



Coptic Orthodox Diocese of the Southern United States



The Holy Gospel According to St. Luke

Chapter 12

Bishop Youssef



Introduction

- In the last chapter, Jesus was invited to dine at the home of a Pharisee
- Knowing the critical thoughts of His host and the other Pharisees and Scribes who were present, Jesus used the occasion to deliver a six condemnations on the spiritual condition of the Pharisees and scribes
- At the end of Jesus' condemnation of the Pharisees and scribes at the banquet in chapter 11, the angry Pharisees and scribes were even more determined to find the evidence to condemn Jesus, 11:52-53



Introduction

- Jesus leaves the home of the Pharisee and proceeds to speak to His disciples and the crowd that has gathered
- This is the beginning of one continuous discourse delivered by Jesus to His disciples in which the focus is on trust in God, and courage when faced with crisis



Introduction

Chapter Outline:

- Beware of Hypocrisy 12:1-3
- Jesus Teaches the Fear of God 12:4-7
- Confess Christ Before Men 12:8-12
- The Parable of the Rich Fool 12:13-21
- Do Not Worry 12:22-34
- The Faithful Servant and the Evil Servant 12:35-48
- Jesus: His Mission a Cause of Division 12:49-53
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Beware of Hypocrisy 12:1-3

- St. Luke begins chapter 12 by linking Jesus' next teaching to the events at the banquet and Jesus' judgment of the Pharisees and Scribes passage by opening with the word "meanwhile" (literally "at that time" in the Greek text)
- Jesus' characterization of the Pharisees and Scribes as "hypocrites" is a concise summary of His accusation against them at the banquet in the previous chapter
- The crowds were so large that some were injured
- Jesus spoke this primarily to His disciples, warning them against the great danger of *hypocrisy*, likening it to *leaven*

Beware of Hypocrisy 12:1-3



- Hypocrisy is expressed both in their doctrines, and in their lives
- Their lives carried a great show of piety and holiness, but was in appearance only
- It is very suitably to compare hypocrisy in doctrine and manners, to leaven; which at first is small and little, but gradually increases and spreads itself, and is hidden and covered, and is not easily discerned, nor its influence and effects observed
- But in time, it infects and corrupts the whole of men's principles and practices, and puffs them up with a vain opinion of themselves



Beware of Hypocrisy 12:1-3

- When our Lord asks his disciples beware of it, his meaning not only is, that they take heed that they were not infected with it themselves
- But that they were not imposed upon by the false claims of these deceitful men
- In Scripture leaven is used as both a positive and a negative example
- Leavened bread was permitted to be eaten in the communal meal of the thanksgiving offering Leviticus 7:13 and for the "first fruits" of the wheat harvest Leviticus 23:17



Beware of Hypocrisy 12:1-3

- Jesus uses leaven as a positive example in His teaching on the growth of the Kingdom, Matthew 13:33; Luke 13:20-21
- But it is used as a negative example in this passage and as it is used it in 1 Corinthians 5:6-8 where St. Paul teaches that Christ, the true Pascal Lamb, destroys the old leaven of sin and makes possible a holy life of which unleavened bread is the symbol
- The rejection of leaven as a symbol for sin is also found in the Old Testament commands of the Law
- For example leavened bread was prohibited in sacrifices that were burned on God's holy altar, Leviticus 2:4



Beware of Hypocrisy 12:1-3

- It was also prohibited during the celebration of the Feast of Unleavened Bread in which leaven was viewed as a sign of the corrupting influence of evil on human nature and a symbol for sin which can easily multiply and spread through God's holy community
- Nothing can be hidden from God and in the "end" (divine judgment) what was attempted to be kept hidden will come to light
- The art of being a hypocrite depends on concealment, but one day all will be revealed
- We can only be hypocrites before men, but never before God

