

ST JOSEPH THE WORKER
ROMAN CATHOLIC CHURCH



LUKE 12

Treasures in Heaven

Living Free from Fear and Greed: Luke 12

Luke 12 provides profound teachings on living out authentic discipleship, urging freedom from hypocrisy, fear, greed, and anxiety. It calls for an undivided heart for God's kingdom, constant readiness for Christ's return, and discernment of spiritual realities. This way, we're encouraged to live with courageous faith, contentment, vigilance, and wise understanding of God's unfolding plan.

Verses 1-3: Beware of the Leaven of the Pharisees

Jesus warns His disciples about the hypocrisy of the Pharisees, likening it to leaven and emphasizing that hidden things will be revealed.

Verses 4-12: Confessing Christ Before Men

Jesus encourages His followers to fear God rather than people, promising the Holy Spirit's guidance when they are brought before synagogues and rulers because of their faith.

Verses 13-21: The Parable of the Rich Fool

Jesus warns against greed and the folly of relying solely on earthly wealth, illustrated through the parable of the rich fool.

Verses 22-34: Do Not Worry

Jesus teaches about the Father's care and provision, urging His followers to seek His kingdom instead of worrying about material needs.

Verses 35-48: Watchfulness

Jesus underscores the importance of vigilance and readiness for His return, illustrating with the parables of the servants waiting for their master and the faithful steward.

Verses 49-53: Not Peace but Division

Jesus speaks about the divisions that His coming will bring, disrupting false peace.

Verses 54-59: Interpreting the Times and Settling with Your Adversary

Jesus criticizes the crowd's ability to predict weather but their inability to interpret the present time. He also advises settling with adversaries before reaching court.

In Luke 12, Jesus offers invaluable insights into the life of discipleship. Confronting the themes of fear, greed, vigilance, and judgment, He provides instructions on how His followers should live - free from hypocrisy, courageous in the proclamation of faith, contented and free from materialistic anxiety, always ready for His return, and able to discern the times.

Themes

Fear and Courage

Greed and Contentment

Vigilance and Faithfulness

Divisions and Judgment

Topics

Beware of the Leaven of the Pharisees

Confessing Christ Before Men

The Parable of the Rich Fool

Do Not Worry

Watchfulness

Not Peace but Division

Interpreting the Times

Settling with Your Adversary

People

Jesus

The Disciples

The Crowd

The Rich Fool

The Pharisees

Locations

The place where Jesus was speaking to His disciples and a crowd of thousands

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Luke 12

Warnings and Encouragements

¹ Meanwhile, when a crowd of many thousands had gathered, so that they were trampling on one another, Jesus began to speak first to his disciples, saying:

“Be on your guard against the yeast of the Pharisees, which is hypocrisy.

² There is nothing concealed that will not be disclosed, or hidden that will not be made known.

³ What you have said in the dark will be heard in the daylight, and what you have whispered in the ear in the inner rooms will be proclaimed from the roofs.

⁴ “I tell you, my friends, do not be afraid of those who kill the body and after that can do no more.

⁵ But I will show you whom you should fear: Fear him who, after your body has been killed, has authority to throw you into hell.

Yes, I tell you, fear him.

⁶ Are not five sparrows sold for two pennies?

Yet not one of them is forgotten by God.

⁷ Indeed, the very hairs of your head are all numbered.

12:1 “Thousands”, The word strictly means “ten thousand” but was used generally of any large number. Jesus’ teaching was addressed primarily to His disciples, though the crowds would also have heard and profited.

12:2, 3 On Judgment Day everything will be brought into the open; all hypocrisy will be unmasked.

12:3 inner rooms. Mud brick walls could be dug through, so storerooms where valuables could be kept were well away from outside the walls (and therefore secret)

12:5 authority to cast into hell. Only God has this power. The word translated “hell” here is Gehenna, the place of final punishment (not Hades, a general word for the place of all the dead). Gehenna derives from Hebrew words meaning “valley of Hinnom,” located outside Jerusalem

12:6 five sparrows sold for two pennies. The “pennies” are the assarion,

Don't be afraid; you are worth more than many sparrows.

