



Luke 12

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Tape #8056
By Chuck Smith

Gospel according to Luke chapter twelve. Last Sunday night, we left Jesus in the midst of a heated debate. I think that they even got to the place of yelling at Jesus. They were egging Him on. He was really laying it on the Pharisees. The lawyer said, Well what about us? He said, Okay and He laid it on them. And then they began to bait Him. They began to urge Him as they were getting so upset and angry over the things they were saying. And so it was just really developing into a real kind of a shouting match. And that's where chapter twelve begins right at the, they were laying in wait for Him seeking to catch something out of His mouth that they might accuse Him. They were urging Him vehemently, provoking Him to speak about many things. And so when you get a heated kind of a debate or argument going, it attracts attention. It draws people.

In the mean time [as this is going on], when there were gathered together an innumerable multitude of people, insomuch they began to trample over each other (12:1),

People were just trying to get close trampling over each other. Trying to hear just all that was going on in this heated debate between Jesus and the religious leaders. He turned to His disciples. Now this is addressed to His disciples,

he said first of all, Beware of the leaven of the Pharisees, which is hypocrisy (12:1).

To His disciples He is warning them to beware of hypocrisy. The word hypocrisy comes from the Greek word hupokrisis. Literally it means wearing a mask. In the Greek theater, the actors used to have these masks that they would hold over their faces. The wearing of a mask. Hiding behind a mask. And Jesus is saying, Beware of this hiding behind a mask, of hypocrisy. Of appearing to be something that you're really not. What a curse hypocrisy has been to the church. Jesus is saying this to His disciples. But what a curse hypocrisy has been to the church where people are pretending to be something they are not. Where people are wearing masks.

For [Jesus said] there is nothing covered, that shall not be revealed (12:2);

You might be trying to cover the truth. You might be trying to hide behind the mask. You might have an appearance of being one thing when in reality you're something else. But it's going to be revealed, it's going to come out.

neither anything hid, that shall not be known (12:2).

We have seen in the last few years many people who were hiding behind masks. And we have seen the truth revealed. So many of those who were on TV, famous TV personalities who were really masking the truth. They were one thing on television but they were something totally different when the cameras were off. And they have been exposed and are being exposed. So Jesus warns them. And I think that Jesus is very gracious and He's very patient. And He gives warning. It is only after the warnings have been disregarded that then the Lord takes the next step and He exposes and He reveals the hypocrisy that is there.

I think that that's probably one of the inherent dangers with television is that so often the temptation is to appear to be something that you're not. Of course, you're all made up to begin with. You have a mask to start with. And you then have a way of sort of being on stage, performing, and it's not always in your heart. People are being deceived. But the Lord said, Look, it's going to be revealed. There's nothing hidden that He's not going to expose.

Therefore whatever you have spoken in darkness [off stage, off of the camera] shall be heard in the light; and that which you have spoken in the ear in closets shall be proclaimed from the housetops (12:3).

You're not going to get by with your double life, with your double standards. God will make certain that it is exposed and that it is revealed.

And I say unto you my friends, Be not afraid of them that kill the body, and after that have no more that they can do (12:4).

The disciples of Jesus are seeing the anger that people have against Jesus. They are seeing these men that are baiting Jesus, yelling at Jesus. They can see the vein sticking out at their neck as they are faced with the truth that Jesus is piercing their hearts and they're angry. And the disciples can see this. And Jesus, talking to His disciples, more or less is saying, You see this anger, you see how upset they are, they're going to be angry and upset with you. They're going to kill some of you. But don't be afraid of those who can kill your body and after that they have no power.

But [I say unto you] I will forewarn you whom you shall fear: Fear him, which after he hath killed hath power to cast into Gehenna; yea, I say unto you, Fear him (12:5).

In the Bible, we have the places of punishment for the evil that are spoken of. And there is that place called Hades and it is translated hell. In the Hebrew the word is Sheol, and in the Hebrew it's the word for grave. In the Greek it is Hades and it is the place of incarceration or the place where the dead exists. Prior to the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ, it was divided into two compartments as we will find out as we move along in Luke's gospel chapter sixteen. And we'll look at this place called Hades more completely when we get to chapter sixteen.

