

# A Declaration of Those Things Which Are Most Surely Believed Among Us

## An Expository Study of **The Gospel According to Luke** **Chapter 12- Luke 12:1-12**

### 231- Who to Fear and What to Fear- Part 3

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March 2, 2014

#### **Luke 12:1-12**

**1** Under these circumstances, after so many thousands of people had gathered together that they were stepping on one another, He began saying to His disciples first *of all*, "Beware of the leaven of the Pharisees, which is hypocrisy.

**2** But there is nothing covered up that will not be revealed, and hidden that will not be known.

**3** Accordingly, whatever you have said in the dark will be heard in the light, and what you have whispered in the inner rooms will be proclaimed upon the housetops.

**4** "I say to you, My friends, do not be afraid of those who kill the body and after that have no more that they can do.

**5** But I will warn you whom to fear: fear the One who, after He has killed, has authority to cast into hell; yes, I tell you, fear Him!

**6** Are not five sparrows sold for two cents? *Yet* not one of them is forgotten before God.

**7** Indeed, the very hairs of your head are all numbered. Do not fear; you are more valuable than many sparrows.

**8** "And I say to you, everyone who confesses Me before men, the Son of Man will confess him also before the angels of God;

**9** but he who denies Me before men will be denied before the angels of God.

**10** And everyone who speaks a word against the Son of Man, it will be forgiven him; but he who blasphemes against the Holy Spirit, it will not be forgiven him.

**11** When they bring you before the synagogues and the rulers and the authorities, do not worry about how or what you are to speak in your defense, or what you are to say;

**12 for the Holy Spirit will teach you in that very hour what you ought to say."**

To the Glory of God

Now as I said last week- for us to understand what is being said here- we need to consider the *context* of the situation as the Apostles and Disciples heard Jesus actually say these Words. At that very moment- this so-called "new religion" of following Jesus was not accepted by anyone outside the small group who actually loved and served Jesus. So while it is true that there was a sea of humanity that followed Jesus to be healed and fed- there was only a handful who followed Jesus because they honestly loved Him and loved what he said and wanted to obey and serve Him.

And these people standing there on that day feared what the religious hypocrites could do to them if they trusted in Jesus and obeyed Him- So Jesus tells them in **Luke 12:4&5:**

**4 "I say to you, My friends, do not be afraid of those who kill the body and after that have no more that they can do.**

**5 But I will warn you whom to fear: fear the One who, after He has killed, has authority to cast into hell; yes, I tell you, fear Him!**

So Jesus is telling these people to fear God because God will punish the hypocrites in hell. So who can kill the body? People can kill each other- and they do it all the time. I mean we go through life trying to prevent being killed. And so all this means is

"do not be afraid of those who kill the body"

... which in this case refers to those religious leaders when the worst they can do is kill your body. So Jesus was not saying here that we should not buy life insurance to protect our families, or that we don't need to put locks on our doors, or that we are sinning if we are afraid of murderers. Jesus is simply saying here that the worst that the Pharisees can do to you is in this life. And that might be real bad. They can take things away from you and they can beat you and they can imprison you and they can even kill you. But they cannot touch

your soul. The damage that they can do to you ends with this life. Their hardship on you will not follow you into eternity.

And Jesus says here that people hurting you in this life is not the worst thing that can happen to you. Hell is worse than being poor. Hell is worse than being imprisoned and being beaten. Hell is worse than even dying. And if you are a true believer- death is nothing more than a door into the very Presence of God. So the very worst that an evil person can do to a true believer by ending their natural life is to usher them into the very Presence of God where they will live forever in a perfect body.

But the character of hypocrisy is that it always fears Man. Hypocrisy is preoccupied with what people think about them and how other people perceive them. True Salvation is preoccupied with what God thinks about them and how God perceives them.

So religious hypocrites were all about trying to gain the trust and gain the favor and gain the confidence of the people so they could take their money. The Pharisees did what they did for money. All religious hypocrites do what they do for money and for power and for prestige. The fact that Jesus says here that we should not fear that evil men can kill us, but that we are to fear God who can kill you...and here's the key word...and after that cast you into hell- by Jesus saying it like this- that makes it very clear that there is something after death that is infinitely worse than death, or there's no contrast between what God can do to you and Man can do to you if there is no eternal punishment.

