

THE PARABLES OF JESUS, #013 A Chronological Study

*"To Him who opened His mouth in parables and
uttered things hidden since the creation of the world."
Psalm 78:2*



"The Rich Landowner" Luke 12:13-21

INTRODUCTION

Leading Up To Our Parable [Luke 12:1-12]:

Before we can understand all that Jesus has to teach concerning "The Rich Land Owner" we need to explore the verses leading up to our parable. There are 12 verses in this first section of our study, and they give us insight into the meaning of the parable which follows.

In the broader view of where we are in the scriptures the Gospel of Luke sets apart Chapters 9 through 19 as "The Savior's Ministry in Judea." Our Study in Chapter 12 is a segment between Chapters 11-13, "Teachings and works presenting the contrast between the

Kingdom of God and The Kingdom of Satan.” Our parable is right in the middle of Jesus’ presentation of these teachings.

#1 – Myriads of people following Jesus:

[Luke 12:1a] *Under these circumstances, after so many thousands of people had gathered together that they were stepping on one another,”*

Can you imagine? Jesus is traveling all over Judea, Samaria and Galilee. On certain days there are “so many thousands of people” following Him and the disciples. The English word that comes from the Greek (*muriadown*) is “Myriads” of people (too many to count). “Billy Graham without a stadium!” When He stopped to teach, there was no room for them to sit without stepping on each other.

In these 12 verses leading up to our parable, Jesus is talking to His disciples – those He hand-selected to become His “apostles,” (Gk *Apostolos*, one who has been sent away, away from). With the intended meaning of being an “emissary.” One sent away with a message. In the New Testament the message is “The Gospel”, “The good news of Jesus Christ.” The importance here is that what Jesus has to say... is being said to the first believers, so if you are a believer... then these words are also directed to you. With that in mind, I have highlighted all the occurrences of “**You**” (in English and in the Greek [(**you**) in parenthesis].

#2 – “You, beware”

[Luke 12:1b] *He began **saying to His disciples...** first of all, “(You) **Beware of the leaven of the Pharisees, which is hypocrisy.**”*

It’s interesting to me that Luke introduces this paragraph as “first of all.” How many of us would have used this as an opportunity to emphasize “beware of the Pharisees,” and let it go at that. But the Holy Spirit, by way of Luke, takes this opportunity to clarify that it is not the physical Pharisee that is to be warned of. Something else is more important than the unbelieving and hostile individual. This is a lesson that we all should learn and store in our hearts. Jesus said,

“Love your enemies,” and that can be a difficult task. Luke tells us that our enemy’s **message** is what is to not be trusted until tested.

Leaven is just yeast, or other biological product, that causes baked goods to rise. The word “Leaven” can be used in both a positive fashion and a negative one. What Jesus wants us to see is that this product enters into the mix and then permeates it. He’s not stating that the leaven [yeast] is good or bad. In this case His point is that **“you”** need to be aware that **the “leaven” of the Pharisees “is hypocrisy” [that which permeates the Pharisees is hypocrisy]**. **“You**, beware of Pharisaical hypocrisy.” **They** were God’s earthly leaders, priests and servants, the purveyors of “God’s” religion. **They** spoke for Him, **they** processed the people’s sacrifices, **they** were the people’s mediators to God and God’s mediators to the people, and **they** were the religious ruling class among the Jews – but **they** long ago had left Almighty God out of their beliefs, their lives, and their synagogues and temple. **They** had replaced what was once the wonderful Word of God... with their own version of what God had given them and were worshipping the Law and not the God of their father Abraham.

The word hypocrisy comes from the Greek theatre. It literally means actor, those who wear masks to hide who they really are. They are playing a role; **they** were being “someone else.” So Jesus’ message in this first verse is, **“You... beware of becoming, or being, a hypocrite.”** Speaking of Christ and Christian values... and living like the devil. Or even worse, pretending to be a Christian in order to lead others away from Him. Beware of becoming one of them! Beware of living and/or espousing a lie. One of our most common mistakes is to speak against the freedoms found in Christ’s salvation and emphasize the Old Testament pharisaical law as essential in the believer’s life. We might also consider the Pharisaical leaven in our lives as our “love of each other as the brethren...,” versus our gossip about them when we’re with someone else. Just some things for **you** to think about.

#3 – God knows everything – so, don't think you can hide from Him:

*[Luke 12:2-3] But there is nothing covered up that will not be revealed, and hidden that will not be known. 3 Accordingly, whatever **you** have said in the dark will be heard in the light, and **what** you have whispered in the inner rooms will be proclaimed upon the housetops.*

God knows everything that all think and do. Ten years ago, that would be pretty hard to imagine – but today! Today we have the internet, Alexa, Siri (and a myriad of other AI), Facebook, Twitter, Tik Tok, (and a myriad of others) who record us and store it all so it can be recalled from the mega-terra-bytes of electronic storage almost instantly. Nothing is forgotten.

