

## Luke 11:37-12:12

### Chapter 11

#### Verses 37-38:

*--And as He spoke, a certain Pharisee asked Him to dine with him. So He went in and sat down to eat. When the Pharisee saw it, he marveled that He had not first washed before dinner.*

--(37) We see Jesus in the home of three Pharisees in **7:36; 11:37; 14:1**. He accepts their invitations because He eats with sinners to call them to repentance. Though, when Jesus comes into a home, He always comes *as He is*, and not necessarily as others might imagine Him to be.

--(38) The Pharisee is not concerned about germs. He is shocked that Jesus does not follow the prescribed form of ceremonial handwashing described in the Mishna or their tradition.

--What is the problem? The typical religious Jew of Jesus' day was more worried about ceremonial uncleanness than spiritual wickedness. As the Great Physician, Jesus sees a need to treat their sinful condition aggressively.

#### Verses 39-44:

*--Then the Lord said to him, "Now you Pharisees make the outside of the cup and dish clean, but your inward part is full of greed and wickedness. Foolish ones! Did not He who made the outside make the inside also? But rather give alms of such things as you have; then indeed all things are clean to you.*

*"But woe to you Pharisees! For you tithe mint and rue and all manner of herbs, and pass by justice and the love of God. These you ought to have done, without leaving the others undone. Woe to you Pharisees! For you love the best seats in the synagogues and greetings in the marketplaces. Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For you are like the graves which are not seen and the men who walk over them are not aware of them."*

--(39-41) Jesus points out the foolishness of thinking everything is good if the outside looks "clean" when God, who knows the heart, sees the greed and wickedness there (**1 Sam. 16:7**).

--The proportional giving of alms would be a reflection of a true inward contentment and desire to help those less fortunate. Instead, the Pharisaic penchant to give only to be seen and the institution of traditions like Corban, proved their greed and sinfulness.

--(42) *Woe*. . . gives us a mixture of grief and denunciation.

--The Pharisaic practice of tithing the smallest things, which were not commanded in **Lev. 27:30-32; Num. 18:21**; or **Deut. 14:22-29**. The OT tithe related primarily to grain, wine, oil, and herds and flocks.

--Jesus is again pointing out how they were substituting over-the-top ritual for true spiritual morality. In the OT, God asked for a tenth of goods in tithes. But in terms of justice, He wanted their very lives, and in terms of love, He wanted all their heart, soul, mind, and strength.

--*These you ought to have done, without leaving the others undone*. Being serious about small things is good, but not at the expense of the most important things.

--(43) **Woe.** . . They loved public visibility and recognition. They loved their public reputation. They were concerned with their own glory, not God's glory.

--(44) **Woe.** . . They were *hypocrites!* Presenting something outwardly that they were not truly inwardly.

--To walk on a grave or touch a dead person would make someone unclean for eight days (**Num. 19:16**). Jesus is saying, not only are the Pharisees unclean themselves, but that they are an unsuspecting defiling influence on others!

#### **Verses 45-52:**

--*Then one of the lawyers answered and said to Him, "Teacher, by saying these things You reproach us also."*

*And He said, "Woe to you also, lawyers! For you load men with burdens hard to bear, and you yourselves do not touch the burdens with one of your fingers. Woe to you! For you build the tombs of the prophets, and your fathers killed them. In fact, you bear witness that you approve the deeds of your fathers; for they indeed killed them, and you build their tombs. Therefore the wisdom of God also said, 'I will send them prophets and apostles, and some of them they will kill and persecute,' that the blood of all the prophets which was shed from the foundation of the world may be required of this generation, from the blood of Abel to the blood of Zechariah who perished between the altar and the temple. Yes, I say to you, it shall be required of this generation.*

*Woe to you lawyers! For you have taken away the key of knowledge. You did not enter in yourselves, and those who were entering in you hindered."*

--(45) Now the lawyers jump in, who we saw before were a different group than the Pharisees, whose particular job was to interpret the law. By pointing out the skewed beliefs and unbiblical customs of the Pharisees, Jesus was by default, also indicting the harmful interpretations of the lawyers.

--One of the lawyers chimes in, almost as if he was not sure Jesus understood what He was saying, or how it would also incriminate the lawyers. He is going to discover Jesus knew exactly the implications of what He was saying!

--(46) **Woe.** . . These lawyers were masters of religious regulations and loopholes.