So Jesus is saying that what God can do to you is far worse and far greater and more lasting than death. All that men can do is kill you. They can hurt you- but their ability to hurt you only affects this life. But what God can do is far worse than that because God not only can kill you physically, but He can affect you after this life, and He can send you to eternal punishment.

Now as we saw last week- the Jews picked up the word "Gehenna" and made it the descriptive word for God's Wrath in hell. So hell is an everlasting lake of fire combined with smoke and darkness- indicating great evil and wickedness and abomination. So it refers to the Divine Judgment and slaughter of God against unrepentant sinners. And the Lord Jesus Christ had so much to say about hell- like weeping, wailing, gnashing of teeth, darkness, blackness, aloneness, torment, burning.

And so our Lord says us- you want to fear somebody? Fear the One Who can send you to a place like that. Yes, end of verse 5, I tell you, fear Him.

So how can we avoid being a hypocrite? We must stop fearing men and start fearing God- the true and living God Who will uncover everything that is hidden and Who has the Authority to send you to hell.

And all of that is the background as to why Jesus talked about the sparrows in verses 6&7.

### **Luke 12:6-7**

**6 Are not five sparrows sold for two cents? *Yet not one of them is forgotten before God.***

**7 Indeed, the very hairs of your head are all numbered. Do not fear; you are more valuable than many sparrows.**

So all that Jesus was saying here is that these religious hypocrites are false- they do not have any real power over you. Sure they can hurt you and imprison you and even kill you- but they cannot touch your soul, and the extent of their ability to harm you lasts only to the end of this life.

But God knows *everything*. God is Omniscient. God knows everything about everything. And sparrows were little tiny birds that the poor picked up, caught in nets and ate, plucked them, skinned them, roasted them and ate them like tiny little hors d'oeuvres. And they were so cheap that you could buy five for two cents. Over in Matthew it says they were two for a penny. So you have two for a penny or five for two pennies. And a penny back then was one-sixteenth of a day's wage- a denarii, which was called an "assarion", and it was a copper Roman coin.

So these sparrows were cheap food for the poor. And nobody cared about sparrows. The only reason the poor cared about sparrows was so they could eat them. But the normal person would never think that a completely Almighty God would bother Himself about sparrows. So the question comes- "*Could there be one sparrow somewhere on the planet that God didn't know about?*" And the answer is, "*No.*" And not only does God simply *know* about all these insignificant birds- He absolutely *rules* over them to the point that where they hop on the ground is

ordained by God. And this is great news for us because if God knows about sparrows- if God takes knowledge of the most insignificant of birds- then this same God knows about and cares about and has ordained your life as well. And that is just another example to the degree that God orders the Universe and the level of His absolute Sovereignty. And this is the God that holds you in His Hand.

And the point of saying that is- *"Look, you better fear God because He knows everything and He controls everything!"*

Now back in the Old Testament in **1Samuel 14:45** and **2Samuel 14:11**, and **over in 1Kings 1:52** is a familiar Old Testament phrase,

**"Not one hair of your head shall fall."**

... and this same phrase is in **Luke 21:18**. And this was God's way of saying that when the Wrath of God is poured out on the unrepentant sinners- I'll protect you. So God knows every hair on every person on the planet. So God knows and understands and controls and rules over the most minute and the most inconsequential details of the Universe. So don't think somehow you don't need to fear God because in the end something will slip by Him- because *nothing* slips by Him. The Truth will be always uncovered and hell awaits the hypocrite, and God knows everything and God rules over everything- including all demons and all unbelievers.

Now we must understand that it's not that God *learned* this information or that He *acquired* it over time. No, God has never learned anything and God has never acquired any knowledge of any subject. Omniscience means that God knows *everything* about everything- so he never learns new things.

Nobody has to inform God about anything. The Open Theists are wrong about God- God is completely Omniscient, and the point that Jesus is making here is that God knows you so completely, so thoroughly, that He even knows the very hairs of your head and they are all numbered.

