

Luke: Chapter 12

Courage! The Father has given you the Kingdom



Begin each reflection day in prayer:

"Take the lilies of the field: They do not spin, they do not weave; but I tell you, Solomon in all his splendor was not arrayed like any of them. If God clothes in such splendor the grass of the field, which grows today and is thrown on the fire tomorrow, how much more will the Father provide for you! Lk. 12: 27-28.

Day 1: Read Lk. 12:1-12. Be on guard.

12:1 Meanwhile, ¹ when many thousands of the crowd had gathered so that they were trampling on one another, Jesus ² began to speak first to his disciples, "Be on your guard against ³ the yeast of the Pharisees, ⁴ which is hypocrisy. ⁵ **12:2** Nothing is hidden ⁶ that will not be revealed, ⁷ and nothing is secret that will not be made known. **12:3** So then ⁸ whatever you have said in the dark will be heard in the light, and what you have whispered ⁹ in private rooms ¹⁰ will be proclaimed from the housetops. ¹¹ **12:4** "I ¹² tell you, my friends, do not be afraid of those who kill the body, ¹³ and after that have nothing more they can do. **12:5** But I will warn ¹⁴ you whom you should fear: Fear the one who, after the killing, ¹⁵ has authority to throw you ¹⁶ into hell. ¹⁷ Yes, I tell you, fear him! **12:6** Aren't five sparrows sold for two pennies? ¹⁸ Yet not one of them is forgotten before God. **12:7** In fact, even the hairs on your head are all numbered. Do not be afraid; ¹⁹ you are more valuable than many sparrows. **12:8** "I ²⁰ tell you, whoever acknowledges ²¹ me before men, ²² the Son of Man will also acknowledge ²³ before God's angels. **12:9** But the one who denies me before men will be denied before God's angels. **12:10** And everyone who speaks a word against the Son of Man will be forgiven, but the person who blasphemes against the Holy Spirit ²⁴ will not be forgiven. ²⁵ **12:11** But when they bring you before the synagogues, ²⁶ the ²⁷ rulers, and the authorities, do not worry about how you should make your defense ²⁸ or what you should say, **12:12** for the Holy Spirit will teach you at that moment ²⁹ what you must say."³⁰

Jesus is preparing his disciples for the crisis that will follow his death. Likewise he is preparing them and the urging the Jewish people to prepare for the destruction of Jerusalem.

<p>1. How would you describe a hypocrite?</p> <hr/> <hr/>
<p>2. What do you fear most?</p> <hr/> <hr/>
<p>3. How can your fear be conquered?</p> <hr/> <hr/>



On the way to Jerusalem Jesus is preparing his disciple to face the crisis that will follow his death. Within the year, Jesus will be gone from their sight. Then they will have to build up the Church by the Holy Spirit's guidance. Likewise, Jesus is urging the entire Jewish nation to prepare for a monumental catastrophe. Less than forty years after his death and resurrection the Jews will rebel against Rome. The Roman army will crush Jerusalem, massacre its people and destroy the Temple.

Jesus has prophesized his death and the destruction of Jerusalem. He tells his disciples to take courage. This will not be the end. They are not to live in fear of men. Instead, they are called to live in profound respect and trust in God, "Fear of the Lord." Neither are they to put their trust in the Pharisees nor material possessions. They are to live boldly their faith in Jesus. The Holy Spirit will lead them. They have been given the Kingdom of God.



BE ON GUARD! Luke 12:1-3.

Thousands have gathered to hear and see Jesus as he makes his way to Jerusalem. Although a great crowd surrounds him, Jesus' first concern is to prepare his disciples. He warns them not to be infected by the hypocrisy of the Pharisees. His disciples are called to live transparently as his witnesses.



HYPOCRISY (Lk 12:1) The Greek word *hpokritos* means "actor". It denotes a man who wears a mask and plays a role in the theater.

A religious hypocrite plays a role of acting out of love for God but instead their motives are selfish. They hide their true self behind masks of their office and false piety. Jesus calls his follows not to be deceived or intimidated by the Pharisees. He also warns them that such hypocrisy is an evil leaven that permeates the soul and swells to corrupt the hypocrite as well as those who follow him. Jesus will give the Holy Spirit as a divine leaven to transform his followers and permeate the world with God's presence. Jesus calls his disciples to be transparent in their lives. Those who play roles and mask their true motives will have their deeds and words revealed publicly.

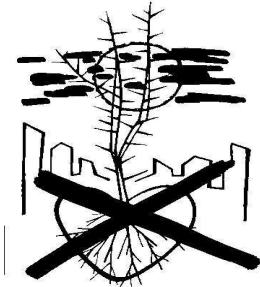
FEAR NO MAN! Luke 12:4-9.

