

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

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

232- Who to Fear and What to Fear- Part 4

March 9, 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 Jesus begins this Passage in verse 1 with a Divine Warning:

Beware of the leaven of the Pharisees, which is hypocrisy.

... and we have been learning over the last three weeks that *all* false religion is hypocritical- not just the religion of the Pharisees that dominated Israel at the time of Jesus- but *all* false religion is hypocrisy. False religion and false teaching is, by definition, a lie. It is not from God, it is meant to deceive, it does not honor God, at all, it cannot honor God, and it cannot benefit people spiritually or eternally because false teaching has no capacity to help anyone in God.

The Bible teaches that all false religions are of satan; they are doctrines of demons; they are the single most prolific way in which satan operates in the earth- to get people to believe something about God and something about Jesus and something about Salvation and the Church that is not true so that they will be deceived and damned for all eternity.

So Jesus begins this section by telling us that all false teaching is hypocrisy. So we need to know that all false teachers are hypocrites- they outwardly appear to be spiritual and godly people but they are not because they are peddling that which is false and that which God and the Spirit of God did not authorize.

And we live in a day when there are many people who claim to know God and yet they do not; they claim to speak for God and they do not. They claim to know the Truth and they do not. They claim to be righteous and they are not. They claim to be good and they are not. They claim to be headed for heaven and they are not. They claim to know the way to Heaven and they do not.

We must know that every teaching from every teacher on the face of the earth that is at odds with that which God has said in His Word is all hypocritical- because it is not the true Gospel. So what you believe matters and why you believe it matters. And so the single most important thing that I can do for you is to give you a consistent and steady diet of Truth straight from God's Word- so you can know and understand and enjoy the Truth and so the Truth can form your life and alter your behavior and reshape your focus and transform your life and

provide you with the faith that you need to trust in Jesus Christ for the saving of your souls. Nothing else even comes close- and everything else that I do and everything else that we do as a Church should be to facilitate that one single end.

Now knowing and enjoying the Truth is the source of every problem in your life. Every sin and every failure is the result of either not knowing the Truth or not enjoying the Truth that you know. And that is why the Bible does *not* say that you will know the Truth and the Truth will *set* you free- the Bible says:

John 8:32b

... you will know the truth, and the truth will make you free.

Now the dominant form of hypocritical false religion in the time of our Lord's earthly Ministry was the religion of the Pharisees and the scribes. The scribes were the smaller group of theologians within the larger group of Pharisees- who were the architects of this kind of demonic religion.

Judaism then as well as today- was a very cruel works-based religious system that forced people to try to earn favor with God by what they did for themselves. And like all hypocritical false religions- Judaism was very powerful, very influential, and was completely damning- because nobody except the priests were ever good enough to earn God's Favor.

Judaism saturated Jewish life in the 1st Century and that's why Jesus called this false religion "leaven", and why He said, "Beware of it". So just how do we avoid false religion? There is only one way- we must come to the Truth. And Jesus unfolds Truth here in a most straightforward way in this Passage.

Now remember- the Lord is speaking to literally tens of thousands of people in this huge crowd- but He is primarily directing His Words to the people who are identified as "disciples"- the *mathetes* or the "learners"- those who are still somewhat open to the Truth- which is a much smaller group within this larger group. Most of the crowd has bought into the deception of the Pharisees that Jesus does what He does by the power of the devil- and that He really doesn't represent God- but that He actually represents satan. So these people are following their leaders and are turning more and more hostile toward Jesus every day-

and with the single exception of Palm Sunday where they hail Jesus as the Messiah- they have completely grown hostile toward Jesus and that hatred based on deception will eventually leads to them screaming for His Blood and His Death.

But in the midst of this mass of ever hostile people- there are those who are still openly identified as “disciples” and it is to them that Jesus addresses the Message. And He cries out to them,

Beware of the leaven of the Pharisees, which is hypocrisy.