Now the average head has about 150 thousand hairs on it and there are over seven billion people in the world, and God has numbered each hair on each person. So the point is- don't fear Man- fear God- He even knows how many hairs are on your head.

Now turn with me to the last Book of the Old Testament- Malachi. And look at Chapter 3. The Prophet Malachi prophesied all about the coming Judgment and in **Malachi 3:2&3** we read this,

**2 "But who can endure the day of His coming? And who can stand when He appears? For He is like a refiner's fire and like fullers' soap.**

**3 "He will sit as a smelter and purifier of silver, and He will purify the sons of Levi and refine them like gold and silver, so that they may present to the LORD offerings in righteousness.**

And then look down at Verse 5:

**"Then I'll draw near to you for judgment."**

Verse 6,

**For I, the LORD, do not change; therefore you, O sons of Jacob, are not consumed.**

... and this goes on and on about all this coming Judgment. But then the first part of verse 16 says:

**Then those who feared the Lord spoke to one another...**

... now what do you think they said to each other?

*"Yikes! God's Judgment is coming- the day of the Lord is coming! It's coming! What are we going to do?"*

... the majority of people were unconcerned about the coming Judgment- but these who feared the Lord were expressing their concern back and forth about this coming Judgment precisely because they believed and because they feared the Lord, and then verse 16 says,

**... And the Lord gave attention and heard it...**

... so God heard their fears that maybe somehow they would get overlooked- that God might forget that they were His and judge them, too. And then look at the rest of verse 16:

**... and a book of remembrance was written before Him, for those who feared the Lord and esteemed His Name.**

So if you already fear the Lord enough to repent and trust in Him- do not fear that God will forget you on the Day of Judgment. Because this same fearful God has your name in His Book. And I love verses 17&18:

**17 And they will be Mine, says the Lord of hosts, on the day that I prepare My own possession and I will spare them as a man spares his own son who serves him.**

**18 So you will again distinguish between the righteous and the wicked, between one who serves God and one who doesn't serve Him.**

... now read **Malachi 4:1-3:**

**1 "For behold, the day is coming, burning like a furnace; and all the arrogant and every evildoer will be chaff; and the day that is coming will set them ablaze," says the LORD of hosts, "so that it will leave them neither root nor branch."**

**2 "But for you who fear My name, the sun of righteousness will rise with healing in its wings; and you will go forth and skip about like calves from the stall.**

**3 "You will tread down the wicked, for they will be ashes under the soles of your feet on the day which I am preparing," says the LORD of hosts.**

So those who fear God now enough to repent and humble themselves will not be afraid on that day. So if you are fearing God in Salvation now- then you do not have to fear what Man will do to us now, and you do not have to fear what God will do on that day. God knows everything and He knows you are His.

So everything hinges on knowing God. So how do you come to know God? What is the only way to come to know God? Well, first of all- you cannot honor God unless you honor the Son. So now go back to **Luke 12:8&9:**

**8 "And I say to you, everyone who confesses Me before men, the Son of Man will confess him also before the angels of God;**

**9 but he who denies Me before men will be denied before the angels of God.**

We must understand, dear friends, that if a person does not honor Jesus Christ- they cannot honor God. Listen to what it says in **John 5:23**,

**"He who does not honor the Son does not honor the Father."**

You cannot honor God without honoring His Son. In **John 8:41 &42** they said to Jesus,

**"We have one Father, even God."**

... these religious hypocrites thought they honored God. But Jesus said to them,

**"If God were your Father, you would love Me for I proceed forth and have come from God."**

... and that establishes the Truth that you can't love God without loving Jesus. You can't honor God and not honor Jesus. In **John 14:6** Jesus said,

**"No man comes to the Father but by Me"**

...no one. So you can only know God as God actually is. And so Who is God? **Ephesians 1:3** says,

**"Blessed be the God who is the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ."**

... so God is to be known as the God and the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ. And that means that He is one with Christ. **2Corinthians 1:3** says:

**"Blessed be the God, even the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ."**

... and so it goes throughout the entire New Testament. **1Peter 1:3:**

**"Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ."**



... and **Colossians 1:3** says the same thing,

**"We give thanks to God, the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ."**

**2Corinthians 11:31, Romans 15:6; 2John 3-** they all say the same thing. The one true living God of the Bible is *always* known as the God Who is also the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ- which means that God the Father and Jesus the Son are the same God. That the God of the Bible is one in His Essence and is eternally manifested in three distinct Persons of God the father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit. So God is only known through Jesus Christ, and God is only honored and worshipped when Jesus Christ is honored and worshipped.

