

Beware of the Leaven of the Pharisees

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[0 : 00] Luke chapter number 12, we've already read the passage, but I encourage you to look for who it is that Jesus was speaking to. We're talking tens of thousands of people have gathered around.

There's a multitude. It says that it's so much that the multitude was stepping on each other. There's no sound system like we would have today. So 10, 20, 30,000 people gathering around, you'd be fighting or jockeying for position.

They hear what this man is going to say. His reputation had grown and people had known, and there's some there that are looking to just their real disciples. That means that they're learners. They're wanting to know more about Christ and who he is.

Is he the Messiah? And then there's others that are trying to catch him in a trap. And so as I go to my disciples, it's always all the way from Thatcher, where we've been out here today, all the way down to Eli.

So if you would imagine that he said, there's 30 plus thousand people over here, and he says, guys, gather around here, around verse number 30, he calls them a little flock.

[0 : 58] That's his group. Maybe parents, you've been in a crowded area with your kids before, and before you walk through it, you're like, hey, gather around. Let me give you some advice. Stay close together. And so this is what Jesus tells them.

He says, guys, there's a lot of people around, a lot of influences, but I want you to beware of the leaven of the Pharisees. Think about all the things that he could have warned them about.

I mean, there's, I mean, beware of the riotous living of this group. Beware of this group of troublemakers over here. Beware of all the different mischief. Beware of that pub over in the corner.

Beware of all the different things that could be said. But he says, I want you to beware of this false religion. This, I want you to beware of this hypocrisy that is out there.

And then he likens it, he says, unto the leaven of the Pharisees. Well, those men, unlike, well, the men in the Bible, probably unlike these men over here. I don't imagine. Any of you guys ever bake bread over there?

[1 : 54] Any of you guys? Okay. All right. Some of your parents might, but they would immediately know what it meant when he was speaking about leaven. In the world we live in today, that's not common, but they would have known what it is that it was about.

And he says, beware of the leaven of the Pharisees. Today, when we take the Lord's supper, we will take an unleavened bread. We'll talk about why it is and how that at the, when Jesus is eating the last supper with his disciples, it was the Passover meal that the bread that they would have was unleavened.

It's flattened that is here. And it doesn't have any leaven, which would be needed for it to grow. In Exodus, it tells, in Exodus chapter number, or Deuteronomy 16, verse 3, it says, Thou shalt eat no leavened bread with it.

Seven days shalt thou eat unleavened bread therewith, even the bread of affliction. For thou camest forth out of the land of Egypt in haste, that thou mayest remember the day when thou camest forth out of the land of Egypt all the days of thy life.

And so, when they go to the feast of the unleavened bread here, what they're remembering is a time back in Exodus, where they were in bondage, and they were going to leave Egypt. And when the meal was made, they say, you've got to make haste.

[3 : 10] And so, you don't have time to let the bread rise, which is what the leaven would do, and that you need to make the unleavened bread. And so, it happened there, the Passover meal, and then it continues.

And when Jesus and the disciples, they will take the bread, they will also have this unleavened bread. And so, what is it? What is the leaven of the Pharisees? What is the thing that was, if you put it in the bread, what is the thing that if you were to put it into your relationship with God, if you were to put it in your religion, it would grow to permeate all of it, and it would be a negative thing to look out for.

So, it says, beware. Don't follow the religion of the Pharisees. It's not the religion that I'm teaching. It's an entirely different way of attempting to relate to one another and to God.

See, this kind of hypocrisy cannot be simply contained in the heart of one person, especially when that person is a religious leader. He's about to leave these 12 and the disciples of it, and they're going to teach Christianity.

They're going to tell people how they can relate to God. They're going to tell people how to confess Christ and the Holy Spirit's leading in their life, how to honor God. And he knew what was in the heart of these men.

