

“What Does Leaven Have to Do With Anything?”

Luke 12:1-7

Read Luke 12:1... The Greek phrase translated “under these circumstances,” is better understood as, “at that time” or “meanwhile,” i.e., it was during the same time period as the other events of chapter 11, that Jesus spoke this to His disciples.

Jesus had been condemning the Pharisees and scribes as godless fools, evil and wicked men who were void of any true knowledge of God. And it would appear that myriads of people were trying to get closer to Jesus to hear what He was saying to those who opposed Him.

Jesus turned to the crowd speaking to His disciples, but all heard Him saying, “Beware of the leaven [yeast] of the Pharisees, which is hypocrisy.” In **Mark 8:15**, Jesus says, “Watch out for the leaven of the Pharisees and the leaven of Herod.”

The use of the word leaven or yeast is metaphorical, it signifies the influence or effect that someone can have upon others, like the effect yeast has when it is mixed in with the flour, causing the loaf to rise. You can’t see the yeast in the dough, but you can see the result of it as the dough expands.

The Pharisees were dangerous because they taught false doctrine and influenced the people to religiously perform rituals and keep laws that had absolutely no ability to make them righteous in the eyes of God.

Herod was an immoral and corrupt man who was having an adulterous affair with his own brother’s wife (Herodias), and she pressured Herod into having John beheaded (cf. **Matthew 14:3-10**)..

Back to **Luke 12:1...** Jesus’ very presence was a threat to the Pharisee’s control over religious Israel; and also to the arrogant immorality displayed by Herod’s aristocratic family members and their followers (Herodians).

The Pharisees, Scribes, and Sadducees were self-righteous hypocrites who taught false doctrine and practice, and the Herodians were godless politicians who ruled over Israel for a hundred years. No wonder Jesus said (**Matthew 5:20**), “Unless your righteousness surpasses *that* of the scribes and Pharisees, you will not enter the kingdom of heaven.”

Just as a small portion of yeast has an impact on all the flour it is mixed into, false teachings, godless piety, and flagrant sinfulness, like that of the Pharisees, influenced Israel away from godliness.

The Religious Leaders and the Herodians, often joined forces against Christ (**Mark 3:6**), “The Pharisees went out and immediately *began* conspiring with the Herodians against [Jesus], *as to* how they might destroy Him.”

Jesus warns His own disciples and all those in the very large crowd, that the Pharisees are enemies of God and of the gospel of Christ.

Read Luke 12:2-3.... The Church of God is not a secret club with hidden agendas (**1Peter 2:9**), “*You are a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people for God’s own possession, so that you may proclaim the excellencies of Him who has called you out of darkness into His marvelous light,*” (**Ephesians 5:8-13**), “*You were formerly darkness, but now you are Light in the Lord; walk as children of Light (for the fruit of the Light consists in all goodness and righteousness and truth), >>>>>> trying to learn what is pleasing to the Lord. Do not participate in the unfruitful deeds of darkness, but instead even expose them; for it is disgraceful even to speak of the things which are done by them in secret. But all things become visible when they are exposed by the light.*”

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Light exposes what is hidden in the dark, it reveals all that the light uncovers. Light is synonymous with God’s righteousness and truth; darkness refers to all that is false, all that is void of the character and nature of God.

John 12:46, “I have come as Light into the world, so that everyone who believes in Me will not remain in darkness.” Darkness represents the unbelieving world, void of God’s presence.

Jesus is saying (**Luke 12:3**), all that He reveals to us we are to make known, to proclaim, i.e., to shout it from the roof tops! In Jesus’ day, a person shouting from their housetop could be heard a great distance away; in fact, in the Talmud (the Jewish book of civil and ceremonial law, and legend) it tells of rabbis blowing trumpets from the rooftops, as a means of announcing the beginning of religious holidays. In Muslim cities, people are called to prayer (5 times a day) from towers (called minarets) high above the mosques, from which Muslim worshippers are summoned to come and worship the false God Allah.

