

This church is not full of hypocrites.

There's always room for more.

Romans 3:10 "No one is righteous - not even one"

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There's room for more hypocrites in church.

Christians are hypocrites, aren't they? Films and novels regularly portray Christians as 'moralists' who can't stick to their morals.

The other night, a documentary on TV about American Christianity featured a powerful preacher called Ted Haggard speaking about his faith. He was famous in the 1990's for building one of America's largest churches – it currently has over 14,000 members.

Today Ted Haggard is famous for being exposed as a hypocrite and forced to step down from leadership. He was exposed by the male prostitute he regularly visited. The prostitute saw the Christian leader denouncing on television the very things he was doing secretly and, unable to bear the hypocrisy, he spoke out.

Like a lot of Australians today, Jesus had a big beef with religious hypocrisy. It was one of the great criticisms he had with the religious leaders. They were "white washed tombs"; clean on the outside, but rotting inside. They were nothing but "actors" – which is what the word hypocrite originally meant.

Mind you, God doesn't see hypocrisy as just a problem for Jewish leaders in the First Century or American Christians in the Twenty-First. From his point of view, we've all got a problem, both the religious and the non-religious. The Bible says: '*There is not one person who is righteous – not even one.*' We might think we're basically good, but we repeatedly fall short of God's high standard, despite our best efforts.

Here's the good news: Jesus came to save hypocrites. He said: "*Those who are well have no need of a doctor, but only those who are sick. I came not to call the righteous, but sinners.*"

Yes Christians are hypocrites – as all people are. They struggle, with God's help, to live by his standard. The greatest error Pastor Ted Haggard made wasn't his sexual habits, as wrong as they were. It was pretending he didn't have a problem. Jesus invites us to admit we've got a problem, and have it completely forgiven.

Prayer: Father God, save me from the hypocrisy of thinking I'm good and save me by the death of Jesus on the cross. AMEN