[4 : 23] It would not stay there, but it would spread. Galatians says, a little leaven leaveneth a whole lump. I don't cook a lot, all right? I've never made bread. So, I had to look it up, all right?

And I went to a recipe, and after reading a long story about the background of the recipe that I didn't need to know, I got down to the bottom, and it says, for every pound of the bread that you'd have here, the dough, you would need like a teaspoon of the yeast here, all right?

And it was just, and all the recipes is just a little bit. In Luke 13, 21, it says, it's like leaven which a woman took and hid three measures of meal until the whole was leaven.

You can't hide leaven in the meal, that it will expand. I'd asked Miss Yvonne about it. She told me to talk to Miss Mize, and I didn't do the science project today. But I was wondering, could I make bread up here, and could I let you see it expand during the time that I was up here?

If I put enough yeast in it, and I put a heating pad underneath it, it could have been possible. It could have also been dangerous, all right? And if I would have really did it the way that I imagined it.

[5 : 29] But it's something that can't be hidden in it. And so Jesus, his love for the multitudes caused him to turn the look towards the little flock and say, if you allow this hypocrisy in your heart, it will spread.

Not just it won't stay in your heart, but it will spread and fill it, and it will go. So not only does it not stay, it will grow, and so we must beware of it. But it will also be revealed. For there's nothing covered that shall not be revealed, neither here that shall not be known.

Hypocrisy will always make itself known, and it fails. Verse 3, Therefore, whatsoever you have spoken in darkness shall be heard in the light, and that which you have spoken in the ear of the closet shall be proclaimed upon the housetops.

And so they have a, you know, in the Bible it says somebody dug and they stole. The idea of you would lose something because somebody dug, they get it. They dug through the side of your house.

So you have your wall here, and they would dig underneath the house, and they would be able to steal your stuff. So in the middle of the house there would have been an inner chamber that would have been where you would have kept your valuables.

[6 : 36] It's also, if you want to talk about your neighbor, David, you don't stand beside their wall and your wall and talk about them. You would go inside the inner part of the house, and that's where you could whisper about your neighbors.

And they said, What you said in that inner part of the house that you think nobody knows about, it will be proclaimed from the rooftop, from the flat roof where they would make announcements. And so hypocrisy will always fail.

It will always come to light. It cannot be hidden from God. This word hypocrisy, it's a strong word. It isn't a word that we would use. If somebody is a salesman or a shrewd businessman, and he's like maybe a trickster or he's sly or he just gets the upper hand on you, that's a different type of language that we use.

But when we talk about hypocrisy, people know that's a word that we use in regard to religion. That's a word that we use when we want to insult a group of people and to say that they are not sincere, they're not a person of integrity.

Anybody ever tell you in here that they didn't want to come to church with you because that place is filled with hypocrites? How many have ever heard that in here? It's filled with hypocrites. And then you've probably been taught the respond, right?

[7 : 49] You'd say, well, do you go to Walmart? Yes. Well, Walmart is also filled with hypocrites, right? And so that's a good response. But hopefully, as Walmart may be filled with hypocrites, I would hope today that we're not filled with hypocrites in this room, that we would examine our hearts.

But all false religion is hypocrisy. If you proclaim that you could let somebody know God, you would know the ways of eternal life, that you would know how to have a proper relationship with the creator of the universe, but you do not speak in terms that are right with the Bible, that is certainly hypocrisy.

That is wrong. That is appearing to know something that you do not. And so we've got to be aware of this. Big message, Jesus given to his little flock with a lot of people around, that emphasizes how important it is.

Big message, it's vital, it's urgent, because if we allow it in our lives in a little bit, it will spread, it will take over, and it will keep going. We've got to know what hypocrisy is because it will fail.

It's not right. It's not pleasing to God. So what exactly is it? What is hypocrisy or what is it rooted in? Hypocrites live before a world's audience and not God.

