

# (Through the Bible) Luke 12-13

by Chuck Smith

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*In this sermon, Chuck Smith emphasizes the importance of authenticity in faith, the dangers of materialism, and living in anticipation of Christ's return.*

**Duration:** 1:28:34

**Scripture:** Luke 12:11-15, Luke 13:25-28, Luke 13:30-32, Luke 14:15, Luke 14:23

**Topics:** "Eternal Life", "Accountability"

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## Description

In this sermon, the preacher emphasizes that the gospel of Jesus Christ is a divider of men. It separates those who are saved and believe in eternal life from those who are lost and have no hope. The preacher also highlights the responsibility that comes with knowledge of the gospel, stating that God holds individuals accountable for what they know. The sermon concludes with a call to live life with the expectation of the Lord's return, comparing it to a servant waiting for his master.

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## Transcript

Shall we turn in our Bibles to Luke's Gospel, chapter 12. We are dealing with the final months in the ministry of Jesus. He has returned to Jerusalem.

He will soon be leaving Jerusalem to go down to the area of the Jordan River beyond Jericho where he will sort of absent himself from the authorities until such a time as he comes back for the Feast of the Passover and makes his triumphant entry on the Sunday before the Feast of the Passover. So, just where here in Luke's account does Jesus leave Jerusalem is not declared by Luke. John tells us about this little time that he spent down at the Jordan River.

It was while he was there at the Jordan River that he got the message from Mariam Marthas concerning the death of Lazarus, which perpetrated his return. And then, of course, soon after that, his triumphant entry, his trial and crucifixion. Probably chapter 12, no doubt, still happened while he was in Jerusalem.

And around chapter 13, as he is there in a synagogue, it could be that he has moved from the precincts of Jerusalem at that point. So, in the meantime, when there were gathered together an innumerable multitude of people, they're beginning to really press upon him and throng him, so bad were the crowds that they were stomping on one another. He began to say unto his disciples, first of all, beware of the leaven of the Pharisees, which is hypocrisy.

Now, leaven was that yeast, actually, that they used in the baking of their bread. And it caused the bread dough to rise by the process of fermentation. And so, actually, it was a rotting of the leaven or of the yeast that causes it as it rots to release these little bubbles of air which puff the bread up.

And all you need is just a little bit of leaven within the lump of dough and that little leaven will exercise its influence upon the whole lump of dough. The whole lump will be putrefied or fermented by just a little piece of leaven. So, they have what they called their starters, like the sourdough, where they put just a little bit of it into the new dough and then they'd always save a part of it to put in the batch that they would make tomorrow.

And just a little leaven was all they needed to leaven the whole lump. Paul warns about the leaven in the church, a little leaven leaveneth the whole lump, therefore purge out the leaven. Jesus is here warning of the leaven of the Pharisees which he said is hypocrisy.

It's amazing how hypocrisy can spread just a little bit of it. It has that effect of rotting and spreading. For there is nothing covered, Jesus said, that shall not be revealed, neither hid that shall not be known.

Therefore, whatsoever you have spoken in darkness shall be heard in the light. And that which you have spoken in the air in closets shall be proclaimed upon the housetops. Now, I don't know that I appreciate that.

There are some things that I have said in confidence that I really don't want published abroad. But the Lord is really just telling us basically to keep yourself open and straight. Don't be hypocritical.

Somewhere a story was spread that we had received some tape recordings of some private evangelist in Israel who had taken a tour over there. That, of course, in Israel, everything or a lot of things are bugged. Your hotel rooms, all you never know.

But somehow these evangelists got word that we received from our friends over there who are involved in the Israeli government that we had received from them some tapes that were made of some of the stories they were telling and things that they were saying about the people that were on their tours. And they were quite upset because according to the story that came to them, we were going to use these tapes to expose them. Very interesting.

I don't have any tapes. I've never had any tapes and I'm not interested in any tapes of private conversations. But this thing of being one thing to a person's face.

All you precious little darlings. And then when you get alone, say, did you see them? Can you believe that? You know, that's what Jesus said. But this business of hypocrisy, how tragic that it is, is one of those evils that seems to permeate the religious systems of man.

Years and years and years ago, before many of you were born, when radio was still in its infant stages, there was an announcer on a children's program that used to read the comic strips to the children. And oh, he was so gushing and all, you know, in his talking to the children and so personable on his show. Well, it so happened that he thought that they had cut off his mic and they didn't.

And he began to express his true feelings concerning kids. And that was the end of his career. Beware of hypocrisy.

That which is spoken in secret, Jesus said, will be shouted from the housetops. I say unto you, my friends, don't be afraid of those that can kill your body. And after that, they have no more that they can do.

I will forewarn you whom you shall fear. Fear him, which after he hath killed, hath power to cast into hell. Yeah, I say unto you, fear him.

Are not five sparrows sold for two farthings? Now, two farthings equals about a penny. So, sparrows aren't worth much. And not one of them is forgotten before God.

Though they are so insignificant, yet your father, God, is concerned. Not one of them is forgotten before God. God is very interested in you.

