

Lifestyle Matters
Part II
Exodus 34:10-28
October 14, 2007
FBC Waynesboro

Follow the flow of the ministry of Jesus and you will find that He found one thing more distasteful and despicable than all other things: hypocrisy. We are studying the Gospel of Luke in our Sunday School Class and we have come to the opening verses of Luke 12. I want you to hear what Jesus says to His followers then and His followers now, Luke 12:1-3. He does not say that hypocrisy is like leaven; He says that hypocrisy is leaven. Now you and I know two things about leaven: literally it is what we know as yeast and figuratively it was seen as symbol of evil. Its symbolic nature was due to two characteristics of yeast: first, it was hidden; it does its work in a way that nobody can see just as hypocrisy can be hidden from the eyes of the vast majority of people. Second, it worked secretly and slowly. Little by little the leaven caused the dough to rise. Even so hypocrisy worked little by little, slowly by slowly with its effect on the person and persons not being known until it is too late. In the case of dough, until it is fully risen and ready for baking and in the case of persons until it is fully formed and the person faces judgment.

Now Jesus is not just clear about how dreadfully dangerous and deadly is hypocrisy, but also absolutely clear about what it is. The word itself points in two directions at once. First, it points to the stage where actors and actresses performed different roles in a single play by donning different masks. In other words, the same person could play three or four different parts in the same play on the same stage by changing masks. So, hypocrisy is that person who becomes who he or she needs to be in order to belong to whatever group he or she is with at the time. So we have our church mask, our community mask, our culture mask, our party crowd mask etc. Second, it points to the judgment seat of God. The word

itself means literally “under judgment.” In other words, any person whose life is lived like this is already under the judgment of God. They do not have to stay there, but that is where they are so long as that is the way they are living. Jesus makes it so powerfully plain because He detests it so and wants to deliver us from it. Satan loves hypocrisy and what he loves most is that group in the church who can say with an affront to holiness and applauding hallelujah, “shoot, we are all hypocrites.” Well, if that is what we are, let’s fold up the tent. Let’s go party. Because if that is true, then the whole thing is a big game anyway.

If you keep reading in Luke 12 you will see that Jesus addresses three areas of life where hypocrisy makes its presence most powerfully plain and it is in these three areas that we must guard our hearts and our lives: the worship of God, 12:4-7; the witness to the world, 12:8-12 and our way of life 12:13-34. Does that sound familiar? They are the same three realities that God addresses in Exodus 34. The only difference is that in the logic of the Greek what is first is first: the worship of God; and in the poetry of the Hebrew what is first is put second as that which is central giving form and focus to what is on each side.

We looked last week at our witness to the world. We hear God saying in this text that we must not compromise with a pagan culture on the issues of our faith, our fellowship, and our family. Let me remind you once again that the pagan culture to which God is referring in those days had three chief characteristics: first, it was geared to the individual so as to make “worship” convenient to the individual and it was focused on the individual’s relationship with his or her “god.” Second, it was structured so as to satisfy what were the perceived needs of human which were determined to be personal pleasure and happiness so that the third thrust of the pagan religion was to do what was necessary to enhance personal pleasure and human happiness particularly as that was manifest sensually and sexually.

Now we turn today to what is central and critical. NOTE TO THE READER: IF YOU ARE READING THIS MANUSCRIPT I REFER YOU NOW TO THE PART I OF “LIFESTYLE MATTERS” WHERE YOU NEED TO PICK UP READING IN THE SECOND PART ON THE WORSHIP OF GOD.