And so I want you to notice the "all-inclusive nature" of the statement in **Luke12:8**,

**"Everyone who confesses Me before men, the Son of Man shall confess Him also before the angels of God."**

... this is an all-inclusive statement. Jesus said, **"Everyone"**. That is to say that whoever does this will be loved by God the Father. Everyone who confesses Jesus before men will be confessed by My Father before the angels and by Jesus as well. So this is a sober warning to the self-righteous religious people.

Now let me just talk about what it means to confess Jesus before men and what it doesn't mean when Jesus says,

"As the Son of Man He'll confess us before the angels of God."

Now the word "**confess**" needs to be understood in the context in which Jesus spoke it. When somebody confesses to a crime- they are owning up to what is true. So when you confess- you're owning up to what is true. And that's exactly what it means. The English word, **"confess"** comes from the Greek word, *homologese*. *Logeo* is the verb "to say", and *homo* means: "the same". So homogeneous or homogenized means: the same. Homo sapiens: having to do with all of us being the same as humans. *Homo* as opposed to *heteros* which means different.

And that's the technical meaning of the word. It literally means: to say what is true or to state about something that is true. So when

you're confessing Jesus- it means that you are saying what is true about Jesus in His Person and in His Work and in His Words. And Jesus said this confession must be,

**"before men."**

... so it is not simply that you make that confession in your heart- but that you believe it to the point that you make that pronouncement of Truth about Jesus *publicly*. Now this does not necessarily means Preaching or Teaching or passing out tracks or going to the jails. It isn't necessarily about a public ministry as much as it has to do with how you live your life.

In **Matthew 7:21&22**- Jesus said that there are many people who give lip service to God when He said,

**21 "Not everyone who says to Me, 'Lord, Lord,' will enter the kingdom of heaven, but he who does the will of My Father who is in heaven *will enter.***

**22 "Many will say to Me on that day, 'Lord, Lord, did we not prophesy in Your name, and in Your name cast out demons, and in Your name perform many miracles?'**

... but Jesus says to them in verse 23:

***And then I will declare to them, 'I never knew you; DEPART FROM ME, YOU WHO PRACTICE LAWLESSNESS.'***

... which is the same thing that God said back in **Isaiah 29:13**:

**Then the Lord said, "Because this people draw near with their words And honor Me with their lip service, But they remove their hearts far from Me, And their reverence for Me consists of tradition learned *by rote,***

So that's not a true confession. The confession that Jesus is talking about here is that you believe and say what is true about Jesus Christ- both with your lips and with your life.

So just how do you do that? How do we kind of get to the core of that? Well true Salvation comes only to those who honor Christ. If you dishonor Jesus- then you are proving that you are not saved. And to

honor Christ is to acknowledge and believe and talk about all that is true about Him- His Person, His Work and His Words.

And so the Pharisees and the scribes and the Jews that followed them were trying to honor God while they were rejecting and condemning and cursing God's Son. But you can't reject what is true about Christ and still honor God. You *dishonor* God by rejecting or denying Christ because God Himself has said,

**This is My beloved Son in whom I am well pleased, listen to Him.**

### **1John 4:15**

**Whoever confesses that Jesus is the Son of God, God abides in him, and he in God.**

... so nobody can truly know and love God apart from affirming the Truth about Jesus Christ.