Are not five sparrows sold for a farthing? None are forgotten before God. Two farthings. But even, he said, the very hairs of your head are numbered.

Fear not, therefore, for you are of more value than many sparrows. And so he is comforting now the disciples with the fact that the father knows our needs. The father is concerned with us.

The father keeps interesting statistics about you. He's concerned with even insignificant things of your life. Also, I say unto you, whosoever shall confess me before men, him shall the son of man also confess before the angels of God.

But he that denies 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 Spirit, it shall not be forgiven.

Now, these are things that we have studied in other gospels of the sayings of Jesus. Luke is just sort of grouping together and Jesus probably is just grouping together a series of thoughts and principles that he has previously amplified upon. And so in another occasion, Jesus amplified the subject of the sin against the Holy Spirit and the blasphemy against the Holy Spirit.

And in other places, he amplified on the confessing him and denying him. Now, when they bring you into the synagogues and unto the magistrates and the authorities, take no thought how or what thing you're going to answer or what you're going to say. For the Holy Spirit shall teach you in the same hour what you ought to say.

And so, this divine inspiration of the Spirit in the moment of peril. One of the company said unto him, Master, speak to my brother that he divide the inheritance with me. And Jesus said to him, man, who made me a judge or a divider over you? But he used the occasion to warn now against covetousness.

He said unto them, take heed and beware of covetousness. For a man's life consisteth not in the abundance of things he possesses. This is an opposite of the popular conception of the world around you.

As far as the world around you is concerned, a man's life does consist in the abundance of things that he possesses. And thus, men are trying to amass more things to themselves. But Jesus is declaring that you've got to be careful of covetousness, because a man's life does not consist in the abundance of things he possesses.

What then does a man's life consist of? It consists of relationships, which are more important than possessions. For what should it profit a man if he should gain the whole world and lose his own soul? Your

relationship with God is more important and more valuable than all of the possessions you could possibly amass to yourself. It is tragic that many people, in order to amass to themselves vast possessions, many men who have been caught up with this covetousness, because of their greed and covetousness, their drive to amass a fortune, they have alienated themselves from any meaningful relationships.

How many families have been broken because the husband was so driven by that desire to get ahead, to amass for himself vast possessions, that he neglected his relationships at home? How many men have driven themselves until they had a heart attack? It's a very common ailment among executives, men who drive themselves until they destroy their health. And covetousness is something that just can't be satisfied. It'll continue to drive you harder, harder, harder, until it destroys those things that are important.

Those things of which life does consist. Life consists of relationships, primarily your relationship with God, which then affects your relationship with others. And covetousness can destroy these things.

So beware of covetousness. And then to illustrate it, he gave them a parable. He said, the ground of a certain rich man brought forth plentifully.

And he thought within himself saying, what shall I do? Because I have no room to bestow my fruits. And he said, I know what I'll do. I will pull down my barns and build greater.

And there I will bestow all my fruits and goods. And I will say to my soul, soul, you've got it made. You've got a lot of goods laid up for many years.

Take your ease, eat, drink, and be merry. But God said unto him, thou fool, this night, thy soul shall be required of thee. Interesting, the man's opinion of himself and God's opinion of himself.

His opinion of himself was, I've got it made. God's opinion of him was, thou fool. Now, notice this.

This man was still in the dream state, not the fulfilled state. He had not yet built the bigger barns. These were only plans.

As soon as I have the bigger barns, as soon as I fill them, then I will be able to say, all right, you've got it made. Kick back, eat, drink, and be merry. Take it easy.

You've got it made. He never did arrive at that point. I would dare say that when, if he had not died that night and he had continued to live and he went ahead and tore down his barns and built the bigger barns and filled them, that he still would not have been satisfied.

And at that point, could not have said, well, you've got it made. Kick back. Very few people ever arrive at that point in life where they can say, well, I have enough.

There is a proverb about those things that are never full. And one of these is, you know, that desire, never full, never satisfied. The question then, of course, is propounded by the Lord.

Tonight, your soul is required of you. So who is going to be able to enjoy all of the goods that you have amassed? Whose shall these things be which you have provided? So is he, the parable now, is of that man who lays up treasures for himself and is not rich toward God. This is whom the parable is addressed to.

Those people who have been so careful to lay up treasures for themselves but are not rich towards God, their relationship with God has suffered as a result or consequence. And he said to his disciples, therefore, I say unto you, don't be covetousness. Don't be covetous.

Take no thought for your life, what you're going to eat, for your body, what you're going to put on. That is, take no thought or take no anxious thought, or better translated, don't be worried about what you're going to eat or what you're going to wear. For life doesn't consist in things.

Life is more than meat. The body is more than clothes. Consider the ravens, for they neither sow nor reap, which neither have storehouses or barns, and God feeds them.

How much more are you better than the fowls? And which of you, by worrying, taking anxious thought, can add to his stature one cubit? Now, if you happen to have a pituitary gland that hasn't functioned at full capacity and you happen to be short, and you're so concerned because you can't reach the top shelf in the cupboard, which of you, by facing this kind of a problem, sitting down and just being so worried and so concerned about, I'm so short, oh, I wish I weren't so short. And which of you, by giving a lot of anxious thought of this, can add 18 inches to your height, is what Jesus is saying. You can't even add one inch to your height, much less 18.