Fear lies at the root of hypocrisy. One who fears others because of self-revelation, rejection, ridicule, shame or violence hides what they truly think and do. The cure for fear is love. Love frees one to live authentically. The only one that a disciple is called to fear is God.

FEAR OF THE LORD: There is a natural fear of God where one fears God's judgment for wrongdoing. But the scriptural base for the Fear of the Lord is supernatural. It fills one with such love of God that one fears offending God more than one fears death itself. "Fear of the Lord" is really the love of the Lord at work that conquers our many natural fears. It is a profound awe and respect that one feels when one has experienced God's presence in one's life.

Jesus emphasizes that God loves us above all creation. God cares for us with all his being and provides for us. He makes this point several times in this chapter:

- Lk 12:7. “You are worth more than a flock of sparrows!”
- Lk 12:12. “The Holy Spirit will teach you at that moment all that should be said.”
- Lk 12:24. “Consider the ravens...How much more important you are than the birds.”
- Lk 12:28. “If God clothes in such splendor the grass of the field, how much more will God provide for you.”



WHAT IS THE UNFORGIVEABLE SIN? Luke 12:10.

“Whoever blasphemes against the Holy Spirit will never be forgiven!”

To sin against the Holy Spirit is to become intentionally hard hearted and treat as false that which one knows to be true. In Chapter 11 Jesus expels a demon from a man. Many witnessed the powerful act. The witnesses have two choices. They can acknowledge that Jesus has God’s power or they can deny the obvious and assert that the healing is not empowered by God. In so doing, they obstinately hold that Satan is responsible for the work of God.

When someone repeatedly closes his eyes to God and shuts his ears to his voice, he comes to a point where he can no longer recognize God. He sees evil as good and good as evil. God’s merciful heart is never stopped up. Rather a sinner can close off his heart to God’s repentance. *(In the Nuremberg trials following WWII it was chilling to see and hear convicted Nazi leaders assert that genocide was a good and not repent nor show the least amount of remorse.)*



Every other sin is open to forgiveness>

- Sins against Jesus are forgiven.
- A man may deny Jesus out of fear like Peter and be forgiven.
- A man may blaspheme Jesus and attack his followers out of ignorance as Paul did and be forgiven.

A pagan who never believed in Jesus will be judged by his fidelity to the truth revealed to him in during his lifetime. One who rejects the Spirit of Truth becomes incapable of seeking forgiveness. The Holy Spirit speaks to the heart of all humanity through their conscience. The Buddhist, Moslem, Hindu as well as the Christian and Jew can sin against the Holy Spirit.

THE HOLY SPIRIT: Luke 12:11-12.

Jesus promises his disciples that through their faithfulness to the truth, the Spirit of Truth would be faithful within them. Their trials would open opportunities for the Holy Spirit to be manifested in their words and deeds. The Holy Spirit would teach them what to say at the moment of their greatest need.

Day 2: Read Lk 12:13-21. Eat, Drink and Be Merry!

12:13 Then ³¹ someone from the crowd said to him, “Teacher, tell ³² my brother to divide the inheritance with me.” **12:14** But Jesus ³³ said to him, “Man, ³⁴ who made me a judge or arbitrator between you two?” ³⁵ **12:15** Then ³⁶ he said to them, “Watch out and guard yourself from ³⁷ all types of greed, ³⁸ because one’s life does not consist in the abundance of his possessions.” **12:16** He then ³⁹ told them a parable: ⁴⁰ “The land of a certain rich man produced ⁴¹ an abundant crop, **12:17** so ⁴² he thought to himself, ⁴³ ‘What should I do, for I have nowhere to store my crops?’ ⁴⁴ **12:18** Then ⁴⁵ he said, ‘I ⁴⁶ will do this: I will tear down my barns and build bigger ones, and there I will store all my grain and my goods. **12:19** And I will say to myself, ⁴⁷ ‘You have plenty of goods stored up for many years; relax, eat, drink, celebrate!’” **12:20** But God said to him, ‘You fool! This very night your life ⁴⁸ will be demanded back from ⁴⁹ you, but who will get what you have prepared for yourself?’ ⁵⁰ **12:21** So it is with the one who stores up riches for himself, ⁵¹ but is not rich toward God.”

1. Why is the rich man in this parable called a fool?

2. What should a disciple's attitude be towards material goods and wealth? Why?

THE SPIRIT OF GREED: Luke 12: 13-21.

As Jesus is teaching his disciples, a man pushes through the crowd to demand that Jesus perform one of the functions that rabbis often performed; arbitration of a dispute over a will. Jesus refuses to judge or divide between



two greedy sons. Instead he tells a parable to show the foolishness of those who trust in possessions rather than in God.

The rich fool: Jesus paints the picture of a man who seeks material wealth with his whole soul. All his energies are channeled on the goal of gold. His joy is in amassing wealth then reaping its comforts. It totally absorbs him. Death reveals the dire poverty of the man’s soul. True wisdom lies in growing rich in the sight of God.