### **2 John 7**

**For many deceivers have gone out into the world, those who do not acknowledge Jesus Christ *as* coming in the flesh. This is the deceiver and the antichrist.**

... and this is the very same Greek word here. So you must confess that Jesus is God, and you must confess that Jesus is Man- that He is fully God and fully Man. Now please turn with me to **Romans 10** because this is the hallmark Passage about this issue. **Romans 10:6-17:**

**6** But the righteousness based on faith speaks as follows: "DO NOT SAY IN YOUR HEART, 'WHO WILL ASCEND INTO HEAVEN?' (that is, to bring Christ down),

**7** or 'WHO WILL DESCEND INTO THE ABYSS?' (that is, to bring Christ up from the dead)."

**8** But what does it say? "THE WORD IS NEAR YOU, IN YOUR MOUTH AND IN YOUR HEART"—that is, the word of faith which we are preaching,

**9** that if you confess with your mouth Jesus *as* Lord, and believe in your heart that God raised Him from the dead, you will be saved;

**10** for with the heart a person believes, resulting in righteousness, and with the mouth he confesses, resulting in salvation.

**11** For the Scripture says, "WHOEVER BELIEVES IN HIM WILL NOT BE DISAPPOINTED."

**12** For there is no distinction between Jew and Greek; for the same *Lord* is Lord of all, abounding in riches for all who call on Him;

**13** for "WHOEVER WILL CALL ON THE NAME OF THE LORD WILL BE SAVED."

**14** How then will they call on Him in whom they have not believed? How will they believe in Him whom they have not heard? And how will they hear without a preacher?

**15** How will they preach unless they are sent? Just as it is written, "HOW BEAUTIFUL ARE THE FEET OF THOSE WHO BRING GOOD NEWS OF GOOD THINGS!"

**16** However, they did not all heed the good news; for Isaiah says, "LORD, WHO HAS BELIEVED OUR REPORT?"

**17** So faith *comes* from hearing, and hearing by the word of Christ.

Now look closely again at verse 9:

**that if you confess with your mouth Jesus *as* Lord, and believe in your heart that God raised Him from the dead, you will be saved;**

So you must confess Jesus as being "Lord"- or in other words- you must confess and believe that Jesus is fully God in order to be saved, and you must believe in the physical and bodily Resurrection of Jesus in order to be saved. So you believe and consequently because you do believe- you confess with your mouth, and then you support that belief and those words with the manner in which you live your life. So if you have no life that supports your confession- then your confession is not true.

Now in this Passage- the word, "Righteousness" is a *positive* term and "Salvation" is a *negative* term. Righteousness means that you're perfect before God. And Salvation means you have been mercifully rescued from sin and death and judgment and hell. So you must confess that Jesus is Lord.

So just what does this mean to confess Jesus as Lord? Jesus Himself defines it in very clear terms. I mean, there are a lot of Passages talking about the Lordship of Jesus Christ all over the place. In fact, it might interest you to know that in **The Book of the Acts** where

you get the chronicle of Apostolic preaching- the preaching of the Apostles in the early Church- Jesus is called "Savior" only twice in the whole Book of the Acts. But He is called "Lord" 92 times! And in the entire New Testament- Jesus is called "Savior" about ten times while He's called Lord more than 700 times!

Now go back to **Luke 9:23** and read that verse with me- **Luke 9:23**- this is the very heart of the Gospel:

### **Luke 9:23**

**And He was saying to *them* all, "If anyone wishes to come after Me, he must deny himself, and take up his cross daily and follow Me.**

... so this is a total takeover of a person's life. This is the end of your life as you once knew it. So true Biblical Salvation is not about you adding Jesus to your life so that your life can be better here on this earth. And those who teach and preach that are deceiving people. No, true Biblical Salvation is all about you *losing* your life. Jesus does not save you so that He can help you fulfill all your dreams and fulfill all your ambitions. When you come to Jesus- like Peter- you *abandon* your dreams and you *abandon* your plans and you follow Him.