Read Luke 12:4-5... Our love and reverence for God should override any fear we have of what those who oppose Christ might do to us. God is the Creator, Life Giver, Sustainer, and Judge over all, and He considers us to be much more than mere creations to serve Him, for He calls us His friends.

Jesus said, (**John 15:9**), “Just as the Father has loved Me, I have also loved you,” (**John 16:27**), “the Father Himself loves you, because you have loved Me and have believed that I came forth from the Father.”

John wrote (**1John 3:1**), “See how great a love the Father has bestowed on us, that we would be called children of God; and *such* we are.”

Please turn to **John 15:12-15...** Jesus commands His disciples to love one another with the ultimate expression of love, giving one’s life for another, just as He would soon lay down His own life for them, and for us. At this point in the narrative, Jesus is just hours away from the Cross, where He will die for the sins of all who will believe in Him as Savior.

Humanity’s greatest need is forgiveness for sin, Jesus laid down His own life to pay for our sins, setting us free from sin’s penalty (**1Peter 3:18**), “Christ died for sins once for all, the just for the unjust, so that He might bring us to God.”

See **Romans 3:10-12, 23-24; 6:23; 8:1...** When you hear the message of Christ and believe it, you are saved (cf **Romans 10:9-10, 13**), no one is rejected.

1John 5:1, “Whoever believes that Jesus is the Christ is born of God.”

Our love from and for God is expressed in our love for each other (**John 13:35**), “All men will know that you are My disciples, if you have love for one another.”

Read John 15:15... In the OT, the Hebrew word for slave is *ebed*, and several men are described as slaves of God: Moses (**Numbers 12:7**), Joshua (**Joshua 24:29**), David (**2Samuel 7:5**), Isaiah (**Isaiah 20:3**), and the Messiah (**Isaiah 42:1**).

In the NT, The Greek word for slave is *doulos*, and several men are called slaves of Jesus Christ: Paul (**Romans 1:1**), James (**James 1:1**), Peter (**2Peter 1:1**), Jude (**Jude 1**), and John (**Revelation 1:1**).

The Greek word *doulos*, translated *slave* in the NT, describes a Christian who desires and demonstrates a life that is in total submission and service to God.

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Normally a master did not confide in their slaves, he merely told them what to do and when to do it. But as slaves of God in Christ, we can know our Master’s plan, purpose, and will; in fact, we are called His friends, and He tells us what the Father wants us to know (**1Corinthians 2:10**), “For to us God revealed *them* through the Spirit; for the Spirit searches all things, even the depths of God.” **14**, “But a natural man [one without the Spirit of God] does not accept the things of the Spirit of God, for they are foolishness to him; and he cannot understand them, because they are spiritually appraised.” **16**, “But we have the mind of Christ.”

It is only believers, friends of Christ, who are told the deep mysteries of God, those things which were hidden in the past and are still unknowable to unbelievers.

What things am I talking about?

The mystery of the kingdom of heaven (**Matthew 13:11**).

The mystery of God’s will (**Ephesians 1:9**).

The mystery of a Savior, born to a virgin (**Isaiah 7:14; Matthew 1:21**).

The mystery of Immanuel [God with us] (**Isaiah 7:14; Matthew 1:23**).

The mystery of spiritual birth as children of God (**John 1:13; 3:3-8**).

The mystery of God living in us (**Colossians 1:26-27**).

See again Luke 12:4-5... In a parallel passage (**Matthew 10:28**) Jesus says, “Do not fear those who kill the body but are unable to kill the soul; but rather fear Him who is able to destroy both soul and body in hell.” The word translated “destroy,” means extreme loss or great ruin, it does not mean annihilation or extinction. All human beings will exist forever, either with God in Heaven (eternal life) or apart from God in Hell, the lake of fire (eternal death).