[9 : 04] Hypocrisy is rooted in a fear of man. Matthew 6, 5. And when thou prayest, thou shalt not be as the hypocrites are. For they love to pray standing in the synagogues, in the corners of the street, that they may be seen of men.

Verily I say unto you, they have their reward. Is praying a sign of hypocrisy? No. Is that what in the story makes that person, as the hypocrites are, it's that statement that they may be seen of men.

It's a fear of wanting to obey man and to be pleasing the man over honoring God. When it's really put on display in the book of Galatians, chapter 6, verse 12, when they're even discipling and teaching other people, and they would say, As many as desire to make a fair show in the flesh, they constrain you to be circumcised, only lest they should suffer persecution for the cross of Christ.

It was that you need to do this a certain way. If you don't, you will be persecuted for being a follower of Christ. And so you need to do something outwardly so that everybody would be pleased with you.

It's an outward conforming form of religion. It's an outward conforming way to relate with God that is displeasing to Him. So knowing the emphasis that Jesus gave on it, knowing how widespread that it could be in our lives, our family, and our church, knowing that it's not honoring to God, how do we avoid it?

[10 : 37] That's the real question. How do we avoid it? And that's an obvious question. Then we have this phrase in verse 4, And I say unto you, my friends. Jesus is going to answer this question.

How to beware of the living of the Pharisees? I'm going to tell you, my friends. And the answer will be, Fear God, confess Christ, and be taught by the Spirit.

Fear God, confess Christ, and be taught by the Spirit. See, God will uncover all that is hidden. God, not man, is our judge. God knows everything.

We read that in verses 2 and 3. All things will be revealed. That was spoken in darkness, it will be brought out into light. What was spoken in the ears in the closet will be proclaimed upon a rooftop.

You need to recognize that there is nothing hidden from the God of the universe. He knows all, and He sees all. And that God that knows all and He sees all, it's Him that is the judge and not man.

[11 : 39] So don't be afraid of Him that can kill the body. Who is it that can kill the body? Obviously, murderers. It's not saying that those, we're not just talking about people that are murderers, but it's saying humans.

One human can kill another human. He says, that's not the person to fear, but afterwards that's no more. But be aware of one that can kill and that would cast into hell.

Man can only kill the body, but God has the power to cast in to hell. And this is a reminder from Jesus Christ that hell is a real place of eternal punishment.

It wouldn't make sense for Him to say, hey, don't be afraid to say that hell is just a grave because man can put you in the grave. Somebody could kill you. They could bury you.

If somebody kills you, they put you in the grave. So it's not saying, don't be afraid of a man who can put you in the grave. Fear God who could put you in a grave. He's saying, no, don't be afraid of man and all they can do is kill you.

[12 : 37] All they could do as a child of God is cause you to graduate onto heaven. That's not who you should be fearing in life, but you ought to fear the God of heaven who not only could take your life, but could cast you in the hell.

So how do you avoid being a hypocrite? Stop fearing man and start fearing God, the true and living God who will uncover everything that is hidden and who has the authority that sends you to hell.

This God that knows everything. Five little sparrows are sold for two farthings and God knows everything about them. I've been reading this passage when we were in Columbia and we were on the Amazon and yes, for several months, you're going to have to hear stories where I say yes when I was on Amazon because it's just such a great way to start a story, right?

And when we were on the Amazon, Blake Young, we were about to leave and he said, hey, I think I would like some fish. And I'm like, that sounds like a good idea. But no, it did not come out in 10 minutes or 15 minutes.

About two hours later, when he said he wanted fish, they headed down to the river and they caught these little fish, five or six very small fish and they cooked it up and Chris Feese ate my portion.

[13 : 47] I didn't get to it, all right? But they were these little bitty fish there in the Amazon that were prepared for us. The God of heaven knew everything about that fish.

The God of heaven knew when it was born. It knew when it was, he knew that Blake was going to eat it. He knew what portion Chris was going to eat of it. He knew how much it would be sold for. He knew that it would take two hours for it to be cooked and all these things going on.