⁸ "I tell you, whoever publicly acknowledges me before others, the Son of Man will also acknowledge before the angels of God.

⁹ But whoever disowns me before others will be disowned before the angels of God.

¹⁰ And everyone who speaks a word against the Son of Man will be forgiven,

but anyone who blasphemes against the Holy Spirit will not be forgiven.

¹¹ "When you are brought before synagogues, rulers and authorities, do not worry about how you will defend yourselves or what you will say,

¹² for the Holy Spirit will teach you at that time what you should say."

The Parable of the Rich Fool

¹³ Someone in the crowd said to him, "Teacher, tell my brother to divide the inheritance with me."

¹⁴ Jesus replied,

"Man, who appointed me a judge or an arbiter between you?"

¹⁵ Then he said to them,

"Watch out! Be on your guard against all kinds of greed; life does not consist in an abundance of possessions."

¹⁶ And he told them this parable:

"The ground of a certain rich man yielded an abundant harvest.

¹⁷ He thought to himself, 'What shall I do? I have no place to store my crops.'

¹⁸ "Then he said, 'This is what I'll do. I will tear down my barns and build bigger ones, and there I will store my surplus grain.

¹⁹ And I'll say to myself, 'You have plenty of grain laid up for many years. Take life easy; eat, drink and be merry.'"

²⁰ "But God said to him, 'You fool! This very night your life will be demanded from you.

Then who will get what you have prepared for yourself?'

²¹ "This is how it will be with whoever stores up things for themselves but is not rich toward God."

Do Not Worry

²² Then Jesus said to his disciples:

"Therefore, I tell you, do not worry about your life, what you will eat; or about your body, what you will wear.

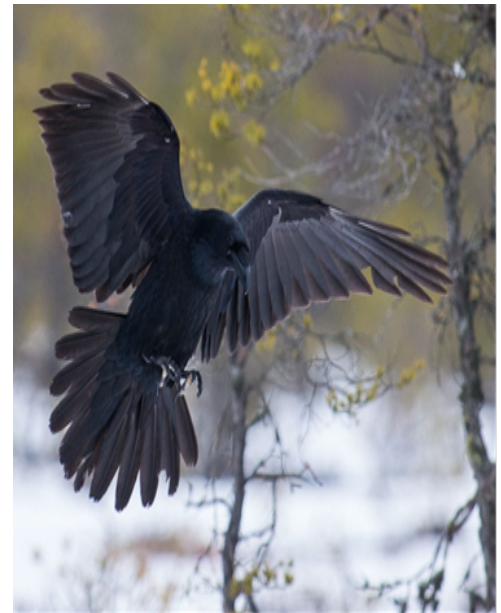
²³ For life is more than food, and the body more than clothes.

²⁴ Consider the ravens:

equal to one-sixteenth of a denarius (a typical day's wage). Five sparrows sold for roughly an hour's pay, but God remembers them all.

12:10 Blasphemy against the Holy Spirit attributes to Satan the work of the Holy Spirit through Christ in the face of overwhelming moral evidence to the contrary. Such deliberate rejection of the truth is a decisive rejection of the One (the Holy Spirit) who can bring a person to repentance and faith; such sin makes forgiveness impossible.

12:13 The rule for inheritance was given in Deut. 21:17, and cases in dispute were often settled by rabbis. This man clearly wanted only a decision in his favor; he was not seeking a just arbitration.



Raven

12:22-34 Jesus provides four weighty arguments against anxiety. First, concern for worldly goods is foolish because life itself is more important (v. 23). Second, God will

They do not sow or reap; they have no storeroom or barn; yet God feeds them.

And how much more valuable you are than birds!

²⁵ Who of you by worrying can add a single hour to your life?

²⁶ Since you cannot do this very little thing, why do you worry about the rest?

²⁷ “Consider how the wild flowers grow.