Now, if you're not able to do the simple things, then why are you worried about the rest? Consider the lilies, how they grow. They don't toil, nor do they spin. And of course, the idea is the woman at the spindle making the yarn and making the cloth and all, using the spindle to make the threads to make the cloth and the whole thing.

But look at the lilies, how they grow. They don't toil, they don't work, their fingers aren't toiling and working at the spindle, yet Solomon, in all of his glory, with all of his wealth, with all of his grandeur, wasn't dressed as beautifully as one of these. Now, if God so dresses the grass, which today is in the field and tomorrow is burned, how much more will he clothe you, O ye of little faith? And so, really, in this whole area, Jesus is talking about life and he is talking about the Father's concern and care for his children.

Sparrows are almost worthless little animals in the sight of man. You can buy five of them for a penny from the little boys in the streets. Yet there's not a sparrow that falls to the ground, but your father doesn't take note of it.

Your father takes account of these little animals. Now, if your father takes account of these little animals, how much more does he take account of you? He knows the number of hairs on your head. And so, you don't have to worry.

You're going to have problems, but don't sit down and dream up your little speeches, what you're going to say. The Holy Spirit will give you the words to say. The Father is going to take care of you in every situation.

Beware of this thing of covetousness. You don't have to worry about the material things. Now, here's the answer to the whole thing in verse 29, or going on from there.

And seek not what you're going to eat or what you're going to drink, or be of a worried mind. For all of these things do the nations of the world seek after. And your father knows that you have need of these things.

I like that. Your father knows all about you. And he knows you have to eat.

He knows that you've got to wear clothes. He knows all about the issues in your life. Your father knows all about these things.

So, rather than seeking these things as the primary issues of life, seek first the kingdom of God. And all of these things will be added to you. Don't fear, little flock, for it is your father's good pleasure to give you the kingdom.

You don't have to worry about these things. You just seek the kingdom of God, because it's the father's good pleasure to give you the kingdom. So, sell what you have and give to the poor.

And provide yourselves bags which wax not old, a treasure in the heavens that fails not, where no thief can approach, neither can moth corrupt. For where your treasure is, there will your heart be also. And let your loins be girded about and your lights burning.

This business of loins girded about is a phrase that was particular to their culture. For the men wore long robes and to work in a long robe is cumbersome. To run is cumbersome.

And so, when a man was ready to go to work, he would pull his robe up and tie a sash around it, making it knee length or above the knee length rather than down to his ankles. And this facilitated his ability to work or to run. So, Jesus is saying, prepare yourself for service, for work.

Gird up your loins and let your lights be burning. And ye yourselves liken to men that wait for their Lord. Now, here Jesus is giving to us a concept of life, which should be the concept of life of every child of God.

A person's concept of life is extremely important because it determines his attitude and his actions. People express their concepts of life with various figures of speech. Life is a journey.

Life is a race. Life is a war. Life is a party.

A man expresses his concept of life. Jesus said your concept of life should be life is like a servant waiting for his Lord. That's what your life should be.

Like a servant who is waiting for his Lord, for his Lord may appear unannounced at any time. Therefore, you should be living your life with the anticipation of our Lord coming at any moment. And if you do live your life with this expectation, it will markedly markedly alter your actions and your attitudes, especially towards the worldly things of which Jesus has just been speaking.

What is my attitude toward material things? What if the Lord comes tonight? Then what value are all of those material things going to be to me? If my master comes for me tonight, all of these things that I've been worried about, all of these things that I've been giving so much time to, what value will they be to me at that point? Now, the way to maintain my proper attitude towards the material world is to be as a servant who is waiting for his Lord. If I am living with that concept of life, then I don't have to worry about an improper attitude towards material things. I'll have the proper attitude because I'm not going to be caught up in the material things because I realize that they're not important.

My relationship with God is all important. And I am like a servant who's waiting for his Lord. And when my Lord appears, I want to be ready for him and able to open the door immediately so that when the Lord knocks, they may open to him immediately, Jesus said.

That's the way you should be. Not a lot of unfinished business when the Lord comes. Oh, Lord, wait.

Oh, I wasn't ready, Lord. Oh, you caught me by surprise. Would you mind waiting for a few hours while I get things cleaned up here? Now, our Lord is coming at any moment.

Every other concept of life has its goal in view, and you can pretty well ascertain when it will be achieved. Life is a race. If you're running a race, you know where the goal is.

You know how many laps you have to finish before you come to that finish line. Life is an education. You know how many more units you need to graduate.

But I don't know when the Lord is going to come. I don't know what is the climax. The climax can take place at any moment.

It can take place before I get home tonight. It can take place before I wake up in the morning. And when he comes, there will be two sleeping in the bed.

It could be that I'll be asleep in bed when the Lord comes knocking, and I want to be ready to just go immediately. Good thing to just clean the slate before you go to sleep at night. Take care of it, Lord.