With God... it is so much more! You will notice that Jesus is directing His talk to those who are hypocritical in a negative fashion and in such a way that the meanings of their words and actions will need to be “covered up, hidden, and not revealed or known.” He makes it clear that neither darkness or private discussions can hide you from Him (the believer involved in Pharisaical hypocrisy) and it will eventually be known and broadcast – concerning your hypocrisy -- these are not my words, but His!.

#4 – My friends... Fear God, don't fear anyone else:

*[Luke 12:4-5a] "I say to you, **My friends**, do not be afraid of those who kill the body and after that have no more that they can do. 5 But I will warn **you** whom to fear: fear the One who, after He has killed, has authority to cast into hell [Gehenna];*

First, Jesus calls His disciples “My Friends.” And if you are a believing friend of Jesus... don't be afraid of anyone who may kill your body. We are all going to die. Some sooner than later. Then there is eternity with God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit... in perfect harmony with them, and the angels, and other created creatures. Earth, and God's will for us for our time here, is a testing and proving time. Our lives are a mere instant of time compared to eternity.

DO NOT BE AFRAID. Jesus says that those who may take a life... have NO MORE they can do to you after that – they become powerless – and you go on with Jesus. So, whom shall we fear?

This second portion of this text needs to be strongly explained... **nowhere** here does it teach that God will take your life and cast you, **the believer**, into Hell.

Jesus is explaining that there is a God, He does take lives, and He does have the authority to cast them into Hell. But that is not the believer's destiny – but He does do those things to those who do not, and will not, believe – the Old and New Testament is full of the assurance of the believer to be eternally bound to His Son Jesus with an eternal destination of being "Children of the eternal God," and "brothers and sisters of Jesus Christ," "wherever He is – I / you will be."

#5 – (Refrain) My friends... Fear God, don't fear anyone else:

[Luke 12:5b-7] yes, I tell you, (you) fear Him! 6 Are not five sparrows sold for two cents? Yet not one of them is forgotten before God. 7 Indeed, the very hairs of your head are all numbered. (You) Do not fear; you are more valuable than many sparrows.

Here's a quick story from my past... A bible teacher I knew was speaking on "The Fear of God." He gave the illustration of visiting a young family with a newborn child. While mom, dad, and visitor were speaking together about "The Fear of God," the mom excused herself and went very quietly to the child's bedroom door and peeked in. When she returned, their visitor said to her, "do you fear your newborn? That's the way you acted when you went to her." The mom said, "No, I... Oh, now I understand... I respect, care about, am concerned about, worry about, and I love her so much... I fear waking her, disturbing her, disrupting her peace and sleep." So, I am to come to Him with love, care, and trust."

Yes, that's it! Fear the Lord, and don't be afraid... *"You are more valuable (way more valuable) than many sparrows!" You are His child, you are a brother or sister of His Son, Jesus.*

#6 – Where does your confession lay?

[Luke 12:8-9] *"And I say to **you**, everyone who confesses Me before **men, the Son of Man will confess him also before the angels of God; 9 but he who denies Me before men will be denied before the angels of God.***

Here Jesus speaks to His disciples and shares with them one of the most important messages of the Christian faith. **If you do not truly believe in Him, His power, His authority, His deity, His saving grace...** then you will not be able to stand up before His detractors and confess your love and your eternal destination. That means that at the day of judgment Jesus will not be shouting out your name from the book of life at that great assembly – because your name won't be there.

[Matthew 7:21-23]

"Not everyone who says to Me, 'Lord, Lord,' shall enter the kingdom of heaven, but he who does the will of My Father in heaven. Many will say to Me in that day, 'Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in Your name, cast out demons in Your name, and done many wonders in Your name?' And then I will declare to them, 'I never knew you; depart from Me, you who practice lawlessness!'

This is a good place to remind each of us that Jesus was talking to His disciples and the crowd around Him before His death and resurrection. To Jesus "lawlessness" was what the scribes and Pharisees were engaged in. They had perverted the Law of God and no longer truly worshipped Almighty God – they only paid "lip-service" to Him and His Law. They perverted the law and justice to suit their own needs. It wouldn't be very long after He said these words that He would be arrested and hung on the Cross for opposing them. That was His destiny, but they will be responsible. His message is pointed toward these things. Jesus is not directing His words here to Christian believers who would follow the Cross. We are not called to be under the yoke of the Law of Moses, that is instead supposed to be our "school master," teaching us how to fear God and love Him. We who believe have already been judged, in Christ, and found to be hidden in His salvation and forgiveness.