**\*Matthew 23:3-4:** *Therefore whatever they tell you to observe, that observe and do, but do not do according to their works; for they say, and do not do. For they bind heavy burdens, hard to hear, and lay them on men's shoulders; but they themselves will not move them with one of their fingers.\**

--Religious leaders should be examples of Christian life: **1 Cor. 11:1; Phil. 3:17; 1 Pet. 5:3.** Examples of true mature Christian individuals, spouses, parents, ministry leaders, etc.

--Fortunately, Jesus is the Great Shepherd. He never asks us to carry the cross He carried for us. In direct opposition to the Pharisees and lawyers, Jesus bore a burden none of His followers will ever be asked to bear. We always follow Him.

--**(47-48) Woe.** . . Jesus is again pointing out the hypocrisy and cruel irony of how the religious leaders would remodel the tombs of ancient prophets, without honoring their message, and being the direct descendants of those who killed them! \*Very much like the majority of Lutherans or Methodists today who would hate Luther or Wesley if they were alive!\*

--**(49) the wisdom of God.** . . What is Jesus referring to by that phrase? I think it is either a reference to wisdom as rejected in **Prov. 1:20-31** or simply how God in His wisdom spoke in those specific times **Heb. 1:1-2.**

--**(50-51)** The Hebrew Scriptures they would be familiar with would begin with Genesis but end with Chronicles, so Abel to Zechariah would be the whole of prophetic revelation until John the Baptist and Jesus arrived.

**\*2 Chronicles 24:20-21: Then the Spirit of God came upon Zechariah the son of Jehoiada the priest, who stood above the people, and said to them, "Thus says God: 'Why do you transgress the commandments of the LORD, so that you cannot prosper? Because you have forsaken the LORD, He also has forsaken you.'" So they conspired against him, and at the command of the king they stoned him with stones in the court of the house of the LORD.\***

--What is Jesus saying? That their fathers started the persecution of God's prophets and messengers, and the judgment of God on such works would culminate with them. Why? Because they would crucify the very Son of God!

--**(52) Woe.** . . This was one of the worst things anyone could have said about the lawyers. They were the ones who should have been *unlocking* the Scriptures, and instead, they were the ones *locking* the truth up.

--Not only were they guilty of not entering the truth themselves, they were doubly guilty because they kept others out as well! They deceived normal folks instead of helping them.

**\*James 3:1: My brethren, let not many of you become teachers, knowing that we shall receive a stricter judgment.\***

**Verses 11:53-12:3:**

--**And as He said these things to them, the scribes and the Pharisees began to assail Him vehemently, and to cross-examine Him about many things, lying in wait for Him, and seeking to catch Him in something He might say, that they might accuse Him.**

**In the meantime, when an innumerable multitude of people had gathered together, so that they trampled one another, He began to say to His disciples first of all, "Beware of the leaven of the Pharisees, which is hypocrisy. For there is nothing covered that will not be revealed, nor hidden that will not be known. Therefore whatever you have spoken in the dark will be heard in the light, and what you have spoken in the ear in inner rooms will be proclaimed on the**

**housetops.**

--(53-54) Hopefully, Jesus already ate dinner, because the meal breaks down right here. The religious leaders can't take anymore, and they begin the attack, trying to get Jesus to say something foolish.

--(12:1) The tumult seems to spill out of the Pharisee's home and into the streets, where a massive crowd gathers. With the religious leaders still likely hounding Him, Jesus begins to warn His disciples and the crowd about hypocrisy.

--Jesus says the *leaven*, or the pervading influence, of the Pharisee's is **hypocrisy**. They were not sincere. Their outward religious actions were ceremonial masks that simply covered the true wickedness in their hearts.

--(2-3) Jesus warns that all hypocrisy is folly in the end. Our cover-ups and self-deceptions are all temporary. The truth is going to come out one way or another. The Scriptures are filled with verses that warn along these lines:

**\*Ecclesiastes 12:14: For God will bring every work into judgment, including every secret thing, whether good or evil.\***

**\*Matthew 10:26: Therefore do not fear them. For there is nothing covered that will not be revealed, and hidden that will not be known.\***

--Reputation is what people think we are. Character is what God knows we are. Reputation can be established by hypocrisy. Character can only be established by sincerity.

