Jesus.**

- You can’t wear pride and show people Jesus

And I’ll tell you something else,

- you can’t wear a mask that Looks Like Jesus - - -
- And pretends to represent Him
- ***If you really don’t*** and I’ll tell you why...

***People’s needs are too great.***

## Take Off That Mask

- **A false** image of God **cannot heal** the broken hearted.
- **A fake persona that tries to be religious** - - -
- **Cannot minister** to people whose lives are falling apart.

## If we're going to be used to reach this world the way Jesus intended for us to reach it

- We are going to have to **take off the masks**
- **Be vulnerable** **to the criticisms** of those who would judge us.

I'm putting down the piety and picking up the cross that Jesus died on - - -

- So I can show the people I love how much He loves them.
- It's time **to be real**.
- It's time **to be honest**.

I've stopped acting the way I think people expect me to act - - -

- I've **started** loving people the way I know He wants me to love them.

Can I say today, "**It's important** **to be real**."?"

- It's ok to **be common**
- It's ok to **authentic**.
- It's ok to **Take Off That Mask**.
- It's ok to be someone who people can relate to.
- If they cannot relate to us **how will they hear us** when we tell them about our God.

## CLOSE:

I know today that **you have loved ones** you would really like to introduce to Jesus.

I know today that **there are people in your family** that you would like to see come to church.

**The people around us** need to feel what we experience when we come together on a Sunday morning like this.

I wonder today if you would consider spending some time this week –

- With **someone you know and love** - - -
- Inviting them to **be your guest** here next week.
- Let's **take off whatever MASK** it is - - -
- That is **separating us** from the ones that we love.
- Let's show them that **we love them**.
- Let's show them that **we care about them**.
- Let's show them **Jesus**.

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**If we're going to be used to reach this world the way Jesus intended for us to reach it**

We are going to have to take off the masks!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!