

## Luke 12:1-12

“Hypocrisy: It’s Cause, It’s Cure”

In the book of Colossians Paul makes a statement that in reality ought to be the defining marks of *any church ministry*; of *any church minister*. “Him we preach, warning every man and teaching every man in all wisdom, that we may present every man perfect in Christ Jesus.” Col 1:28

We find in that Vs the “*heart*” of ministry, the “*how*” of ministry and the “*hope*” of ministry. The heart? The focus? Jesus Christ; it’s *Him* that we preach, that we proclaim; we’re determined to know nothing among you outside of Jesus Christ and Him crucified. Jesus is the answer to life’s problem, He’s the solution, He’s the means, the way, the truth and the life; the only access to the Father; He’s the gate through which we enter in to eternal life.

The hope? The end goal? “*That we may present every man perfect in Christ Jesus*” it doesn’t matter if you’ve been a believer for 3 months or for 35 yrs it’s our aim, our agenda to equip you; to aid you in your maturing process in Christ. That you might be fruitful in your walk and relationship with the Lord and that your fruit might remain. Whether you’re 7 yrs old or 75 yrs old we want to come alongside you and encourage you in your commitment to Christ.

The how? The means which we employ to accomplish that end? “Warning every man and teaching every man in all wisdom.” That is, taking you through the word of God line upon line, precept upon precept, here a little there a little finding out what the Lord would have us do and be a part of; and what He would have us avoid and watch out for. It’s teaching and warning.

It’s been said that the Pastor/under shepherd of the sheep who only feeds/teaches the sheep with out warning the sheep is only fattening them up for the kill. Jesus made it clear that we’re to be *wise* in the way that we navigate our course through life. Wise as serpents, but gentle as doves...

Warning and teaching, that was the method of our Master; it’s a lesson we learn from our Lord as we survey the scriptures and find Him equipping His disciples for the work of the ministry. Notice.

Vs1

The words, “In the meantime” act as the “stitch” which connects what was happening at the end of Ch 11 to what’s happening here in the beginning of Ch 12. Perhaps you recall the context. We left off with our Lord being assailed and cross examined by the religious leaders of His day. He’d called them out for the hypocrites that they were; the fact that they were like unmarked graves (everything looking normal on the surface yet nothing but corruption underneath; dotting every “I” and crossing every “T” outwardly but inwardly they were a mess, lacking love; unwilling to show mercy, full of greed and wickedness).

As you might imagine they didn’t take to kindly to being called out and placed under the spotlight being seen as anything less than super-spiritual and/or the perfect picture of godliness. So they sought to turn the tables and cross examine our Lord, looking to catch Him in something through which they might accuse Him.

Meanwhile this extraordinary sized crowd begins to amass... (thousands; innumerable multitude). Do you remember how back in high school whenever there would be a fight how that all these people would amass and circle around to see what would happen? We have a similar scene happening here; these guys are assailing Jesus, verbally attacking Him and coming after Him and as all the people begin to press in He leans into His disciples and says, "Beware of the leaven of the Pharisees."

It's a warning, "Beware" "take heed" "guard yourself from" the *leaven* of the Pharisees. What does that mean? The "leaven" of the Pharisees; understand that leaven, in the scriptures is always seen as a type of sin, or sinful influence. It's a perfect picture because like yeast it only takes a very little (seemingly insignificant) bit to permeate; saturate, influence and "puff up" the whole body, the entire loaf. That's why when God delivered the Children of Israel from Egypt there was to be no leaven in their midst, none of the "worldly" corruptive influence of Egypt was to go with them to the Promised Land.

Jesus spoke of the leaven of the Sadducees, the leaven of Herod; Paul the apostle spoke of leaven in both the book of 1<sup>st</sup> Cor and Galatians and it's always regarding the corrupting influence of some sort of sin. How that it creeps in *subtly* but defiles you *completely*. In this case, in this context the sin is *hypocrisy*. Jesus tells us straight up that He's speaking about hypocrisy.