But then there is another place of punishment for the wicked and that is the eternal place of punishment and in the Hebrew, it is called Gehenna. And when Jesus speaks of Gehenna, He speaks in terms of the eternal punishment. Concerning Gehenna He said, "Where the worm dieth not, and neither is the fire quenched" (Mark 9:44). Here He uses the word Gehenna. "Don't fear him who can kill your body but after that doesn't have any power. But rather, fear the one who can kill your body but then cast your soul into Gehenna; yes, I say, Fear Him."

One day, death and Hades will give up the dead which are in them and they will stand before the great white throne judgment of God. And those whose names are not found written in the book of life will then be cast into Gehenna. This is the second death, the scripture said. So Gehenna, the place of God's final disposition of the wicked and Jesus said concerning Gehenna, that it was prepared for Satan and his followers. So we'll, as I say, get more involved in that when we get to the sixteenth chapter. But know that when you talk about hell, there are two Greek words that are both translated hell in your Bible. One is Hades and the other is Gehenna. Hades is a temporary place in the heart of the earth. Gehenna is the eternal place of separation from those who do not want to be with God.

Then Jesus said,

Are not five sparrows sold for two farthings, and not one of them is forgotten before God (12:6)?

A farthing is a half of a cent. Two farthings would be a cent. And in those days you could buy five sparrows for two farthings. Luke's gospel declares that Jesus one time was saying, Are not two sparrows sold for a farthing? So evidently, two for one but you can get five for two. In other words, buy four of them and they'll throw in the extra one free. They're not worth much. And that's what Jesus is saying. Sparrows aren't worth very much. They're a very, but yet your Father watches over them and not one of them is forgotten before God. Every sparrow, God is very watchful over His creation, even the sparrows. Jesus in another place said, Not a sparrow falls to the ground but what your Father isn't aware of it. And yet they're quite insignificant. There are so many of them and yet your Father watches them. And then He said,

But even the very hairs of your head are all numbered (12:7).

They say that blondes have 125,000 hair on their heads, and that brunettes have 95,000, and that red heads have 85,000. I don't know who counted them but that's what they say, whoever they are. But Jesus again is just illustrating how that your Father is omniscient, He knows all things. And nothing passes Him. Every minute detail of your life is of concern to Him. That's how observant and concerned your heavenly Father is with you. Therefore, Jesus said, you're worth more. Your Father watching over you.

Fear not therefore: because you are of more value than many sparrows. Also I say unto you [still addressing His disciples], Whosoever shall confess me before men, him shall the Son of man also confess before the angels of God: But he that denieth me before men shall be denied before the angels of God. 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 (12:7-10).

Matthew and Mark have the warning of the blasphemy against the Holy Spirit, coupled with the casting

out of the demon of the man who was deaf and mute and blind, where they attributed the works of Jesus to Beelzebub. Here Jesus again is warning against the blasphemy of the Holy Spirit which I believe is the continual rejection of the witness of the Holy Spirit to your heart that you need to surrender your life to Jesus Christ.

You see, God has provided only one means by which your sins can be forgiven. And that's through the death of His Son. And the Holy Spirit bears witness to your heart that you need to surrender your life to Jesus. And if you disregard that warning, if you do despite to His Spirit of grace that is reaching out and offering you the salvation, there is no other means whereby your sins can be forgiven and your sins will either be forgiven and pardoned because of the work of Jesus Christ, or they will be punished in Gehenna. So beware of that turning your back upon the witness of the Holy Spirit to your heart inviting you to receive Jesus Christ as Lord.

And when they bring you unto the synagogues, and unto magistrates, and powers, take no thought how or what thing you're going to answer, or what you're going to say: For the Holy Ghost shall teach you in the same hour what ye ought to say (12:11,12).

Notice this. Number one, your Father very concerned with you, He knows the minute details of your life. He's watching over you. You don't have to fear. Secondly, Jesus is going to confess you before the holy angels. Thirdly, the Holy Spirit is going to come to your aid when you're brought before the tribunals and all. You're not going to have to worry about your defense, the Holy Spirit will give you the words of defense. I think that one of the classic examples of the Holy Spirit really giving the words for defense is found in the book of Acts when Stephen is brought before the council and you read the defense of Stephen before the council. It is absolutely a classic. So then of course, Paul when he stood before the various judges and all, his answers to them also very classic. And so Jesus said, You don't have to worry about what you're going say. The Holy Spirit will give you in that hour the things that you are to say. So Acts chapter seven, the defense of Stephen. You might read it over with this context.

But notice, the Father, the Son and the Spirit, all committed to you. Father watching over you. You don't have to fear. Jesus confessing you before the holy angels. And now the Spirit there to assist you when you stand before the tribunal.