Beware of Hypocrisy 12:1-3



- How should what Jesus teach in verses 2-3 be applied to our confession?
- We should be fearless and forthcoming in our confessions because, since nothing can be hidden from God, we might as well reveal all our sins without reservation
- Father Theophactius says that in verse 3 He addressed the Pharisees, as if telling them, “You Pharisees, what you speak of in the dark, that is, all your effort to test Me in the hiding places of your hearts, is heard in the light, because I am the light
- By my light, the deceit of your darkness is uncovered



Beware of Hypocrisy 12:1-3

- What you speak of in the ears and bedrooms, that is, what you whisper in each other's ears will be declared on the rooftops, for it is heard by Me as someone crying out loud on the rooftop
- Here too, light could mean 'the gospel', and the rooftop could mean the 'gospel'
- The rooftop may also mean the high spirits of the disciples
- What the Pharisees have plotted together, will be called and would be revealed through the light of the gospel, by means of the great preacher the Holy Spirit that reigns over the high souls of the disciples

Jesus Teaches the Fear of God

12:4-7



- Jesus addresses His disciples as *friends* and counsels them to be fearless in conduct when faced with persecution, even if their persecution leads to martyrdom
- Though He would have them beware of the Pharisees, He would not have them be afraid of them
- He would have them know them, and avoid their hypocrisy, and guard against it; but not fear them, the worst they could do unto them was to kill the body
- And that they had no need to be afraid of, since at death, their souls would be immediately happy, in the enjoyment and vision of God

Jesus Teaches the Fear of God

12:4-7



- When Jesus spoke to these disciples of His about martyrdom and persecution, He knew that all of them – except John – would die martyr's deaths for Him
- He also knew of His own coming suffering
- Physical death cannot separate us from the love of God, but spiritual death being *cast into hell*; of the eternally will separate us from God forever
- Rather than fearing man they should fear offending God who has the power over eternal life and death

Jesus Teaches the Fear of God

12:4-7



- If God remembers the *sparrows*, He will not forget you – so don't lose heart
- There are few things worse than the sense of being *forgotten*; Jesus assured every believer that their life was precious and remembered before God
- If God knows *exactly* how many hairs you have; if He knows that about you, He also knows all the important things
- Nothing, such as persecution and bitter suffering, even death, can happen without the consent of God
- This thought will surely give them courage to endure

Confess Christ Before Men

12:8-12



- When the Lord asked in His church of the new flock not to carry the yeast of the Pharisees which is hypocrisy, and not to be from the outside other than the inside, the Lord then asks the church to be conducted in God's fear alone, without fearing people
- Those who fear God would not fear people or ask for their praise, and would not ask for any reward or fear any punishment
- Jesus here comforted the faithful, explaining that the suffering Christian will be given the reward of faithfulness and honor before the throne of God

Confess Christ Before Men

12:8-12



- The *confessors*, those who endured suffering for Jesus, yet were spared death, had special honor
- Even as there was an honorable reward for the faithful, there is a terrible penalty for the unfaithful
- They would be denied and disgraced before the throne of God
- *before men*, There is a real and important place for a public declaration of faithfulness to Jesus
- For many, this is the most difficult thing of all – and is usually difficult because of a fear of man, the exact thing Jesus warned against in His previous words, Luke 12:4-7

Confess Christ Before Men

12:8-12



- The test to either confess or deny Jesus before men may come in many ways; but it will always come
- It is helpful to be determined in heart and mind before the test comes
- Jesus clearly called His listeners to a choice
- As before in Luke 11:23 the choice is to either be with Jesus or against Him
- Here the choice is to *confess* Jesus or *deny* Him

Confess Christ Before Men

12:8-12



- Jesus Christ is the Lord of eternal life with the full right to pass judgment on the works and hearts of those who belong to Him by their professed belief in Him as their personal Redeemer and Redeemer of the world
- In His First Advent He did not come to judge but to save, John 3:17, 5:26
- However, in His Second Advent He will return to judge the world
- Those who rejected God's divine grace in this life have already condemned themselves by rejecting Christ and God's spirit of love, Matthew 3:12, 13:41-43; Luke 3:17

