



**** All Past Bible Studies are available at <https://capitolcom.org/bible-studies/alabama/> ****

Luke 12:1-34 – Godly Fear Casts Out Worldly Fear

“Fear him who, after he has killed, has authority to cast into hell” ... “Fear not, little flock, for it is your Father’s good pleasure to give you the kingdom.” -- Jesus, Luke 12:5, 32

Our verses above appear contradictory but are actually not. **Read Luke 12:1-7.** We often see Jesus tell His disciples to “fear not”, as in verse 7, but He also carefully taught much of what we know about hell. After just pronouncing the six woes against the Pharisees and lawyers, Jesus experiences peak popularity, with Luke telling us in verse 1 that “many thousands” are turning out—so many that people are getting hurt. Jesus turns to His own and warns them about the “leaven of the Pharisees”, hypocrisy. Since we are all equally prone to such a charge what exactly is Jesus implying? Leaven symbolizes influence. When the Israelites left Egypt they celebrated the first Passover with unleavened bread, symbolizing leaving the Egyptian cultural influences (and false religions) behind. In the N.T., the same word used here most often is associated with a warning to beware the negative influences of the teachers. (See Matt 16:11-12 where we are explicitly told leaven stood for the teachings of both the Pharisees and Sadducees.) Now Jesus tells His disciples that their teaching is hypocritical because they ignored the heart, or inner man, and will be exposed as such by revelation, as is everything we do. God is always more concerned about who we really are on the inside (1 Samuel 16:7).

Because these religious leaders ruled by intimidation, Jesus looks ahead to the coming persecutions they will face and reminds them to only fear the One who can put them into eternal torment. Their coming spiritual transformation will equip them to stand against the powerful, even to martyrdom for most of them. Also, the One Who cares for a few sparrows and provides for them will do so much more for those He calls and adopts as His own. Tragically, Judas Iscariot hears this warning and will not heed it. The worst any man can do to us is take our life. But we know from 2 Corinthians 5:8 that to be separated from our body—by death—means our souls are present with the Lord in glory, to our benefit. Keeping in mind that our lives are momentary sufferings compared to an eternity with our Creator should help us prioritize better.

It is not enough to rest in our salvation status, we are also called to testify. **Read 12:8-12.** Jesus teaches them about their duties after He departs the world. Once they receive the Holy Spirit (see Acts 2), their duty is to stand up and bear witness of the Son of Man. He expects us to boldly do this because we already know there

Capitol Commission state ministers are pastor-missionaries who in session teach weekly verse-by-verse Bible studies for all those in our state capitols. The Bible studies are hand distributed to each legislative office, are available online at capitolcom.org, and shared across the Capitol Commission community. This ministry is an extension of the church seeking to proclaim the gospel message and help believers mature through Biblical expositional instruction. Prayer is foundational to this ministry, consistent with proper submission to governmental authority (Rom 13:1-7) and obedient to the command to pray for our appointed leaders (1 Tim 2:1-4).

Our desire is to witness God’s work in transforming hearts.
 Capitol Commission is a non-political and non-lobbying 501(c)(3).

is actually nothing to fear. When you stand for Christ, He promises to stand for you, before the Father and the heavenly host of angels! Conversely, when anyone denies Him, He will also deny them. Heaven forbid that is any of us! In this passage Jesus clearly positions Himself as the only mediator between God and man (1 Tim 2:5). Going on, Jesus teaches that even a word spoken against Him can be forgiven but to blaspheme the Holy Spirit there will not be forgiveness. Does this contradict what He said in verse 9? To acknowledge or deny Christ implies that you already know Him, so your response indicates whether you accept His offer of salvation or not. To simply speak against Christ is still forgivable, especially if someone cares enough to confront the one doing it and instruct him or her toward faith. But to blaspheme the Spirit becomes unforgivable because it is the Spirit's work on us that forgives us. This indicates one who rejects God's offer of salvation and, since it is the only way to Him, rejects God. That Spirit saves, transforms, seals (guarantees) us, and, in verses 11 and 12, gives us the message to share, even when taken forcibly before society leaders.

A person interrupts Jesus to ask Him to force his brother to share an inheritance, leading to another teaching parable. **Read verses 13-21.** For someone to seek arbitration from the Lord, there may have been an inheritance problem. Perhaps this person was the younger son and thinks Jesus will take his side, exert moral authority and force the elder to divide what was rightfully his. But notice Jesus did not come to right all the wrongs of His society, or ours, but instead to reach the hearts of the hearers. So, He begins teaching against covetousness, which is the sin of desiring what someone else has (as forbidden by Commandment 10 of 10). Note two things here: 1) Jesus is a judge, but over much weightier and eternal matters than this man's legal quarrel, and 2) that our lives are not measured by material worth. What do we make of the parable of the "rich fool"? Jesus does not condemn wealth here, that is not what makes the man a fool. What makes him a fool is he was greedy and squandered his wealth solely for his existence here, in this life, while not storing up any true treasure for the life to come. This theme is taken up again in the next section.

Read verses 22-34. This may be a familiar lesson, taught often to help us feel less anxious. How we live, the things we consume, are not to consume us! Using the birds and the flowers, as He did earlier in the sermon on the mount (Matt 6:25-33), Jesus teaches the disciples to trust God's provision for today and to focus on the His kingdom for the future. To worry when you have a Father in heaven with all the capabilities of the universe is indeed foolish, especially if you are trusting instead in your own wealth. The rich fool had trusted his wealth to give him joyful merriment for the rest of his days, but God took his life that night. Conversely, we cannot add a day to our lives by worry, which takes any trust in wealth and makes it seem larger than God Himself. Jesus closes with an admonition to not fear because the Father wants to give us the kingdom, so be kingdom-minded in how you invest. That means use today's money to store up true riches in a 100% protected account "in the heavens". It does not fail, is not subject to theft, and nothing can destroy it. And, it reveals where your heart, your inner man, is truly focused.

Question To Ponder Further: *Psalm 111:10 teaches us "the fear of the LORD is the beginning of wisdom". Do you rightly fear God or have you settled into a familiarity with the divine One that sometimes breeds contempt, takes Him for granted? During this Holy Week, strive to see Him with fresh eyes, remembering to fear Him and not man, trusting that this fearsome One promises to love and keep us who believe for eternity.*

Contact Information:

Ron Comoglio, Alabama State Minister
Ron.Comoglio@capitolcom.org
Ph: 334-476-9333

**NOTE: Our Final Bible Study Meets Next Tuesday, April 7th at 11:00 a.m. in Room 602
If you cannot make it, don't worry! A copy will still be delivered to every Legislator's office**