... and then Jesus unfolds a Trinitarian view of the Truth- where the Father is referred to in verse 5 and the Son is referred to in verse 8, and the Spirit is referred to in verse 10. So that tells us that true religion has a Trinitarian understanding of God that involves honoring the Father and honoring the Son and honoring the Holy Spirit. The writer of **Hebrews** put it this way,

Hebrews 11:6b

... he who comes to God must believe that He is...

... and what that statement really is saying is if you're going to come to the one true living God- you have to believe He is Who He is. You cannot come to a “god” of your own making. You cannot come to a “god” who you have manufactured in your mind- who is something *other* than what God Himself has revealed Himself to be in Scripture. You cannot come to a “god” who is less than or different from or more than the Biblical Revelation of the one true and living God.

So if anyone comes to God- they must come to the God Who is exactly Who He is. No one can come to God for Salvation; no one can receive forgiveness and eternal life- who does not believe in the true God as He actually is, and who does not respond to God as Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. The Bible is very clear that God is one God. And yet the Bible is equally clear that all three Persons of God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit are fully Deity. And the Bible is also equally crystal clear that all three Persons of the Trinity are eternally manifested and that they operate simultaneously at the same time. The Biblical Testimony to the Trinity is repeated over and over, and Salvation itself is the Work of the Tri-une God in all three Persons, and,

therefore, true Biblical Salvation demands and requires the sinner's acknowledgment of that Trinitarian participation.

So Jesus has been exposing apostate Judaism as being entirely worthless and entirely hypocritical. And in **Luke 11:37-54**- He has pronounced six Curses on the Pharisees and the scribes and their false religion. And there will be many more Curses to come later in His Ministry which are described for us in **Matthew 23**. But, for now, He is warning those who have not yet made a full commitment to this hypocritical religion but are still listening to Him and to whatever degree they are open to the Truth. And to them He says, *"First of all you have to honor God- the one, true, living God- the God Who is to be feared because He has Authority to cast you into hell. He is the One you must fear."* And you remember in verses 2- 7 we saw that we are to honor God because He will expose the Truth; verses 2 and 3 tell us, it says very clearly that nothing is covered up that will not be revealed, nothing hidden that will not be known. So whatever is said in the dark will be heard in the light; whatever is whispered in the inner room will be shouted from the housetop. God is Omniscient and He knows everything and so you must honor God and fear God because all hypocrisy will be unmasked.

Secondly, He will send those hypocrites into hell. In Verses 4&5 Jesus says,

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 you fear God first because He will expose the Truth. And then you fear God because He has Authority to cast you into hell. And thirdly- you fear God because He controls everything. He controls every sparrow and not one of them is forgotten, and every hair on every head is numbered. So nothing escapes God's knowledge and control and that is why the Omnipotent, Omniscient Eternal God is to be feared. He knows who is to be unmasked and judged as a hypocrite. The end of verse 7, He also knows those that are His and are of far more value than any sparrows. And so everything begins with honoring God.

Now the Jews standing there that day would have said, *"Oh, we do honor God! We honor God- the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob. We honor the Creator God, the God of the Old Testament."* But then Jesus raises the bar and adds verses 8 and 9 a second requirement,

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.

... so we learned last week that since the coming of Jesus- it isn't enough to simply believe in God. If a person is going to be saved- they must also believe in Jesus Christ. So since that time- confessing the Father correctly *requires* confessing the Son. Honoring the Father *requires* honoring the Son and confessing Jesus means, as I told you last time, the word confess means: *to say what is true*.

So confessing Jesus means to say what is true about Jesus- including to confess that He is God Almighty in human flesh and that He is Savior and Lord. So it is to confess Jesus as "Lord" in the words of **Romans 10**. And we pointed out last time that you cannot honor God unless you honor Christ. Jesus Himself said in **John 5:23b**,

He who does not honor the Son does not honor the Father who sent Him.