Confess Christ Before Men

12:8-12



- Jesus assures the disciples that there is no limit to His mercy
- But anyone who stubbornly refuses to accept His mercy by repenting his sins, rejects His forgiveness and God's gift of grace offered by the call of the Holy Spirit
- This demonstration of the deliberate rejection of God's gift of salvation up to and including the end of one's earthly life can lead to the loss of eternal salvation
- The Holy Spirit's main ministry is to testify of Jesus, John 15:26
- When that testimony of Jesus is fully and finally rejected, one has truly blasphemed the Holy Spirit and essentially called Him a liar in respect to His testimony about Jesus

Confess Christ Before Men

12:8-12



- The blasphemy of the Holy Spirit will never be forgiven – not because it is a sin too big for God to forgive, but because it is an attitude of heart that cares nothing for God’s forgiveness
- It never *has* forgiveness because it never *wants* forgiveness God’s way
- Jesus said this when it seemed He was more popular than ever Luke 12:1
- Yet Jesus knew that being regarded as popular wasn’t the same as truly being confessed and trusted
- Even as He called His hearers to make a choice, He warned against making the wrong choice

Confess Christ Before Men

12:8-12



- Jesus also warned them that men would persecute them in civic courts, *magistrates* and religious places, *synagogues*
- Jesus spoke these words to men who would face this exact challenge
- Thousands upon thousands since then have faced this challenge and received God's grace in it
- Jesus' disciples could have perfect trust in God in such moments of great testing, knowing that the Holy Spirit would speak through them even if they were not skillful in words
- It is the promise of God that when a man is on trial for his faith, the Holy Spirit will guide him

The Parable of the Rich Fool

12:13-21



- Jesus had just taught on our great value to God and on the importance of standing for Him
- In the midst of this teaching a man seeks Jesus' intervention in a family dispute over inheritance
- *tell my brother*, This man did not ask Jesus to listen to both sides and make a righteous judgment; he asked Jesus to take sides with him against his brother
- Obviously, Jesus' previous words about the need for full commitment and God's care for us didn't penetrate this man's heart
- He felt he needed to fight for what was his
- But Jesus denies his request because that is not His mission

The Parable of the Rich Fool

12:13-21



- There were courts of law set up to deal with such issues
- Instead, He offers a teaching on the dangers of greed and a warning that material possessions do not define what is really important in life
- It was not that Jesus is unconcerned about justice
- Our Lord's words show that He had read the secret of the man's heart
- Greed was there leading the man to think that "life" was not worth living unless he had an overabundance of
- When we live with the attitude that our life *does* consist in what we possess, we live in *covetousness*, and *covetousness is idolatry*, Colossians 3:5

The Parable of the Rich Fool

12:13-21



- *The ground of a certain rich man yielded plentifully*, This man, it appears, became rich, not by unjust gains, but by the produce of his own land
- He was so successful that he had trouble managing his resources
I have no room to store my crops
- No place to bestow my fruits, Well answers St. Ambrose, "Thou hast barns - the bosoms of the needy, the houses of the widows, the mouths of orphans and of infants."
- With a wealth of resources, the man in the parable had his life confidently planned
- He would build to better manage his wealth, and then enjoy life to the fullest

The Parable of the Rich Fool

12:13-21



- Telling himself; "Enjoy, *eat* and *drink* without any fear of exhausting of my stores"
- This man's covetousness, therefore, consisted in the satisfaction which he took in his goods and fruits, in his putting a high value on the pleasures of luxury which they afforded, and in proposing to derive his happiness from them alone, without taking God into his plan at all
- In one night, all the man's accomplishments and plans were ruined
- He made business plans and life plans, but could not control the day of his death – and all his accomplishments and plans were instantly nothing

The Parable of the Rich Fool

12:13-21



- *Fool*, Not because he was rich, but because he lived without any awareness of and preparation for *eternity*
- *your soul*, This man owed his life, his livelihood, and his wealth to God; but most of all he owed his *soul* to God, and it would be *required* of him
- Everyone would think the man in the parable was a great success, but God said he was a *fool*
- *So is he who lays up treasure for himself*, The rich man in the parable thought it was all for him

