

#74 “FIVE WARNINGS FOR CHRISTIANS”

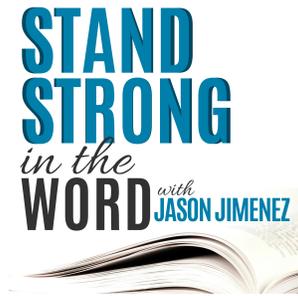
Luke 12:1-59

After Jesus left Bethany (Lk. 10:38-42), He began teaching His disciples about prayer (11:1-5); and was approached by a Pharisee to dine with him (11:37-54). This turned into six WOES from Jesus. Following this open rebuke, Jesus now turns His attention to warn His disciples of hypocrisy, covetousness, fear and worry, carelessness, and ignorance. Much of this sermon given in Judea was preached almost two years prior in Galilee.

WARNING #1: BEWARE OF HYPOCRISY

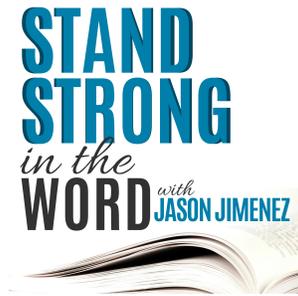
12:1-12

1. ***In the meantime*** (In which things or circumstances), ***when so many thousands*** (Greek text depicts tens of thousands) ***of the people had gathered together that they were trampling one another, he began to say to his disciples first, “Beware*** (Put your mind to understand) ***of the leaven*** (implying hypocritical behavior) ***of the Pharisees, which is hypocrisy*** (play acting). Jesus just openly rebuked the Pharisees and lawyers in Luke 11:37-54. He then uses this opportunity to warn His disciples of their hypocrisy (Matt. 13:33). ***Thousands of people***—Came from towns and villages to hear and see Jesus. ***Beware of the leaven***—The Jews knew this to imply evil (see Ex. 12:15-20). Hypocrisy is like leaven. It only takes a little bit to spread, spoil and sour the whole thing. Jesus was revealing the corruption of the Pharisees (see Matt. 16:6-12; Mk. 8:14-21).
 - A. ² ***Nothing is covered*** (concealed) ***up that will not be revealed, or hidden that will not be known***. Previously, Jesus rebuked the Pharisees for being whitewashed tombs. They appear to be holy; yet dead inside. Thus, their hypocritical living will be found out—and they will be judged.
 - B. ³ ***Therefore whatever you have said in the dark shall be heard in the light, and what you have whispered in private rooms*** (storerooms) ***shall be proclaimed on the housetops*** (roofs). Because verse 2 is true; verse 3 will take place. God’s final judgment has been determined: “Because he has fixed a day on which he will judge the world in righteousness by a man whom he has appointed; and of this he has given assurance to all by raising him from the dead (Acts 17:31).”
 - 1) Luke 8:16-18, “No one after lighting a lamp covers it with a jar or puts it under a bed, but puts it on a stand, so that those who enter may see the light. For nothing is hidden that will not be made manifest, nor is anything secret that will not be known and come to light. Take care



then how you hear, for to the one who has, more will be given, and from the one who has not, even what he thinks that he has will be taken away.”

