

## I. God Sees, Knows, and Cares (Lk. 12:1-12)

- A. Under these Circumstances (vs. 1) - Luke sets the scene for this next section of teaching by giving us the circumstances that bring it about. These circumstances are producing great pressure in their lives.
1. Earthly Popularity - The crowds had become so large that they were literally trampling upon one another. By this time the disciples too were heavily sought after and were surely feeling the pressure of hypocrisy, fear of man, and pride.
  2. Fear of Persecution - The last two verses of the preceding chapter tell us that the Pharisees had turned hostile towards Jesus. Surely that same hostility was being felt by the disciples.
- B. Beware of Religious Hypocrisy (vs. 1) - Jesus described the main stronghold of sin that plagued the Pharisees as hypocrisy. Jesus describes the effects of hypocrisy as “leaven or yeast” in light of how it only takes a very small amount to affect and spread to the whole. The literal definition of the word Jesus used in the original language is, “the acting of a stage player”. Jesus warned that hypocrisy resulted in a hindrance to actually understand the scriptures, blindness to one's condition, and an inability to discern God's will and leading for themselves and others.
1. Nothing hidden that won't be revealed (vs. 2) - This verse is generally used in light of the ultimate revealing of men's hearts at the end of the age. However, in context, Jesus says this in light of the inability to hide the conditions of the heart in this age, and to use it as a way to reveal hypocrisy in our own hearts. What is truly inside a person is always eventually seen discerned by their outward actions and emotions. Even if we can hide what's in our own hearts from others, we know it and need to acknowledge it.
- C. Whom shall you revere? (vs. 5) - Jesus poses one of the ultimate questions we face most often in this life. Will you fear men or God? We all know the right answer to this question but the truth is we often struggle to walk it out. This question is posed to the disciples in the context of seeking fame and adulation from the crowds, and being afraid of the Pharisees who desired to kill them. Jesus gives us a powerful weapon of truth to fight against the pull to please men more

than pleasing God. When faced with the fear of men you need to fight it with the powerful truth of eternal perspective.

- D. Blasphemy of the Spirit Unforgiven (vs. 10) - It is surprising to me how many Christians, who are grounded in the basic essential doctrines of what the scriptures say concerning soteriology (doctrine of salvation), have so many wrong ideas concerning what “the unforgivable sin” is. The bible is clear that no particular sin is unforgivable. Jesus’ substitutionary work in His death and resurrection atoned for all sin for all time. Therefore, the only unforgivable sin is to reject forgiveness itself which is exactly what Jesus is saying here. The Holy Spirit testifies to who Jesus is and what He has done. If we reject the testimony of the Spirit then we remain unforgiven. Bear in mind, also, that Jesus tells us that the Holy Spirit knows the internal beliefs of the heart so you will be held accountable to God by the Spirit as to what you truly believe, not just on what you say. In other words, all hypocrisy will be revealed by the Spirit.
- E. Rely upon the Spirit (vs. 11) - Jesus tells the disciples that to fear God more than men will result in persecution in both the civic (magistrates) and religious (synagogues) arenas. But don't worry, because the same Spirit that convicts you is your greatest friend and strength. God cares about the smallest details of our lives more than we do, so how much more does He care about the single most significant aspect of our lives, which is our right relationship with Him? So don't worry about what you say to men or how you're going to look to men, worry about eliminating hypocrisy and revere what the Spirit is saying for you to do or say more than what men will think.

## II. Wage War on Greed and the Deceit of Riches (Lk. 12:13-34)

- A. Tell my brother to divide the family inheritance with me (vs. 13) - According to the custom of that day the older brother would inherit  $\frac{2}{3}$  while the younger would receive  $\frac{1}{3}$  of the family inheritance. So this man asks Jesus to bring judgment upon this cultural injustice. Jesus asks the man why he thinks Jesus should bring this judgment. The man had rightly reasoned that Jesus was an excellent judge and would bring forth righteousness. So Jesus does, and tells the man that His judgment is that the man was motivated by greed not justice. Jesus just revealed the greatest opponent of wholeheartedness (fear of man) and now reveals the second greatest opponent of wholeheartedness (covetousness).
- B. Beware every form of Greed (vs. 15) - Jesus tells us that greed takes various forms. The first form of greed is the acquiring of money for the sake of having an abundant life. Most of us have fallen into this way of thinking at one time or

another. The more money you have, the fuller your life will be; if only you or someone else had a little more money then life would be better.

