



**Home : Sermons : July 16, 2006**

## **Faithful Fear – Luke 12:1-34**

**Introduction** – Against the backdrop of Jesus' condemnation of the wicked religious rulers and the fact that those Pharisees were now planning and plotting the death of the Messiah, Jesus charges His disciples to proclaim their loyalty to Him and His gospel-kingdom at all costs. Persecutions will come upon Jesus as well as upon His followers. We must not be cowardly nor fear the wrong things. A faithful fear and hope in the Christ of God is the only answer.

**Do Not Hide in Hypocrisy** (vv1-3) – The leaven of the Pharisees is a lump of death. The Pharisees talked as though they honored God, but ultimately they honored themselves, protected their own power, and twisted the true knowledge that had been given them for their own gain.

**All Things Will Be Unveiled** – The unveiling of the hypocrites will occur for the Pharisees, but it will occur for all men as well. Therefore, closet-Christianity is not an option. When things heat up, God will make clear who His followers are.

**Do Not Fear Man** (vv4-7) – This is not hyperbole with regard to Jesus' followers. Jesus will die in persecution and His followers should be prepared as well to die (9:22-23). But there is a natural fear that we all have when it comes to pain and death.

**Fear God** – We are not to dispel that fear with hopes of peace all the time, although we pray for that peace (1 Tim 2:1-2). What dispels the fear of man is the appropriate fear of God. Mary had sung of that fear (Luke 1:50), and we are told that our salvation is to be worked out with fear and trembling (Phil 2:12). Godly fear is a gift (Jer 32:38-40) and is to be manifest in our walk with Jesus, including in our corporate worship (Heb 12:28).

**Do Not Fear...** – At the same time, Jesus tells us “not to fear” (vv6-7). Not the smallest thing happens in the life of a disciple that God has not ordained, does not notice, or does not care about.

**Do Not Deny Your Loyalty** (vv8-12) – What you say matters before God. How you handle your confession in the public matters before God, for He is using His church to disciple the world; He is not establishing a secret club. Regarding the “unforgivable sin” it helps to remember two things. First, contextually, those who blasphemed Christ (as a people) could still be forgiven (many Jews were converted). But the rejection of the work of Pentecost in Jerusalem by the persecuting, unbelieving Jews eventually brought destruction upon that city. Second, for the individual, anyone who is deeply anxious about having blasphemed the Holy Spirit in this way shows by his concern that he hasn't.

**Trust the Holy Spirit of God** – In fact, quite the opposite; the Holy Spirit is our great Counselor and Teacher for those concerned about loyalty in the face of persecution. Bringing the Word to mind, the Holy Spirit gives us all we need to say in those times of difficulty.

**Foolish Envy** (vv13-15) – If Jesus cares about the five sparrows, then certainly He cares about my inheritance, doesn't He? Yet Jesus is able to judge the heart and He knows this man is full of covetousness. His hope is in the abundance of His possessions and He is looking to Jesus as a means to that end – wealth.

**Foolish Apathy** (vv16-21) – In like manner, Jesus tells a story of a man indifferent regarding his life except for his immediate comfort. This is not only a story against those who are seeking to get rich, but to those seeking to avoid any discomfort today for the sake of Christ.

**Foolish Anxiety** (vv22-33) – We are not to put our hope in our luxuries, nor even worry about tomorrow's necessities. We are to plan and care for our stewardship, but we are not to worry. Worrying doesn't help (v25) and shows that we haven't learned the lessons of God's gracious care for us that is all around us (vv24-25, 27-28).

**Do Not Fear...** – Once again, we are told not to fear (v32), and Jesus uses the loving phrase, “little flock.” *“Life is more than food, and the body is more than clothing (v23).”* Seeking first the kingdom of God heads off the mindset of anxiety and is the test of faith (vv29-31). And this kingdom, these treasures in the heavens, is not necessarily only in the afterlife. The point is

perspective, loyalty, and motivation for service, generosity, and sacrifice.

*How am I to be rightly motivated? Place your fear in the right place. Place your hope in the right place. Place your trust in the right place. When your number one priority is loyalty to the Persons and the glory of the triune God, everything else falls into place.*

*Dave Hatcher – July 16, 2006*