Day 3: Your Heart's Treasure (Read Lk. 12:22-34.) .

12:22 Then ⁵² Jesus ⁵³ said to his ⁵⁴ disciples, “Therefore I tell you, do not worry ⁵⁵ about your ⁵⁶ life, what you will eat, or about your ⁵⁷ body, what you will wear. **12:23** For there is more to life than food, and more to the body than clothing. **12:24** Consider the ravens: ⁵⁸ They do not sow or reap, they have no storeroom or barn, yet God feeds ⁵⁹ them. How much more valuable are you than the birds! **12:25** And which of you by worrying ⁶⁰ can add an hour to his life? ⁶¹ **12:26** So if ⁶² you cannot do such a very little thing as this, why do you worry about ⁶³ the rest? **12:27** Consider how the flowers ⁶⁴ grow; they do not work ⁶⁵ or spin. Yet I tell you, not even Solomon in all his glory was clothed like one of these! **12:28** And if ⁶⁶ this is how God clothes the wild grass, ⁶⁷ which is here ⁶⁸ today and tomorrow is tossed into the fire to heat the oven, ⁶⁹ how much more ⁷⁰ will he clothe you, you people of little faith! **12:29** So ⁷¹ do not be overly concerned about ⁷² what you will eat and what you will drink, and do not worry about such things. ⁷³ **12:30** For all the nations of the world pursue ⁷⁴ these things, and your Father knows that you need them. **12:31** Instead, pursue ⁷⁵ his ⁷⁶ kingdom, ⁷⁷ and these things will be given to you as well. **12:32** “Do not be afraid, little flock, for your Father is well pleased ⁷⁸ to give you the kingdom. **12:33** Sell your possessions ⁷⁹ and give to the poor. ⁸⁰ Provide yourselves purses that do not wear out – a treasure in heaven ⁸¹ that never decreases, ⁸² where no thief approaches and no moth ⁸³ destroys. **12:34** For where your treasure ⁸⁴ is, there your heart will be also.

1. What would you say are some of the most important treasures of you life?

(Get a small box and place in it whatever reminds you of or symbolizes the treasure(s) of your life. Bring it to the group next week).

THE SPIRIT OF DIVINE PROVIDENCE: Luke 12:22-34.

As wealth can be a danger for those who have it, so can the lack of wealth be a danger. An absence of material securities can be a real source of anxiety. Jesus gives clear instruction for his disciples to build their lives securely on God who is “Abba” for them.

The central point of Jesus teaching about the ravens and lilies of the fields is that his disciples should avoid the consuming state of anxiety over material possessions. They know God cares for them. They are far more important than anything else in creation. Jesus establishes the guiding principle to guide his disciples regardless of their financial state: “*Seek out instead his Kingship over you and the rest will follow.*”

They have been given a treasure. “*It has pleased your Father to give you the kingdom.*” If they receive this gift with their whole heart they will be blessed beyond all imagination and definitely beyond all material possessions that will eventually corrode or disappear.



Day 4: Lk. 12:35-53. "I have come to light a fire."

12:35 "Get dressed for service ⁸⁵ and keep your lamps burning; ⁸⁶ **12:36** be like people ⁸⁷ waiting for their master to come back from the wedding celebration, ⁸⁸ so that when he comes and knocks they can immediately open the door for him. **12:37** Blessed are those slaves ⁸⁹ whom their master finds alert ⁹⁰ when he returns! I tell you the truth, ⁹¹ he will dress himself to serve, ⁹² have them take their place at the table, ⁹³ and will come ⁹⁴ and wait on them! ⁹⁵ **12:38** Even if he comes in the second or third watch of the night ⁹⁶ and finds them alert, ⁹⁷ blessed are those slaves! ⁹⁸ **12:39** But understand this: If the owner of the house had known at what hour the thief ⁹⁹ was coming, he would not have let ¹⁰⁰ his house be broken into. **12:40** You also must be ready, because the Son of Man will come at an hour when you do not expect him." ¹⁰¹ **12:41** Then ¹⁰² Peter said, "Lord, are you telling this parable for us or for everyone?" ¹⁰³ **12:42** The Lord replied, ¹⁰⁴ "Who then is the faithful and wise manager, ¹⁰⁵ whom the master puts in charge of his household servants, ¹⁰⁶ to give them their allowance of food at the proper time? **12:43** Blessed is that slave ¹⁰⁷ whom his master finds at work ¹⁰⁸ when he returns. **12:44** I tell you the truth, ¹⁰⁹ the master ¹¹⁰ will put him in charge of all his possessions. **12:45** But if ¹¹¹ that ¹¹² slave should say to himself, ¹¹³ 'My master is delayed ¹¹⁴ in returning,' and he begins to beat ¹¹⁵ the other ¹¹⁶ slaves, both men and women, ¹¹⁷ and to eat, drink, and get drunk, **12:46** then the master of that slave will come on a day when he does not expect him and at an hour he does not foresee, and will cut him in two, ¹¹⁸ and assign him a place with the unfaithful. ¹¹⁹ **12:47** That ¹²⁰ servant who knew his master's will but did not get ready or do what his master asked ¹²¹ will receive a severe beating. **12:48** But the one who did not know his master's will ¹²² and did things worthy of punishment ¹²³ will receive a light beating. ¹²⁴ From everyone who has been given much, much will be required, ¹²⁵ and from the one who has been entrusted with much, ¹²⁶ even more will be asked. ¹²⁷