Then and Now:

[Luke 12:10] *And **everyone** who speaks a word against the Son of Man, **it will be forgiven him**; but he who blasphemes against the Holy Spirit, it will not be forgiven him.*

Jesus brings this up again, and it is still pointed at the scribes, Pharisees, and rulers who told the crowds around Jesus that He was performing His miracles based on the power of the devil, Satan. Those who do this were, nor will be, ever forgiven for it. In our age this is still true. I'm sure there are individuals and cults out there who speak those words. For the most part, however, those who never come to faith in Jesus will also never be forgiven.

*11 When they bring **you** before the synagogues and the rulers and the authorities, **(you)** do not worry about how or what **you** are to speak in **your** defense, or what **you** are to say; 12 for the Holy Spirit will teach **you** in that very hour what **you** ought to say."*

So, this is the last part of the text before we get to our parable. What should we be prepared for in those days that are before us in this changing world. The situation in Jesus' time was so much worse than we must bare today. The Roman government was burning Christians on crosses in order to provide light at night in the Colosseum and along the streets in various places in their kingdom. Pornographic and phallic statues were everywhere in Rome and many other cities in their empire. Individuals, like Saul – before He became Paul – were given official permission by the government to murder Christians, just because they felt that religious problems should just be "swept under the rug." I say this so that we might realize how much freedom we have. And then, there is the "but." For if history does repeat itself, and our culture continues to disintegrate... then, perhaps even in our own lives, we may see such arrogant and cruel persecution. So, what does Jesus say to us?

*"**(you)** do not worry about how or what **you** are to speak in **your** defense. for the Holy Spirit will teach **you** in that very hour what **you** ought to say."*



"The Rich Landowner and You"

"The Rich Landowner"

Luke 12:13-21

13 Someone in the crowd said to Him, "Teacher, tell my brother to divide the family inheritance with me." 14 But He said to him, "Man, who appointed Me a judge or arbitrator over you?"

So, we should ask the question, "Why does this man want Jesus to intervene in this property dispute?" Was not the "law of the land" able to satisfy him? We need to look at the rest of the paragraph. Jesus is speaking to those who have problems with possessing "things" and not possessing "the Kingdom of God." I expect that Jesus read the intentions of the man's heart... greed. "My brother has wealth and I want it!" Jesus gave him an answer that would lead him, and the crowd around them, to ask deeper questions. That's a good point! How often do we stop and ask ourselves if what we want for ourselves is steeped in greed – are our motives for wanting (especially something that someone else has) righteous

motives, or are we actually experiencing greed? Do we go to Jesus, the Father, the Spirit asking with greed in our hearts? When we go to Him, we need to go to Him in righteousness, asking for righteousness to be done.

In each society there are laws in place to take care of civil issues. Make sure that when you go to the Lord that you are not going with a desire to "get God to see your side of things." See if there be any greed, lust, evil desire, in your heart first, fix it, and then Go to Him in righteousness.

15 Then He said to them, "Beware, and be on your guard against every form of greed; for not even when one has an abundance does his life consist of his possessions."

What's the age old saying... "You can't take it with you!" Trying to store up things is like speeding on a road with many stoplights.

Jim Elliot, missionary to South America, gave his life to bring the Good News of Jesus Christ to a tribe that had never heard about Jesus and God's plan for salvation. He and his companions were killed by the very ones to whom they wanted to bring salvation. He risked his life in a way that is foolish to those who don't recognize that this short life on earth does not compare to the eternal joy and glory that awaits those who will one day be face to face with Jesus.

Jim Elliot said, "He is no fool who gives what he cannot keep to gain what he cannot lose."

16 And He told them a parable, saying, "The land of a rich man was very productive. 17 And he began reasoning to himself, saying, 'What shall I do, since I have no place to store my crops?'

This seems like a logical conclusion to come to as a farmer whose crops are doing well. But there in this statement one little catch... "a rich man." We should also note that it doesn't say that the rich man was doing very well, but that his land was. Now, the point of Jesus' parable rests upon its last line...

21 So is the man who stores up treasure for himself, and is not rich toward God."

So, having seen the end of Jesus' parable we can now look with care to see what His words will be concerning those who live their lives with no emphasis on being rich toward God – rich in God – rich for God. There's nothing wrong with being rich, in fact it can be a great blessing to you, your friends and neighbors, your community, and your church – If... the object of being rich is to glorify God by righteously administering the wealth that He has sent your way.

18 Then he said, 'This is what I will do: I will tear down my barns and build larger ones, and there I will store all my grain and my goods. 19 And I will say to my soul, "Soul, you have many goods laid up for many years to come; take your ease, eat, drink and be merry.'"