At this point, Jesus is interrupted by someone in the crowd. Evidently not one of the disciples.

And one of the company [the crowd that was there] said, Master, speak to my brother, that he divide the inheritance with me (12:13).

He's asking Jesus to arbitrate in a dispute between his brother and himself over an inheritance.

And Jesus said unto him, Man, who made me a judge or a divider over you? And he said unto them (12:14,15),

Probably both of the brothers who were fighting over this inheritance,

Take heed, and beware of covetousness (12:15):

To covet is a sin. One of the ten commandments deals with coveting. It is one of the Thou shalt not. Thou shalt not covet thy neighbor's house, thy neighbor's wife, thy neighbor's servant, or anything that is thy neighbor's.

Paul the apostle said that he really didn't understand this law, until the Spirit really quickened it to his heart. Because coveting is something that is not an overt activity. It's something that goes on inside. And he said I didn't know that to covet was sin except the law said, Thou shalt not covet. And when he came to the understanding that this is dealing with an attitude. You see, the Pharisee and as a Pharisee, they always interpret the law in outward things.

Thou shalt not murder. Okay, I've never clubbed a man to death. And therefore, I'm innocent. But Jesus said, No, no, if you have hatred in your heart for a man, you have the desire to kill him. You're guilty because of the attitude that you have. You say, I've never had sex with another woman other than my wife. Jesus said, But if you've desired to have sex with that woman, lusted after her in your heart. And so Jesus is saying that the law is spiritual. And it is actually God talking about the things of the heart, the attitude that you have concerning things. And this attitude of coveting. And there of course is an inner thing, that desire to have that which belongs to someone else.

The law, you see, taught the respect for the rights and the property of others. And so He's warning these fellows, "Beware of covetousness." Here they're fighting over the inheritance. Who gets the most and who does it really belong to? And then Jesus set forth this important truth,

for a man's life consisteth not in the abundance of the things that he possesses (12:15).

How that goes against the common thought of man today. Because somehow we think that life does consist in possessions and in the abundance of possessions. And people are constantly trying to amass more and more to themselves thinking that as soon as I can achieve, as soon as I can attain this next goal, then I will be satisfied. I will be content. And always it's one more thing. Just a little bit more.

Paul said, "Godliness with contentment, that's really being rich" (1 Timothy 6:6). It's interesting how that so many times people have amassed such fortune but they can't rest. They're constantly seeking more and more and more. "A man's life doesn't consist in the abundance of the things that he possesses." And now Jesus gives a story to illustrate this truth.

And he spoke a parable unto them (12:16),

I think to them here is to all. He addressed the fellows and He said, Look, beware of covetousness. A man's life doesn't consist in the abundance of the things that he possesses." And then to the crowd, He turns and He speaks a parable and,

He says, The ground of a certain rich man brought forth plentifully (12:16):

Now notice the rich man, all of the I and My. I, I, my, my. Look at this, my, my!

And he thought within himself, saying, What shall I do, because I have no room where to bestow my fruits? And he said, This will I do: I will pull down my barns, and build greater; and there will I bestow all my fruits and my goods. And I will say to my soul, Soul, thou hast much goods laid up for many years; take thine ease, eat, drink, and be merry (12:17-19).

What a picture this is. A man is prosperous. His barns are full. And he has a bumper crop. And he said, What am I going to do? I have so many things. Now a man's life doesn't consist in the abundance of things that he has. But I have so many things I don't have room for them anymore. Go out and rent a storage shed, you know, for my goods. But no, he said, I will tear down my barns and I will build bigger barns and I will fill them with my substance, with my fruit. Notice, not satisfied, got plenty, but he's not satisfied. I've got one more jump to take. And when I make this next move, then I can say, I've made it.

Oh how that is so true of human nature. Never fully satisfied. It's always one more. And if I can just make this next step. But when you make that next step you find that you're empty there and so it's just one more. And it's always one more. You never arrive. It's always just out of reach. Just beyond. It's once more. And so as soon as I can build bigger barns and fill it with all that I have, then I can say, Soul, you've got it made. Take it easy. You got plenty for the rest of your life. Just eat, drink and be merry.

