

Fearful, Yet Not Afraid (Luke 12:4-12)

I. Introduction

A. *This Week in Clear Living*

1. God provides our righteousness through Jesus Christ.
2. As our Provider, God deserves our complete reverence and devotion.
3. God has provided the only path to salvation through Jesus.
4. God has provided His Spirit to lead you in answering your persecutions.
5. God's provision for our physical needs frees us to pursue His kingdom.

B. My opinion is that this lesson should be entitled, "Fearful, Yet Not Deterred" or "Fearful, Yet Not Stopped."

C. Notes on Luke 12.

1. This message immediately followed Jesus' rebuke of the Pharisees and the scribes.
2. Dr. J. Vernon McGee indicated that this chapter begins the time when Jesus was most popular.
 - a. The crowds were extremely large.
 - b. Jesus healed many.
3. Dr. Craig Evans wrote that Luke 12 can be divided into 11 small units. Our lesson deals with two of them.
 - a. A warning against hypocrisy
 - b. A message about whom we should fear
 - c. Encouraging people to confess Jesus before others.

Question: Why do we sometimes have to listen so carefully?

D. In Luke 12:1, Jesus warned the people about receiving the false teaching of the Pharisees.

1. "Beware ye of the leaven of the Pharisees, which is hypocrisy."
 - a. Beware (*prosecho*) - to turn the mind to, attend to be attentive.
 - 1) The disciples were told to pay close attention to what the Pharisees were teaching and to not be easily fooled.
 - 2) Many times in life, we need to exercise the same kind of attention.
 - b. Leaven (*zume*) - metaphorically, of inveterate mental and moral corruption, viewed in its tendency to infect others. Leaven is applied to that which, though small in quantity, yet by its influence thoroughly pervades a thing.
 - c. Hypocrisy (*upokrisis*) - the acting of a stage player.
2. Despite the large number of people, the verse says that Jesus began telling His disciples first.
 - a. Other people were around.
 - b. But initially, His message was not intended for everyone's ears.

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3. **Many people in this world like to exercise control over others. Many people in this world are willing to trick people out of their money. We need to be on guard against such individuals.**
 - a. Most treacherous dictators have crowd appeal.
 - b. Many professionals (doctors, lawyers, financial analysts, politicians, and preachers) play on peoples' vulnerabilities.
- E. In Luke 12:2-3, Jesus warned that nothing would be hidden forever.
 1. Eventually, the Pharisees hypocrisy would be revealed.
 2. Eventually, all false teachers would be revealed.
 3. We sometimes think that evil will reign forever and that false teachers will never be caught, but Jesus told His disciples that that was not true.
 4. Therefore, we should be upright and proclaim the truth from the housetops for all to hear.

Question: Do Jesus' words to His disciples in Luke 12:1-12 apply to everyone or just to His original twelve disciples? He called those twelve His friends. Are we also His friends?

- II. In Luke 12:4-12, Jesus encouraged His disciples to not be afraid.
 - A. In verse 4, He told them to not be afraid of those that can only harm the body.
 1. Friend (***philos***) - he who associates familiarly with one, a companion.
 2. John 15:13 says, "Greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends."
 - a. We are the friends of Jesus.
 - b. He laid down His life for us because He loves us.
 3. How do we become a friend of God?
 - a. **Believe the Lord and trust in Him.** James 2:23 says, "And the scripture was fulfilled which saith, Abraham believed God, and it was imputed unto him for righteousness: and he was called the Friend of God."
 - b. **Resist friendship with the world.** James 4:4 says, "Ye adulterers and adulteresses, know ye not that the friendship of the world is enmity with God? whosoever therefore will be a friend of the world is the enemy of God."
 - B. In verse 5, Jesus forewarns His disciples to fear the One that condemn a soul to everlasting torment..
 1. Forewarn (***hupodeiknumi***) - to make known future things
 2. Hell (***geenna***) - Hell is the place of the future punishment call "Gehenna" or "Gehenna of fire". This was originally the valley of Hinnom, south of Jerusalem, where the filth and dead animals of the city were cast out and burned; a fit symbol of the wicked and their future destruction.

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- a. People before Christ went to Hades when they died. There was a compartment for the saved dead and one for the unsaved dead (see Luke 16:23 (*hades*)).
- b. To the scribes and Pharisees: Matthew 23:33 says, "Ye serpents, ye generation of vipers, how can ye escape the damnation of hell?"
- c. To those that reject Christ: Mark 9:43-44 says, "And if thy hand offend thee, cut it off: it is better for thee to enter into life maimed, than having two hands to go into hell, into the fire that never shall be quenched: Where their worm dieth not, and the fire is not quenched."
- C. In verses 6-7, Jesus tells His disciples that they are important to God.
 1. God cares for the lowly sparrows. He will care for them.
 2. God has numbered the hairs in our head. Nothing escapes him.
- D. In verses 8-9, Jesus told His disciples about the importance of confessing Him to others.
 1. Confess (*homologeō*) - to profess one's self the worshipper of one, to praise, or to celebrate.
 2. Angels (*aggelos*) - a messenger, envoy, one who is sent, an angel, a messenger from God.
 3. Deny (*arneomai*) - not to accept, to reject, to refuse something offered, or to deny, abnegate, abjure.
- E. Jesus is talking about how the disciples would respond to religious pressure.
 1. *Rejecting false doctrine would not hurt them from an eternal perspective.*
 2. *They should not be bothered by thoughts of entering the afterlife.*
 3. *God takes care of His own.*
 4. *There are consequences when a person does not accept the offered sacrifice of Jesus.*
 5. *If a person receives Christ as their Savior, then they are already confessing Him.*

Question: What is the unpardonable sin? Who can be guilty?

III. The unpardonable sin.

- A. Luke 12:10 says, "And whosoever shall speak a word against the Son of man, it shall be forgiven him: but unto him that blasphemeth against the Holy Ghost it shall not be forgiven."
 1. Against (*eis*) - A reference to something that has happened.
 - a. In this case the person has spoken against Jesus, and that person can be forgiven.
 - b. The same word is used in John 3:16 for "in", and the meaning is the same as having entered into a relationship with Jesus.

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2. Blaspheme (***blasphemeo***) - to speak reproachfully, rail at, or revile.
Revelation 13:6 says, "And he opened his mouth in blasphemy against God, to blaspheme his name, and his tabernacle, and them that dwell in heaven."
 3. Forgiven (***aphiemi***) - to let go, let alone, let be.
- B. Dr. McGee wrote that blaspheming or speaking negatively does not condemn a person. But rejecting or refusing the convicting, saving work of the Holy Spirit does.

Question: The early church debated whether lapsers should be allowed back into their congregation. Can a person deny the Lord and still be saved? Should lapsers be allowed back into the church?

IV. A Problem in the Early Church

- A. Not everyone in the early church chose to be martyred.
 1. Some people denied the Lord and lived.
 2. Later they tried to come back into the church, which caused a controversy.
 3. The people that had denied Christ to avoid death were called "lapsers," to suggest that they had a lapse of memory at the time of danger and a restored memory when the danger had passed.
- B. In verses 11-12, Jesus talked about more serious persecution.
 1. He implied that His disciples would be brought before councils.
 2. John and Peter had that experience in Acts 4:1-21.
 3. The Apostle Paul was frequently threatened because of His faith.
 4. Ten of the remaining eleven disciples were martyred.
 5. Over three million early Church Christians were martyred.
- C. Jesus promised that He would never leave them (Matthew 28:19-20).
- D. We can trust Him.

V. Next week's lesson: "Blessed Servants" (Luke 12:35-48)