

“Big Brother” (Game Time! – Pt. 2)
(Luke 12:1-3)

- **Big Brother’s Watching**

- Imagine being one of 16 strangers stuck inside a house together for 100 days on national TV. The house is rigged with cameras and mics that record *every move, every word*. (By the way, there’s only one bathroom.) Not only does the footage get edited into 3 episodes per week, but the 24/7 live feed gets streamed online for the world to see. Constants compete in grueling mental and physical challenges to determine who’s safe from elimination and who’s in danger of being “evicted,” until only 2 remain, and the previous houseguests vote on who wins the \$750K prize. Maybe it’s because I’m an introvert, but of all the competition shows we’re looking at, *this to me seems like the last one I’d want to be on! How about you?*
- **Season 28 of Big Brother premiered this week on CBS!** The first season aired in the U.S. way back in 2000. It’s part-psychological experiment, part-reality TV, part-competition show, and the cameras are always on. It might sound fun to be on TV and compete in a game in someone else’s house for a couple months—but contestants often talk about how *psychologically intense* the experience is. 24/7 surveillance with the whole world watching, locked-in with fierce, often treacherous competitors, disconnection from life outside—it creates overwhelming anxiety, paranoia, and *tons of drama*. And of course, a lot of people think it makes for great TV!
- Isn’t it fascinating to think about how humans are wired and how people behave when they’re put in different environments? On the one hand, too much isolation can be *deeply damaging*—think about solitary confinement—but on the other hand, completely removing privacy and personal space can be just as harmful. Both these extremes are abused in prisons, concentration camps—and, I guess, now reality TV, go figure! Too much scrutiny, too much time in the spotlight can be destructive, and so can too much isolation. We all need a balance of *public* and *private*. And I think most people would agree that the mark of a healthy, mature person, the measure of true character, is having a consistency between the public

self and private self. “Integrity” is this idea that we would have the same values, act the same way, whether *everybody is watching*, or *nobody is watching*. *Who am I, really, when no one is watching?* That’s often the biggest test. And maybe that’s why we can’t stop watching shows like *Big Brother*.

- Still, at the end of the day, it’s all a game! It’s entertainment. Everyone volunteered up for it, and when it’s over, they win some cash and go home. What about when the stakes are higher? What about when it’s real life? *Big Brother* might be a tough, but I can’t think of any higher stakes than what Jesus faced when He walked the earth and carried out His mission. Through all that pressure, He taught His disciples some indispensable truths that we need to take hold of if we’re going to follow Him. So, as we get ready to open up Luke 12, *let’s pray*.

- **Jesus’ Take on Hypocrisy**

- This moment comes at the halfway point of the Gospel story. Things are *getting real* for Jesus and the disciples. He’s gone through testing in the wilderness, started His public ministry, called the first disciples, performed mind-blowing miracles, shown His glory on the mount of Transfiguration, confronted the religious leaders with their hypocrisy. At this point, Jesus cannot escape the public eye—He has trouble even finding a place to get away from the crowds. The pharisees are now watching *every move* and measuring *every word* to condemn Him. Talk about *Big Brother watching!* But Jesus knows what’s in their hearts, and He knows they’ve got *nothing on Him*. In Luke 12:1-3, He makes it a teaching moment for His disciples. He turns the tables and points the microscope at His accusers:

“Meanwhile, when a crowd of many thousands had gathered, so that they were trampling on one another, Jesus began to speak first to his disciples, saying: ‘Be on your guard against the yeast of the Pharisees, which is hypocrisy. There is nothing concealed that will not be disclosed, or hidden that will not be made known. What you have said in the dark will be heard in the daylight, and what you have whispered in the ear in the inner rooms will be proclaimed from the roofs.’”

- This whole passage comes together when you unpack this one word: *hypocrisy*. When we talk about a *hypocrite* we usually mean someone who says one thing but

does another. But in Jesus' day this word had a much more potent meaning: it literally referred to *an actor on a stage*, someone who *wears a mask*. Think about that. Greco-Roman theater usually involved just a few spoken-part actors who wore large, carefully-contrived, overly-dramatic *masks* so that large audiences could clearly see their expressions, so they could switch between multiple roles with each mask, and even so that the specially designed mouth pieces could project their voices louder. Jesus is saying that these religious leaders who rejected Him were a bunch of *actors playing a part* for an audience, wearing a mask, hiding their true selves.