Now, we see in verse 19 what his problem is in this lesson. He is laying up wealth so that He, alone, can "take his ease, eat, drink, and be merry." We see no evidence here of honoring God with the wealth that God has provided him with. No mention of ministry, no mention of thankfulness.

20 But God said to him, 'You fool! This very night your soul is required of you [Lit. "they are demanding your soul from you;"]; and now who will own what you have prepared?' 21 So is the man who stores up treasure for himself, and is not rich toward God."

I didn't think about the importance of seeing the Greek literal text for this verse until I saw it noted on the bottom of the New American Standard Bible. When I read it I thought, "How odd!" Who are **"They"**?

How about: Things, money, houses, cars [horses, camels, chariots], barns (storage units) to keep your stuff in, lots of income producing investments, etc. And how about influencers – those who offer opportunities to "invest?" According to Jesus, "they are demanding your soul from you!" Each of us need to take some time and review our desires for wealth, retirement, and the acquisition of stuff. What will we leave behind and why? For many this will be a hard

discipline. Certainly, we wish to take care of our families as much as we can. We may have charities and churches we wish to give and leave something, but the big question is what do you collect, invest, bank, gather, store, etc. And why? Are you honoring God? Are you listening to Jesus? Are you gathering... that you may "take your ease, eat, and drink and be merry," with little or no thought of the spiritual ramifications of just living for yourself?

FOLLOW-UP QUESTIONS WITH ANSWERS

1. Based on the beginning of Chapter 12, how popular is Jesus and His ministry?

At that time in Jesus' ministry there are literally "too many to count" who are following Him. The Greek word is "myriads" of people, often translated thousands.

2. Define what Jesus means by the term "the leaven of the Pharisees."

Leaven is an allusion to yeast when mixed into bread dough. Over time it spreads throughout the whole loaf of dough and affects all of it. We are to understand from the interactions between Jesus and the Pharisees (and scribes, and rulers, etc.) that it is the evil that they represent that Jesus has in mind. Over time (throughout Israel's history) evil (hypocrisy) in the religious leaders has caused great harm to the nation and to the purposes of God in His people.

3. Why does Jesus warn His disciples concerning hypocrisy?

Jesus directly addresses His disciples as "You." "You beware!" It's not just any hypocrisy. It is the "Hypocrisy of the Pharisees." Jesus' disciples will become the religious leaders of early Christianity. They will be in charge of the spiritual growth and life of the Church. The particular hypocrisy of the Pharisees was that they also were in charge of the life and spiritual condition of the nation of Israel – and they saw no value in their God, His Spirit, and His Word, they were only interested in the people's keeping of the Law, politics, money, political freedom, and independence for Israel from Rome – at any cost (The Pharisee says, "You... Live by the LAW – we will live in ease & eat, drink, and be merry!").

4. Can anyone hide from God?

"No." Such a simple answer yet so hard for so many to understand it's depth. I can't speak for anyone else, but I know how often sin creeps into a life and how we lie to ourselves. What rules our lives when we are alone? What kinds of things do we not do when we're with others? Especially spouses and our children. What is it about us that we don't want anyone to know and see? God sees it all – and

so often we still do what we should not do, especially since God is our witness.

5. What are you worth in God's eyes?

It's probably easy to say, "God sacrificed His Son for me on the Cross," but what does that really mean to you? The God of the universe (and much more) chose mankind to be His unique family members – sons and daughters of the Living God. Many have decided to reject Almighty God for many bad reasons. They will not become the very children of God. Those who believe Him, have faith in Him, continue with Him, will become the very children of God. We must understand the God reveals Himself to us in three persons, all the same God. So, when we say "Him"... we mean the one God who is Jesus, Father, and Spirit. He is One. All this to say that if you are In-Christ... you are of so much value to Him that God became a man in order to die as one of us so that we might spend eternity as one of His own children. Think on that!

6. So, what is the parable of the Rich Landowner about and why is it important?

It's all about GREED. Our lesson flows from thousands of people coming to see Jesus. It moves on to "You Beware" of religious hypocrisy, and "You Cannot Hide from God," then as a believer you have Great Value to God. And we end up with probably the most devastating sin (apart from blaspheming the Holy Spirit of God) that is common to all of mankind – greed. The heart is desperately wicked... who can know it! Greed affects our everyday lives, what we think, who we fellowship with, what we do for a living, where we go to church, and on and on. BEWARE... the crowd, BEWARE... the hypocrisy, BEWARE... trying to hide from God, BEWARE... your great value is at risk, BEWARE... of your greedy heart!

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Jeremiah 18:15
"Don't stumble from the Ancient Path"
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