

“Unforgettable” Luke 12:1-7

Context: Luke details Jesus Christ’s active life in the midst of his historical investigation of Christ’s birth account, redeeming death, and life-giving glorification. The Pharisees, Lawyers, and Scribes were infuriated by Jesus’ condemnation of their hypocrisy and arrogance. As part of a buildup of Jesus’ rejection by all mankind, they sought to trap Him in words to warrant His arrest. The core reason for Christ’s rejection is His call for the Holy Spirit’s transformation of our darkened, sin-filled thought and emotional life. Today, Christ’s foundational teachings continue as we consider God’s eternal care for those who, because of their profession of Jesus as Lord, are persecuted by the unbeliever. Luke’s purpose for writing is clearly found here as he seeks to steady those ‘God lovers’ whose faith has become wobbly because of persecution (cf. Luke 1:3-4).

Where’s hope: There is a hope in a loving, caring God who works out even the most temporal injustice for our eternal good (cp. Revelation 6:10-11).

1. The problem with hypocrisy (Luke 12:1-3)

Jesus likens the outward spiritual playacting of the Pharisees to yeast. He warns His disciples that, just as yeast spreads through bread and causes it to puff up, so it is with fake spirituality. It’s not as if anyone gets away with acting, though. Sometimes here and especially in the final judgment, the mask is stripped away and the face of the actor meets the discerning eye of the Maker.

2. The security in sincerity (Luke 12:4-7)

In light of the rejection of His message, Jesus brings before the eyes of His disciples the proper place of fear toward earthly persecution and eternal judgment. Again the teaching goes to our valuation of our eternal existence over temporal life. It is better to act on our dread of God, who consigns the idolater to a never-ending decay in the refuse of personal idolatry than to dread one who is permitted by God to take a fading biological life that isn’t eternal anyway. What hope is there in a God who would allow this persecution? Jesus brings hope that the God who allows persecution is the God who knows the end and cares for even the slightest of creatures, the sparrow. God cares not only for our being, but even for our most inanimate part, our hair. No fear then, for no one falls without His consent.

For Further Study:

- Sometimes word studies reveal striking depth through cultural pastimes. As a **Bible study method**, look up the term ‘hypocrisy’ used in Luke 12:1 in *Vines Expository Dictionary* <http://vines.mike-obrien.net/>. How does the metaphor of an actor’s mask in a staged play resemble the spiritual life of the Pharisees (cf. Luke 11:39-44)? Are you masking any evil within by playacting a spiritual life to which you aren’t sold out? How does one lose one’s mask and playacting?
- Luke 12:1-3 contrasts the hidden with the exposed. How does a Pharisee’s “mark of sanctity to hide an evil heart” differ from a believer’s mark of sanctity to confess his or her sins (cf. Matthew 5:23-24; James 5:16)? When do you confess sin in public and when only in private? How do you know who is safe to confess your sin to? What do you do when you are just too confused about the whole matter of confession (cf. 1 John 1:9)?
- Luke 12:2-3 declares a time when everything hidden, both good and evil, will be dis-closed. Our **doctrinal statement ‘On Last Things’** under **what we believe** describes this time (<http://gracepointfellowship.org/files/DocStmnt.pdf> - cf. footnotes 5 and 6). How does Jesus’ release from sin (1 John 1:9) enliven a saint’s heart, so that her or his acts might be written in the Book of Life (cf. Matthew 25:31ff and Revelation 20:15)?

Transformation exercise:

Reflect on Luke 12:6-7 each morning. Do you have a story in which your hope in God resulted in evidence that He had not forgotten you? Ask God to make you aware of someone to whom you can bring that story.