

Wednesday Evening Bible Study

October 9, 2019

The Gospel of Luke

Living for Christ in a Dark World

Topics – Luke 12:1 - 12; The Leaven of the Pharisees; Blasphemy of the Holy Ghost

Text – Luke 12:1 - 12

Congregational Reading – Luke 12:1 - 12

Introduction

We are still in an extended section of Luke's gospel where we are seeing events that are exclusive to Luke. Up until chapter seventeen, everything contained in Luke's gospel is not found anywhere else in the gospels. Matthew's Gospel, however, teaches many of the same principle, but not in the same historical context as here in Luke. (Read Matthew 10:16 – 42)

I. An Admonition Regarding His Foes (vs. 1 – 3)

After sparring with the Pharisees and Lawyers in chapter eleven, Jesus now warns the disciples about the Pharisees.

The word, "trode" (καταπατέω – *katapateō*) in verse 1, means to trample under your feet. These people were jammed together to the point that they could have been trampled. In this crowd, Jesus warns His disciples while rebuking the Pharisees.

The word, "hypocrisy" (ὑπόκρισις – *hypokrisis*), means to put on an act. It has the idea of pretending to be something that you are not. The Pharisees pretended to be the friend of Jesus, but secretly, they were His enemies. They pretended to love God, but inwardly they only cared about their religious system.

"Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! for ye make clean the outside of the cup and of the platter, but within they are full of extortion and excess. Thou blind Pharisee, cleanse first that which is within the cup and platter, that the outside of them may be clean also. Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! for ye are like unto whited sepulchres, which indeed appear beautiful outward, but are within full of dead men's bones, and of all uncleanness. Even so ye also outwardly appear righteous unto men, but within ye are full of hypocrisy and iniquity." (Matthew 23:25-28)

Verse 2 clearly teaches that whatever the Pharisees were hiding would eventually be revealed.

In verse 3, He seems to be warning the Pharisees directly. At least He was probably speaking loud enough for them to hear Him.

Though the warning was specifically directed to the Pharisees, it applies to us as well.

1. Don't try to cover up your sin. Confess it to God, and if necessary, confess it to the people who have been wronged.
2. Public sins need a public confession.
3. Sins of leadership need to be confessed publicly.
4. We don't have to broadcast all of the dirty details, but we need to be more transparent and be ready to admit when we have messed up.
5. Don't sneak around. *"Be sure your sin will find you out"* (Numbers 32:23).
6. You are not responsible to broadcast other people's sins.

"He that covereth a transgression seeketh love; but he that repeateth a matter separateth very friends."

(Proverbs 17:9)

This verse is not talking about covering your own sins, or sweeping something under the rug that needs to be dealt with. It is talking about broadcasting something about somebody else to people who do not need to know.

II. Advice to His Friends (vs. 4 – 7)

Verses 4 – 7 all go together. We typically think that this instruction regarding sparrows only refers to the fact that God supplies our needs, but both here and in Matthew's gospel, it teaches God's protection.

Interesting note ☺ - Matthew tells us that two sparrows are sold for a farthing (ἀσσάριον – *assarion* – a tenth part of a drachma [some say a sixteenth]; twice the worth of a mite; about an hour's wage), but Luke tells us that you can five for two farthings. They even had quantity discounts in Jesus' day.

The simple truth that Jesus is teaching His followers is that we need to stop stressing and worrying about making sure the world is happy with us (pleasing men). We need to be far more concerned with pleasing God. God is not teaching here that God will revoke a person's salvation for not standing up for him, but He is teaching that the eternal is far more important than the temporal. Perhaps, the eternal judgment of the lost people we are attempting to please could be avoided if we demonstrated a solid testimony in front of them. They might just get saved.

Don't fear men. Fear God.