2. ⁴ **“I tell you, my friends, do not fear those who kill the body, and after that have nothing more that they can do.** The Pharisees sought to kill Jesus (see Jn. 7:25; Lk. 11:53-54); and their growing threats intimidated the disciples. But Jesus tells His disciples not to fear them. For they do not have control over their lives. God does. Proverbs 29:25, “The fear of man lays a snare, but whoever trusts in the Lord is safe.”
 - A. ⁵ **But I will warn you whom to fear: fear him who, after he has killed, has authority to cast into hell. Yes, I tell you, fear him!** It’s better to fear God who has the power over one’s eternal destination.
3. ⁶ **Are not five sparrows sold for two pennies** (Roman copper coin; 1/16 of a denarius)? **And not one of them is forgotten before God.** ⁷ **Why, even the hairs of your head are all numbered. Fear not; you are of more value than many sparrows.** Man brings fear and death. God offers love and forgiveness. This is the contrast Jesus sets forth for the disciples to understand. If God knows about the sparrows; He certainly will not forget His children. He will comfort His people in the midst of trials.
4. ⁸ **“And I tell you, everyone who acknowledges** (confesses of; open allegiance) **me before men, the Son of Man also will acknowledge before the angels of God,** ⁹ **but the one who denies** (any relationship/association) **me before men will be denied before the angels of God.** Jesus challenges the disciples to take a side. You either acknowledge without shame; or you reject without honor. Those who deny Jesus are rejecting the way of salvation.
 - A. ¹⁰ **And everyone who speaks a word against** (reference to) **the Son of Man will be forgiven** (remove the guilt), **but the one who blasphemes** (revile; slander) **against the Holy Spirit will not be forgiven.** This statement reinforces verses 8 and 9. The Pharisees believed the Holy Spirit’s work in Jesus was of Beelzebul. They denied His power and divinity.
 - 1) “God did not judge the nation immediately. Instead, Jesus prayed for them as He hanged on the cross (Luke 23:34; see also Acts 3:17). Then God sent the Holy Spirit who ministered through the Apostles and other believers in the church. *This was the last opportunity for the nation, and they failed by rejecting the witness of the Spirit* (Acts 7:51). Luke 12:11–12 was fulfilled during the first chapters of Acts when the message went “to the Jew first” (Acts 3:26; 13:46; Rom. 1:16). Israel’s third “national sin” was the stoning of Stephen (Acts 7), after which the message went out to the Samaritans (Acts 8), and then the



Gentiles (Acts 10). Note that Stephen said, “You always resist the Holy Spirit” (Acts 7:51). I do not believe that the “sin against the Holy Spirit” is committed by people today as it was by Israel centuries ago. I believe that the only “unpardonable sin” today is the final rejection of Jesus Christ (John 3:36). The Spirit of God witnesses through the Word, and it is possible for sinners to reject that witness and resist the Spirit. But the Spirit bears witness to Christ (John 16:7–15); so the way people treat the Spirit is the way they treat the Son of God.”¹

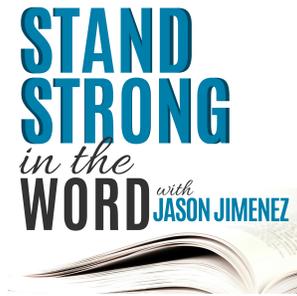
- B. **“And when they bring you before the synagogues and the rulers and the authorities, do not be anxious about how you should defend (Apologeomai, to vindicate; give an answer) yourself or what you should say, ¹² for the Holy Spirit will teach you in that very hour what you ought to say.”** Believers in Christ don’t have to worry about defending themselves in the midst of opposition. Whether it comes from the religious (synagogue) or civic (rulers and authorities) arena. The Holy Spirit will give them the words to say and the bravery to remain steadfast in the faith.

WARNING #2: BEWARE OF COVETOUSNESS

12:13-21

1. ¹³ **Someone in the crowd said to him, “Teacher, tell my brother to divide the inheritance with me.”** This man felt it more important to convince Jesus to side with him, while disregarding everything He just said (12:1-12). According to the law (Deut. 21:17), the elder son received a double portion (two-thirds) of the inheritance; while the younger only a third.
2. ¹⁴ **But he said to him, “Man, who made me a judge or arbitrator (divider) over you?”** Even though Jesus, as a Teacher, could get involved in matters of inheritance; He had no interest to get involved in civil/materialistic/legal disputes.
3. ¹⁵ **And he said to them, “Take care, and be on your guard (watch over closely) against all covetousness (strong desire for more), for one’s life does not consist in the abundance of his possessions.”** Jesus tells a parable to expose the root problem with the two brothers’ dispute over their inheritance. Life does not consist in storing up a lot of wealth. A valuable lesson on greed and the neglect of the things of God.

¹ Warren W. Wiersbe, *The Bible Exposition Commentary*, vol. 1 (Wheaton, IL: Victor Books, 1996), 220.

