

BEWARE

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Luke 12:1-12

1. Luke 11 ends with these words. Luke 11:53-54

When He left there, the scribes and the Pharisees began to be very hostile and to question Him closely on many subjects, 54 plotting against Him to catch Him in something He might say.

2. Chapter 12 begins with the words, "Under these circumstances," that is the hostility of the scribes and Pharisees.

NOTE: Those who are determined to represent Jesus Christ in the culture will find the culture to be determined in its pushback.

3. It is important to note that, although Jesus was surrounded by thousands of people, He was speaking primarily to His disciples.

4. The Jews referred to what we call preaching as "Charaz," which refers to stringing pearls together.

a. In this passage Jesus strung together some individual, and apparently unrelated, pearls of wisdom.

b. The unifying factor that unites these pearls is that they all related to things that we need to be aware of.

I. Beware of the sin of hypocrisy. 1-3

A. Jesus stated that hypocrisy infected the lives of the Pharisees like leaven leavens bread.

B. The hypocrite is an actor who is rarely genuine, and often play-acting.

C. In a positive sense Jesus was calling on His followers to be genuine.

D. To reinforce His message Jesus pointed out that eventually everything will be brought to light.

E. We need to take seriously passages like:

1. Proverbs 15:3

The eyes of the Lord are in every place, watching the evil and the good.

2. Jeremiah 23:23-24

"Am I a God who is near," declares the Lord, "And not a God far off? 24 "Can a man hide himself in hiding places so I do not see him?" declares the Lord. "Do I not fill the heavens and the earth?" declares the Lord.

3. Hebrews 4:12-13

For the word of God is living and active and sharper than any two-edged sword, and piercing as far as the division of soul and spirit, of both joints and marrow, and able to judge the thoughts and intentions of the heart. 13 And there is no creature hidden

from His sight, but all things are open and laid bare to the eyes of Him with whom we have to do.

II. Beware of misplaced fear. 4-7

- A. Jesus referred to His disciples as, "My friends."
- B. He told His friends not to be afraid of those who can only abuse and kill the body.
- C. The One we need to reverence, and fear, is the One who has authority over our souls.
 - 1. So then, my beloved, just as you have always obeyed, not as in my presence only, but now much more in my absence, work out your salvation with fear and trembling; 13 for it is God who is at work in you, both to will and to work for His good pleasure. Philippians 2:12-13
 - 2. For this reason we must pay much closer attention to what we have heard, so that we do not drift away from it. 2 For if the word spoken through angels proved unalterable, and every transgression and disobedience received a just penalty, 3 how will we escape if we neglect so great a salvation? After it was at the first spoken through the Lord, it was confirmed to us by those who heard, 4 God also testifying with them, both by signs and wonders and by various miracles and by gifts of the Holy Spirit according to His own will. Hebrews 2:1-4
- NOTE: Verse 1 warns us not to be careless of, or to make light of, the Word of God.
- D. Sadly there are many professed followers of Jesus Christ who are more concerned about what other people think about them than they are about what God knows about them.
- E. As Jesus' friends we can be confident that our Heavenly Father never forgets us, and that every detail of our lives is important to God.

III. Beware of denying Jesus before men. 8-9

- A. Those who openly confess Jesus before men can be confident that He will openly claim them as His own before the angels of God.
- B. Those who deny Jesus before men will be denied before the angels of God.
 - 1. There are situations in which God's people must be careful related to carrying out their ministries.
 - 2. But every true believer will identify with Jesus by being salt and light.

IV. Beware of rejecting and resisting the ministry of the Holy Spirit. 10

- A. Most of the Jewish leaders had so rejected and resisted the Holy Spirit that they were unable to recognize His activity.
- B. Even in the presence of the divine Son of God they were unmoved and untouched by His life, example and teaching.
- C. Those who resist and refuse to listen to their consciences can come to the place where they no longer have one.
- D. Those who resist and refuse to listen to the Holy Spirit may come to the place where they can no longer hear or recognize Him.

E. To blaspheme the Holy Spirit is to reject the very One who is in the world to bring us to God.

V. Beware of anxiety. 11-12

A. Jesus was preparing His followers for the day when they would become the objects of this world's animosity.

B. He promised that the Holy Spirit would teach them what to say when they were dragged before the governing authorities.

NOTE: This promise is tied to our knowledge and understanding of God's Word.

C. We need to focus on nurturing our relationship with God, and His Word, so that we can have confidence regardless of what kind of opportunities or challenges we are confronted with.

APPLICATION

1. We should examine ourselves in the light of God's Word, by asking appropriate questions.
2. Questions like, what has God seen and heard this week, and what have people seen and heard?
3. Did I live and talk in such a way that my life is an honest reflection of who I am in Christ?
4. Is there any area in my life where I am resisting or refusing to listen to the Holy Spirit?
5. To what extent do fear and anxiety impact my life?