But God said unto him, You fool, tonight you're going to die (12:20):

Then who will receive, who will inherit all of the goods that you have? That was Solomon's problem. After he had amassed all of his wealth, after he had more cattle than anybody would ever live before, after he had made silver as common as rocks in Jerusalem. If you've ever been in Jerusalem, rocks are common. But he had, silver was as common as rocks in Jerusalem under his reign. He had just everything. He'd amassed, he'd done all of these things. And then he got to worrying. I'm going to live it to that dumb kid of mine. And he doesn't have any sense at all. He doesn't understand the value of things. He's a spendthrift. He's going to go through this, and I've sacrificed and I've worked so hard and I've used my brain to bring all of this to pass. And now I'm going to leave it to this dumb kid. And it bothered him because He's just going to waste it. It took such wisdom and all to bring it together.

And so, here are people who are, Hattie Green, classic example. Amassed a fortune. She died in her day the richest woman in the world. She was penurious. She had her whole house boarded up except for one room to save on fuel. She then found a flop house, twelve dollars a week room and board so she closed up her house and moved into this boarding house. When she bought the paper, after she read it she would fold it up carefully and give it to her son and he would have to go out to Central Park and resell it so she could get her nickel back. Yet the richest woman in the world.

When her son was out selling again the paper, he slipped on some ice and cut himself. She took him to

the free clinic in New York. A doctor recognized her and refused to treat her son for free. Said he was going to charge her. She got so angry she took her son out, blood poisoning set in and they finally had to amputate his leg. When she died and his sister had committed suicide, he inherited the fortune. And within two years, he had blown it off. All of her sacrifices. All of her penuriousness. All of this wisdom, the way she skimmed the wall and manipulated stocks and so forth to create all this wealth and the son, bitter, angry, blew the whole thing. Who you going to leave it to? Are they going to be wise?

And so here Jesus said, You fool. God is saying to this man, You fool. You think that just that one more step is going to bring you satisfaction but you're never going to make it. Tonight you're going to die. And then whose will be all of these that you have amassed?

So is he that layeth up treasure for himself, and is not rich toward God (12:21).

This parable is of that person who has just laid up treasure for himself and is not rich towards God. He may be the wealthiest man on earth but he is a pauper as far as God is concerned in spiritual things.

Now Jesus again addresses His disciples,

And he said unto his disciples, Therefore I say unto you, Take no thought for your life (12:22),

That is, anxious thought or don't be worried about your life as far as,

what you're going to eat; and neither for the body [as far as], what are we going to wear. The life is more than meat, and your body is more than clothes. Consider the ravens: for they neither sow nor reap; neither have they storehouses nor barns; and God feeds them: how much more are you better than the fowls (12:22-24)?

Look around. Here God takes care of His creation. They don't go through all of the pain and labor and all of laying up goods and all, your Father feeds them. And you're worth much more to your Father than are the birds.

And which of you by worrying, taking anxious thought can add to his stature one cubit (12:25)?

If you're short and you're worried about being short, and you just sit there all day long worried because you're so short. Which of you by all of this worry can add eighteen inches to your height. Now Jesus said,

If you then are not able to do that thing which is the least, why do you worry about the rest of it (12:26)?

Worrying is not productive. All of your anxious thought and worry doesn't produce anything positive.

Consider the lilies (12:27)

These beautiful anemones that grow all over the Holy Land in the springtime and we are now in the springtime. We're getting close to Passover. And the hillsides covered with these beautiful scarlet and blue and white anemones.

how they grow: they toil not, and neither do they spin (12:27);

Of course in those days, the women had to make their own cloth. They would spin the wool and dye the wool to make their own cloth. But these beautiful scarlet anemones that cover the hillside, they don't toil, they don't spin.

and yet I say unto you, that Solomon in all of his glory was not clothed as beautifully as they are (12:27).

With all of his wealth and glory, he didn't have robes that were as pretty as those hillsides that are just clothed and bathed in the scarlet colors.

If God will so clothe the grass of the field, which today is, and to morrow is cast into the oven (12:28);

As soon as the spring flowers and the plants, the weeds and so forth that grow, as soon as they died, they would use them in their fire. There was not that much wood in the Holy Land and so they would use them in their ovens. And of course, it was used as kindling in the oven. So they would go out and gather these dry weeds and flowers and they would use them for kindling in their ovens. So "if God will so clothe the grass which is today in the field, and tomorrow is cast into the oven," they're very temporary, they just pass very quickly. You have a short blooming season for these anemones, just about a month and they're gone.

how much more will he clothe you, O ye of little faith (12:28)?