The Parable of the Rich Fool

12:13-21



- *my crops, my barns, my goods, my soul*, Everything was about him, and nothing was about God
- It was proved in the end that nothing was his – even his own soul was subject to God
- He did not have any *crops*, any *barns*, any *goods*, and his *soul* was dead
- *and is not rich toward God*, The man's problem was not in that he had treasure on earth; but that he was not *rich toward God*
- Among the saints of God in both Testaments are many notable rich men, whose possessions seem to have helped rather than hindered them toward eternity



Do Not Worry 12:22-34

- Jesus continues with a commentary on the Parable of the Rich Fool urging the disciples not to worry excessively about earthly things
- He first urged them to confess the faith, then He warned them of greed as a dangerous enemy that makes man lose his contact with God and people
- Then He told them the parable of the foolish rich man who set his heart on earthly barns
- The Lord urges us not to be concerned about luxurious things
- Now He is exalting us to a higher level, which is that of not worrying about even the necessities such as food and clothing



Do Not Worry 12:22-34

- *Do not worry*, is a loving command
- We often fail to appreciate what damage worry does in our lives
- There is a difference between a godly sense of responsibility and an ungodly, untrusting worry
- He assures us He is our maker, and the Giver of our life; so will He not be concerned about feeding us?
- The worry Jesus spoke of brings man down to the level of an animal who is merely concerned with physical needs
- Your life is *more*, and you have eternal matters to pursue
- He wishes His flock not to be neglectful or careless, but to be well balanced mentally, without any fear or worry



Do Not Worry 12:22-34

- What a contrast between the life of the rich and prosperous landowner just related, whose whole heart and soul were concentrated on a toil which should secure him fine food and costly clothing, and these birds fed by God so abundantly
- The ravens knew nothing of the anxious care and the restless toil of the rich man in the midst of which he died, and yet they lived
- Yet take careful note; the birds don't *worry*, but they do *work*
- Birds do not just sit with open mouths, expecting God to fill them
- Worry accomplishes nothing; we can *add* nothing to our lives by worrying
- There may be greater sins than worry, but there are none more self-defeating and useless



Do Not Worry 12:22-34

- If no amount of anxious care can add one cubit to our stature or the measure of our days, how much less can we control all the myriad possibilities upon which the happiness of the future may depend!
- Jesus tells His disciples to be free of worries using the examples of raven and here using the example of *the lilies* and *the grass*
- God cares for the *lilies*, but that means that every day for the *lilies* is not sun and sweetness
- If every day was sunny, and there was never clouds and rain, the flowers would die quickly
- God even takes care of the *grass*, so He will also certainly take care of you



Do Not Worry 12:22-34

- By these words the Lord asks us to have trust in Him, for He grants us His mercy
- The literal meaning to these words mean we are unable to add anything to our physical stature
- As for the spiritual meaning, it means we are unable to trespass our boundaries without God's help
- The Lord put the lily on a higher level
- *little faith* is not a little weakness
- To think the Lord who clothes the lilies will leave his own children naked is disgraceful



Do Not Worry 12:22-34

- Again, after the moving, touching words, the Lord returns to the pressing injunction with which He began His lessons to His disciples upon the parable of the "rich fool"
- Do not trouble yourselves about your eating and drinking
- His point is that the disciples need a priority of values, which is made clear in verses 30-34
- They are not to behave like the pagans who run after the material their focus must be on the spiritual
- That is not to say that Jesus is telling the disciples that they should not continue to work and care for their families, *your Father knows that you need these things* these material things