- Now that you have that image in mind, listen to verse 2 again: ***“There is nothing concealed that will not be disclosed, or hidden that will not be made known.”*** Jesus' issue with the religious leaders was not their commitment to Scripture, their focus on piety, their passion to guard doctrine, or their desire to shepherd the people—His issue was that these leaders *used their religion as a mask*. It was a show. It wasn't real. It looked good on the outside, but it hid something ugly underneath. ***“These people honor me with their lips, but their hearts are far from me.” (Matt. 15:8) “Woe to you, teachers of the law and Pharisees, you hypocrites! You are like whitewashed tombs, which look beautiful on the outside but on the inside are full of the bones of the dead and everything unclean. In the same way, on the outside you appear to people as righteous but on the inside you are full of hypocrisy and wickedness.” (23:27-28)***
- You claim to love God, but what you really love is recognition and prestige. You claim to love people, but what you really love the feeling of being right. You claim to love faithfulness, but what you really love is attention. *It's a mask. It's a performance.* And you might be fooling a lot of people, even fooling yourself. But there's One you can't fool. And in the end, you will have to face Him without that mask. Everything that was once hidden and whispered in the darkness, that you thought would never be known, is going to come out in the open, and there will be nowhere to hide. *That's a little disconcerting.* And sadly, it's part of all of our fallen human nature—it's an unavoidable consequence of our sin.

- **Come Out of Hiding**

- What was the first thing humans did when sin entered the story? What happened after the fall? *They covered themselves and they hid.* **“Then the eyes of both of them were opened, and they realized they were naked; so they sewed fig leaves together and made coverings for themselves. Then the man and his wife heard the sound of the Lord God as he was walking in the garden in the cool of the day, and they hid from the Lord God among the trees of the garden. But the Lord God called to the man, ‘Where are you?’ He answered, ‘I heard you in the garden, and I was afraid because I was naked; so I hid.’” (Gen. 3:7-10)**
 - *They covered themselves and they hid.* That was the first consequence of sin—and we’re all still dealing with it today. This word “integrity” carries so much weight: to be *integrated* is to be *whole, seamless, complete*. But sin *disintegrates, fragment, fractures, compartmentalizes*. All of us have played the hypocrite. All of us have tried to project versions of ourselves that look *better* than we actually are. All of us have sometimes acted the opposite of what we really believe, or say we believe. All of us have done things we’re ashamed of. All of us have sometimes feared, *if they saw who I really am they would reject me*. All of us have missed the mark and fallen short.
- But Jesus didn’t come to earth to say: *make yourself look better, get your act together, then come to me*. Jesus says, *come to me, as you are, with all your warts and scars and brokenness, and I will save you, I will forgive you, I will heal you, I will integrate the broken fragments of your life*. Jesus says, *I can’t heal your mask, I can’t save your mask, I won’t talk to your mask—I want you*. When someone lacks integrity, when they live out an obviously false-story of hypocrisy, we call them “two-faced.” What Jesus is after in each one of us is making us *true-faced*. **“Do not lie to each other, since you have taken off your old self with its practices and have put on the new self, which is being renewed in knowledge in the image of its Creator.” (Col. 3:9-10)**
- My mentor once taught me a powerful concept developed by psychologists called **“the Johari Window” (Pic)** (it sounds kind of highfalutin but it’s just because the developers named “Jo” and “Harry”). We kind of intuitively recognize this, but it’s

powerful to see it fleshed out. We all have these “arenas” in our lives, these “layers” to how we move through life and interact with the world. There’s the open arena: the things you know about you, and everyone else knows about you.

There’s the hidden arena: the things that you know about you, but nobody (or very few people) know about you. Then there’s the blind spot: things other people see about you, but you don’t recognize about you (ouch). And the most interesting one, the unknown arena: the things you don’t know about you, and others don’t know about you either—really, only God sees it, and you can only discover it with great intentionality and care.

- Here’s the thing: so many of us only focus on *the public arena*. The stuff everyone else sees. The stuff that’s easy to measure, easy to pat ourselves on the back for, the stuff we project, whether it’s accurate or inaccurate. This is where it’s so easy to live with a mask. But do you know where we find the most growth with God? It’s in the arenas that people *don’t* see—the hidden stuff, the blind spots, and unknown stuff. And that’s also the stuff *we’re usually most afraid of facing*—it’s Adam and Eve, covering up with fig leaves, hiding. But that’s exactly where Jesus wants to show up and do His greatest work.
- Church life can *all too easily* become a community of hypocrites—not because we have a sinister desire to be fake. But because we’re so afraid of facing the broken stuff in us that we come wearing masks. Church life needs to be a community where we leave our masks at the door. Where we come as we are and we let grace flood in, where transformation happens because we *get real with God and real with each other*. Do we have the courage to take off the masks, and let Jesus transform us from *two-faced* to *true-faced*?
- Steffany Gretzinger wrote a song called “Out of Hiding”. I think this is a great way to finish today, and get ready for Communion: **“Come out of hiding, you’re safe here with me / There’s no need to cover what I already see / You’ve got your reasons, but I hold your peace / You’ve been on lockdown and I hold the key / ‘Cause I loved you before you knew it was love / And I saw it all, still, I chose the cross / And you were the one that I was thinking of when I rose from the grave / Now rid of the shackles, my victory is yours / I tore the veil for you to**

come close / There's no reason to stand at a distance anymore, you're not far from home."