Satan will eventually be thrown into the Lake of Fire (**Revelation 20:10**), “And the devil who deceived them was thrown into the lake of fire and brimstone, where the beast and the false prophet are also; and they will be tormented day and night forever and ever,” along with all those who reject God (**Revelation 20:15**), “And if anyone’s name was not found written in the book of life, he was thrown into the lake of fire.”

All true believers who have died, along with those who remain alive at Christ’s return, will be raised to new life to live with God in heaven (**1Corinthians 15:54**), “When the perishable has been clothed with the imperishable, and the mortal with immortality.”

Jesus encourages true believers that He will not allow any permanent harm to come to them as they serve Him, and that goes for us as well, for God’s people have nothing to fear!

Read Luke 12:6-7... Matthew 10:29 says, “Are not two sparrows sold for a cent? And yet not one of them will fall to the ground apart from your Father.” Here in **Luke 12:6**, you can get five sparrows for two cents.

Sparrows were plentiful and were often roasted and served as cheap finger food, as appetizers.

One “cent” was the smallest denomination of money during Christ’s time, equal to one-sixteenth of a denarius (average laborers daily wage); and yet, God knows when every one of these inconsequential birds falls from a tree to the ground.

We are also told that the number of hairs on our head are numbered. The average person has about 140,000 hairs on his/her head, and God knows that number? What does that really have to do with anything?

June 30th, 2024 – (full sermon notes)

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Listen, God placed a billion galaxies with a billion stars each in the universe and (**Psalm 147:4**), “He counts the number of the stars; He gives names to all of them.” And yet, here in Luke we are talking about sparrows and hairs on our heads? I believe these seemingly insignificant facts about God’s knowledge express how important we are to God. Out of all of creation, we alone were formed out of the dirt of the ground by the hands of God and He then breathed life into us.

All who belong to God the Father, through God the Son, confirmed by God the Holy Spirit, are provided for and protected by God, and there is absolutely nothing in this world or the next for us to fear, but everything to gain (**2Peter 3:13-14**) for, “according to His promise we are looking for new heavens and a new earth, in which righteousness dwells. Therefore, beloved, since you look for these things, be diligent to be found by Him in peace, spotless and blameless.”

The only way anyone can have God’s peace and be considered spotless and blameless before Him, is to have received forgiveness for all their sins (past, present, and future) and eternal life, these are the greatest rewards, belonging to every believer and follower of Jesus Christ.

As a Christians, we are promised an eternity with God in a universe with everything having been made new, like it was in the Garden of Eden, before sin’s curse entered.

We are told, in John’s vision (**Revelation 21:1-5**), “the first heaven and the first earth passed away... And I saw the holy city, new Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, made ready as a bride adorned for her husband. And I heard a loud voice from the throne, saying, ‘Behold, the tabernacle of God is among men, and He will dwell among them, and they shall be His people, and God Himself will be among them, and He will wipe away every tear from their eyes; and there will no longer be *any* death; there will no longer be *any* mourning, or crying, or pain; the first things have passed away.’ And He who sits on the throne said, ‘Behold, I am making all things new,’” **12**, “Behold, I am coming quickly, and My reward *is* with Me, to render to every man according to what he has done,” (**Revelation 22:20-21**), “He who testifies to these things says, ‘Yes, I am coming quickly.’ Amen. Come, Lord Jesus. The grace of the Lord Jesus be with all. Amen. [*GRACE is an acronym for God’s Riches At Christ’s Expense, everyone who believes in Jesus Christ, as Lord and Savior, receives forgiveness for all sin (past, present, and future) and eternal life with God in heaven.*]

1John 5:11-13, “And the testimony is this, that God has given us eternal life, and this life is in His Son. He who has the Son has the life; he who does not have the Son of God does not have the life. These things I have written to you who believe in the name of the Son of God, so that you may know that you have eternal life.”

If you have any doubts or questions about this, please contact me, at the following:

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