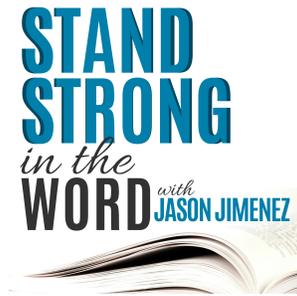


- A. ¹⁶ *And he told them a parable, saying, “The land of a rich man produced plentifully, ¹⁷ and he thought to himself, ‘What shall I do, for I have nowhere to store my crops?’ ¹⁸ And he said, ‘I will do this: I will tear down my barns and build larger ones, and there I will store all my grain and my goods. ¹⁹ And I will say to my soul, “Soul, you have ample goods laid up for many years; relax, eat, drink, be merry.”’* The rich man spent all of his time, resources and talent to satisfy his greed. He thought it more important to invest in his future life by storing up more goods for himself. And once he had more than enough; he thought it would bring him happiness.
- B. ²⁰ *But God said to him, ‘Fool (Foolish one)! This night your soul is required (demanded) of you, and the things you have prepared, whose will they be?’ ²¹ So is the one who lays up treasure for himself and is not rich toward God.”* God’s response to this man’s approach was to call him a fool. His life only consisted of achieving more wealth. But upon sudden death, he realized his earthly value had no eternal weight (see Matt. 6:19-21).
- 1) 1 Timothy 6:6-10 - ⁶ *But godliness with contentment is great gain, ⁷ for we brought nothing into the world, and we cannot take anything out of the world. ⁸ But if we have food and clothing, with these we will be content. ⁹ But those who desire to be rich fall into temptation, into a snare, into many senseless and harmful desires that plunge people into ruin and destruction. ¹⁰ For the love of money is a root of all kinds of evils. It is through this craving that some have wandered away from the faith and pierced themselves with many pangs.*

WARNING #3: BEWARE OF WORRY AND ANXIETY

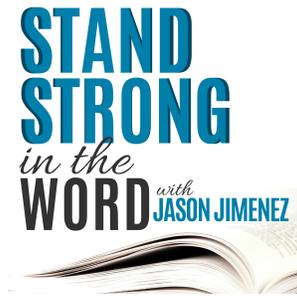
12:22-34

1. ²² *And he said to his disciples, “Therefore I tell you, do not be anxious (worry; apprehension) about your life, what you will eat, nor about your body, what you will put on. ²³ For life is more than food, and the body more than clothing.* Jesus immediately transitions from greed to worry. The two are inseparable. Jesus reminds the crowd that there is more to life than food and clothing. In the Sermon on the Mount, Jesus went from discussing how to store up treasures in heaven (Matt. 6:19-24) to not letting worry consume your life on earth (Matt. 6:25-34).
- A. Eating, drinking and clothing are the trio that represent what we need on earth. It’s hard not to focus on these three, and not let them consume you. That’s why an eternal perspective is key. The more you trust the Lord, and look to store



treasures in heaven, the less you will fret and worry about what you don't have on earth.

2. ²⁴ **Consider the ravens: they neither sow nor reap, they have neither storehouse nor barn, and yet God feeds them. Of how much more value are you than the birds!** If God provides for the birds of the air, He will certainly provide for His children. The world—and everything in it—belongs to God. That includes you.
3. ²⁵ **And which of you by being anxious can add a single hour to his span of life?** ²⁶ **If then you are not able to do as small a thing as that, why are you anxious about the rest?** Worrying about life will not add growth, or give length of life. Quite the opposite. Stress and anxiety are root causes for so many illnesses. Contentment is a great remedy for stress. Paul displayed a life of contentment, “as sorrowful, yet always rejoicing; as poor, yet making many rich; as having nothing, yet possessing everything (2 Cor. 6:10).”
 - A. ²⁷ **Consider the lilies, how they grow: they neither toil nor spin, yet I tell you, even Solomon in all his glory was not arrayed like one of these.** Although Solomon was the richest man alive, not even his best robe was as beautifully arrayed like a flower.
 - B. ²⁸ **But if God so clothes the grass, which is alive in the field today, and tomorrow is thrown into the oven, how much more will he clothe you, O you of little faith!** Jesus says those who worry too much about earthly things have an insufficient faith. They struggle in trusting God to meet their needs because they lack a relationship with Him. Worry and wrong pursuits on earth are all strong indicators of a lack of faith in God.
 - 1) Examples of Jesus calling out a lack of faith:
 - Matt. 8:23-27 - Disciples caught in a storm on the sea.
 - Matt. 14:28-33 – Peter walks on water.
 - Matt. 16:5-12 – Disciples argue over having no bread.
 - Matt. 17:14-21 – Disciples unable to cast out demon.
 - C. ²⁹ **And do not seek what you are to eat and what you are to drink, nor be worried.** ³⁰ **For all the nations of the world seek after these things, and your Father knows that you need them.** ³¹ **Instead, seek his kingdom, and these things will be added to you.** God is omniscient. He knows what you need before you even ask. Skip Heitzig, “Since God’s ability transcends my reality, it’s best for me to bow at His immensity. God is always greater than our present knowledge of Him. If God were small enough for our brains, He wouldn’t be big enough for our needs.” What matters the most is pursuing God’s kingdom, and striving to be more like Him each day. **Seek** requires a faithful pursuit from those who have been given