What is hypocrisy? In short it's pretense, it's a charade, it's pretending to be one thing outwardly while being another thing altogether inwardly. It's like when Jesus rebuked the Pharisees telling them that they drew near to God with their mouths, they honored Him with their lips, but their hearts were far from Him. It speaks of acting the part; a hypocrite is an actor; and there are hypocrites in every arena of life. People who are trying to impress others in order that they might hide the truth of who they are...they're not genuine in how they present themselves to you.

In the current context the hypocrite is one who seeks to appear more spiritual than he/she actually is. It's the masquerade of bringing the bible to church; using catch phrases like, "PTL" and "God bless you", it's learning the language of Christianese but on Monday you slip back into "just another one of the guys at work" mode; and depending on which group you're standing in that will determine which mask you wear...

Now that's an extreme example; could be as simple as seeking to insinuate that your relationship with Christ is much more intimate than it actually is. Remember Ananias and Sapphira (Acts 5)? Look it up later but here's the deal. He pretended to give more to the church than he actually did, and his wife conspired with him. Now the problem wasn't that he kept some of the proceeds from the sale of his land for himself; it was that he put off like he gave it all; wanted people to think he was real spiritual; God struck him dead. I don't think he didn't make it to heaven, I believe we'll see him there but God was sending a message, He desires purity, requires authenticity in the church, not hypocrisy.

James tells us, "*But the wisdom that is from above is first pure, then peaceable, gentle, willing to yield, full of mercy and good fruits, without partiality and without hypocrisy.*" James 3:17

It's the real deal; that's what the world needs to see right now; the genuine article; "real Christians". Listen, Christians aren't perfect. Sometimes Christians hurt. Sometimes Christians have problems. Though we're not proud of problems, and struggles and things occasionally ensnare us, the fact is that things like this happen. The world needs to see that Christians go through tough times, but they have a God whom they hope in Who helps them.

In the midst of crisis is the perfect time for Christians to be real; if you've been impacted by this catastrophe and someone says, "Hey, how you holdin up?" Don't say, "Hey I'm doing great," if you're not doing great. Be honest, say, "You know what, I'm struggling right now; it's difficult for me to process the enormity, the gravity of what's happened in my life, but I love God, and I know that he's in control and He has a plan in all this, that His thoughts toward me are thoughts of peace and not of evil to give me a future and a hope."

It's ok to tell people you're having a hard time; it doesn't mean you don't love God, it means you're human; you're genuine, but that you're confident of the love of God. His love isn't circumstantial; it's realized through the lens of the cross. God demonstrates his own love, not through peachy circumstances, (keeping us from any and all things hurtful) but by the fact that when we were yet sinners Christ died for us.

No greater love has anyone than this, than to lay down one's life for his friends. Yet we read in the book of Romans, "*For when we were still without strength, in due time Christ died for the ungodly. For scarcely for a righteous man will one die; yet perhaps for a good man someone would even dare to die. But God demonstrates His own love toward us, in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us.*" Rom 5:6-8

Vs2-3

This is the futility of hypocrisy; its' interesting how we think we're getting away with things because no one knows about it. But what Jesus is telling us here is that even though you may *conceal* it from others, the day is coming when God will *reveal* it to all... God sees right through our lies; He judges the motives and intents of the heart.

The bible is real clear: "*For God will bring every work into judgment, Including every secret thing, Whether good or evil.*" Ecclesiastes 12:14 The book of Romans speaks of, "...*the day when God will judge the secrets of men by Jesus Christ,*" Romans 2:16 Again in 1 Cor, "*Therefore judge nothing before the time, until the Lord comes, who will both bring to light the hidden things of darkness and reveal the counsels of the hearts.*" 1 Corinthians 4:5 Here's the deal, "...*there is no creature hidden from His sight, but all things are naked and open to the eyes of Him to whom we must give account.*" Heb 4:13

What then is the application? Avoid acting the part that other people want to see; don't worry about being a man pleaser, be a God pleaser. Don't try to hide who you are; be genuine, open and honest in your relationship with God because anything less than that will be exposed anyway...