Do Not Worry 12:22-34

- His teaching is that excessive worry about what will happen tomorrow shows lack of faith in God's providence
- He does not mean that we should ignore our earthly responsibilities to earn a living and care for those who depend on us
- The leaders of the church at Thessalonica were having a problem with people within the community who were not doing their fair share of the work
- When Paul was there, he issued the order that if someone did not work that person could not eat the community's food, and he urged the church leaders to continue to be firm in admonishing those who were neglectful of their duties 2 Thessalonian 3:10-16

Do Not Worry 12:22-34



- Earlier Jesus referred to the disciples as His "friends" and now He calls them His *little flock* how inspiring and touching
- They were little, but they were a *flock* – meaning they have a Shepherd
- *little flock* is another term of tender kind word addressed to His own who were grouped near Him
- In the earlier part of this discourse He had told them of the troublous life which awaited them, but at the same time wished to show them how dear they were to Him
- Jesus gave them confidence when He said *your Father* instead of saying “*My Father*”



Do Not Worry 12:22-34

- The command to give away what we have is a *test* of discipleship
- The correlation between where your heart is and the location of your treasure is not a suggestion; it is a simple fact
- If you regard your material possessions as your treasure, then your heart is set here on this earth
- He challenges them to make a radical choice and to cast their lives completely into God's hands by selling all they have in order to store up an infinite *treasure in heaven*
- In Matthew 19:29 He told them that if they were willing to give up everything to follow Him, their reward would be greater than what they gave up

The Faithful Servant and the Evil Servant 12:35-48



- The Master goes on with His teaching on the subject of covetousness, still addressing the disciples
- There is another reason why His followers should treat the accumulation of earthly goods with indifference; no man knows *when the* end of this state of things may come
- Their hearts must be fixed on something else than perishable things
- They must act as servants on the watch for the *return* of their lord

The Faithful Servant and the Evil Servant 12:35-48



- *Girded*, This alludes to the ancient manner of dress
- They wore a long flowing robe as their outer garment
- When they worked or walked, or ran, it was necessary to "gird" or tie this up by a belt about the body, that it might not obstruct them
- Hence, to gird up the loins means to be "ready," to be active, to be diligent
- *your lamps burning*, We are also reminded that *Your word is a lamp to my feet and light to my path*, Psalm 119:105

The Faithful Servant and the Evil Servant 12:35-48



- One may have an inner willingness to serve God *your waist be girded* but not have the light needed to serve Him well (the light of God's word burning brightly)
- Jesus here compares Himself to a master returning at an unknown hour from a wedding, or was the bridegroom Himself; so be in a readiness, waiting for the coming of Christ, the bridegroom of the church
- On this St. Augustine comments, "What does it mean to be dressed and ready for action? It means to control our passions, which is the work of chastity. As for lighting our lamps, this means to light them brightly with the good deeds, that is by righteous work."

The Faithful Servant and the Evil Servant 12:35-48



- The title "blessed," when used by our Lord, it implies some rare and precious virtue in the one to whom this title to honor is given
- He raises the slaves to a position of equality with their master
- These true faithful ones are no longer His servants; they are His friends
- He even condescend Himself to minister to their needs
- Doubtless some of the Apostles must have recalled these words when Jesus washed their feet
- The ready servants will be served by their Master and blessed; there is rich reward in living a life ready and expectant for Jesus to return

The Faithful Servant and the Evil Servant 12:35-48



- Among the Jews at the time of our Lord, the old division of the night into three watches had given place to the ordinary Roman division into four
- They were calculated thus, from six to nine, from nine to midnight, from midnight to three, and from three to six
- In this parable the second and third watches are mentioned as necessary for the completeness of the picture; for the *banquet* would certainly not be over before the end of the first watch, and in the fourth the day would be breaking

The Faithful Servant and the Evil Servant 12:35-48



- The second and third watches, then, represent the still and weary hours of the night, when to watch is indeed a task of difficulty and painfulness
- And here again the Lord repeats His high praise on such devoted conduct in His second *blessed are those servants*
- A thief never announces his coming; he comes at a time when you would not expect him
- The way to be on guard against a thief is to live in constant readiness, and the way to be ready for Jesus' return is to live in constant readiness
- It is perfectly clear that in this parable the master's return signifies the coming of Christ