He knew every detail. He didn't learn it. He always knows every detail. That's the God of heaven. And so you should honor God, not man.

What does God think about something? How do I honor Him is what I should be deciding. And then the reasonable question is, how do I honor God? If I don't honor God, then I'm as the hypocrites fearing man because that's the two options.

Fear of those that can kill the body or kill the fear of the God that can cast your soul in the hell. There's only these two different options. So how do I make sure that I'm really honoring God? Verse number eight, also I say unto you, transitional statement, giving an answer to the question that this passage would cause us to ask.

[14 : 54] I say unto you, whosoever shall confess me before men, him shall the Son of Man also confess before the angels of God. But he that denieth me before men shall be denied before the angels of God.

If you do not confess the Son, you cannot honor the Father. You can't say, I really love God, but I just do not, Jesus is just the teacher.

I really love God, but I have no affections, I have no desire for Jesus Christ and to know Him. This is an argument that happens back and forth with Jesus and the Pharisees where they always want to say, hey, we honor God, look at all the outward things that we do.

And then they would try to make the argument they honor God and then he would put it like this in John 5, 23, that all men should honor the Son even as they honor the Father. He that honoreth not the Son honoreth not the Father which hath sit him.

There's no way to separate the two. They believe that they honor God but they would insult Jesus. John 8, 41. John 8, 41. Listen to the way that they speak to Jesus here.

[15 : 58] He says, Ye do the deeds of your Father. Then said they to Him, We be not born of fornication. We have one Father, even God. And so here, a slide at Jesus who that they had said was born as did not know His Father as insulting of Him, they would say, Hey, us, we have one God.

We worship the Father. But you here, they did not honor God because they insulted the Son. Jesus said if you love God then you would love Him. It's plain as day.

In John 8, 42. Jesus said unto them, If God were your Father, you would love me. But I proceeded forth and came from God. Neither came I of myself, but He sent me.

You cannot honor God if you do not confess Christ. And that is where the great hypocrisy of the world is, is that they could say, We love God.

We can show you a way to heaven, but you will not confess Christ. Beware, little flock. Beware of the hypocrisy of this world. There is no knowing God without confessing Christ.

[17 : 06] And so what does it mean to confess Christ? If I ask you what it means to confess, you're going to probably picture a person in a dark room, a bright light bulb on them. Where were you the night of June 7, 1992?

That was the night that I got saved as a kid. All right. There's a light shining on this person and they would say, Confess. Well, that's not a bad understanding of it. It's just not a complete understanding because confessing something is to, you're really owning up to what is true.

Technically, it is to say what is true. True. Before men, because that's the only option, if you're confessing Christ, there would be before men, a regenerated heart will be shown in a changed life.

I was in New York City many years ago with a group of teenagers and this young man came to me. He's now a pastor in Maryland and he came to me and he had been sharing the gospel all day long and he said, I'm just so concerned that when I got saved that I did not confess Christ, that I didn't say what I was supposed to say in the right way.

And I said, what have you been doing today? He said, I've been sharing Jesus with people. Why? Because I love Jesus. Why do you love Jesus? Because he died for me. What this young man didn't realize is that his life was confessing Christ, that he was living a life that was a public confession, that something had changed in his heart, that he would never be the same.

[18 : 28] And that's what he's saying. That's why that confession will have to be before other people. And so what is it that we're confessing? It's this. Listen closely. You need to be, make sure that you're honoring God.

Because if not, you could be cast into a lake of fire in hell. Because you need to honor, you need the fear of God, which means you need to confess Christ. Jesus is God.

1 John 4, 15, whosoever shall confess that Jesus is the son of God, God dwelleth in him and he in God. You must confess that Jesus is God.

2 John 7, for many deceivers are entered into the world who confess not that Jesus Christ has come in the flesh. This is a deceiver and antichrist. That large multitude, they did not want to recognize that that was the Messiah, that was God.

