

Luke 12:1-12

Introduction: This is part of the larger section of 12:1-59 in which Jesus reminds His disciples that they must pursue God's priorities and His agenda and recognize that God is intimately concerned with the welfare of those who trust Him.

God alone knows all about us—12:1-3

- 1) The setting—12:1a ¹ *During this time* (of chapter 11), *when myriads of the crowd had gathered together so that they trampled one another, He began to speak to His disciples first,*
 - a) Surely such a large crowd is evidence of success, isn't it? Jesus knows that popularity and celebrity is temporary at best.
- 2) A warning concerning hypocrisy—12:1b "*Stay alert to the dangers from the leaven of the Pharisees, which is hypocrisy.*"
 - a) The pursuit of man-pleasing (the desire to impress people) often leads to hypocrisy. Watch out!
 - b) The way of the Pharisees is not the true way to God.
- 3) A proverb concerning God's omniscience—12:2-3
 - a) God knows all our **actions**—12:2 ² *For ...*
 - i) *there is nothing concealed that will not be revealed* (by God),
 - ii) *nor hidden that will not be made known.*
 - b) God knows all our **speech**—12:3—³ *Because ...*
 - i) *whatever you^{pl} have said in the dark will be heard in the light,*
 - ii) *and what you^{pl} had spoken in the ear* (i.e. whispered) *in the inner rooms* (i.e. the most private) *will be proclaimed upon the housetops* (i.e. publicly).
- 4) This is both a warning concerning sin unbelievers commit and word of encouragement concerning the good things true believers have done. God knows it all. (cf. 1st Corinthians 4:5; Romans 2:16)

God alone is worthy of our awe and trust—12:4-7

- 1) Godward fear—12:4-5 ⁴ *Now I say to you^{pl}, My friends,*
 - a) Negatively—*do not be afraid of those who kill the body, and after that have nothing more that they can do.*
 - i) This seems to refer to the persecution/potential martyrdom in 12:11.
 - b) Positively—⁵ *But I will indicate whom you^{pl} should fear; fear Him who, after He has killed, has authority to cast into hell* (Gehenna; the eternal Lake of Fire). *Yes, I tell you^{pl}, fear Him!*
 - c) God has sovereign authority over our existence after this earthly life. (cf. Revelation 20:11-15)
- 2) Remember God's intimate concern for you—12:6-7
 - a) Illustration of seemingly insignificant birds—12:6 ⁶ *Are not five sparrows* (one of the cheapest things sold in the market) *sold for two assarion* (1/8 of a denarius, less than 1 hour's pay)?
 - i) Sparrows were regarded as good to eat and sought after by the poor since they were very inexpensive. (Rogers)

- ii) *And not one of them is forgotten before God.*
- b) Illustration of hairs on your head—12:7a ⁷ *But the very hairs of your^{pl} head have all been counted.*
- 3) Comforting restatement of proper awe—12:7b *Do not fear therefore; you^{pl} are worth more than many sparrows.*

God alone is the righteous Judge –12:8-12

- 1) Responses to Christ—12:8-9
 - a) Positive confession—12:8 ⁸ *And I say to you^{pl}, whoever acknowledges (i.e. state what one knows to be true) Me in the presence of people, him also the Son of Man will acknowledge in the presence of the angels of God.*
 - i) Hypocrisy is associated with fearing people; trust is demonstrated by standing for Christ regardless of the cost.
 - b) Negative denial—12:9 ⁹ *But whoever renounces Me (permanently) in the presence of people will be renounced (by God) before the angels of God (i.e. in heaven).*
 - i) We know Peter denied Jesus but was later forgiven.
- 2) Forgiveness is not be extended to everyone—12:10
 - a) Sinning against God the Son—12:10a ¹⁰ *And anyone who speaks a word against the Son of Man, it will be forgiven him (by God);*
 - b) Sinning against God the Spirit—12:10b *but to him who speaks insults against the Holy Spirit, it will not be forgiven (by God).*
 - i) This seems to be a persistent lifestyle of decisive rejection of the Spirit's message and ministry concerning Jesus. As the Spirit's testimony about God's work through Jesus is permanently refused, then nothing can be forgiven, since God's plan has been rejected. (Bock)
- 3) Promise of the Spirit's help in time of persecution—12:11-12
 - a) The setting of persecution—12:11 ¹¹ *And when they bring you^{pl} before ...*
 - i) Jewish sphere—*the synagogues*
 - ii) Gentile sphere—*and the rulers and the authorities,*
 - b) The command to remember during persecution—12:11b
 - i) What? *do not be anxious about how or what you^{pl} should say in your^{pl} defense, or what you^{pl} should say,*
 - ii) Why? ² *for the Holy Spirit will teach you^{pl} in that very hour what you^{pl} ought to say.*
 - (1) Rather than speaking against Him (cf. 12:10b), they speak through Him. (Bock)
 - (2) Disciples will not find that they have nothing to say or that God has abandoned them. Only loss of nerve will produce faithlessness. To those who depend on God in the hour of testing the Spirit offers aid so that they can confess their faith. (Bock)

Take-home truth: If one is to survive the ultimate heat of judgment, one must trust God. (Bock)