

A Whitewashed Tomb

On the French Riviera, it is such an important status symbol to have a balcony on an apartment that it is quite common to see balconies painted on the walls of apartment houses. People even paint wet laundry hanging on a clothesline just to give it a touch of reality! This sounds harmless, but there is a deeper spiritual issue to be examined.

Jesus said, *"Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! for ye are like unto whited sepulchres, which indeed appear beautiful outward, but are within full of dead men's bones, and of all uncleanness. Even so ye also outwardly appear righteous unto men, but within ye are full of hypocrisy and iniquity"* (Matthew 23:27-28). A hypocrite is basically someone who pretends to be something other than what they really are. A couple of examples of hypocrisy would be Ananias and Sapphira, who pretended to appear more generous than they really were (Acts 5:1-10), and Peter, who ate with the Gentiles but shunned them when the Jews arrived (Galatians 2:11-14).

Paul condemned hypocrisy too. Romans 2:1 says, *"Therefore thou art inexcusable, O man, whosoever thou art that judgest: for wherein thou judgest another, thou condemnest thyself; for thou that judgest doest the same things."* God wants genuineness and sincerity, not people who "play" a part. He does not want people who *"profess that they know God; but in works they deny him"* (Titus 1:16). We cannot be spiritual hypocrites "painted" to appear like a Christian! The punishment of hypocrisy is spiritual death and eternal condemnation (Job 8:13-15; Psalm 101:7; Matthew 24:50-51; Romans 1:18). Do not follow this outcome; repent of hypocrisy if you have it in your life.

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