So just what does it mean to deny yourself? Remember when we studied that text and I told you that the word literally means:

to refuse to associate with

... so Jesus says in **Luke 9:23** that if anyone wishes to come to Him and be saved and be a part of His Kingdom and be forgiven- then the first requirement is that you refuse any longer to associate with the person that you are. You do hate your sin and you so hate your life of rebellion against God- that you no longer desire to be that person ever again. And that is why the Apostle Paul says,

**"For me to live is Christ.... I'm crucified with Christ.**

Paul said he died in order to live with Jesus. So Salvation means that you don't have a life of your own any longer; you don't have a will of your own any longer; you don't have a plan of your own. You are either bought and paid for and you now are the purchased possession of

Jesus Christ, or you are still for sale to the highest bidder. You either belong to Jesus and you are His bond-slave, or you belong to Satan and you are a slave to sin. There isn't a third choice. To be saved means by definition that you have died and your life is hid in Christ. Saved people don't have any ambition of our own. Our ambition is to be pleasing to Jesus- period. So true Biblical Salvation is the end of you.

So what we're talking about here in confessing Jesus as "Lord" is the absolute and complete self-denial of yourself. It's a kind of personal suicide. But notice that He's not finished. He goes on to say:

**"Take up your cross daily."**

... and that's not some mystical idea. It means get ready because you might need to literally die. So this is very practical. What the people of the American Church need to hear is that true Biblical Salvation might make you the single most unpopular person in school. You might lose all your friends, your family might turn against you, you might be ostracized by everybody who used to love you, and it might very well cost you your life.

Now the people back then were used to crosses- they were everywhere- by the thousands- all up and down the roads. The Romans had stuck the Jews up on the highways in Israel to put fear in the hearts of the people. So corpses were hanging on crosses all over Israel- being eaten by the birds. So they knew what it was to lose your life for a cause. And Jesus said that confessing Him as Lord might cost you your life. But He still wasn't finished. He then said,

**follow Me**

So Salvation is self-denial, and then it is self-sacrifice, and finally it is self-submission. And verse 24 says this is how you "**save your life**". This is how you "**save your eternal soul**". If you hold on to your life- you'll *lose* your soul. So the summation of denying yourself and taking up your cross daily and following Jesus is all about losing your life. And the only way you'll ever save your soul is to completely *abandon* your life to Jesus.

So when you confess Jesus as "Lord"- you are saying, "*I'm a bond-slave and Jesus is the Master and I'll do whatever He asks.*" Now why

in the world would anybody in their right mind say that? Because they want forgiveness of sin and heaven so desperately. The Holy Spirit has convicted you and you realize that you are lost and that without Jesus- you're doomed. Because it's only the desperate who repent and confess.

So what you're doing when you confess Jesus as "Lord" is you're confessing the Truth about Him- that He is, in fact, the Absolute and utter Sovereign of the Universe and He has every right to be the Sovereign over your life- and particularly because you are so desperately hopeless in running it yourself. And that left to yourself- you'll run your life right into hell. And the word, "Lord" here means: "Sovereign Ruler". It means: "God". Now back to **Luke 12**- Jesus says,

**"Everyone who confesses Me before men, the Son of Man shall confess him also before the angels of God."**

...in other words- if you deny yourself and trust in Jesus- then He will affirm you in the Glory of Heaven before the angels of God. And that scene is a Judgment scene. That is a picture that is given to us in **Matthew 25:31-34** when Jesus said:

**31 "But when the Son of Man comes in His glory, and all the angels with Him, then He will sit on His glorious throne.**

**32 All the nations will be gathered before Him; and He will separate them from one another, as the shepherd separates the sheep from the goats;**

**33 and He will put the sheep on His right, and the goats on the left.**

**34 "Then the King will say to those on His right, 'Come, you who are blessed of My Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world.**

... so here He comes- the Son of Man- the same title that He uses there of Himself in **Luke 12**. And that was the most common way Jesus referred to Himself. It was a Messianic title taken out of **Daniel 7:13 &14**.

**13 "I kept looking in the night visions, And behold, with the clouds of heaven One like a Son of Man was coming, And He came up to the Ancient of Days And was presented before Him.**

**14** “And to Him was given dominion, Glory and a kingdom, That all the peoples, nations and *men of every language* Might serve Him. His dominion is an everlasting dominion Which will not pass away; And His kingdom is one Which will not be destroyed.

