

Pre-Sermon: This is to help you prepare for hearing from God's Word

- Prayerfully read Luke 12:49-59. What do you think? What stands out to you?

Sermon Questions: This will help you evaluate how well you were listening

- What is the main thing the preacher wanted you to do today as a result of studying this passage? What did the preacher want you to think about?
- What is the shocking thing that happens in chapter 11 that started this whole discussion of the heart off?
- What does Jesus say is the problem? What is the cause of this problem?
- What does the word healthy literally mean?
- How do the Pharisees illustrate what it means to have an unhealthy eye?
- In what way does chapter 12 make clear that this is not just a problem for Pharisees?
- What are the two different approaches to life that are illustrated in chapter 12?
- Why is the wrong approach so tempting?
- What reasons do we find in verses 49-59 that we really need to watch out for greed, fear, and hypocrisy and make sure that we really are all in for Jesus and living for eternity?

Sermon Synopsis: This is a short summary that will help you reflect on the message

We are looking at Luke 12:49-59. I feel an extra sense of urgency because we are at the end of this chapter. But because it's a conclusion, we can't just start at the end. We have to go back and get ourselves in the flow first, because there is this whole big thing Jesus is saying starting back in Luke 11. As we've been looking at these passages the past several weeks, we've been trying to talk about what is going on in your heart. I've been wanting you to really think about whether the way you look at life matches up with what you say you believe. And specifically, we've been looking at the way you think about stuff. Does the way you think about stuff match up with what you believe God is doing through Jesus? Partly because it doesn't always, automatically. A lot of people are divided. They hear about Jesus, get the outside cleaned up, but they are still looking at life a lot like everyone else. That's a threat!

How this all got started was not me looking at us, but us looking at Jesus. Or more specifically, us looking at a crowd looking at Jesus. Back in chapter 11, we see something pretty frightening taking place. Even though Jesus is doing shocking miracles, when he starts talking people have a hard time listening. They heard him speak God's Word, but they were not submitting. To make matters worse, in 11:29-31, they were blaming Jesus for it. Which is crazy! And Jesus calls them out on it. He makes clear the problem is not with the amount of revelation they were getting. The problem was with the people listening. They were an evil generation. But what was so evil about them? These are the kind of people you would expect to benefit when the Messiah showed up and started talking. And yet clearly they are not. Something is wrong. Jesus identifies the problem. The light in them is darkness. All the revelation in the world is not going to do any good, if the light inside someone is darkness. These people show it's possible for it to be dark inside and not know it, which is why Jesus says be careful. We need to evaluate. And yet how do we do that?

Jesus gives a hint in 11:34. The eye is the lamp of your body. If the inside is going to be bright, the lamp has to be on, and the lamp is your eye, so your eye needs to be healthy. If it is not, it's going to be dark. And the word that helps you understand what it means for your eye to be right, is the word healthy. This word is translated two ways in the Bible. The first is sincere. The other is generous. If your eye is generous, your whole body is going to be full of light, and if your whole body is full of light, there's not going to be hidden dark places in you. You are going to be sincere. You are not going to be a divided person, with some parts dark, some parts light, the lamp is going to be on and you are going to be able to see. And we need to be able to see! Luke shows what happens if we have bad eyes in 11:37-54. This is the section where Jesus pronounces all these woes on the Pharisees and lawyers. And when Jesus exposes their primary problem what does he say? "Now you Pharisees cleanse the outside of the cup and of the dish, but inside you are full of greed and wickedness." In other words, you are hypocritical. Outside you look good, but inside you are greedy.

If it ended there, I suppose we might be tempted to look at the Pharisees and the crowd and say, oh, those people. But it doesn't. How does chapter 12 begin? Jesus is talking to his followers and he says beware! And what does he tell them to beware of? The leaven of the Pharisees. And what is that leaven? Hypocrisy! And how did that hypocrisy show up? They were super concerned about religious activity and how they looked on the outside and people's approval and not concerned at all that inside they were full of greed. And that's the second big thing Jesus warns us about in verse 15. Be on your guard against all covetousness. Jesus is challenging his followers to look at the way we look at life. There are two ways to live and they are incompatible. One way is people who are religious and yet basically are living for now. They are divided. They profess an interest in Jesus but deep down their life right now is more valuable to them than anything else. And you know how that shows up? Making man's approval more important than God's, focusing on surviving over everything else, and covetousness.