I commit myself to you. He may come before morning. And that's the way the Lord wants you to live, because it creates a greater urgency to everything I do.

Because this may be my last opportunity to do it. My last opportunity to share the love of Jesus Christ. My last opportunity to serve the Lord.

My last opportunity to lay up treasures in heaven. And so, your concept of life is as a servant waiting for his Lord. It has a lot to do with my life as far as purity is concerned.

For we are now the sons of God, but it doesn't yet appear what we're going to be. But we know when he appears at any moment, anytime, we're going to be like him, for we will see him as he is. And he who lives by this concept, he who has this hope in him, purifies himself even as he is pure.

It is a purifying influence living this concept of life. I want to make sure that I'm pure. I want to make sure that I'm right.

I want to make sure that I'm ready to meet my Lord at any moment, so that when he comes, you may open immediately. And blessed are those servants who, when the Lord comes, he will find watching. Verily I say unto you, that he shall gird himself and make them to sit down at meet and will come forth and serve them.

Now, that's the thing that just absolutely is hard for me to really conceive. The Lord's reward for his faithful servants who are girded, waiting for their Lord, ready to open, watching for him to come. What's he going to do? He's going to gird himself and serve them.

The glorious marriage feast of the Lamb. And the Lord's going to be there to say, hey, you want some more? I'm going to serve you. Oh my.

Now, if he shall come in the second watch or come in the third watch. And these are watches during the night. You don't know what watch he's going to come.

The second or third. But the thing is, be ready so that whatever time the Lord may come, you will be ready. And if he finds them girded, waiting for the Lord, blessed are those servants.

And this know, that if the good man of the house had known what hour the thief was coming, he would have watched and he would have not allowed his house to be broken through. So therefore, be ready also, for the Son of Man is coming at an hour when you think not. Now, how many of you believe that the Lord is coming in the next hour? Honestly.

I don't think any of us believe he's coming in the next hour. We probably wouldn't be sitting here. There's a little bit of unfinished business I'd like to take care of, you know.

A few calls I want to make. Watch out. The very fact that you don't think he's coming in the next hour makes it a good candidate for the Son of Man is coming in an hour when you think not.

Then Peter said unto him, Lord, is this parable for us? Is it or is it for everybody? And the Lord said, who is that faithful and wise steward who his Lord will make ruler over his household to give them their portion of meat in due season? Who is that faithful servant that the Lord is going to make a ruler in his household in the kingdom of God? Blessed is that servant whom the Lord when he comes shall find him so doing. So doing what? Watching for the Lord as a servant girded, waiting for his Lord. Of a truth I say unto you that he will make him the ruler over all that he has.

Jesus said, and in that day I will say unto them on the right hand, come ye blessed of the Father, inherit the kingdom that was prepared for you from the foundations of the earth. As John is describing Jesus in the first chapter of Revelation one, he said unto him who loved us and gave himself for us, who hath made us unto our God, a kingdom of priests, and we shall reign with him upon the earth. He said, I will make him the ruler over all that I have.

But here's a warning. If that servant says in his heart, oh, my Lord's going to delay his coming. The Lord isn't going to come until after the revelation of the Antichrist.

He's going to delay his coming until the tribulation period or until after the tribulation period, or he's going to delay his coming until Russia moves or whatever. Hey, the Lord can come at any moment and he wants you to be ready for him to come at any moment. Now there is always a danger of saying the Lord is delaying his coming.

That is a dangerous and a pernicious doctrine and thought because the effect of it is so often slothfulness. Lord's delaying his coming. Let's have a big party.

And he begins to beat the men, servants and the maidens. And he begins to drink and 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 ready and he will cut him in two and will appoint him his portion with the unbelievers.

And that servant, which knew the Lord's will and prepared not himself, neither did according to his will shall be beaten with many stripes. But he that knew not and did not commit things worthy of stripes shall be who did commit things worthy of stripes shall be beaten with few stripes. And here's the key for unto whom much is given.

Of him shall be much required and to whom men have committed much of them. They will ask the more God holds you responsible for your knowledge. Knowledge creates responsibility before God, and having

the knowledge that you have brings you into a greater responsibility before God.

God holds you responsible. Now, there are oftentimes questions asked concerning that poor man in the jungles of New Guinea who has never heard the name of Jesus Christ and who was killed in a battle with other men and he is eaten by them. What happens to him? Is he lost forever because he didn't believe in Jesus Christ? How could he believe in Jesus Christ when he never had a chance to hear? Is it fair that God would punish him with eternal punishment when he had never had a chance to hear Jesus answers that for us here? Showing that all punishment is not going to be the same.

Those who have heard have a greater responsibility and thus a more severe degree of punishment, whereas those who did not hear yet did things worthy of stripes because they did not know a lesser degree of punishment, they will be punished for the knowledge that they have. So you better quit worrying about that poor little man in New Guinea and start worrying about yourself because you have heard, you do know, you are responsible for what you know. And having received the greater knowledge, if you do not act in accordance to that knowledge, then there shall come the greater degree of punishment.

