

Coach House Church **BEACONS**

WHO IS BEHIND THE MASK?

17TH JULY 2020

Ok...we've all seen the Marvel and DC Comic characters, whether it in the comics or on the TV, or even more likely on the big screen adaptations that have been so much part of our lives in recent years.

Whether it be Batman, Iron Man, Black Panther, Antman or Spiderman – they all have something in common ... they all hide their true identities behind a mask.

Why? Because they don't want their ordinary lives to be uncovered.

I often wonder when these people actually sleep, as it seems they hold down permanent jobs by day and are then amazing superheroes by night ... But I digress.

It's me, Andy again and I want us to consider something as we go through this Beacon together.

How real am I prepared to be to those around me. Will I be me or do I wear a mask to hide who I really am, or how I really feel.

In a few days we will all have to wear masks when we visit the shops. It seems that it we have spent ages trying to dissuade people from covering their faces when going into shops (usually for identification purposes) and now all of a sudden, we are told that we must cover our faces or face a fine.

Now I'm not against wearing a mask. If this is the guideline to keep people safer in these days, then a mask it will be.

I'm more concerned with the masks we put on in other situations.

Now let's be honest. We have all done the following or similar.

Someone passes us in church and asks how we are. Our response is usually 'I'm fine – how are you'

The problem most times is that this is avoid and deflect tactics. I'm fine when we are far from it and how are you, to deflect the attention away from our ourselves. We even try it with God.

He knows everything we do and think before we even speak or act, so why do we pretend to be OK , when He knows we are not.

It seems to be a human trait that is in built into us. We really dislike being frail and having our feelings exposed in front of others. A bit like our superheroes wanting to keep their true identities to themselves – or in Batman's case, the trusty butler! Maybe sometimes it is because we fear the outcome of something, so we hide the truth.

Abraham, tried to protect himself from being killed by jealous Egyptians, by claiming that his wife Sarah - was his sister But this created a whole load of problems as Pharaoh took her for his wife thinking she was not spoken for! This isn't even the first instance of Abraham using this trick!

Later Abrahams son, Isaac, used the same ruse, when he claimed that his wife Rebecca was his sister, so that The Philistines would not kill him in order to have Rebecca.

Abimelech, the King of the Philistines found out and was angry because telling him this lie meant as his men would have made choices concerning her that would have angered God.

All these stories occur in the book of Genesis in the Bible, and they tell us that we will do anything to protect ourselves – even at the expense of those closest to us. As we follow the Old Testament through, we find many instances of people acting one way outwardly but inside they are someone or something else, and the outward appearance is a sham in order to deceive. God called out his people so many times for having the wrong motives in their actions.

In Isaiah 29 the prophet berates Gods people for their actions – even when they think all is OK!

They honour me with their lips – but their hearts are far away from me
Their worship of me is nothing but man-made rules learned off by heart – some renditions say their worship is a farse!

By the time that Jesus appears in Gods story, we have amazing instances of Jesus seeing the truth and gently leading people to be honest in their appraisals of themselves and to put things that are wrong right.

It was almost as if wearing a mask makes no difference with Jesus ... he sees straight through it and knows our hearts.

Why then do we continue to hide the truth from ourselves and others? Sometimes we are ashamed of what we have done, sometimes we are covering up sin in our lives, and sometimes it is because we have done it for so long it has become second nature and we do it without even thinking.

In Paul the Apostles letter to the Roman Christians he says this
Romans 12 v 2 – 4

***Don't copy the behaviour and customs of this world, but let God transform you into a new person by changing the way you think. Then you will learn to know God's will for you, which is good and pleasing and perfect.
Because of the privilege and authority God has given me, I give each of you this warning: Don't think you are better than you really are. Be honest in your evaluation of yourselves, measuring yourselves by the faith God has given us. Just as our bodies have many parts and each part has a special function, so it is with Christ's body. We are many parts of one body, and we all belong to each other.***

So, what can we pick out from this?

Firstly, the behaviour of this world we live in doesn't have it right! The customs of this world are not right – and bear in mind that lots of today's cultural ideas are firmly placed from historical viewpoints. We need to be different. And our thinking needs to be changed – radically....because God has a better planand it is perfect and good for us But we need to take stock of who we really are and apply a good long hard evaluation of ourselves, in light of the understanding that God gives us about ourselves.

When we measure our lives against that of Jesus, we cannot help to see how far away from perfect we actually are! But this is what we are told to do! Why? Because if we don't then we will fail to see that we are in a precarious position that only God can rescue us from.

If we don't see ourselves as we really are, then we will certainly miss the potential that God has for our lives.

The body has many parts and the functions are necessary and work together for the good of each other. Wouldn't it be great to know your true worth and place?

This is all part of Gods plan for us, but it requires us to lower the mask, to come out of hiding and face the truth.

It is so refreshing to have honesty between us and to allow ourselves to be humble and sometimes exposed in order for God to do a greater work in and through us.

There are so many instances in the bible of people hiding, making excuses, pretending to be something they were not, and in nearly every instance the truth was painfully revealed.

God does not want us to learn the hard way – He has made the way very clear and has covered every provision to remove all the obstacles. We just have to be honest with who we really are and acknowledge that God alone is our only hope.

In a few days' time we are urged to put on protective masks, hopefully as a temporary measure in a troubled time.

God would urge us to remove the masks we have been wearing for a long time, ones that we have been so comfortable we don't even realise we are wearing them – the masks that hide the truth from others and ourselves – but never from God.

Let us be honest in our evaluation of ourselves and
brave enough to allow God to change
us for ever.



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