They do not labor or spin.

Yet I tell you, not even Solomon in all his splendor was dressed like one of these.

²⁸ If that is how God clothes the grass of the field, which is here today, and tomorrow is thrown into the fire, how much more will he clothe you—you of little faith!

²⁹ And do not set your heart on what you will eat or drink; do not worry about it.

³⁰ For the pagan world runs after all such things, and your FATHER knows that you need them.

³¹ But seek his kingdom, and these things will be given to you as well.

³² “Do not be afraid, little flock, for your Father has been pleased to give you the kingdom.

³³ Sell your possessions and give to the poor.

Provide purses for yourselves that will not wear out, a treasure in heaven that will never fail, where no thief comes near and no moth destroys.

³⁴ For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also.

Watchfulness

³⁵ “Be dressed ready for service and keep your lamps burning,

³⁶ like servants waiting for their master to return from a wedding banquet, so that when he comes and knocks, they can immediately open the door for him.

³⁷ It will be good for those servants whose master finds them watching when he comes.

Truly I tell you, he will dress himself to serve, will have them recline at the table and will come and wait on them.

³⁸ It will be good for those servants whose master finds them ready, even if he comes in the middle of the night or toward daybreak.

³⁹ But understand this: If the owner of the house had known at what hour the thief was coming, he would not have let his house be broken into.

⁴⁰ You also must be ready, because the Son of Man will come at an hour when you do not expect him.”

⁴¹ Peter asked, “Lord, are you telling this parable to us, or to

take care of His own, just as He cares for the birds of the air (v. 24). Third, anxiety accomplishes nothing (vv. 25, 26). Finally, as heirs of the inexhaustible riches of the kingdom of God, believers should not worry about earthly details (vv. 32, 33). Jesus calls His followers to order their priorities correctly by focusing their hearts on the kingdom (v. 34).

12:25 a single hour to his span of life. Or, “make his life any longer.”

12:27 lilies. It is not certain what precise flower is meant. Solomon was proverbial for his wealth and splendor.

12:31 seek his kingdom. The disciples were already in the kingdom. Therefore, they should concentrate their energies on the interests of that kingdom.

12:33 Sell your possessions, and give to the needy. Central to this verse is the contrast between earthly goods that are perishable and a source of anxiety, and the treasures of the kingdom of God that are a lasting source of peace. Some of Jesus’ followers had at least moderate wealth (10:38; John 19:27), and He is not demanding that all His disciples be poor. But they must be generous and not set their hearts on earthly possessions (v. 34).

12:35 dressed for action. That is, to be ready for service. Long robes hindered free movement and were kept above the knees with a belt when necessary.

12:37 dress himself. This is a reversal of roles, the master taking the place of the servant (cf. 22:27).

12:38 second watch, or . . . third. The **Jews divided the night into three watches** (Judg. 7:19), and the **Romans into four**. Jesus uses the Jewish division here. These servants watch for their master throughout the night.

everyone?”

42 The Lord answered, “Who then is the faithful and wise manager, whom the master puts in charge of his servants to give them their food allowance at the proper time?

43 It will be good for that servant whom the master finds doing so when he returns.

44 Truly I tell you; he will put him in charge of all his possessions.

45 But suppose the servant says to himself, ‘My master is taking a long time in coming,’ and he then begins to beat the other servants, both men and women, and to eat and drink and get drunk.

46 The master of that servant will come on a day when he does not expect him and at an hour, he is not aware of. He will cut him to pieces and assign him a place with the unbelievers.

47 “The servant who knows the master’s will and does not get ready or does not do what the master wants will be beaten with many blows.

48 But the one who does not know and does things deserving punishment will be beaten with few blows. From everyone who has been given much, much will be demanded; and from the one who has been entrusted with much, much more will be asked.

Not Peace but Division

49 “I have come to bring fire on the earth, and how I wish it were already kindled!