While we know this approach is wrong, I will tell you what makes it really tempting. Fear. Sometimes we don't even want to look if our eye is healthy, because we are afraid of what will happen if we take Jesus' approach because Jesus' approach is really different. It's all in. Following Jesus is going to require you bank everything on what God's going to do through Him. While that sounds great sitting here, it can be hard when we don't see Jesus right in front of us, and the world seems messed up, and nothing seems to be changing and I am afraid you might ask, why live like this when it is not going to make my life easier right now? Why take action? Why be all in?

I want to look at 12:49-59 and give you some reasons. The first is the longest. **I am going to start by reminding you of the gospel.** God has a big plan for the universe. History is going somewhere. Jesus gives us a hint where. He says he came to cast fire on the earth. That's talking ultimately about a time when God supernaturally intervenes in history to sweep aside his enemies and rescue those who belong to Him. He's talking about this great promised day of judgment which is going to kick off this great reversal by purifying the universe of evil. Jesus looks at the world and longs for God's enemies to be eliminated. Jesus wants that to happen. If we want to live in a perfect world, we should too. The only way for the world to be perfect is for sinners to be judged. And yet that is the problem, because we are all sinners. That is why before God sends judgment on this earth, He sent judgment on His son. Imagine the judgment of God like a flood of water. Jesus says he has to be immersed in the flood of God's judgment on sin. This is the purpose of the cross. Jesus came to save those who put their trust in Him so we can be part of His eternal Kingdom. That's what makes the moment we are living in so important. There are stages.

Fire is coming, but first baptism. Glory but first crucifixion. While Jesus is coming to fulfill the Old Testament promises and establish God's kingdom, first He has to be rejected, suffer, and die. That's not a mistake. It's not a surprise. It's purposeful. If Jesus hadn't come and hadn't been rejected, there wouldn't be any division, there would only be one group, and that is those who were judged forever. But he has come and has experienced God's judgment so you wouldn't have to. But you have to make a decision. Either this is the story of the universe or it is not. Jesus is the coming King or you are on your own and this life is all you have got. Those two ways of looking at the world are opposite. They are not compatible. If God is providing this kind of salvation through Jesus, you need to be all in. That's why I am telling you that you really have to watch out for greed, insincerity, an overfocus on the now, worry and anxiety.

If you wonder how important this really is, **look at what happens when people are not careful.** The people in Jesus day could understand what was happening in things like the weather, but they couldn't see the obvious thing God was doing through Jesus. And what reason does he give? Hypocrisy! That's scary! I don't want that to happen to you.

I know the busyness of life can make feel like some of these issues unbelievers are concerned about really are the most urgent. **But stop and think with me a little about life.** Your time here in this world is short. Then you stand before God. This is your only chance to make things right. In the gospel, God is giving you a glimpse of where everything is headed. It's going to be beautiful and terrible and awesome and terrifying all at the same time. Jesus will return and separate everyone who has ever lived into two groups. Those who will be judged. Those who will live with Him forever. This division is eternal. Those who will be judged, will be judged forever and those who will enter in and enjoy His perfect, eternal kingdom. Those two groups won't be divided on the basis of how important they were, or how good they were, or how prosperous they were. They will be divided on the basis of their relationship with Jesus. This means the decisions we make about Jesus now will impact us forever. There's no relationship more important. So you must watch out for greed and hypocrisy and fear! These are serious distractions. If you are not careful you will start focusing on now and things that don't matter will quickly start feeling like they matter an awful lot. That is a problem because it can stop you from focusing on what is going to matter eternally which is your relationship with God.

Application Questions: We can't just read these passages, study them. It's vital you respond. It's urgent you look, you ask: "This is the gospel, this is what God's doing through Jesus, am I all in?"

- Is your eye healthy?
- How generous are you? Why not ask a friend to help you evaluate?
- Are there ways you are deliberately ignoring the problems going on inside and seeking to present a different version of yourself for the approval of others?
- How big a role does fear of the future play in your life?
- Are you living a now centered life? What are some ways that you are clearly living for the return of Christ? What would it look like for you to be all in for Jesus in the way you use your stuff? What is keeping you?
- Imagine you are trying to convince someone that they need to stop hesitating and watch out for greed and refuse to make excuses for covetousness and actually work at changing their lives so that they are generous and sincere. How could you use the truths of this message and verses 49-59 to do so?