much (see Lk. 12:48). The man with the fig tree came “seeking fruit from it” (Lk. 13:6). “To seek God’s kingdom is to set one’s aim in life on God himself and the accomplishment of his purpose of bringing all life under his rule.”² **Added** God will give/grant/provide you with more than what you need spiritually, emotionally, physically.

4. ³² **“Fear not, little flock, for it is your Father’s good pleasure to give (grant; a gift) you the kingdom.** This is an amazing statement for several reasons. First, Jesus tells the crowd not to **worry** and to **fear not** because He will protect His flock. Second, Jesus tells His flock that He will give them the kingdom.
5. ³³ **Sell your possessions, and give to the needy. Provide yourselves with moneybags that do not grow old, with a treasure in the heavens that does not fail, where no thief approaches and no moth destroys.** ³⁴ **For where your treasure is, there will your heart be also.** The idea is not to put all your stock into the world, but to live a sacrificial life that is motivated by an eternal perspective. A believer’s richness is not in his earthly wealth, but in his/her richness in God. **Where your treasure is** – An expression that points out whatever is most important to you.

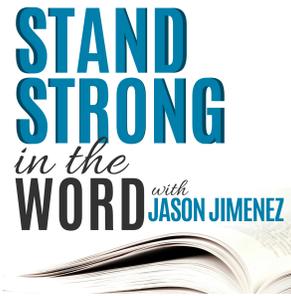
WARNING #4: BEWARE OF CARELESSNESS

12:35-48

1. ³⁵ **“Stay dressed for action (gird up the loins; be in a state of readiness) and keep your lamps burning,** ³⁶ **and be like men who are waiting (remain with expectancy) for their master to come home from the wedding feast, so that they may open the door to him at once when he comes and knocks.** If the servant isn’t greedy or consumed with worry, then he/she will be alert and attentive to serve their master. The command given by Jesus is to be ready because He (the Master) will return unexpectedly. **So that they may open the door**—Preparedness to serve at your post.
 - A. **“loins ... girded**—to fasten up the long outer garment, always done before travel and work (2 Ki 4:29; Ac 12:8). The meaning is, Be in readiness.”³
 - B. Note: Jesus mentions **wedding feast** as He has set His eyes on Jerusalem; knowing what His death and resurrection will bring. Thus, His parable is announcing His future reign on earth (see Rev. 19:6-9; Lk. 22:29-30; Isa. 55:1-2).

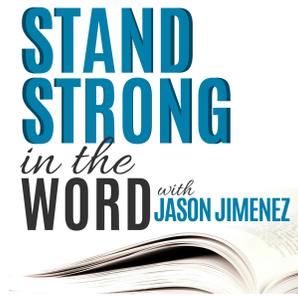
² I. Howard Marshall, [“Luke,”](#) in *New Bible Commentary: 21st Century Edition*, ed. D. A. Carson et al., 4th ed. (Leicester, England; Downers Grove, IL: Inter-Varsity Press, 1994), 1002.

³ Robert Jamieson, A. R. Fausset, and David Brown, [Commentary Critical and Explanatory on the Whole Bible](#), vol. 2 (Oak Harbor, WA: Logos Research Systems, Inc., 1997), 112.