I know there's a lot of issues in this you would like me to address myself to tonight, but I'm not going to. Jesus said, I am come to send fire on the earth. And what will I if it already is kindled? But I have a baptism to be baptized with.

And how am I straightened until it is accomplished? He's talking about the fire of hell that was really burning against him in the hearts of the people. It's already kindled this fire, the fire of judgment. And he has a baptism, that baptism of death.

He was when the disciples said, the mother of James and John said, Lord, I'd like a favor. My one son said on the one side and the other on the other view when you're sitting there in the glory of your kingdom. And Jesus said, are they able to be baptized at the same baptism? Oh, yes, Lord.

The boy said, you bet you we can. And she said, well, that may be, but to grant that request is the father's prerogative. Talking about his death, this baptism, and I'm straightened until it's accomplished, I'm set towards it.

Do you suppose that I've come to give peace on earth? I tell you, no, a division. The gospel of Jesus Christ divides men, those who are saved and those who are lost. Those who believe in those who do not believe those who have a hope of eternal life.

Those who have no hope of eternal life. The gospel of Christ is a divider of men. Families are divided by it.

And so from now on, there will be five in one house divided three against two, two against three. The father divided against his son, the son against the father, the mother against the daughter, the daughter against the mother, the mother-in-law against her daughter-in-law, the daughter-in-law against her mother-in-law. This division that the gospel created, and especially so in the Jewish home, where so often to receive Jesus Christ brought a complete ostracizing from the rest of the family.

What a division their faith in Jesus Christ did create in an Orthodox Jewish home, where many times they would have a funeral for that child and consider them dead because they dared to believe that Jesus was the Messiah, the chosen one of God. The division. Now he is talking to his disciples up to this point.

Now he turns to the crowd and he said to the people, when you see a cloud rise out of the West, immediately you say, oh, there's going to be a shower. And so it is. And when you see the South wind blow, you say, oh, it's going to be a hot day today.

And it comes to pass over there. Of course, from the West would be your, it would be coming from the Mediterranean Sea. So like here, when you've got the clouds blowing in from the ocean, you say, oh, we're going to have a shower, you know, and you get the Santanas blowing, you say, oh, it's going to be a hot one today, you know.

So over there, much the same, Jesus said, you hypocrites, you can discern the face of the sky and of the earth, but how is it that you can't discern this time? In other words, you're able to tell by the signs in the heavens, what kind of a day it's going to be rainy or hot. Why is it that you haven't been able to read the signs that God has placed for the time of the coming of the Messiah? And he rebuked them because they had not known the time of his coming. They should have.

Now I feel that the same is true for us today. The Lord has given ample evidence by prophecy telling in advance the things that would exist at the time of the return of Jesus Christ. Having given us the signs of these things, he said, now, when you see these things begin to come to pass, look up and lift up your head for your redemption draweth nigh.

And yet there are people who are able to make predictions of the stock market, are able to make weather predictions, or they can predict and forecast many things, but they're not aware of the fact that we are in the last days and in the end of time and the same kind of a spiritual blindness over the return of Christ. And even many ministers will sort of mock the idea of the eminency of the return of Jesus Christ. How sad that people are just as ignorant of his second coming as they were his first.

He said, yes. And why even of yourselves judge ye not what is right? Why can't you yourself make a good judgment? Now he said, when you go with your adversary to the magistrate, you've got problems. You're being involved with a suit as you're in the way.

Give diligence that you may be delivered from him. Seek an out of court settlement. What the Lord is saying, lest he hail you to the judge and the judge deliver you to the officer who cast you into prison.

I'll tell you, you won't get out until you've paid the very last mite, which is one eighth of a cent. Now there were present at that season. And of course now Luke may have gone on and a period of time.

We don't know how much time elapsed between verse 59 of chapter 12 and 13 one. It could be that this synagogue is somewhere down near Jericho. There were present at that season, some that told him of the Galileans whose blood pilot had mingled with their sacrifices.

Now the Galileans were often hotheaded. They were always chafing under the Roman rule and most of the revolts against the Roman government came in the area of Galilee. So they are relating to Jesus how that there were some Galileans who were probably involved in a ruckus against Rome.

And Herod sent his soldiers and when the soldiers came, they were in the act of offering sacrifices to God and the soldiers killed him right there and their blood was mingled with the blood of the sacrifices. And of course to the Jew, that was a very heinous thing. And so they had just informed Jesus about this and Jesus answering said unto them, do you suppose that these Galileans were sinners greater than all of the rest of the Galileans? You suppose that they were the worst sinners in Galilee because they suffered such

things? You think that this is an act of God's judgment because they were worse sinners than all the rest? Now it is so often that we make that mistake of when something happens to a person that is a very sad or tragic event.

So many times people look at it as judgment. Oh well, they getting what they deserve, aren't they? You know, I wonder what they did to deserve that terrible thing. And Jesus is putting down this concept.

Hey, do you think that because this happened to them, they were worse sinners than the rest of the people in Galilee? He said, I tell you, no way. And unless you repent, you also are going to perish. Now the 18 people upon whom the tower of Siloam fell and killed them, do you think that that happened because they were sinners who were living there in Jerusalem? Now the pool of Siloam is down in a area that you have to go down many steps to get down to the pool of Siloam.