You and me, we can be sure that our sin will find us out (Nu 32:23); your flesh, and your enemy (Satan) will whisper in your ear, “it’ll be our little secret”, but then once you’re sucked in and brought into bondage he blows your cover; starts shouting it from the rooftops...it’s amazing how things get out, but they do. Ecclesiastes 10:20 says this, “*Do not curse the king, even in your thought; Do not curse the rich, even in your bedroom; For a bird of the air may carry your voice, And a bird in flight may tell the matter.*”

Vs 4-5

We’ve spoken about hypocrisy; it’s futility, the need for honesty and integrity, here Jesus exhorts us to live with a view toward eternity. He’s exposing the secrets of the hearts of the Pharisees even here. They put off like they’re holy and close to God. They’ve concealed their murderous intent toward Jesus; but Jesus is drawing it into the light, sharing publicly their intent collectively which is (secretly) to murder the Son of God...

We’re seeing here both the cause and an effective cure for hypocrisy. It’s cause? (Vs 4) The fear of man; being worried about what other people think *of* you or might do *to* you; and knowing that all of the 12 (with the exception of John) would die a martyr’s death (of course Judas committed suicide) Jesus exhorts them to maintain the proper perspective. To fear man will cause us to do strange things, hiding the truth; putting up a pretense for their acceptance or approval. That’s called hypocrisy.

What Jesus is saying here is the NT vernacular for the OT truth found in Prov 29:25, “*The fear of man brings a snare, But whoever trusts in the Lord shall be safe.*” Worst case scenario is that the power that man can wield over us is limited to this life and even at that they can’t take your life until God is finished with you (I think Daniel demonstrates that, Shadrach Meshach and Abed-Nego demonstrate that, over and over again we see where the scriptures demonstrate His hand upon His people’s lives). Now once His plans for us are fulfilled we might be brought home in any # of ways; cancer, persecution, whatever...

But God’s power is not limited to this life; not only does He maintain power/authority over our bodies physically, but equally over our spirit eternally...

So it’s a matter of proper perspective. Whom should I fear; the one who can persecute me temporarily, or the One who wields authority over me *eternally*?

Concerning our context Jesus is saying that the fear of God will promote integrity; purity and practical holiness in our lives. The fear of man will promote deceitfulness; hypocrisy and lies.

But our God is a consuming fire; don’t be deceived He will deal with sin, He will judge in righteousness and in holiness. But check it out; not only is He a holy and righteous God, He’s also caring and compassionate Father, notice...

## Vs 6-7

God is completely righteous and all powerful; but Jesus says here that concerning His children we need to realize that God's power is for us and not against us. God is in love with you and concerns Himself with the details that pertain to you. He even knows the # of hairs on your head; how much more is He aware then of every problem, every need and every nuance of our lives? So don't be afraid (Jesus says), if God watches over the "least" of His creation (the sparrows) how much more does He concern Himself with the crowning achievement of His creation...you? Peter encouraged us this way, "...*casting all your care upon Him, for He cares for you.*" 1 Peter 5:7 If we really believe that God *cares for* us, will take care *of* us then we can relinquish our fears into His care because we're gonna trust Him with the details of our lives.

## Vs 8-10

Another remedy for hypocrisy; having to wear a mask of ambiguity? Confess Christ boldly. Just get it out there, where you stand and where you're at with Jesus, then you don't have to worry about what people think of you; you can know...they think you're weird ☐. But now it's clear!

