

What Must I Do To Be Saved?

- BELIEVE – ACTS 16:31
- REPENT – ACTS 17:30; LUKE 13:3
- CONFESS – ROMANS 10:10; I TIMOTHY 6:12
- BE BAPTIZED – ACTS 2:38; MARK 16:16
- BE FAITHFUL – REVELATION 2:10

PRAYER LIST: Prayers for continued success of Brandon's kidney operation and Karen Ault's recovery from surgery. Prayers for Nancy Abel, Alta Byrne, Bill Fairbanks, Denise Collins, John & Pat Savel, Gary Henry, Jerry Farley, Wayne Walker, Ethan Longhenry, Sarah Purrenhage, Mark Fox, and the people of Ukraine.

North Ridgeville church of Christ
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Times for Meeting

Lord's Day	9:30 AM	Bible Study (all ages)
	10:30 AM	Worship
Wednesday	7:00 PM	Bible Study (all ages)

Elders
Bruce Dean
Mark Ullman

Evangelist
Steven Wallace

THE NORTH RIDGEVILLE CHURCH OF CHRIST

“But be ye doers of the word, and not hearers only,
deceiving your own selves.” James 1:22

December 04, 2022

“Nor Will I Go In With Hypocrites”

Steven J. Wallace

“I have not sat with idolatrous mortals, Nor will I go in with hypocrites”
(Psa. 26:4).¹

That there have always been hypocrites is not contestable. A hypocrite is an actor who portrays himself to be something when he is something else. The word translated as “hypocrite” in our passage describes those who have secret and concealed motives. When Jesus charged some as being hypocrites in the New Testament, he was charging them with being pretenders and stage players. The hypocrite is not genuine. He is a phony who masquerades as something he is not. He might parade love while being unlovely. He is dishonest. His true character is shrouded by his disguise. What you frequently see is not what you get!

We find hypocrisy on many different fronts. It runs through politics, business, and even faith. Some use it as an excuse to abandon the worship of the church and their service to God by saying, “There are too many hypocrites in the church!” Excuse-makers and hypocrites are frequently found in the same crowd and both sins likely lodge themselves in the same mind. The hypocrite acts as if he does right when he does not. The excuse-maker acts like he *would* do right if others were not actors! Hence they excuse themselves from their

duty to God by asserting: “There are too many hypocrites in the church.” Will the one who gives up on God because of the bad conduct of men stop going to their job when hypocrisy surfaces there? Certainly not! They will continue to go because they want to get paid. Will they stop listening to music, watching movies, and dining at restaurants where hypocrites dine? Hollywood and the music industry are filled with hypocrites but it doesn’t stop people from listening to music or watching their movies. Some give up on God, not because of God, but because of what a man has done. Does that make any sense?

When will we learn that we cannot hold God accountable for the action of those who claim to be His worshipers? When will we see that making this excuse is itself hypocritical and is merely playing on the stage of piety but, when unmasked is simply making an idol of self-will? Hypocrisy is rampant with all kinds of sins and sinners. I’ve found those who teach about love behave very unlovingly. Have we not seen unfaithful people who want people to be faithful to them, cheaters who want to win honest deals, slanderers who hate to be gossiped about, law-enforcers who are law-breakers, and artists against violence glorify violence in the theater? But what happens to the artist who makes millions playing a serial killer who speaks out against murder? What happens? Nothing. They are typically given a pass by the world, and when this happens hypocrites become fearless (Isa. 33:14). But if a person of faith falls into sin, the world will bury him as a sinner, a hypocrite, a scoundrel. The world tolerates hypocrisy in the world, just not in faith. If you doubt that, how many times have you heard the apostle Thomas labeled as “doubting Thomas”? Have you ever had doubts? Why is Simon referred to as “Simon the sorcerer” when he repented and was baptized (Acts 8:13, 24)? Why does no one refer to him as “Simon the penitent one”? The world glorifies sin and yet thunders against saints who fall into it.

Unlike most other communities, the church of Christ deals with hypocrisy with the call to “repent or perish.” The Lord’s church disciplines disorderly saints so as to save them while giving care to self-examination (2 Thess. 3:6-14; Gal. 6:1). We are to reach toward the grounds of forgiveness (2 Cor. 2:10; Matt. 6:14, 15).

No person exposed the sin of hypocrisy more than our Lord (Lk. 12:56; Mk. 7:6, 7; Matt. 22:15ff; 23:1ff; etc.). Yet He died for this sin also. His apostles dealt with hypocrisy very straightforwardly. When Peter and Barnabas were caught up in hypocrisy, Paul withstood them to their face (Gal. 2:11-14). Paul reminded the Jews that the hypocrite falls in the judgment of God (Rom. 2:3). When Paul fell into the peril of *false brethren*, he did not blame God or shirk his duties but maintained a deep concern for the churches (2 Cor. 11:26, 28). Avoiding hypocrisy begins with adding *virtue* to *faith* (2 Pet. 1:5).

In Psalm 26, David is not venting his anger with God or refusing to “go to worship” because there were hypocrites. Rather he was speaking of the *assembly* of *evildoers* within his community—probably even at the state level. He had no desire to partake of their deeds. Psalm 1:1, “Blessed is the man who walks not in the counsel of the ungodly, Nor stands in the path of sinners, Nor sits in the seat of the scornful.”

Being surrounded by unprincipled people didn’t cause David to lose his integrity or shrink back from worshipping God, but it had the opposite effect of wanting to draw nearer to the Lord. He continued:

“I will wash my hands in innocence; **So I will go about Your altar, O LORD**, That I may proclaim with the voice of thanksgiving, And tell of all Your wondrous works. LORD, **I have loved the habitation of Your house, And the place where Your glory dwells**” (Psa. 26:6-8, emp. added).

Here now lies the sad irony. Those who refuse to worship God *today* because “there are too many hypocrites in the church” will spend an *eternity* in hell with them. Let’s reflect on the closing words of David’s twenty-sixth Psalm:

“Do not gather my soul with sinners, Nor my life with bloodthirsty men, In whose hands *is* a sinister scheme, And whose right hand is full of bribes. But as for me, I will walk in my integrity; Redeem me and be merciful to me. My foot stands in an even place; **In the congregations I will bless the LORD**” (Psa. 26:9-12, emp. added, SJW).

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