The Faithful Servant and the Evil Servant 12:35-48



- When the Son of Man suddenly returns in His glory it will be to gather all people of all nations of the earth for the Resurrection of the Dead and the Last Judgment
- Some will be prepared like the faithful and vigilant servants of the Masters house (the Church), but many people of the world will be unaware and unprepared
- The whole tone, then, is a severe reminder to us, to all impatient ones, that the great event may be long delayed, but it tells us, too that this long delay involves a test of their loyalty

The Faithful Servant and the Evil Servant 12:35-48



- When St. Peter heard the parable concerning the Lord's coming in which the Lord declares His coming all of a sudden at an unexpected time, and how we should be watchful awaiting this coming, St. Peter asked His Master if this parable concerned the disciples alone or if it concerned everyone else
- St. Peter might have asked within, himself "What did the Lord mean by saying 'these slaves?'"
- Did He mean the disciples entrusted with 'the house of God' as servants and as shepherds until the master of the house comes?

The Faithful Servant and the Evil Servant 12:35-48



- Or did He mean every believer entrusted with his life as God's house, as a servant and a shepherd to the body, the soul, the potentials, the talents and all the possibilities to work together for the account of the house Master, the Lord Jesus Himself?
- Our Lord, in the deeply instructive method which He often adopted, did not answer the question, but taught the only lesson which was needful for the questioner
- The promise was spoken, not for the Twelve only, but for every faithful and wise steward

The Faithful Servant and the Evil Servant 12:35-48



- The answer of the Master then told Peter that all His followers, if found true and loyal, should receive the reward promised, in verse 37, to the watching servants, who in the world to come would be not the servants but the friends of God
- He will be counted worthy for greater matters and will receive a reward worthy of his honesty
- This is what the Savior taught us on another occasion, when He praised the active hard working and honest slave, saying, *Matthew 25:21 Well done, then good and trustworthy slave; you have been trustworthy in a few things; I will put you in charge of many things; enter into the joy of your master*

The Faithful Servant and the Evil Servant 12:35-48



- If in these graver responsibilities the stewards are faithful to the end, will they receive their high and peculiar reward
- If, on the other hand, they fail in their continuous watch for the coming of their Lord, and instead of the restless toil which the Master has assigned to these stewards, these servants, weighted with higher responsibilities, give themselves up to worldly pleasures and passions, their destiny will be terrible
- If they live as oppressors of the flock rather than as shepherds, then to these unfaithful stewards the Lord will suddenly come, as pictured in the parable imagery, a thief in the night
- *begins to beat the male and female servants*, Play the role of the Master

The Faithful Servant and the Evil Servant 12:35-48



- For he who harms the glory of Christ, or dares to scorn the entrusted flock, he is no different than those who do not know Christ and they will be counted with those who do not love Him
- The expression is simply implying that a terrible destiny is surely reserved in the life to come for those who have so sadly misused their high opportunities and neglected their great responsibilities
- Christ has thus said to the devout St. Peter in John 21:15-16
- He who loves His sheep, takes care of them
- He who neglects them will be punished and counted with the unbelievers

The Faithful Servant and the Evil Servant 12:35-48



- When the master comes, He will let the punishment match the offence
- Those who *knew* how to be ready and yet were not, will be punished worse than those who did not know and were not ready
- To some, great knowledge of the Divine will is given and splendid opportunities of work are offered; to such, if only they are faithful and true, will indeed a high place in the heavenly Jerusalem
- But sorrow and woe for them in the life to come if they fail, if they miss the splendid chance of being true workers with and for God!