Don't worry about what you're going to eat, don't worry about what you're going to wear. Life is more than that. You don't have to worry about these things. Your Father knows what you have need of. He takes care of the ravens and they don't go to all the problem of gathering into barns, planting and sowing and so

forth. And He takes care, He clothes the fields so beautifully. “How much more will your Father clothe you and take care of you? You don’t have to worry about these things.

So don’t seek what you’re going to eat, or what you’re going to drink, neither be of a troubled mind (12:29).

Doubtful mind, wondering, Oh my, what am I going to do?

For all these things do the nations of the world seek after: and your Father knows that you have need of these things (12:30).

Your Father knows that you have need of the basic things of life.

But you rather seek the kingdom of God; and all of these things will be added (12:31).

Priorities. God first. Seek the kingdom of God first. God will take care of these other things if you put Him first. Now what happens if you don’t put Him first and you put these other things first? Then your whole life will be spent trying to get enough food, trying to get enough clothes, and that will be your whole life. And you won’t have time for the Lord. All your time will be absorbed in just trying to get by. Just trying to make a living. Just trying to exist and survive.

Whereas if you’ll seek first the kingdom of God, your Father knows that you have need of these things. He’ll take care of them. He’ll take care of them much better than you can. And so,

Fear not, little flock; for it is your Father’s good pleasure to give you the kingdom (12:32).

Seek the kingdom. Your Father’s good pleasure is to give you much more than just clothes and food. It’s His good pleasure to give you the kingdom.

Sell what you have, and give alms; provide yourselves bags which wax not old, a treasure in the heavens that faileth not, where no thief approacheth, neither moth corrupteth (12:33).

Put your investment in eternal things. Invest in the things that are eternal, not in those things that are going to decay. Those things that are corrupted.

For where your treasure is, there will your heart be also (12:34).

Now Jesus begins to warn them concerning His coming. And what should be our attitude in light of the fact that the Lord is coming back at any time.

Let your loins be girded about, and your lights burning (12:35);

You remember the parable of the ten virgins. Their lights had gone out. Let your light be burning. But then, your loins girded. This has to do with that day in that society and we read in the scripture, Gird up your loins. And just what in the world is that talking about, Gird up your loins? In those days, the men wore robes usually down to the ankles. And robes that were down to your ankles are difficult to run in. Can you imagine trying to run in a long robe? You’d be tripping all over the robe. So whenever they were going to run, they would gird up the robe. That is, they would pull the robe up and they would tie a sash around to hold the robe up so that their legs would be free. The same when you would go to work. You’re wanting the freedom of getting around so you would gird up the robe and tie a sash around it. And thus, girding up your loins so that you can have freedom of movement. That’s what Jesus is saying be ready to go to work. Be ready to have your loins girded and your lights burning.

And you yourselves like unto men who are waiting for their lord (12:36),

You’re just there all set waiting for the Lord to come through the door that you might serve Him so that, *when the Lord will return from the wedding; and he comes and knocks, you may open unto him immediately (12:36).*

You’re all prepared, you’re all set to serve Him. The moment He knocks, you’re there, you’re ready. You’ve been watching. You’ve been waiting. You’ve been in preparation, set there waiting for Him to come.

Blessed are those servants, whom the lord when he comes shall find watching: verily I say unto you, that he will then gird himself, and make them sit down to meat, and will come forth and serve them (12:37).

You remember the night that Jesus had that last supper with His disciples. How that He girded Himself and took a towel and went around and washed their feet. How He served them. And so He is saying, If you’re ready, if you’re watching, when He comes, ready to serve Him, then He will gird Himself and He in turn will serve you. Our blessed Lord. How beautiful.

But if he shall come in the second watch, or come in the third watch, and find them so (12:38),

Still waiting, second watch goes by, He has not come yet. Third watch. And when He comes say in the third watch and they are there still waiting.

blessed are those servants. And this know, that if the goodman of the house had known what hour the thief would come, he would have watched, and he would not have allowed his house to be broken through. Be ye therefore ready also: for the Son of man is coming at an hour when you think not (12:38-40).

Don't let any man tell you what he knows when Jesus is coming again. So many books have been written in the last few years. So many dates have been set. But Jesus plainly says, "Be ready for the Son of man is coming in an hour when you think not." And I'm always disappointed when people set a date because I know that He's not going to come on that date. And I hate to eliminate any time that the Lord might come. But I have to eliminate that date because they set it and He's coming when you think not. So the very fact that they think it disallows Him coming at that time.

