

Ending the Masquerade – by Thailer Jimerson

What is a *masquerade*? Here's how Google defines it: Mas·quer·ade (maskə' rād) - *noun* (1) a false show or pretense; *verb* (2) pretend to be someone one is not. And when you're invited to attend a masquerade, you usually imagine a party where everyone adorns those Mardi Gras-esque, domino masks. Masquerades are supposed to be confined to that party – not church. And yet. And yet we don the disguise that hides our true identity – fear, pride and shame holding us back from genuine spiritual intimacy with our fellow redeemed sinners.

It's time to drop the masks. This is why we are so excited about starting our Masquerades mini-series this Sunday.



It all started with our **ReGenesis** series where we sought to discover the roots of community, and its breakdown, from the first few chapters of the Bible. Two weeks ago, we learned that when Adam and Eve sinned, the first thing they lost was relationship as they hid from each other underneath the veneer of a fig leaf apron. And to this day, we hide ourselves. So in order to address this issue and further understand the multifaceted nature of confession, we're going to consider biblical profiles of characters that hid - and suffered for it.

The essence of the series is summarized by Paul Laurence Dunbar in his poem shared with me by a good brother in Christ:

We wear the mask that grins and lies,

*It hides our cheeks and shades our eyes,—
This debt we pay to human guile;
With torn and bleeding hearts we smile,
And mouth with myriad subtleties.*

*Why should the world be over-wise,
In counting all our tears and sighs?
Nay, let them only see us, while
We wear the mask.*

*We smile, but, O great Christ, our cries
To thee from tortured souls arise.
We sing, but oh the clay is vile
Beneath our feet, and long the mile;
But let the world dream otherwise,
We wear the mask!*

So here's the plan. Look forward to four biblical profiles of those who tried to hide and messages on the unique lessons we can learn from them in the upcoming Sundays. We'll have four total: two from the Old Testament – Achan, and David & Nathan; and two from the New Testament – Peter, and Ananias & Sapphira.

What can we learn from them? You'll just have to come and find out. And please invite as many as you can who struggle with this issue. We want to drop the masks of pretentious righteousness that we've been taught for so long to adorn with our church clothes, and, instead, get to being real with each other and, by bearing burdens, eventually grow to a point where we can really say we've overcome with a little help from our friends.