

God's Watchcare over His Saints

Sermon 38 in the Luke Series

Luke 11:47-12:12

Last week we did not make quite as much headway as we hoped. I had thought we would go through all six woes, pronounced by Christ upon the Scribes and Pharisees, but we only made it through the first 4.

So we pick up from there in verse 45

I. Three Woes Directed to the Scribes (Lawyers) 45-52

You are insulting us too.

He was a little too dull to understand Jesus was also speaking to the Scribes – so Christ pointedly pronounces three woes on them.

A. They made difficult demands on the people, with no desire to follow these demands themselves. 46

They were experts at piling up laws.

They were constantly creating NEW laws.

They had little concern for the people – they loved their “laws”.

There are at least FOUR FACTORS that accompany legalism.

We spent quite a bit of time on that last week, and the message is available under the title “Portrait of a Legalist”.

B. You enter into the murderous sin of your fathers – 47-51

These religious leaders were VERY PROUD of their heritage.

It was proverbial in that day to honor the dead prophets.

If we had been alive, we would not have treated the prophets as our fathers did.

If we had lived in Isaiah's day – we would have listened to that great prophet.

We would have listened to Jeremiah.

We would have listened to these great prophets.

Look how we honor them by building their tombs and remembering them!

But, the proof of the pudding is in the eating – and if they would not listen to the one sent directly from God Himself – the Very Son of God – you can be assured they were not going to listen to any lesser ambassador, unless God opened their hearts.

In fact, their animosity would only be stronger.

That is exactly what happened as they crucified the Lord of glory.

Abel was the first martyr in the OT – and Zechariah is the last martyr recorded in the Hebrew OT.

Abel was killed by his brother because of jealousy.

Abel obeyed God and brought an acceptable sacrifice.

Cain brought God the fruit of his own hands.

God respected Abel's offering and disallowed Cain's.

Instead of repenting – Cain killed his brother.

We find the history repeated over and over again.

2 Chronicles 24:20-22 – In the Hebrew OT the book we call 2 Chronicles comes at the very end instead of Malachi, like in our Bibles. The order is different.

C. It was their responsibility to unlock the Scriptures and bring them to the people, but instead, they made the Scriptures less accessible -- 52

-- They substituted works-righteousness for salvation by grace.

-- They claimed the works of God, done by the Spirit of God in the Lord Jesus Christ were actually the works of the Devil.

-- They were not content to simply be wrong – they conscientiously TAUGHT error.

II. The Hostile Reaction of These Religious Leaders 53-54

They were trying to trap Him in His words.

Literally, they were trying to AMBUSH Him.

Warnings are given for a reason.

Woes from Jesus come with a purpose.

When God gives a warning – it is a gracious call to repentance.
Words of warning are some of the most gracious words we could ever receive.

If you are in your house at night, asleep, and your house catches on fire --
you would be grateful to the one who yelled to you, and woke you from your
slumber so you and your family could escape.

How terrible would it be for someone to witness this and say, “I don’t want
to wake them up. They are sleeping so soundly, and besides, they would
feel bad if they got the bad news that their house was burning down.

Christ gives many warnings in the Scriptures.
The point of them always is – REPENT and BELIEVE the gospel.
In Him is eternal life.
Outside of Him – there is only ruin, error and death.

Now, we change gears.
Chapter 11 verses 37-54 took place in private, in a Pharisees house.
Now, as we enter chapter 12 – Christ resumes his public ministry.

III. There are no Secrets from God 12:1-3

A. Christ Speaks again v. 1

Christ was wildly popular.
Not everyone BELIEVED him.
Some came to hear him out of mere curiosity.
But he was drawing a crowd.

v. 1 – **innumerable multitude.**
Probably not the most exacting translation.
There were *μυ-ρι-α-δων του οχ-λου*
A CROWD OF THOUSANDS

That helps us understand the tumult.
They all wanted to get closer to Jesus.
They didn’t want to be stuck in the back, where they couldn’t hear.

And Christ did begin to teach again – but note: He purposefully directs His teaching to His disciples. (not necessarily just the 12, but His followers).
THAT is significant.

One of the most important rules for a preacher is to know your audience.
There are different ways of speaking to different people.
There are some things that are inappropriate if they are directed to the wrong group of people.

B. Christ warns them about the Pharisees

The illustration He uses is LEAVEN.
The Leaven of Hypocrisy.

Why would He use LEAVEN as the example?

1. It is not because leaven is a type of sin (contrary to popular opinion, leaven is not ALWAYS a type of sin in the Scriptures.) This time leaven comes in the context of sin, but it would simply be redundant in this case, because HYPOCRISY is obviously a sin.
2. It is the QUALITIES of leaven that are being compared to the qualities the Pharisees have within them. This is the most common way leaven is used as an illustration in Scripture.

A little leaven will leaven the entire large lump of dough.

It doesn't stay isolated.

The leaven spreads throughout the entire lump until the entire lump is "leavened".

And so it is with the Pharisees. Their hypocrisy colored every action, deed and thought – even their good deeds.

Leaven works in a way that is slow, insidious and constant.

The Pharisees appeared, on the outside to be Spiritual giants, but as Christ said, their problems were INTERNAL.

C. Hypocrites are always Exposed 2-3

Here is the fearful point Christ is making.

The number one goal of the hypocrite is to **make you think he is better than he really is.** That is what he is all about. His goal and intent is to FOOL YOU and make you believe he is something that he is not.

Christ says “Sin will not stay hidden” It will be exposed either now – or in eternity.

Liars will be caught in their lies.

“Tell the truth, and you never have to remember what you said.”

It’s true.