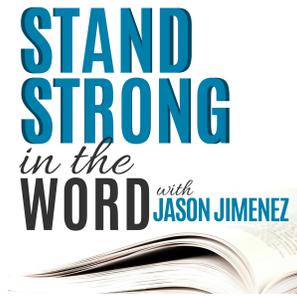


2. ³⁷ **Blessed are those servants whom the master finds awake when he comes. Truly, I say to you, he will dress himself for service and have them recline at table, and he will come and serve them.** What's astonishing is that in Jewish weddings the bridegroom and his bride were treated as king and queen; and yet Jesus states the bridegroom/master returns home (after the wedding feast) to serve his servants who were waiting for him with anticipation. (NOTE: This speaks of the future return of Christ who will reward His faithful subjects).
 - A. "Our Lord here promises that there will come a time when He will honor all His slaves (believers) for their efforts in His behalf, a time when He Himself will wait on them in glory. This promise originates in the Old Testament (e.g., Ps 23:5) and is developed in the New Testament which calls it the wedding feast of the Lamb."⁴
 - B. ³⁸ **If he comes in the second watch (9PM-12AM), or in the third (12AM-3AM), and finds them awake, blessed are those servants!** Always alert and doing what they are called to do.
 - C. ³⁹ **But know this, that if the master of the house had known at what hour the thief was coming (breaking in), he would not have left his house to be broken into.** ⁴⁰ **You also must be ready (prepared; readiness), for the Son of Man is coming (erchomai—arriving in a particular state) at an hour (right time; favorable/fixed time) you do not expect (have certainty)."** No one knows when Jesus is returning to snatch up His church (see 1 Thess. 4:13-18; 1 Cor. 15:51-58). **For the Son of Man is coming**—A title that depicts the Day of Yahweh that brings judgment.
3. ⁴¹ **Peter said, "Lord, are you telling this parable for us or for all?"** Peter's question connects the two parables.
 - A. ⁴² **And the Lord said, "Who then is the faithful and wise (prudent; thoughtful) manager, whom his master will set over (make ruler) his household (therapeia, healing; treatment—focuses on healing; medical service) to give them their portion of food at the proper time?** Jesus answers Peter by telling him that He is speaking not only to the religious leaders who have failed in awaiting the Messiah; but future believers who neglect the rapture of Christ as well. Thus, Jesus is calling out His people (present and future) to choose to be wise and faithful servants. People who care to meet the needs of others.

⁴ M. S. Mills, [*The Life of Christ: A Study Guide to the Gospel Record*](#) (Dallas, TX: 3E Ministries, 1999), Lk 12:35–40.



- B. ⁴³ **Blessed is that servant whom his master will find so doing when he comes.**
⁴⁴ **Truly, I say to you, he will set him over all his possessions.** Those who remain faithful in Jesus' absence will receive a great reward.
- C. ⁴⁵ **But if that servant says to himself, 'My master is delayed (in ruling) in coming,' and begins to beat the male and female servants, and to eat and drink and get drunk,** ⁴⁶ **the master of that servant will come on a day when he does not expect him and at an hour he does not know, and will cut him in pieces and put him with the unfaithful.** This servant takes advantage of his position and lives a greedy and feckless life. There are those who pretend to be servants of God, and are not. **Cut him in pieces and put him with the unfaithful** literally means to separate and cast out the unfaithful with a loss of rewards (see Lk. 10:13-16).
- 1) 1 John 2:28, "And now, little children, abide in him, so that when he appears we may have confidence and not shrink from him in shame at his coming."
 - 2) 1 Corinthians 3:13-15, "Each one's work will become manifest, for the Day will disclose it, because it will be revealed by fire, and the fire will test what sort of work each one has done. If the work that anyone has built on the foundation survives, he will receive a reward. If anyone's work is burned up, he will suffer loss, though he himself will be saved, but only as through fire."
- D. ⁴⁷ **And that servant who knew his master's will but did not get ready or act according to his will, will receive a severe beating.** ⁴⁸ **But the one who did not know, and did what deserved a beating, will receive a light beating. Everyone to whom much was given (bestowed a gift without compensation), of him much will be required (to ask earnestly; to demand), and from him to whom they entrusted (placed in front of) much, they will demand the more.** Jesus points out that those who **knew** of their master's return, yet failed to be ready will receive a harsher punishment. There will be degrees of eternal punishment and eternal rewards.
- 1) "Living for material possessions can blind us to the future and make us unprepared for the Lord's return. We can get so wrapped up in this world's goods that we neglect eternity. We must be servants who are faithfully waiting and watching for the Bridegroom (vv. 35–