50 But I have a **baptism to undergo**, and what constraint I am under until it is completed!

51 Do you think I came to bring peace on earth? No, I tell you, but division.

52 From now on there will be five in one family divided against each other, three against two and two against three.

53 They will be divided, father against son and son against father, mother against daughter and daughter against mother, mother-in-law against daughter-in-law and daughter-in-law against mother-in-law.”

Interpreting the Times

54 He said to the crowd: “When you see a cloud rising in the west, immediately you say, ‘It’s going to rain,’ and it does.

55 And when the south wind blows, you say, ‘It’s going to be hot,’ and it is.

56 Hypocrites! You know how to interpret the appearance of the earth and the sky. How is it that you don’t know how to interpret this present time?

57 “Why don’t you judge for yourselves what is right?

58 As you are going with your adversary to the magistrate, try hard to be reconciled on the way, or your adversary may drag you off to

12:42 faithful and wise manager. The manager was a slave put in charge of the whole estate by the owner. The owner was free from the burden of administration and the manager had considerable authority.

12:44 all his possessions. The reward of faithful service is the opportunity to perform higher service.

12:45, 46 The punishment for failure to make proper use of opportunities for service is severe.

12:47, 48 People are punished for failing to do right as well as for doing wrong. Ignorance can be blameworthy when there is the opportunity to know what is required. God makes His people’s duty plain (Rom. 1:20; 2:14, 15)

12:49 fire. The fire of judgment.

12:50 **baptism.** Jesus’ death is also a “baptism,” another image that points to death (to “baptize” a city was to subject it to near total destruction). Liturgically, baptism came to symbolize death to an old way of life and rising to a new way. Jesus accepted His own death as the divine plan for bringing salvation to sinners.

12:54–56 The people could discern that a west wind (from the Mediterranean) meant rain and a south wind (from the desert) meant heat. But they did not discern what God was doing in their midst.

12:57–59 In legal matters, anyone with a bad case does well to secure an out-of-court settlement before the case comes to trial.

the judge, and the judge turn you over to the officer, and the officer throw you into prison. ⁵⁹I tell you; you will not get out until you have paid the last penny.”

Footnotes

- a. Luke 12:1 Or *speak to his disciples, saying: “First of all, be*
- b. Luke 12:25 Or *single cubit to your height*

Sinners should be reconciled to God now; they will perish if they wait until Judgment Day.

Bible Study Questions

1. What does Jesus' warning about the leaven of the Pharisees teach us about religious hypocrisy?
2. How can Jesus' promise of the Holy Spirit's guidance bring comfort in times of persecution or trial?
3. How does the parable of the rich fool challenge societal values relate to wealth and success?
4. In what ways does Jesus' teaching on worry speak to your current anxieties and concerns?
5. How can the call to watchfulness in anticipation of Jesus' return shape our daily lives and priorities?
6. What do you think Jesus meant when He said He came to bring division, not peace?
7. How does Jesus' admonition to settle with our adversaries speak to conflict resolution in our lives?
8. What can we learn from Jesus' rebuke of the crowd's inability to interpret the times?
9. How can the teachings about fear and courage impact your approach to sharing your faith?
10. How does the parable of the rich fool speak to the modern obsession with wealth and accumulation?
11. What practical steps can you take to pursue the kingdom of God above material needs, as Jesus taught?
12. In what ways can you cultivate a spirit of readiness and watchfulness in your spiritual life?
13. How does Jesus' teaching on division challenge common ideas about the effects of the Gospel?
14. How can Jesus' advice on settling with an adversary guide us in dealing with conflicts or disputes?
15. How does Jesus' critique of the crowd's discernment challenge us to understand current events in light of God's kingdom?
16. How does the metaphor of leaven help us understand the pervasive nature of hypocrisy?
17. How can the teachings on worry and God's provision reshape our understanding of God's care for us?
18. How can the parable of the faithful steward inspire you in your service to God?

- 19.** How does Jesus' teaching on division affect your understanding of family and community relationships?
- 20.** How can you improve your ability to 'interpret the times' in light of God's word and His kingdom's priorities?