But one lie, leads to another lie, to another, and then to contradictions in the story – and soon the liar is exposed.

Adultery is a sin done in secret that almost invariably is exposed.

It’s an amazing thing really.

One would think it would be an easy sin to get away with.

Done in secret – hidden -- so no one knows.

But, it seems to always get found out – and with it comes the inevitable shame and heartbreak.

Hypocrisy is a sin that is hidden – purposely – but when God shines the light of day upon it – it becomes obvious for all the world to see.

The secret words we speak

They are not secret to God.

He does and will reveal them in His time.

All of our actions are before His face.

Nothing is hidden from His sight.

The Omnipresence of God is a great comfort to His people, and a great terror to hypocrites.

When our children are afraid, we tell them, “Don’t be afraid, God is watching over you.”

But, when we are sinning, we should have that same realization, and it should be a deterrent to us in what we think, say and do.

IV. Words of Warning and Comfort 12:4-12

These 4 verses taken together are some of the strongest warnings and strongest comforts in all of the Scriptures.

Warnings to the Pharisees and all lost people.

Comfort to the disciples and all true believers in Jesus.

A. Do not fear men – fear God! 4-5

Who is the one who has the power to cast men into Hell?

No man has that power.

Satan himself does not have that power.

That power is reserved for God alone – through Jesus Christ.

The very one they were opposing – is the one who will be their judge.

B. God's Ever Present Watchcare over His Own 6-7

The very hairs of your head are numbered.

For some of us – that is not as difficult.

But, the point is:

He is the God of the Macro and the God of the Micro.

He is the God of exacting detail.

He is the God that NOTHING about us is too small for Him to note.

Does God know your trials?

Does God know your circumstances?

Does God CARE about your difficulties?

The answer is YES – he cares so much that we need not fear.

He cares for you MORE THAN he cares for the wild birds of the air.

And HE DOES care for them.

He does watch over them.

HOW MUCH MORE will He watch over you and me?

Interesting, is it not – v. 5 tells us to FEAR God – v. 7 tells us not to fear.

That is because if you FEAR GOD you have NOTHING ELSE to fear.

C. God's Watchcare in Regards to Persecution 12:8-12

10 deal with the UNPARDONABLE SIN.

We already dealt with that, and the tape is available here and on the internet.

1. Ashamed of Jesus? 8-9

There are many warnings like this is in the gospels and also in the epistles. They all boil down to one truth.

Those who really belong to the Lord will not deny His name simply to save their own lives – but will confess they belong to Him, even if it costs them their life.

v. 4 again

Human reasoning says LIE. Simply say you are not a Christian – while still believing in your heart.

A Christian can't do that.

He may do it temporarily – as Peter did when he denied the Lord.

A Christian repents – and confesses.

And, if he doesn't – we can assume he is not a Christian at all.

Ultimately, how is one ACKNOWLEDGED or DENIED.

At the great day of the Final Judgment – all men will be divided into two categories. THE SHEEP on the right hand and THE GOATS on the left hand.

THE SHEEP will be acknowledged by Christ as belonging to Him.
THE GOATS will be denied "*I NEVER KNEW YOU.*"

2. The Unpardonable Sin 10

We already dealt with this, at length, and the tape is available from our bookroom, or on the internet.

3. The Coming Persecution 11-12

- 1) This is a promise all persecuted Christians can claim, but let us not divorce the interpretation from its context.

Christ is speaking to His disciples.

Christ is speaking directly to those who WOULD suffer persecution.

Their persecutors would be among those in THIS VERY CROWD THAT DAY!

The Jews were the strongest persecutors of the early Christians.

Saul of Tarsus is the prime example – but there are many other examples in the NT.

THAT GENERATION until 70 AD would be a persecuting generation.

Many Christians would suffer and even die at the hands of Jewish authorities.

Remember Stephen, the first martyr who was stoned by the Jewish crowd.

By Acts 8 – persecution was in full force and the Christians were scattered.

v. 50-51

They were literally a persecuting generation.

Not content with the blood of Christ – they sought the blood of the NT

Christians **v. 49**

- 2) Take no thought for your defense

This is not a proof text to prove that preachers should not study for their sermons.

This is a word of comfort – that they can stand with confidence, before any strata of society or authority -- and witness of the grace of God that has been wrought in their life through Jesus Christ.

They would be called upon to testify.

They needed not fear or be worried about it.

God's grace would prove sufficient

And the Holy Ghost would be with them.

To be cast out of the synagogue was to be put out of Jewish society.

You have the status of a Gentile with none of the privileges of a Jew.

Paul himself fulfilled this prophecy as he went to Rome and stood before Caesar, and one can imagine Dr. Luke thinking about that upcoming event as he wrote this epistle – probably from Rome, during that two year waiting period when Paul was receiving visitors into his house from all over the empire.

Thousands upon thousands and no doubt millions have proven these words to be true in the 2000 years since Christ came.

His grace is sufficient.

We do not need to work out our own schemes to protect ourselves.

CAN WE TRUST GOD?

We should trust God.

Who's more powerful – The world and Satan – or God? v. 4-5

You and I are prone to worry.

You and I are prone to distress.

You and I are prone to all kinds of stress and difficulty.

Don't we see how USELESS it all is?

We believe in God.

He is on the throne.

He cares for us.

He will provide for us.

We can choose to believe that – or we can choose to worry, fret and distrust God.

Are you trusting Him with your eternal soul?

Then you have nothing else to fear!

If not, you have EVERYTHING to fear – for God Himself is your enemy.

Come to Christ – today – and put ALL your hope and trust in Him.

PRAY

HYMN 558

Benediction: 12:6-7