

'Luke' - Extra Teaching Points #20

Luke 12:1-12 (NASB95)

Luke 12:1-3

*"Under these circumstances, after so many thousands of people had gathered together that they were stepping on one another, He began saying to His disciples first of all, **"Beware of the leaven of the Pharisees, which is hypocrisy.**"² "But there is nothing covered up that will not be revealed, and hidden that will not be known."³ "Accordingly, whatever you have said in the dark will be heard in the light, and what you have whispered in the inner rooms will be proclaimed upon the housetops.*

Q: What would motivate someone to be a hypocrite (actor)? Why would someone "act" like they were religious?

- Probably pride, power, and/or position.

Q: Why does Jesus call the Pharisees hypocrisy "leaven"?

- Leaven is something that, by nature, spreads and replicates.
- The Pharisees didn't start out as actors satisfied with being seen as more righteous than they were... but hypocrisy spread like leaven, to the point where being actors was the norm.

Q: Why might Jesus be warning His disciples against this kind of hypocrisy at this time?

- People were choosing sides—Jesus... or the religious establishment.
- The temptation to want to be seen as a "somebody" in Jesus' movement, and receive the attention and praise of people, would be a temptation for His disciples from then on!

Luke 12:4-7

*"I say to you, My friends, do not be afraid of those who kill the body and after that have no more that they can do."⁵ **"But I will warn you whom to fear: fear the One who, after He has killed, has authority to cast into hell; yes, I tell you, fear Him!"**⁶ "Are not five sparrows sold for two cents? Yet not one of them is forgotten before God."⁷ "Indeed, the very hairs of your head are all numbered. **Do not fear; you are more valuable than many sparrows.***

Vs 4 Jesus tells us not to fear people... all they can do is kill your body, which will die someday anyway.

Vs 5 Jesus teaches that we should fear God; what does that mean?

- Fearing God is about *respecting* Him, *not* being *frightened* of Him.
 - In Vs 7 Jesus tells us not to be afraid because we are important to God.
 - If Vs 5 means God should frighten us, then Vs 7 would be a contradiction.

Vs 6 & 7 Sparrows die just like every other creature; so Jesus is not saying that if you're valuable to God He won't let you die.

- **What Jesus is saying is that if you're valuable to God, you will never be allowed to die unless it is in His will for you to die.**
 - This should be the main concern for a Christian: That we die when God wants us to, in order to achieve His purposes.
 - Dying outside the will of God is the only thing a person should ever really be afraid of.

Extra Info on hell in Luke 12:5:

The word translated "hell" in Luke 12:5 is the Greek word "*geenna*" or "*Gehenna*."

- *Hades* is also translated as "hell" in older translations, but it's not the same place as *Gehenna*.
- *Hades* is a general name for the place of departed spirits, whereas *Gehenna* carries the notion of punishment.

“Gehenna” was also known as “*the valley of Hinnom.*”

- It is located on the south side of Jerusalem.
- This is where the Canaanites once worshipped the god Moloch by sacrificing their children.
- Afterwards, it became a garbage dump for every kind of trash, as well as the carcasses of animals, and the dead bodies of criminals.
- In order to avoid disease, constant fires were kept burning.

If Jesus was speaking of Gehenna the way the Prophets did, instead of the way the Rabbis commonly did, then He might have been telling His disciples not to fear martyrdom.

- While the Rabbis talked about Gehenna in reference to punishment for the wicked dead, the Prophets talked about Gehenna as the place where the bodies of those who opposed God would end up.
 - [Jer. 7:31-34](#) & [Is 30:33](#) prophesied about the valley of Hinnom (*Gehenna*) being the place where corpses would be collected after the Babylonians destroyed Jerusalem... which happened in 586BC.
- Jesus knew the Romans were going to come in 70AD, and would do to Jerusalem what the Babylonians had done in the days of the Prophets.
 - Many of His disciples and apostles would suffer martyrdom at the hands of the Jews for being His disciples; but God would raise them up at the last day ([John 6:39-40, 44, 54; 11:25-26](#)).
 - However, those who opposed Jesus would not only face God’s judgment at the hands of the Romans, they would also receive God’s judgment on the last day ([John 12:48; John 5:28-29](#)).