And they probably had, there are buildings around the pool of Siloam now, walls and all. And they were probably building a tower and the people used to go to the pool of Siloam. It was a crowded place because that was the main water supply for Israel, for Jerusalem.

And the women would do their washing there in the pool. And also there was no doubt, always crowded with people. And this tower that they were building there at the pool of Siloam fell and 18 people were crushed to death.

And so Jesus calls the attention to this tragedy. He said, do you think that that happened because they were the worst sinners in Jerusalem? Nope. I tell you, unless you repent, you will all likewise perish.

And then he spoke a parable to them. A certain man had a fig tree planted in his vineyard and he came and sought fruit from it and he found none. And he said to the dresser of his vineyard, three years I've been waiting for this tree to produce fruit and I have found none.

Cut it down. Why should it take energy or nutrients out of the soil? Why cumbereth it the ground? But the gardener answered and said, Lord, let it go for one more year and I'll dig about it and fertilize it. And if it bears fruit, good.

And if not, after that, we'll cut it down. The fig tree is used in a symbolic sense of the nation Israel, the Lord desiring to receive fruit and not receiving it, coming for fruit, not finding it. And the one more opportunity that is given to them to bear fruit.

If they don't, then it will be cut down. Tragically, they did not. And the nation was cut off.

And as he was teaching in one of the synagogues on the Sabbath, there was a woman which had a spirit of infirmity for 18 years and was bowed together and could not lift herself up. Now, I have seen people over there in the Orient, in the Middle East, who are bent over from their waist. The upper torso goes down and they usually hold their head out, but they're bent double from their stomach, the upper torso down and their head is sort of down by their feet, looking out, just bent over.

And it's a very grotesque sight to see. Here was a woman who had this grotesque appearance, being bent double. She was in the synagogue on the Sabbath day when Jesus was there.

According to the account, her condition was caused as the result of demonic activity, a spirit of infirmity. And when Jesus saw her, he called her to him and he said unto her, Woman, you are loosed from your

infirmity. And he laid his hands on her and immediately she was made straight and glorified God.

Imagine what that must have done in the synagogue that day. With this woman, who after 18 years in this bent over condition, was able to stand up straight and started praising God and glorifying God. Now, the ruler of the synagogue responded with indignation because Jesus had healed her on the Sabbath day.

And not to Jesus, he didn't have that much courage, but to the people. He said, there are six days in which men ought to work. And in them, therefore, come and be healed, but not on the Sabbath day.

So, sort of rebuking the people, saying, look, you've got six days to be healed, don't come on the Sabbath day. And the Lord answered him and said, hypocrite, do you not on the Sabbath day loose your ox or your donkey from the stall and lead him to the watering trough? One thing about the Jews was they were always very humane. A high value upon life, human and animal.

This humane aspect to the day is one of the great qualities of the Jewish people. Some of the greatest hospitals, open to everybody, their value that they place upon life. And so, because of that, their law would allow them to untie the donkeys or their ox and lead it to water, even though it was the Sabbath day and that was work.

Because of the humaneness of it or the kindness of it to animals, they were allowed to do that in the law. And so, Jesus said, you know, which of you, you have an ox or a donkey, don't you loose it, don't you untie it on the Sabbath day to give it water? And ought not this woman being a daughter of Abraham, who Satan has bound for 18 years, be loosed on the Sabbath day? All I've done is untie a woman that Satan has bound up for 18 years. So what if it is the Sabbath day? You'll loose your donkey to give him water.

And when he said these things, all of his adversaries were ashamed, rightfully so. And all of the people rejoiced in the glorious things that were done by him. And he said, unto what is the kingdom of God like? Now, here he has just had this run in with the religious leaders.

The religious systems of man who had taken the revelation of God, the law, the ordinances, the statutes. And they had made such a system out of it that it was hard for a simple man to come to God with this complex system that man had made. And so, really, as Jesus said, you won't enter the kingdom yourself and you actually hinder those who would like to come into the kingdom.

It's tragic when religion becomes a hindrance to man's coming to God, rather than an assistance to man's coming to God. But that's the capacity of man. He's able to take a simple thing and make it extremely complex by setting up his own hierarchy in it, and his systems of authority and power.

And Jesus had just come up against the authority who would hold back the work of God on these people because of some tradition that they had developed. A concept of man that had become popular among them. And thus, they would hold back the people from God's work in their lives.

And so, Jesus said, what shall I liken the kingdom of God to? What can I give to resemble it? It's like a grain of mustard seed, which a man took and cast into his garden, and it grew and waxed into a great tree. Wait a minute, something's wrong. A mustard seed is a herb.

It belonged in the herb gardens. A mustard seed never became a great tree. There's something abnormal about this.

There's an abnormal growth here. And it grew and waxed into a great tree, and the fowls of the air lodged in the branches of it. In college, I had a professor who told us not to try to preach from the parables until we had been pastoring for at least 30 years.

He said, it will take you that long to understand the parables. What do college professors know? I started preaching from the parables immediately. I wish I could retract many of those sermons that I have preached from the parables.