Peter at this point interrupts Him. He's talking about His coming. How that they should be ready, they should be watching, they should be waiting. And this He is speaking to us. And how much more to us who live in these days as we see almost constantly now one of the major signs of His coming, and that is the earthquakes. Think of what we've seen just in the last couple of weeks. Earthquakes in divers places. And I understand that the World Health Organization of the United Nations estimates that twenty million people will starve to death this year in the world because of the wars and the calamities that have taken place that there will be twenty famines. And of course, we know of the pestilences, the AIDS epidemic and all. And the earthquakes in divers places.

So Jesus is saying, Look, you be like a servant who's watching, who's waiting. All set, waiting for the Lord to come. The moment He knocks, you'll be able to open the door. That's the attitude that He wants the church to be in. That of expectancy and that of waiting for the Lord.

So Peter said unto him, Lord, is this parable for us, or is it for everybody (12:41)?

The parable of the Master coming and the servants waiting. Is that for us? Is that for everybody?

And Jesus then said, Who then is that faithful and wise steward, whom his lord will make ruler over his household, to give them their portion of meat in due season? Blessed is that servant, whom his lord when he comes shall find so doing (12:42,43).

Doing what? Ruling over the Lord's household and giving them their meat in due season. When Peter wrote his first epistle—and Jesus is responding to Peter's question—writing to the bishops or the elders he said, "Take care of the flock of God which is among you, taking the oversight, not by constraint, but willingly; and not for filthy lucre, but of a ready mind; and neither as being the lords over God's heritage, but examples to the flock. And when the chief Shepherd shall appear, you will receive a crown of glory that fades not away" (1 Peter 5:2-4).

So who is the steward that the Lord is going to put over His flock? The one who gives them their meat in due season. The one who loves, takes care of them, tends them, feeds them. This is what the Lord wants. The steward who has been entrusted by the Master to watch the other servants and over the Master's things. "Blessed is that servant, whom his Lord when He comes shall find doing this."

Of a truth I say unto you, that he will make him ruler over all that he hath. But and if that servant say in his heart, My lord delays his coming; and he will begin to beat the menservants and maidens, and he begins to eat and to drink, and to be drunken; The lord of that servant will come in a day when he's not looking for him, at an hour when he is not expecting, and he will cut him in sunder, and will appoint him his portion with the unbelievers (12:44-46).

A very stern warning by Jesus concerning those that He has entrusted with spiritual things by which they are to feed and to take care of God's flock. They begin to abuse their position. They begin to use the flock of God and they begin to enrich themselves and live luxuriously while neglecting the flock. And the Lord will come when they're not expecting. They're drinking, they're abusing the things that God has entrusted them with.

And what is going to happen? The Lord said He's going to cut them in two and He's going to give their, their portion will be with the unbelievers. I'll leave you to balance that out with, Can a person who is a Christian ever be lost?

And that servant, which knew his lord's will, and prepared not, neither did according to his will, will be beaten with many stripes (12:47).

Here Jesus is teaching that there will be degrees of punishment in hell. That one who has knowledge of the Lord's will knows better and yet doesn't do the Lord's will, will be beaten with many stripes.

Yet those that committed things that were worthy of stripes, will be beaten with few stripes. For unto whom much is given, of him shall be much required: and to whom men have committed much, of him they will ask the more (12:48).

And so a man will be held responsible for the knowledge that he has. Those who had been given much will be held to a higher standard and a greater accountability than those who didn't know. There is the answer to that poor fellow in the dark jungles of Africa who has never heard of Jesus Christ. The Lord will be fair in His judgment and justice will prevail. I'm more interested in the fellow who knows and isn't heeding. He's the fellow who is in big trouble. And you ought to be worried about you more than him who is out there in the dark jungles of Africa because you've heard and you know, you're responsible for what you've heard and what you know. God will take care of him. But He will also take care of you. "Unto whom much is given, much is required: and to those men who have been committed much, of him they will ask the more."

Now Jesus speaks about and is still speaking really about His second coming but of the effects of the Gospel. He's going to speak now of His cross and of the effect that Christianity is going to have.

I am come to send fire on the earth; and what will I, if it be already kindled (12:49)?

He's going to come to bring judgment, to bring fire upon the earth; and already that judgment is being kindled.