III. Answers for Your Fellows (vs. 8 – 12)

In these verses, Jesus is teaching three things:

1. Don't be ashamed of Him. Stand for Him. Speak for Him.

"And he said to them all, If any man will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross daily, and follow me. For whosoever will save his life shall lose it: but whosoever will lose his life for my sake, the same shall save it. For what is a man advantaged, if he gain the whole world, and lose himself, or be cast away? For whosoever shall be ashamed of me and of my words, of him shall the Son of man be ashamed, when he shall come in his own glory, and in his Father's, and of the holy angels." (Luke 9:23-26)

2. Don't reject the message of the Holy Ghost – Jesus Christ.

There is a lot of confusion regarding verse 10. Some believe that it could only be committed by people living in the time of Christ who saw Him do His mighty works, and then attributed them to Satan. This is the context of the teaching in Matthew 12:32 (See Matthew 12:22 – 32).

The Holy Ghost is here on the Earth to point people to Christ. When we reject the message of the Holy Spirit, we are rejecting Christ, and you cannot be saved if you reject Christ.

"Howbeit when he, the Spirit of truth, is come, he will guide you into all truth: for he shall not speak of himself; but whatsoever he shall hear, that shall he speak: and he will shew you things to come. He shall glorify me: for he shall receive of mine, and shall shew it unto you." (John 16:13-14)

William Hendriksen does a splendid job of explaining this "unpardonable sin."

He writes: Their sin is unpardonable because they are unwilling to tread the path that leads to pardon. For a thief, an adulterer, and a murderer there is hope. The message of the gospel may cause him to cry out, "O God be merciful to me, the sinner." But when a man has become hardened, so that he has made up his mind not to pay any attention to the promptings of the Spirit, not even to listen to his pleading and warning voice, he has placed himself on the road that leads to perdition. He has sinned the sin "unto death" (1 Jn. 5:16; see also Heb. 6:4-8). . . .

The blasphemy against the Spirit is the result of gradual progress in sin. Grieving the Spirit (Eph. 4:30), if

unrepented of, leads to resisting the Spirit (Acts 7:51), which, if persisted in, develops into quenching the Spirit (1 Thes. 5:19).¹

Note – From the New American Commentary:

The second part of this verse is a warning about the unforgivable sin of speaking against the Holy Spirit. What exactly this sin consists of is far from clear. The suggested interpretations include: (1) claiming that Jesus possessed an unclean spirit (cf. Mark 3:28–30); (2) apostasy by a Christian (Luke 12:8–9), as opposed to a nonbeliever speaking against Jesus (as in 12:10a); (3) rejecting Christ after his resurrection, in contrast to doing so before the resurrection; (4) rejection of the disciples' testimony, which (after Pentecost) was inspired by the Holy Spirit; (5) **persistent and unremitting resistance to the Spirit's work as he brings conviction of sin and reveals the need for repentance and faith**. The last probably is the best interpretation, for rejection of the Spirit's work renders faith impossible and salvation unattainable (cf. Acts 7:51). One thing is clear. Anyone concerned about this sin has nothing to fear, for such a concern witnesses to a sensitivity and openness to the Spirit's work, which those who have sinned in this way do not possess.²

3. Don't worry about what you will say when confronted regarding your faith. The Holy Ghost will tell you what to say. Just be willing to open your mouth.

Moses was afraid that he would not be eloquent or know what to say to Pharaoh. God told him, "Who made man's mouth." In other words, God told Moses that He would give Him the words to say.

"Now therefore go, and I will be with thy mouth, and teach thee what thou shalt say." (Exodus 4:12)

God will give us the words to say also, if we are unashamed and bold in our faith.

Conclusion

Jesus has taught us that we need to be far more concerned about pleasing Him and standing for Him in a world that is becoming increasingly antagonistic toward Him. We need to pick a side, and stand boldly for the right team.

"For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ: for it is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth; to the Jew first, and also to the Greek. For therein is the righteousness of God revealed from faith to faith: as it is written, The just shall live by faith." (Romans 1:16-17)

¹ Swindoll, Charles R.. *Insights on Luke (Swindoll's Living Insights New Testament Commentary Book 3)* (pp. 352-353). Tyndale House Publishers, Inc.. Kindle Edition.

² Robert H. Stein, *Luke*, vol. 24, The New American Commentary (Nashville: Broadman & Holman Publishers, 1992), 348–349.