It's amazing how they have changed in the last 30 years. This parable and the following parable of the leaven hidden three measures of meal until it leavens the whole lump have had two widely divergent interpretations. There are some mainly liberal theologians who use these parables to show how the kingdom of God will start very small, like a mustard seed, which is so very small.

Yet, it grew into a great tree and the fowls of the air came and lodged in its branches. And so they teach that though the kingdom of God will start with a very small beginning, the 12 disciples, yet it will grow and grow and expand until it encompasses the whole world and all kinds of nations and people will be able to lodge in its branches. And they say it really doesn't matter what a person believes, they all find shelter and lodging in this great tree.

It's able to accommodate a wide variety of beliefs and systems. And, again, the same idea with a little bit of leaven hidden in three measures of meal until the whole of it is leavened is again a symbol of how just the gospel will begin in just a little part of the world, but will gradually expand until the whole world has been brought to Christ. These theologians back in 1935 and 36 were proclaiming every day and in every way, the world is getting better and better and better.

That was before Hitler began his movement into Austria. After Hitler's rise, somehow you didn't hear that phrase anymore because we saw that horrible Holocaust of World War Two. But unfortunately, things haven't improved much since World War Two.

The world is perhaps in the worst shape it has ever been in. And far from the church being a healthy influence, bringing the kingdom of God. And, of course, that was what was going to happen according to this philosophy.

The church is going to bring the kingdom of God to the world. And one of these days, the church will take over the governments of the world and we'll have a theocratic government. And we will be able to rule and we'll bring the glorious kingdom age and we'll bring peace.

And the men will beat their swords into plowshares and the church is going to bring to pass the glorious kingdom age. Now, there are still groups that do believe this. The Mormon Church, for instance, has set itself up to take over the government as soon as it collapses.

And they believe that the collapse must come. And they will then step in in the shambles and they will establish a righteous government. And we will all become Mormons and we will have peace on the earth.

But unfortunately, the Jehovah Witnesses are planning much the same. So it looks like when the system falls into shambles that we're going to have a first class war. As to who will be setting up the theocratic government, whether it be the Mormons or the Jehovah Witnesses.

I am of the opinion that it will not be the accomplishment of man or of the church, but will and can only be accomplished by the return of Jesus Christ himself. And I don't think that it is going to happen prior to his return. In fact, I think every day and in every way the world is getting worse and worse and worse.

And that's pretty much in keeping with what Jesus said would happen. For evil days, he said, shall wax worse and worse. Thus, the second interpretation to these parables.

Guess which one I believe. Number one, the mustard seed growing into a tree is abnormal growth. It isn't natural growth, it's abnormal growth.

Now, there is what is known as expositional constancy. And that is you use a figure of speech in a parabolic form. And that figure of speech remains the same in all parables.

So, in all of your parables, the fowls or the birds are never used in a good sense, but in an evil sense. When the seed fell by the wayside, the birds of the air came and devoured it, that it could not take root. And what did Jesus say the birds of the air were? Satan comes in and snatches it away.

So, what Jesus is saying is that though the church may experience an abnormal growth, it will become the lodging place of many evil systems. And as I look at church history, that is what I see is indeed the fact. When Constantine, for political reasons, gave the edict of toleration and supposedly embraced Christianity and joined the church to the state, that was the darkest hour in the history of the church.

For in joining the church to the state, he introduced into the church a multitude of pagan practices of which the church has never been able to fully free itself. To the church of Sardis, the Protestant Reformation, Jesus said, I have sought not against you. I have not found your works complete before God.

The Protestant Reformation came as a protest against the evil practices that had arisen within the Catholic Church. Especially the selling of indulgences. For the Pope was desirous to build a great cathedral in Rome, St. Peter's.

And the money wasn't coming in fast enough to build this glorious monument that he was desiring to put up as a symbol for Christianity. And so someone in the council came up with a bright idea. Everybody likes to sin.

Why don't we sell them forgiveness for sins? And they can buy an indulgence before they ever indulge. So that as they're indulging, the thing is covered because they've already bought their forgiveness. So you want a little escapade on the side? You want to go out and get drunk? Fine.

Go down and buy a drunk indulgence. You want to have an affair? Go down and get an adultery indulgence. And they started selling the indulgences to the people.

And this so incensed Martin Luther that he took his 95 thesis, his objections to the practices that had developed within the church, and he tacked them on the door. And he protested. And thus the name Protestant, beginning of the Protestant Reformation, a dark black history, birds in the branches, fowls, leaven, as we mentioned earlier, when Jesus said, beware the leaven of the Pharisees, creates a fermenting process, rotteness, the three measures of meal.

Going back into the Old Testament, when the angels of the Lord visited Abraham, he ordered Sarah to prepare something for her. And she took three measures of meal and made some bread for them. And at

that point, they became symbolic of fellowship with God.

So that under the law, when they had made the burnt offering sacrifice, which was the sacrifice of consecration of a person's life to God, they followed it with the meal offering, which was made of three measures of meal, three tenths of an ephaph of fine flour, the three measures of meal. And they would offer this as a sacrifice, sacrifice which symbolized the offering of my works to God, bringing me into fellowship with Him. Now, in the offering of the sacrifices, they were never to use any leaven.