The Faithful Servant and the Evil Servant 12:35-48



- Those who are instructed by the Master with tasks in His household will also be given the ability to carry them out, so no excuse will be tolerated
- In this solemn passage it is notable that degrees or grades in punishment as well as degrees or grades in glory are distinctly spoken of



Jesus: His Mission a Cause of Division 12:49-53

- In verse 49 Jesus tells the disciples that He has come to set the earth on fire!
- In the Old Testament, fire is sometimes used as a means or symbol of purification, Leviticus 13:52; Numbers 31:23; Malachi 3:2-3
- Of discernment, Jeremiah 23:29; Isaiah 33:14
- As a symbol of judgment, Genesis 19:24; Exodus 9:24; Psalms 66:12; Isaiah 43:2, 66:15-16; Luke 3:9, 9:54
- And a manifestation of the presence of God, Exodus 3:2, 13:21-22
- St. John the Baptist told the Jews that the Messiah was coming with the Holy Spirit and fire, Luke 3:16



Jesus: His Mission a Cause of Division 12:49-53

- In Scripture, fire is one of the most expressive symbols of the transforming energy of the Holy Spirit
- In this case the fire Jesus speaks of can either be the coming of the Holy Spirit at Pentecost, or it is the refining and purifying fire that Jesus will light in His death and Resurrection that will ignite and transform the New Covenant people of God
- On verse 49 St. John Chrysostom explains, “By this, He wanted to present to us a disciple full of blaze and fire, ready to endure every risk.”



Jesus: His Mission a Cause of Division 12:49-53

- The baptism Jesus here speaks of was the baptism of pain and suffering and death - what we call the Passion of the Lord
- He knew it must all be gone through, to bring about the blessed result for which He left His home in heaven; but He looked on to it, nevertheless, with terror
- *how distressed I am till it is accomplished!* These words express both the trouble and distress Christ was in, at the apprehension of His sufferings as man
- What He felt most strongly, in His human nature, was the pain, the constraint of expectation



Jesus: His Mission a Cause of Division 12:49-53

- He was, in that perfect humanity of His, harassed and oppressed, as other sufferers have been, by the thought of what was coming, more than by the actual suffering when it came
- A true and vivid expression of human hesitation at the presentation of the agonies that were about to happen, similar to what we find in Gethsemane and at John 12:27
- St. Cyril the great says, “By His baptism He means the ‘dye’, which is the physical death. By His stress, He means His grief and His endurance till they are fulfilled.”



Jesus: His Mission a Cause of Division 12:49-53

- Christ came to make peace with God for men, and to give the Gospel of peace, and spiritual and eternal peace to men; but not external peace, especially that, which is not consistent with the protection of truth
- Jesus gives a warning concerning His coming in that His Gospel message will not unify
- His message that is met with either acceptance or rejection will be a source of conflict and division even within families
- This may be the price one must pay for being a faithful steward
- When you follow Jesus faithfully, there may very well be division for His sake



Jesus: His Mission a Cause of Division 12:49-53

- Some think the house refers to the entire world; and that the two refer to the Jews and the Gentiles who resist the Christians who believe in the Holy Trinity
- The father who rises against his son is the devil who has set himself as a father to the unbelievers, He thus found his son deserting him through the Christian faith so as to accept a heavenly Father
- The mother who is against her daughter refers to the Jewish synagogue that attacked the first church, particularly that of the apostles and the disciples who have left their mother by accepting the faith in the crucified Messiah



Jesus: His Mission a Cause of Division 12:49-53

- The mother-in-law who rose against her daughter-in-law is also the Jewish synagogue that attacked the Gentile church that accepted being united with the heavenly Groom, the Lord Jesus who came as a Son to the Jews, biologically speaking
- It is as if the Jewish synagogue attacked its daughter as well as its daughter-in-law; that is, it rose against the church of Jewish origin as well as the Gentile church
- The daughter and the daughter-in-law rebelled against this synagogue, that is to say, the mother and the mother-in-law, because the church rejected the literal deeds of the old law, such as the circumcision, the washings, and the physical purification