But I have a baptism (12:50)

And He's talking now of His death, His crucifixion. "I have a baptism,"
to be baptized with (12:50);

When James and John were asking if they could have places of prominence, one sitting on the left and one sitting on the right, He said, "Are you able to be baptized with the baptism wherewith I'm going to be baptized" (Matthew 20:22)? A reference to, and the word baptism literally means to be dipped in or to be immersed. That's the literal meaning of the word. And He's going to, I have this baptism whereby I'm going to be baptized.

and how am I straitened till it be accomplished (12:50)!

There is this realization that He's on His way to Jerusalem and that the cross awaits Him there. And this is sort of a dominating factor in His consciousness at this point. I have this baptism, I'm straitened until it's accomplished.

You suppose that I am come to bring peace on the earth? I tell you, No; but rather division: For from henceforth there shall be five in one house who are divided, three against two, and two against three. The father shall be divided against the son, and the son against the father; the mother against the daughter, and the daughter against the mother; the mother in law against her daughter in law, and the daughter in law against her mother in law (12:51-53).

In other words, the Gospel is going to bring a division between those who believe and those who reject. And even in households, there will be brought a division between those who are a part of the kingdom of God and those who are not. The division between the believers and non-believers.

And then he said unto the people (12:54),

Luke starts to tell us, He was talking to the disciples, He was talking to the brothers, talking to the people. Now "He said unto the people,"

When you see a cloud rise out of the west (12:54),

Over the Mediterranean they see the cloud building up,

they say, Oh we're going to have some rain showers today; and so it is. And when you feel the south wind beginning to blow, you say, It's going to be a hot day; and it comes to pass (12:54,55).

Sort of like when our Santa Anas begin to blow. Going to have some hot weather. But He said,

You hypocrites, you can discern the face of the sky and of the earth; but how is it that you do not discern

this time (12:56)?

You see, they should know that the time for the Messiah has come. Had they really read the scriptures, they would have known that it has been 483 years since the commandment went forth to restore and rebuild Jerusalem, 483 years. According to Daniel's prophecy, from the time of that commandment to the coming of the Messiah the Prince will be 483 years. This is the 483rd year. Now you have enough sense.

When you see the clouds rising over the Mediterranean, you say, We're going to have some rain showers. You feel the south wind begin to blow, you say it's going to be a hot day. You can discern the skies and the earth; you understand these things but you don't understand the most important thing. These times in which we live, the time for the Messiah. In other words, the Lord expected them to know that the time for the Messiah was coming. It was there. It was upon them.

And I believe that the Lord expects us to know the times of His coming again. And surely, as we see, as we mentioned earlier, the earthquakes and the pestilences and the famines, we should realize that we are getting close to that hour and we need to be watching. We need to be ready. Servants who are prepared to immediately open the door to welcome the Master when He returns.

Yes [He said], and why even of yourselves do you not judge what is right (12:57)?

You ought to be able to judge among yourselves those things which are right, those things which are honest.

When you go then with your adversary to the magistrate, as you are in the way, give diligence that you may be delivered from him; lest he hale you to the judge, and the judge delivers you to the officer, and the officer cast you into prison. I tell you, you will not depart from there, until you have paid the very last mite (12:58,59).

So the warning of Jesus that we ought to settle our differences and seek to settle the differences. Paul rebuked the church of Corinth because they were going before the earthly magistrates suing one another. And Paul said, The church ought to judge in these matters. Don't you know that we're going to be judging angels?

Talk to any attorney today and they will warn you about going into court because you never know just how unrighteous the judgment may be that comes forth from the court system. We're watching right now, aren't we? To see how righteous the judgment is going to be.

A lot, a lot, a lot there in chapter twelve for us to mull over and think about. But you won't have too much time to do that because we have to move into chapter thirteen next week.

Father, thank You for the light and the understanding that You give to us. And Lord, help us to beware of the leaven of the Pharisees, that hypocrisy, wearing a mask, seeking to appear to be something we really aren't. And help us, Lord, to beware of covetousness realizing, Lord, that our lives really don't consist in things but the true life consists in Thee. And thus, Lord, may we be rich in the things of the Spirit, the eternal riches. And Lord help us that we might be watching. And that we might be ready so that when You come, Lord, we will be ready and waiting. Doing, Lord, what You called us to do. Tending over Your flock, giving them their meat in due season. Faithful, Lord, in Your work. In Jesus' name we pray, Amen.