Luke 12:8-10

*“And I say to you, **everyone who confesses Me before men, the Son of Man will confess him also before the angels of God;** ⁹ but he who denies Me before men will be denied before the angels of God. ¹⁰ “And everyone who speaks a word against the Son of Man, it will be forgiven him; but **he who blasphemes against the Holy Spirit, it will not be forgiven him.**”*

Vs. 8 For Jesus to “confess us before the angels of God” means He owns us.

- Jesus acknowledging that we belong to Him, is the only hope any of us has on the Day of Judgment.
- For Jesus to confess us, we must confess Him; **which is a way of life**, not a one-time statement.

Vs. 9 Denying Jesus isn’t necessarily a one-time thing either.

- **Titus 1:16** “*They profess to know God, but **by their deeds they deny Him, being detestable and disobedient and worthless for any good deed.**”*
- Apparently, there is more than one way to deny Jesus.
 - We can deny Him verbally, or by our behavior.

Vs. 10 Blasphemy of the Holy Spirit is also mentioned in [Matt 12:31-32](#) and [Mark 3:28-30](#).

Extra Info on Blasphemy of the Holy Spirit:

This is sometimes referred to as the unpardonable sin... although those words are not used in scripture.

Blasphemy is the Greek word “blasphemia” (blas-fay-me’-ah), which means ***vilification*** (especially against God) — evil speaking, railing.

- **Blasphemy of the Holy Spirit is the refusal to acknowledge God’s power as good, like you see in [Isaiah 5:20](#).**
- This blasphemy is so serious because it concerns the whole person, **not just a few words spoken on any one occasion.**
- Blasphemy against the Holy Spirit is a hardening against God, which is deliberate and irreversible.

Matthew and Mark record Blasphemy of the Holy Spirit in connection with the Beelzebul controversy, which helps us with the meaning.

- Jesus' opponents attributed his works of mercy to the devil. They called good 'evil'.
- People in such a situation cannot repent and seek forgiveness—they lack a sense of sin; they reject God's judgment of what is right.
- It is this **continuing attitude** that is the ultimate sin.
- God's power to forgive is not taken away, but this kind of sinner no longer has the capacity to repent and believe.

So why is blasphemy against Jesus forgivable?

- It seems that God understood that people wouldn't always recognize Jesus as God ([Acts 3:17](#)).
 - Even Peter "spoke against" Jesus, and was forgiven ([Matt 26:69-75](#)).
- It is possible, even likely, that Jesus is saying that He understands why some people wouldn't recognize Him and His ministry at that time, and might be resisting Him.
- However, in the age to come, the Holy Spirit will be working on people's hearts; if they resist Him too, then they are without hope.

[Luke 12:11-12](#)

*"When they bring you before the synagogues and the rulers and the authorities, **do not worry about how or what you are to speak in your defense, or what you are to say;** ¹² **for the Holy Spirit will teach you in that very hour what you ought to say.**"*

[Acts 7](#) is probably an example of what Jesus is promising here.

- Stephen was put on trial, and gave an incredible and convicting sermon.
- Instead of trying to defend himself, and worrying about how he could convince the authorities of his innocence, he gave them the message God wanted them to hear.

Q: What does this teach us about defending ourselves?

- It seems like we must make a choice about whom we are going to depend on to defend us—ourselves... or God?

Follow Up Assignment

Q: Do you pretend to be more 'Christian' than you really are?

- If so, why?
- What do you need to do to be seen for who you really are?

Q: Who are you most afraid of, and why?

- What do Jesus' words about '*who to fear*' mean to you?

Q: Whom do you tend to rely on to defend you; yourself... or God?

- What does it look like when you get this right?
- What does it look like when you get this wrong?