Jesus: His Mission a Cause of Division 12:49-53

- St. Ambrose offers a symbolic interpretation
- He says that the house is man as whole
- In this house there are two: the body and the soul
- If they agree together in the name of Christ, then the Lord is in their midst
- Through this unity, the body is enslaved to serve the soul
- He can also see that this house contains five senses: that of smell, touch, taste, vision, and hearing
- If we, through the hearing and the vision, isolate those two senses together so they be sanctified, and resist the wrongful physical pleasures by means of the taste, the touch and the smell, then two have been divided against three

The Spirit of Discernment

12:54-59



- For the first time in His discourse, Jesus turns His attention to the crowds
- Jesus rebuked the people of His day because they did not *discern this time*
- They know the signs in the sky that mean rain is coming or predict the coming of the hot desert winds, but they ignore the signs written in the books of the prophets that predict the coming of the Messiah and are being preached and fulfilled by Jesus
- They should recognize these signs and realize that judgment is near but they have closed their minds and hearts to the light of the Gospel

The Spirit of Discernment

12:54-59



- Jesus asked His listeners to think through it for themselves
- Anyone who can *judge what is right* can see the importance and good of getting right with God *before* we come before Him as Judge
- The meaning of the words is not that they did not know what was right, but that they did not act upon their knowledge
- They were passing an unrighteous judgment on the preachers of repentance, on the Baptist and on Christ, because they came to tell them of the time of their visitation, when their action ought to have been as true and spontaneous as their daily judgment about the weather

The Spirit of Discernment

12:54-59



- If one waits until they will stand before His throne of judgment, the time will then be too late
- They need to settle their earthly affairs because divine judgment is coming and an accounting will be made in which no one will be exempt
- In verse 59, Jesus reminded them (and us) of the great *penalty* of not settling with God before the Day of Judgment
- All of this presses upon us the urgency to get right with God now, and to live in readiness and anticipation of the return of Jesus
- St. Augustine explains, “Let us see who is this adversary with whom we have to agree so he would not hand us over to the magistrate: if you err, then God’s word is your adversary”

The Spirit of Discernment

12:54-59



- He is the adversary to your will, so He becomes a source of your salvation; what a good and useful adversary!
- He is our adversary since we are adversaries to ourselves, that is, since you are an enemy to yourself; and thus God's Word will be and enemy to you
- Be a friend to yourself, and thus you will be in accord with the Word of God
- As for the way, it is this life! If you have a righteous will with your adversary, and you agree with Him, then you will find, instead of a magistrate,. A Father; instead of a cruel officer you will find an angel who carries you to Abraham's embrace; and instead of jail you will find paradise

The Spirit of Discernment

12:54-59



- Look how things change so quickly on the way, all because you have agreed with the adversary! St. Augustine
- Jesus here alluded to the idea that there is a *price to be paid* in hell, *till you have paid the very last mite*
- This helps to explain the fearful yet Biblical truth that hell is eternal; because *payment* for sins is required, and imperfect humanity can't make a perfect payment, required by a perfect God
- The punishment of hell is eternal, just as life is eternal in heaven, Matthew 25:46; 2 Thessalonians 1:9
- The torment of hell is forever, Revelation 14:11, and the fires of hell are not quenched, burning forever, Mark 9:48



Discussion

- Whom should we fear, and whom should we not fear – 12:4,5?
Why?
- How does God illustrate His personal care for His creatures – 12:6,7? Explain how this knowledge may help us.
- What are the consequences of confessing or denying Christ – 12:8,9?
- What request did a man in the crowd make – 12:13 and for what first reason did Jesus give for refusing – 12:14?

Discussion



- Describe the rich farmer's prosperity – 12:16-17. Why was he foolish?
- What can we learn about the inadequacy of trusting material things?
- Where should our treasure be – 12:33-34? How do we place our treasure there?
- What should faithful servants do – 12:35-38?



Discussion

- How will the master reward faithful servants?
- Explain the teaching about servants who do or don't know the master's will – 12:47-48.
- What is expected of those who have been given and entrusted with much?
- Luke 12:51. In what way did Jesus indicate that division would affect everyone until He returned?