Later on in history, people would say that he was not man, that he did not come and die. Either ditch, he is fine for you to go off into. But you must confess that Jesus Christ is God and that he had come in the flesh.

[19 : 32] And then lastly, Romans 10, 9, it tells us that if thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus Christ, thou shalt believe in thine heart that God had raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved.

Confess that Jesus Christ is God, that he has come in the flesh, and that he is Lord. And this is no minor detail. In the New Testament, where Jesus is called the Savior, which he most certainly is, twice, he is referred to as Lord 700 times.

You must recognize that this man, Jesus, is God, came in the flesh, and he is Lord. And so how do you learn to confess Christ? If you can't honor God unless you're confessing Christ, how are you going to do that?

And no one comes to the Father except through the Son. So listen carefully. No one comes to the Son except by the Spirit. And whosoever shall speak against the Son of Man, it shall be forgiven.

But him that blasphemes against the Holy Ghost, it shall not be forgiven. We live in a world of deception. On that same trip in New York City, a man walked up to me on a pier, and he said, I am the Messiah.

[20 : 42] And I said, really? That's very interesting. Then he tried to sell me a bracelet. All right? And so he has deception. He said, I am the Messiah. I have said in India with men that would be spiritual gurus, and they would try to tell me of the way of finding nirvana, a way of escaping this life.

As a teenager, I spent hours listening to my friends that were in a works-based relationship tell me how, one, I could not go to heaven unless I was baptized because that was a work towards salvation, or that I will not ever be filled with the Holy Spirit unless I'm able to speak in tongues.

Everywhere you turn, there's some kind of deception that is there. There's a million different options. Today, you had so many different options of where you would go and you would worship.

So how are you going to know that confess Christ? How are you going to know how to honor God? And it must be that we hear. The test is what we hear.

1 John 4, 1. Beloved, believe not every spirit, but try the spirits whether they are of God because many false prophets are gone out into the world.

[21 : 50] We live today without the work of the Holy Spirit. We could just be drawn into all kinds of lies and deception. We ought to be amazed at the grace of God that was sung today because somebody brought you the gospel message.

You could have been in many different places. You could have been the son, the daughter of a false teacher. You could be layer generation after generation and somebody teaching a false deception, somebody teaching a hypocrisy, saying they could tell you how to go to heaven but not having the first clue of how to confess Christ.

And so how do you try the spirits? How do you know what is of God? 1 John 4, 2 answers. The next verse, it says you have to try the spirits and to know what is true and what is false.

Verse number 2 will tell you, Hereby know you the Spirit of God. Every spirit that confesses that Jesus Christ has come in the flesh is of God.

The Holy Spirit is going to direct your heart to confessing and knowing and loving Jesus. It's the Holy Spirit's testimony of Christ is the only way we know the truth about Christ.

[22 : 58] The Holy Spirit has spoken concerning the Son. Faith comes what? It comes by hearing and hearing by the Word of God. Who is the author of the Word concerning Christ?

Who is the author of the Word? Who is the author of the New Testament? Who is the author of the Old Testament? For the prophecy came not in old time by the will of man because the will of man is full of hypocrisy.

The will of man is full of deception. But the Word of God by holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost. The Holy Spirit has worked and has caused us believers in here to recognize that Jesus Christ is the Son of God, that He has come in the flesh and that He is the Lord.

And by confessing Christ we honor God. So how do we avoid the sin of hypocrisy of the Pharisees? You fear God. You confess Christ. You get taught by the Spirit.

So a church service is open to all people. Anybody is welcome to come. But the Lord's Supper is something that should be taken place by those that are committed followers of Jesus.

[24 : 12] People that have committed to not the leaven of the Pharisees but we want to follow Christ. And so there ought to be a time of personal examination. A person might have told you I don't go to church anymore because it's filled with hypocrites and we'd say God let that not be true of us.