**Verses 4-7:**

**--And 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. But I will show you whom you should fear: Fear Him who, after He has killed, has power to cast into hell; yes, I say to you, fear Him!**

***Are not many sparrows sold for two copper coins? And not one of them is forgotten before God. But the very hairs of your head are all numbered. Do not fear therefore; you are of more value than many sparrows.***

--(4-5) It is important to remember the context here. The context is that of the Pharisee's who are the children of those who killed the prophets, and the dangers of their religious hypocrisy—all focus on The outwardly religious Vs. Inwardly spiritual & The eyes of men Vs. Eyes of God.

--In the midst of a hostile crowd, Jesus warns His disciples never to fear those who can only kill the body. **\*Bodily harm does nothing to pollute or kill our spiritual life in Christ!\***

--How many disciples of Jesus Christ are enslaved to the fear of man—even men who have no ability to kill them?! All they can think about is what others will do, say, or think about them.

--How do we overcome this fear of man? With the fear of God! What will God do, say, or think about us, and them?

--Instead, Jesus warns all men to fear God, who can kill the body, and **after** (no thought of annihilationism here!) **cast into hell**.

--The idea of *casting* describes the utter helplessness of the one being thrown. Jesus is revealing something here about the Father. God will, of His own unashamed will, with His own hand, cast into hell—all religious hypocrites should fear Him!

--**(6-7)** To His disciples, to ***My friends***, even those living in the face of martyrdom, Jesus has a word. They are remembered, known, and valued.

--If sparrows, which are of little value, are remembered and known of God, how much more His friends, and His suffering sons and daughters?

#### **Verses 8-12:**

--***Also I say to you, whoever confesses Me before men, him the Son of Man also will confess before the angels of God. But he who denies Me before men will be denied before the angels of God.***

***And if anyone who speaks a word against the Son of Man, it will be forgiven him; but to him who blasphemes against the Holy Spirit, it will not be forgiven.***

***Now when they bring you to the synagogues and magistrates and authorities, do not worry about how or what you should answer, or what you should say. For the Holy Spirit will teach you in that very hour what you ought to say.***

--**(8-9)** The context here is still public profession or the fear of man. Jesus is challenging His disciples to profess Him—***Me before men***. A profession of Jesus' person, message, and gospel. Remember, He is saying this while hounded by an enraged crowd of Jewish religious leaders!

--He promises those disciples and friends who claim Him before men that He will own them before heaven.

--In like manner, those who deny Him—His person, message, and gospel—before men, He will also ultimately deny. This is not a momentary denial like Peter, but an ultimate denial like Judas. The language gives us the sense of: *He that has denied*.

--**(10)** What is this? Certainly, the religious leaders had been ascribing the finger of God to the work of Satan (**11:14-23**). Jesus also tied them to their forefathers who had rejected the Word of God that came through Spirit-filled prophets like Abel and Zechariah.

--Jesus is saying the ultimate unforgiveable sin is a willfully hard, dark, and evil heart against the Word and work of the Holy Spirit.

***\*John 16:8: And when He has come, He will convict the world of sin, and of righteousness, and of judgment:\****

--I think it is overlooked, and important, to see Jesus is offering a direct word of forgiveness to those who would revile Him, and later discover the truth of His Person through the work of the Holy Spirit. \*Thief on the cross, many of the priests, Saul, etc.\*

--**(11-12)** After this word of warning, Jesus moves back to His disciples and friends with a word of comfort. When they are put on trial before men, the governmental rulers they stand before will end up on trial as rejectors of the Holy Spirit!

--What a comfort this promise has been to so many believers down through the centuries:  
Peter, John, Paul, Polycarp, martyrs, etc.

\*Alice Driver, was a poor, thirty-year-old Protestant woman who was put on trial by Catholic Mary the first, and sentenced to be burned at the stake. At her examination, the chancellor and priest couldn't reason with her about Scripture (the whole conversation is a wonderful read!) at which point she ends saying: *"Have you no more to say? God be honored! You be not able to resist the Spirit of God in me, a poor woman. I was an honest poor man's daughter, never brought up in the university, as you have been, but I have driven the plough before my father many a time (I thank God): yet, notwithstanding, in the defense of God's truth, and in the cause of my Master Christ, by his grace I will set my foot against the foot of any of you all, in the maintenance and defense of the same, and if I had a thousand lives, they should go for payment thereof."*\*