- C. Abundant Life does not come from Riches (vs. 15) - Jesus leaves no room for debate here. Abundant life does not come from riches! It comes from God who gives abundant life freely to all who ask. The truth is that, in general, the folks who have the fullest hearts of joy and peace are not wealthy, and the wealthy man who has abundant joy and peace is rare.
- D. Parable of the Rich Man (vs. 16-20) - Jesus tells us a parable that really hits home in our western culture and mindset. The rich man said, “I will build my wealth until I have enough to last me until the end of my life and then I will say to my soul take your ease and be merry.” Notice the rich man was already rich, he had more than he needed for the day. Jesus reveals that a form of greed is a mindset that drives you to acquire enough wealth so that you can have a good life later on. However, the rich man dies before he is able to take advantage of his stored up wealth. The point of the parable is that the man is foolish not wise because he spent all his time foolishly on his priorities, thinking he would enjoy them later and his soul would be at peace when he had enough wealth.
- E. Foolish is the man who stores up treasure but is not rich towards God (vs. 21) - Jesus makes it clear that wrong priorities and slavery to worry stems from the mindset that the peace and joy that our soul longs for comes from wealth. The source of the peace, joy, and security that we long for is from God Himself and we are foolish when we prioritize the acquirement of riches over building up our life in God and relationship with Him.
- F. So I say to you do not worry about food or clothing (vs. 23) - Food and clothing are basic human needs in order for us to survive. We should pay heed to what our creator is saying here. The purpose of our lives is not just to exist and to exist for as long as we can. We are meant to live and true life is only found in relationship with God. He came that we might have life abundantly even though we were already physically alive. Those who live wisely prioritize their life in God over their physical existence, which consists of food, clothing, shelter, and various forms of physical comforts. (John 10:10)
- G. Consider the Ravens, Lilies (vs. 24-28) - Jesus is actually quoting Psalm 147:7-11 here and giving commentary on it. Ravens in Jewish culture, and honestly in most cultures, are a despised bird that represents death and evil. This is exactly Jesus’ point. God cares for the Ravens; they don’t have to store up food because

they trust God to care for them. How much more does He care for us, His most precious creation?

Lilies were flowers that represented beauty and abundance. How did they acquire such beauty and abundance? Not even Solomon achieved the splendor and beauty of a lily. God gave it to them freely because he cares for the lilies. How much more does He care for you than for a flower? Jesus tells us that all the grass of the field is insignificant and only exists to nourish the other creatures. Yet God cares deeply for it. So much more deeply does He care and will He provide for you his most precious and significant ones.

- H. Seek the Kingdom and these things will be added (vs. 31) - Jesus reiterates the parable of the rich man and tells us to seek first His kingdom. He is referencing the values and righteousness of the Kingdom, such as loving God with all our heart and loving our neighbor, and cultivating the heart of the Kingdom of God through relationship and the indwelling Spirit in order to have the kind of life our Creator and Father intended for us. Then the physical needs, such as food, clothing, and shelter will be added to our life in the right priority. Notice that even those things needed for physical existence are given or added by God, not by our own strength.
- I. Sell your possessions and give (vs. 33) - He doesn't just tell us to stop being enslaved to worry and give into the spirit of greed, but He tells us how to go on the offensive to defeat it. We are to cultivate generosity and to give freely, knowing that we will be provided for. As you do, you will loosen the grips that greed and worry have upon your soul.