So the day is coming when Jesus sets up His throne and all the angels of God are there, and everybody is separated and the sheep who are on His right go into the Kingdom, and the goats on His left are cast out of His Presence forever. In **Matthew 25:46**- Jesus said:

**These will go away into eternal punishment, but the righteous into eternal life."**

... and this happens before the watching angels of God. And so what Jesus is talking about here is about Judgment. And I told you, as we get to this point in His life- He says a lot about Judgment and that's His point here.

Judgment is coming.

So when it comes to that Judgment- just as you have denied yourself and trusted in Jesus- He will affirm you in the glory to come. And then He says in **Luke 12:9**:

**but he who denies Me before men will be denied before the angels of God.**

And this is how to stay out of Heaven- just deny Christ. Now again this is not saying that everyone who is saved has to be a public speaker and preacher. That is not what this means. Everybody has not been called to preach or teach. The Greek word here is *arneomai*, and it means: to disown or to reject. And that's exactly what the Pharisees and scribes had done.

And so Jesus is saying to these people who are still the *mathetes*, they're still the learners, they're still on the fence, they're still making up their mind, so Jesus is saying, “*Look, if you will acknowledge what is true about Me, My Person, My Work, and My Words- I'll acknowledge you before the angels of God at the Day of Judgment. But if you deny Me like these Pharisees have- I'll deny you before the angels of God.*”



*And I will say, 'Depart from Me, you workers of iniquity, I don't know you...I never knew you.'*"

So this is straightforward and clear-cut and inescapable. Heaven will belong to those who honor God by honoring the Son. And you cannot honor the Father without honoring the Son. It's impossible. I have strongly argued for years that if Jesus is not your Lord and Master and Sovereign- then He is not your Savior. If you do not *follow after* Jesus- then you do not love Him. And if you do not love Jesus- then you're not saved, you have not been forgiven, you're not going to Heaven.

Because you cannot divide between the Person of Jesus and the Words of Jesus. You cannot love the Lord and not serve Him. And when I speak of serving Jesus- I am not talking about sinless perfection- I am talking about *honesty*. You do not serve Jesus *perfectly*- nobody does- but you must serve Him *honestly*- and when you fail- you know you're wrong and you grieve and you repent and you struggle to follow after Him better.

But you cannot possibly think that you are saved when you are never convicted of sin, and when you have no thought of being close to Him, and when you feel entitled to live according to the dictates of your own heart. That is not *serving* Jesus- that is *using* Jesus for your own nefarious ends.

And I am sad to say to you that in far too many places- the true Biblical Gospel is not being preached in the American Church. Many in the modern Church preach a Gospel that has been stripped of repentance and stripped of confession of Jesus as Lord, and stripped of submission, and stripped of self-denial, and stripped of obedience, and this so-called "gospel" has been reduced to nothing more than "praying a prayer" and "accepting Jesus into your heart" and "inviting Jesus into your own life" and "making a decision for Christ".

And none of that is Biblical. Big named Evangelists like Billy Sunday and Charles Finney just made those terms up. Nowhere in the Bible do we ever read the phrase "accept Jesus or ask Jesus into your heart or invite Jesus into your life or make a decision for Christ." The Bible doesn't teach things like that.

But what you *will* read in the Bible is if you want to come after Jesus- then you must deny yourself and take up your cross and follow Jesus and repent of your sins and believe and confess Jesus as God,

confess Jesus as Man, and confess Jesus as Lord, and then back that confession up with the way you now live your life to God's Glory. That is what is in the Bible.

And that is true Biblical Salvation and the other is a man-made religious system that mass produces believers like General Motors mass produces cars- but they all have defects in them.

But the modern Church has now become resilient against the Truth- much more resilient than it used to be- and I'll tell you why. 150 years ago- the visible Church on the earth was tied to its theology. So back then- Theology mattered. And another word for Theology is "Biblical Truth". And back then- if you could expose the error of a particular teaching by the careful study of Scripture- you could expose false teaching and it was rejected.