40) and working for the Master (vv. 41–48). He will come like a thief (v. 39; 1 Thes. 5:2; Rev. 16:15), so we must be ready.”⁵

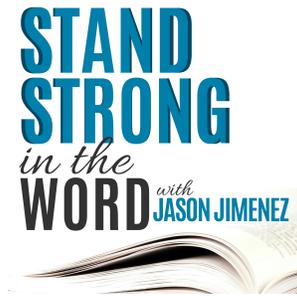
4. ⁴⁹ ***“I came to cast fire on the earth, and would that it were already kindled! ⁵⁰ I have a baptism to be baptized with, and how great is my distress until it is accomplished! ⁵¹ Do you think that I have come to give peace on earth? No, I tell you, but rather division. ⁵² For from now on in one house there will be five divided, three against two and two against three. ⁵³ They will be divided, father against son and son against father, mother against daughter and daughter against mother, mother-in-law against her daughter-in-law and daughter-in-law against mother-in-law.”***
- A. Jesus speaks of His coming judgment (fire) on the earth and His death and burial (baptism) to come (see Luke 11:29-30—The Sign of Jonah). His ministry, death and resurrection will bring division (dividing believers and nonbelievers); yet will purify His people (Israel) and lead others to true repentance.
 - B. Matthew 3:11-12, “I baptize you with water for repentance, but he who is coming after me is mightier than I, whose sandals I am not worthy to carry. He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit and fire. His winnowing fork is in his hand, and he will clear his threshing floor and gather his wheat into the barn, but the chaff he will burn with unquenchable fire.”
 - C. John 9:39-41 - Jesus said, “For judgment I came into this world, that those who do not see may see, and those who see may become blind.” Some of the Pharisees near him heard these things, and said to him, “Are we also blind?” Jesus said to them, “If you were blind, you would have no guilt; but now that you say, ‘We see,’ your guilt remains.

WARNING #5: BEWARE OF IGNORANCE

12:54-59

1. ⁵⁴ ***He also said to the crowds, “When you see a cloud rising in the west, you say at once, ‘A shower (storm) is coming.’ And so it happens. ⁵⁵ And when you see the south wind blowing, you say, ‘There will be scorching heat,’ and it happens. ⁵⁶ You hypocrites! You know how to interpret (regard as important; necessary; worthwhile) the appearance of earth and sky, but why do you not know (possess information) how to interpret the present time?*** In wrapping up His message on warnings, Jesus ends

⁵ Warren W. Wiersbe, [*Wiersbe’s Expository Outlines on the New Testament*](#) (Wheaton, IL: Victor Books, 1992), 178.



with the importance of knowing and understanding the times in which you live. Jesus rebukes the crowd for being more invested in insignificant signs than they are in discerning the coming Kingdom of God. This directly ties back into the rich man in Luke 12:16-21. An earthly mindset is too focused on gaining information that will earn more profit and power. A heavenly mindset is focused on affording opportunity that will lead to more souls being saved. Thus, you must not remain ignorant of the signs of the times.

2. ⁵⁷ ***“And why do you not judge for yourselves what is right?”*** ⁵⁸ ***As you go with your accuser (adversary; opponent at law) before the magistrate, make an effort (give your best attempt; apply energy) to settle with him on the way, lest he drag you to the judge, and the judge hand you over to the officer, and the officer put you in prison. ⁵⁹ I tell you, you will never get out until you have paid the very last penny.”*** Jesus’ illustration points to reconciliation. Despite the hypocrisy, carelessness and ignorance of the crowd, Jesus offers them a way out. To get right with God by repenting.