That we're not a group of people making a man-made religion. We're not asking our kids and one another to conform to an outward religion. But we're people that have been taught by the Spirit that confess Christ and to honor God.

1 Corinthians chapter number 11 verse number 28 it says but let a man examine himself and so let him eat of the bread and drink of the cup. The psalmist David asked God to search his own heart that there is no hypocrisy spiritual hypocrisy that we could do today.

There's no test in which I'd have. Inside of the church as members of the church we provide accountability one to another. We say hey I see that you're living in this manner and I want to speak to you.

But the matters of the heart the things that are really in there if the leavening is in there of hypocrisy that is between you and God. Nobody knows about the sparrows of this world like the God of heaven.

[25 : 22] Nobody will ever know your heart like the God of heaven. And so you would say God I want you to examine my heart. This is a good thing for a church. Just like Jesus would tell the disciples there can be no leaven in you guys because if I leave and there's leaven and hypocrisy in you I will leave you behind and all you will do is create one of a million other false systems of religion.

Some of them look very different than what you know but then there's other places and they look just like us and they meet just like us that they have bought into the lie of hypocrisy coming to God on their own terms.

And then in verse 31 of 1 Corinthians 11 it says for if we would judge ourselves we should not be judged. That when we would come to this place of an examining of our hearts and say God that I will submit myself to you I will let you look into my heart and identify what is going on then that would require that the church would not need to help you in that area that the church would not we would admonish one another but first of all it's the Holy Spirit working in your life.

Many times even recently we have a baptism right here and that baptism is a public confession where a person says I, he is the Lord he is the God of the universe I want to follow him with my life and after the person is baptized we'll say he has raised the walk and newness of life and that is the starting point where they would become a member of this church and that would be a sign of obedience unto the Lord that they are going to follow him as we come to the Lord's table we are saying Lord we are continued in our commitment to walk in this newness of life and so I ask would we come in a worthy manner the Bible says that it's possible for you to not come in a worthy manner there is a division among the church there was people that were coming in because they just saw it as a meal there was a way in which they dishonored one another we could do that today and we would say now we are going to line up by some kind of way I am going to tell you those that I like the best are going to come first and those I like the least are coming later or we are going to line up by some economic status of how that is going to happen but that is not what we are going to do every one of us are going to take the Lord's Supper in the same way having been served and so on a personal level as a church we are committed to doing it in a way that honors God but on a personal level are you ready today to take this in a manner that is worthy failing to appreciate what the bread and cup signify that Christ loved the church and died for her and a little bit when a special song and you receive the cup and you receive the bread are you able to remember what he has done for you failing to feel any remorse in our attitudes and actions that are so inconsistent with the love of God you have a hatred for that sin you have a hatred for your sin in your life because of what it did to our Savior

Jesus Christ failing to repent of those attitudes and actions and turn to the path of love if you are in here today and you just say I am just I am living in rebellion that I am just not willing to turn from my sin then you are taking the Lord's Supper in an unworthy manner you need to repent of that failing to trust Jesus for forgiveness and to walk in the power in which he would do it relying upon the Holy Spirit so these are questions that I would ask you to contemplate on because Jesus told that group of disciples beware the leaven of the Pharisees because he knows that it is something that they could fall into so church family beware the leaven of the Pharisees are you walking with the Lord are you confessing Christ are you honoring him or being led by the Spirit are you living in the way that the Pharisees would be living which is this with an outward show but no real change in your heart so as Kristen will come to the piano first thing that we'll do is we'll take some time here you've been praying throughout the week or Charlotte will come you've been praying last week I told you you were coming we should live always prepared for this moment but we've been leading up to this this week and this time would you allow that self-examination are you ready to receive the Lord's Supper when you take the Lord's Supper will it be doing its stated purpose of bringing you to a place of remembrance and expressing your love to him in the longue and