But theology no longer drives the American Church- the evil of "Pragmatism" drives the Church and theology is no longer an issue with very many people. Pragmatism says that whatever works must be of God; whatever draws the most people and makes the people happy and satisfies them and whatever the people crave after must be of God. And more and more people of the modern Church will tell you, *"You don't need theology- all you need is Jesus"* And they will justify unbiblical and patently pagan teachings because they are so popular and so many people seemingly benefit from them. So there is an indifference about Truth and Doctrinal Precision and Biblical Exegesis and Theology in the modern Church that is frightening.

And if you get on the radio and preach pragmatism- and you'll draw the interest of the majority of church people. But you go on the radio and teach expositionally through an entire Book- and they're not sure why you're wasting your time.

So how do you awaken a Church that is in theological error when theological error doesn't matter anymore? It is going to take a Sovereign Move of God's Spirit- because Theology does matter. The true Biblical Gospel invitation has always been a Sovereign Call to come to Jesus and die to yourself. The Gospel is a Gospel of complete self-denial. The Gospel has always been a Call to submission and a Call to sacrifice and it's always been a Call to repentance and Jesus never eased up.

And so you must confess Jesus. It is a requirement. And you must deny yourself or you deny Him. Jesus says you can deny Me and I'll

deny you. Or you can confess Me and I'll confess you. But confessing Me means denying yourself. That's what the Gospel offers. It is an invitation to completely give up your life. It's an invitation to say I will lose my life to find it.

Jesus didn't come to help you fulfill your dreams, He didn't come to help you fulfill your ambitions and to bump you up a few notches on the satisfaction scale and to make your marriage better and to help you hit more home runs. That's not why Jesus came. He came to take over and in return for that- you receive the forgiveness of sin, eternal life, and the peace and joy and power of the Spirit of God. And that doesn't mean a thing to you unless you realize how lost you really are. True conversion is never evidenced by the remembrance of an event or a remembrance of a prayer or the remembrance of a feeling.

True conversion is evidenced by a confession of Jesus Christ with both lip and life. That is to say- a verbal confirmation of one's submission to the Lordship of Jesus Christ that is supported by an obedient life. And John said it as clearly as it could be said, **1John 3:10**,

**By this the children of God and the children of the devil are obvious: anyone who does not practice righteousness is not of God...**

So you look at the pattern of their life. This is not just confessing with your mouth- this is a full life confession. If you acknowledge before the watching world that you believe all that is true about Jesus Christ- including His Deity and His Humanity and His saving Work and His Lordship, and it's evident in your life- then He has promised that He will acknowledge you before the angels of God. But if your life is a denial of Christ- then He'll deny you at the Judgment before the angels of God.

So you want to miss hell? You want to escape hypocritical false religion? There is only one way. You must honor the true and living God- the God Who will uncover all hypocrisy, the God Who has the Authority and the Power and the Right to send souls to eternal hell, and the God Who knows everything- nothing escapes Him. And the only way you can honor this God is to honor His Son. Whoever honors the Son, honors the Father and honoring the Son means that you confess, that is to say you say what is true about all that Jesus is and all that He said and all that He did.

And that takes you to the third duty- to honor the Spirit. And I'm going to do that next time but I'm just going to give you a hint.

You can't honor the Father until you honor the Son, and listen to this, you can't honor the Son until you honor the Spirit. You say, "*What do you mean?*" I want you to think about this between now and next Sunday. **1Corinthians 12:3**- the end of the verse- listen to this:

**Therefore I make known to you that no one speaking by the Spirit of God says, "Jesus is accursed"; and no one can say, "Jesus is Lord," except by the Holy Spirit.**

... so you can't know the Father until you know the Son, you can't know the Son except through the work of the Holy Spirit. And one other text, **1John 4:2**

**By this you know the Spirit of God: every spirit that confesses that Jesus Christ has come in the flesh is from God;**

So how do you know the Spirit? The Spirit is always at work in the people who make the true confession of Christ. So you can't know Christ without the Sovereign Work of the Spirit. It's the Spirit that shows us Christ. And it's Christ that shows us the Father. So the way to Jesus Christ is through the Work of the Holy Spirit. And the way to the Father is through the Work of the Son.

And Lord willing- we're going to find out next time about honoring the Spirit.

Amen. Let's pray.