### III. Ready and Watchful good Stewards (Lk. 12:35-48)

- A. Be dressed in readiness and keep your lamps lit (vs. 35) - Just as Jesus did in the other Gospels, He talks about the great importance of developing perseverance and diligence in intentionally prioritizing cultivating a kingdom heart. The wise will keep their lamps lit with a spirit of eagerness. Especially in the hour of darkness. This is the hour the thief comes to kill, steal, and destroy and it is the hour in which we are easily lulled into dullness and sleep.
- B. Son of Man is coming at an hour that is unexpected (vs. 40) - Jesus then references a time in which the bible is clear that darkness will be at its height. It is the hour just before the Son of Man comes on the clouds of heaven to deliver the earth from wickedness and sin fully and completely and restore all things. As you see this hour coming upon the earth, you are to all the more give yourself to

diligence of spirit to cultivate your life in God so that you're not overtaken by the spirit of that day.

- C. Who will be called a faithful servant (vs. 42) - Jesus stays on the theme of wisdom here and adds faithfulness to those who are wise. The wise are faithful (Greek word for trusting or believing) by preserving in a lifestyle of wisdom that is more intentional than the current situation demands. Why? Because the key to withstanding the crisis is the preparation and training that you give yourself to before the crisis comes that you know is coming.
- D. The Judgment of the unfaithful (vs. 45-48) - Jesus tells us that those who knew what sort of lifestyle to live, but choose not to live wisely, will receive a more severe judgment than those who were ignorant of wisdom. Why? Because He is a just judge; He's not a mean judge but a perfect and fair one. Justice requires penalty in accordance with the crime. So to those who know and do not do, they incur greater guilt than those who do not know. We must see this for what it is and what we know of our beautiful loving Savior. He is pleading with us to respond to the wisdom He has given us because we will be held accountable for it.

#### **IV. Righteous Division from a Set Apart Response (Lk. 49-59)**

- A. I have Come to Bring Fire to the Earth (vs. 49) - I believe that the tenor of this discourse reaches a very emotional pinnacle here. Jesus' message is reaching a pinnacle as He is seeing and feeling the reality of an entire people walking out His exhortation. As we have looked at in multiple examples in the bible, the fire of God speaks of His zealous all consuming love and righteousness. He desires that this fiery all consuming love and righteousness covers the earth.
- B. A Baptism to undergo, How Distressed I am until it is Accomplished. (vs. 50) - In order for this fire to come to the earth, He has to undergo a baptism of suffering and death. He longs for it. His eyes of fiery love and jealousy for our fullness come to a whole new level of clarity as He looks upon the current human condition and sees the nearness of the freedom and life he would soon bring through His work on the cross. (his own arm brought)
- C. This Fire will cause Division not Peace (vs. 51-53) - The rise of a faithful wise people who live out values and a lifestyle contrary to the lifestyle and values of the age (vs 30) will bring great division. Do not be surprised by the reality that there really is a war between darkness and light, between the righteousness and love of our God and the evil and hatred of Satanic demonic forces that currently

hold sway over the nations. As the fire of God's truth and righteousness collides with this darkness there will be division and war.

- D. It will divide Households (vs. 52-53) - This battle will hit us the hardest within the sphere of personal relationships and family. Once again, Jesus is being merciful and kind as He tenderly prepares us for the pain of the battle. Those whom we love the most may be those who we will be divided from as we live out the values and lifestyle of the Kingdom. In that hour, you will be tempted to quit or to be offended at your circumstances. Jesus is preparing your heart to endure and sympathizing with you as a friend.
- E. Judge Rightly the Importance of time and how you Need to Respond (vs. 54-59) - Just as you can look at the growing dark clouds and respond by seeking shelter, so to you have been given ample warnings of the increasing pressure and battle of the coming day of the Lord. You have been given the way of preparation to overcome and endure it. Therefore, make every effort to respond now so that the darkness of the day does not overcome you. He is so for your heart to be fully alive and filled with His fiery love. He has taken away every obstacle and stands in intercession continually on your behalf contending for your fullness. The promise of scripture is that the wise and faithful will shine like the stars in the day of darkness and will victoriously lead many to righteousness, if we give ourselves to the wisdom of being faithful to set our priorities in accordance to His ways that he enabled us and called us to live out. (Dan. 12:1-3)