So that the leaven inserted into the three measures of meal is an evil thing. But yet that evil will permeate until it has an effect upon the whole lump. And unfortunately, this has been again the experience of the church.

And as we look at the condition of the church today, we see that it is far from what Jesus said it should be. There is leaven, and it has affected the whole church. And the witness of the church is sadly hindered by the leaven within it.

Now, Jesus went through the cities and villages teaching and journeying toward Jerusalem. So He is now on His way back towards Jerusalem. Then one said to Him, Lord, are there only a few that are going to be saved? And He said unto them, strive.

The word in Greek is agonizo, strive to enter in at the straight gate. For many, I say unto you, will seek to enter in and shall not be able to. When once the master of the house is risen up and has shut the door, and you begin to stand without and knock at the door saying, Lord, Lord, open unto us.

He will answer and say unto you, I do not know you from whence you are. Then shall ye begin to say, oh, but we have eaten and drunk in thy presence. We've taken communion.

You have taught in our streets. But he shall say, I tell you, I don't know from whence you are. Depart from me, all ye workers of iniquity.

And there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth when ye shall see Abraham and Isaac and Jacob and all of the prophets in the kingdom of God and you yourselves are thrust out. And they shall come from the east and from the west and from the north and from the south and shall sit down in the kingdom of God. And behold, there are last which shall be first and there are first which shall be last.

The same day there came a certain of the Pharisees and saying unto him, you better get out of here because Herod is going to kill you. And Jesus said to them, you go tell that vixen. Behold, I'm casting out devils and I'm curing today and tomorrow and the third day I will be perfected.

This is the only person of which Jesus really spake in such a derogatory manner. Herod had gone over the limit. Jesus had absolutely nothing to say to him except the message that he said, you go tell that fox.

I'm going to do my work. That vixen, female fox. When Jesus appeared before Pilate, Pilate sent him to Herod and Herod was glad because he had heard about Jesus and he was curious.

He wanted to see Jesus work some miracle. And when he came to Jesus, when Jesus came to Herod, Herod asked him a lot of questions, but Jesus didn't say a word. He had no answers.

He didn't say a word to Herod. It is sad when a man's condition is so bad that the Lord has no word for him at all. Jesus refused to speak to him, had no word for him.

That's how far he had gone down. What a sad condition to be in. You tell him that the third day I shall be perfected.

Herod's going to kill me. He said, I'm going to, I'll be there. Nevertheless, I must walk today and tomorrow and the day following.

Now, remember, he's journeying towards Jerusalem. He said, it isn't proper that a prophet should perish out of Jerusalem. And then he cried, oh, Jerusalem, Jerusalem, which killeth the prophets and you stone them which are sent unto thee.

How often would I have gathered thy children together as a hen doth gather her brood under her wings and you would not. Behold, your house is left unto you desolate. And verily I say unto you, you will not see me until the time come when you will say, blessed is he that comes in the name of the Lord.

Now, they did not see him publicly until his triumphant entry. And what were they crying at his triumphant entry? Hosanna, Hosanna. Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord.

You see, he had just been warned about Herod's out to kill you. You better be careful. Herod's going to kill you.

I said, you go tell it full. I've got my work to do. I'll be there.

I've got a journey today and tomorrow. Third day I'll arrive. It's not proper that a prophet should perish outside of Jerusalem.

But then his lament, oh, Jerusalem, Jerusalem. Thou that killest the prophets and you've stoned those that have been sent to you. How often I would have gathered you together as a hen gathers her brood under her wings, but you would not.

Now, when he made his triumphant entry, as we will get in the 19th chapter here of Luke's gospel. Again, as he is looking at Jerusalem, he again laments, cries over Jerusalem. If you had only known at least in this thy day, the things that belong to your peace, but they're hid from your eyes.

They're crying, Hosanna, Hosanna. Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord. So I feel that Jesus is perhaps referring to the fact that he will not be seen in Jerusalem until the day of his triumphant entry.

It is possible that he is referring to his second coming. But it is true that at the triumphant entry, they were crying. Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord.

But it is also true that things are going to get so bad in Jerusalem prior to the return of Jesus Christ. When the antichrist comes to the rebuilt temple and declares that he is God and demands to be worshiped as God and begins to persecute the Jews with a greater persecution than they have ever known before. Then they will be crying.

Oh, blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord. They'll be praying for their Messiah and Jesus will come. So, which of two or perhaps it refers to both that Jesus is making reference here.

They'll not see him until they pray, blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord. Next week, chapters 14 and 15. Now may the Lord bless you and be with you and cause you to hide his word away in your heart.

Meditate upon it. Go over and review it and then be doers of the word and not hearers only. Adopt that concept of life that Jesus spoke of.

That you might be as a servant just waiting for his Lord. May God be with you and bless you. Give you a good week.

Help you as you begin this new year. That you might walk with him in an ever deepening fellowship in Jesus name.

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