1. Vs 49: What fire do you think Jesus wants us to ignite today?

2. What is the baptism that Jesus must receive?

BE PREPARED: Luke 12:35-48.

In every moment of life a disciple is a servant of the Lord. Likewise a disciple is a worker for the Kingdom. He needs to be ready for any opportunity to receive Jesus and to dutifully give witness to the Kingdom. The disciple who faithfully lives for the Lord will be personally and gratefully acknowledge by him. However the one who abuses the gift of faith and power will be judged accordingly.

Jesus wants his disciples to live whole-heartedly for God and to build up God's reign. He does not want half-hearted service from those who have been blessed by his Father. He calls his followers to live every day as if he is about to return in glory.

FIRE ON EARTH: Luke 12:49-53.

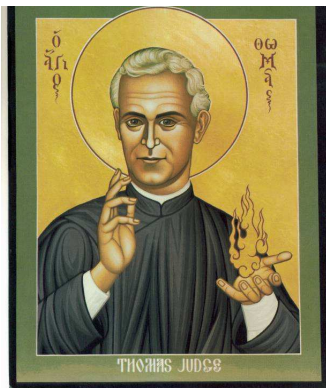
“I have come to light a fire on the earth.”

The Reign of God will be fully initiated by Jesus' death and resurrection. The Holy Spirit will dwell in the hearts of his disciples and be poured out upon the entire earth. A new creation is about to begin. Jesus moves towards Jerusalem with determination and passion. He has a baptism to receive. It is not the baptism of water by John. It is the baptism of his suffering and death that will immerse the world in a new way of life.



Division: Upon his death and resurrection the world will have to make a decision. He did not come to divide men's material goods. He did come to divide men's hearts according to their response towards his saving death. Jesus fulfills the prophecy of Micah 7:6 in predicting division between generations in a family.

FR. JUDGE AND ZEAL:



“The Catholic spirit is the fire the Lord came to cast upon the earth. It is the burning of the Sacred Heart. It is zeal. Zeal is the white heat of charity...All through the Gospels we find our Lord using souls as His instruments for good. The great mystery of the Incarnation, at the beginning of His life in this world, bears witness to the fact that the human agent may participate in divine work. It is His will, understand, that this fire should scatter through you and you may thank God for this grace, for your selection. It should give you, certainly, a holy joy and tremendous pleasure to think that you have been so chosen by the Almighty, that His Holy Spirit is to burn in you for others, and to be communicated through you to others.”

Conference to the Missionary Cenacle Family – Pentecost Meeting – May 31, 1924

Day 5: Signs of the times (Read Lk. 12:54-59.)

12:54 Jesus ¹³⁵ also said to the crowds, “When you see a cloud rising in the west, ¹³⁶ you say at once, ‘A rainstorm ¹³⁷ is coming,’ and it does. **12:55** And when you see the south wind ¹³⁸ blowing, you say, ‘There will be scorching heat,’ and there is. **12:56** You hypocrites! ¹³⁹ You know how to interpret the appearance of the earth and the sky, but how can you not know how ¹⁴⁰ to interpret the present time? Clear the Debts **12:57** “And ¹⁴¹ why don’t you judge for yourselves what is right? **12:58** As you are going with your accuser before the magistrate, ¹⁴² make an effort to settle with him on the way, so that he will not drag you before the judge, and the judge hand you over to the officer, ¹⁴³ and the officer throw you into prison. **12:59** I tell you, you will never get out of there until you have paid the very last cent!” ¹⁴⁴

1. Why do people care so much about the weather to predict and prepare for it?

2. Why do people fail to foresee and prepare for how they will be judged?

SIGNS OF THE TIMES: Luke 12:54-59.

Wind from the west brought moisture from the Mediterranean Sea, while wind from the South brought dry heat from the African desert. The people cared enough about the weather to watch for the signs to predict it, but they failed to notice clear signs of the approaching moral disaster. And even more telling, they do not acknowledge the signs of Jesus' Messiahship. They do not repent and believe. Yet this will not stop Jesus from fulfilling his mission.