Now when He speaks of confessing Him; what's not being referenced here is coming forward in a church service. That can have its place but it's not a biblical precedent; you don't find it in the bible; confessing Christ goes way beyond standing up in a group of people who love Jesus and want to see you flourish *in* Jesus. We're talking about a confession, a profession of lifestyle; perhaps you've heard the phrase, "Witness for Jesus 24/7 and when necessary use words." Your whole life, my whole life should confess Christ, not just my lips, my life and my heart.

Jesus says in essence, "If you receive Me, I'll receive you; but if you *reject* Me, I'll reject you." It's not important that we receive the praise of men on earth; what's important in the acknowledgment of God in heaven...

Real quick I want to point out the all inclusive pronoun of Vs 8, did you catch it? "Whoever..." The opportunity to believe in and receive Christ, to confess Him and profess Him publicly goes out to *whoever*; that means we all qualify, regardless of who you are, where you've been or what you've done, you are free to surrender your life *to* Christ and find forgiveness *in* Christ.

## Vs 10

Jesus says, "Hey, if you stumble in your confession of me, you play the momentary role of the hypocrite due to the fear of man and in some way speak against Me, forgiveness is available for that." (Think of Peter who denied Him 3xs)

But as for blaspheming the Holy Spirit Jesus says that's a line we can't cross. The question then that confronts us is, "What is the blasphemy of the Holy Spirit?" Well, in order to know that it's important to understand the role of the Holy Spirit as it pertains to humanity.

Jesus said in John's gospel (Ch's 15:26 and 16:8) that the primary objective of the Holy Spirit would be to testify and point people to Him (to Jesus) and to convict the world of sin, of righteousness, and of judgment. So it's not that it's a sin that's "too big" for God to forgive; it's that you've rejected God's means of forgiveness which comes through the Person of Jesus Christ whom the Holy Spirit testifies *of*.. The Holy Spirit comes alongside you, begins to convict you of your sin, show you your need for Jesus, yet you reject Jesus Christ rather than receive Him which now leaves you with out options. There's no other means of forgiveness, you effectively can't be forgiven because you've rejected the work of the Holy Spirit who is seeking to lead you to Christ. Outside of Christ there *is no* forgiveness; so to blaspheme and reject His work is to forfeit forgiveness.

The good news? If you're worried about being in that place, you're not . You're still sensing conviction, if you were in this place your conscience would be so seared you wouldn't even be here. But to leave this planet apart from Jesus Christ is to have blasphemed the Person and the work of the Holy Spirit. My encouragement? Receive Jesus Christ today and you don't have to worry about it.

Vs 11-12

Most of us will probably never have to worry about being placed on trial for our faith, yet we've all been in that place whereby we're being called out; put in the circle placed on "trial" with out warning. Jesus says here that the Holy Spirit will help you in your hour of need. You keep placing the word *in* and the Holy Spirit will draw it *out* when the need is there.

What this *isn't* is a justification for not studying and preparing to teach God's word; "Oh the Holy Spirit will give me the words..." That's not what Jesus is saying at all, that's laziness and lack of diligence. We're to study to show ourselves approved unto God, workmen that need not be ashamed rightly dividing the word of truth.

But when you're put under pressure and in a tight spot God will show Himself faithful to you; so don't worry, just be who you are in Christ and God will honor that. If you need to give to Christ than do that and God will honor that as well and forgive you of all of your sin and make you brand new...

Prayer Points:

God as always we thank You for Your word; the clarity, the simplicity *of* it, the compassion that's found *in* it, the appeal You make to us *through* it to be reconciled to Yourself through Your only begotten Son, Jesus Christ May our lives confess Him; help us Lord that we not play the part of the hypocrite but that we be open and sincere in our love for You.

Maybe you've never made that initial confession of Christ, but today you're in that place; you're done *resisting* Him, you're ready to *receive Him*. I want you to understand that Jesus shed His blood and died upon the cross for your and for my sin; that He was buried and that 3 days later He rose again so that we might stand justified (just as if I'd never sinned at all) before God through faith in Him. So if you're ready to turn *from* your sin and enter *into* life in Christ, now is your moment.