And so in order to escape the Judgment of the hypocrites- we must confess and honor God and we must confess and honor Christ. There is no way to God except through Jesus Christ. Jesus Himself said in **John 14:6b**:

... I am the way, and the truth, and the life; no one comes to the Father but through Me.

... so you do not honor the Father unless you honor the Son.

But now we come to the next transition and the third Person of the Trinity. And now we see that you do not honor the Son unless you honor God the Spirit. And we come to that in verses 10 to 12,

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."**

Here Jesus transitions from the One to fear- God the Father, to the One to confess- God the Son, to the One to hear, -God the Holy Spirit. So no one comes to the Father except through the Son and no one comes to the Son except by the Spirit. And this is critical.

So to avoid the damning Judgment that comes on all people in false religious systems requires believing in the Father- the true God. But it also requires believing in the true Son and it also requires believing in the true Spirit.

So we must acknowledge God the Father as Sovereign Judge and Creator and Law Giver. And we must acknowledge the Son as Sovereign Savior and Lord. And we must acknowledge the Holy Spirit as Sovereign Revealer.

We acknowledge God the Father as the One Whose holy Law has been violated. We honor God the Son as the One Who has earned spotless Righteousness and Who paid the Penalty for our violation of God's Law and satisfied God's Wrath on our behalf. And we honor the Spirit as the One Whose Revelation concerning God and Christ has been made known to us.

So no one comes to God except through Christ. And no one comes to Christ except through the Spirit- because you can't come to Jesus unless you know the Truth about Him and you can't know the Truth about Jesus unless you believe the Revelation of the Holy Spirit that He has given. You see, it is the Holy Spirit Who reveals Jesus Christ to us. The knowledge of Jesus Christ transcends mere intellectual information- it must be revealed. And so to say this in another way- God is revealed in Jesus Christ and Jesus Christ is revealed by the Holy Spirit.

Now please allow me show you two Passages that are very important foundations to this. **1John 4-** please go there with me- **1John 4:1-6**

1John 4:1-6

1 Beloved, do not believe every spirit, but test the spirits to see whether they are from God, because many false prophets have gone out into the world.

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

3 and every spirit that does not confess Jesus is not from God; this is the *spirit* of the antichrist, of which you have heard that it is coming, and now it is already in the world.

4 You are from God, little children, and have overcome them; because greater is He who is in you than he who is in the world.

5 They are from world; therefore they speak *as* from the world, and the world listens to them.

6 We are from God; he who knows God listens to us; he who is not from God does not listen to us. By this we know the spirit of truth and the spirit of error.

Now the world is full of liars and deceivers and false prophets precisely because satan operates in this world. So don't be gullible. Just because somebody says they have a Word from God or a Message from God, or just because somebody says that God spoke to them and told them this, or told them that, or just because somebody says they have the Truth of God- because there are many false prophets out there- John says here that we are not to believe it just because they make that claim. The Apostle John teaches that we are to put them and what they say and what they teach to the test- so that we will not be deceived. So just how do you test them? Read verse 2 with me:

By this you know the Spirit of God...

...not guess, not hope, not wonder- but if you conduct this test- John says here that you will know what is and what is not from the Spirit of God. So the Apostle John says here that this is how you know when somebody is speaking in accord with the Holy Spirit. Now remember that the Holy Spirit is the singular Revealer of Divine Truth. So how do you know when the Message or the Word is really from the Spirit of God and not from some other spirit- either a human spirit or a demonic spirit? How do you know when the Message that is given is really from the Spirit of God? John says in **1John 4:2&3:**

2 ... every spirit that confesses that Jesus Christ has come in the flesh is from God;

3 and every spirit that does not confess Jesus is not from God; this is the *spirit* of the antichrist, of which you have heard that it is coming, and now it is already in the world.

So a true Message from God the Holy Spirit will contain a true confession of Jesus Christ. So a genuine Message from God the Holy Spirit will have a correct Christology. So there are only two possibilities. When somebody says they have a Message from God- it is either absolutely the Truth from God and it will contain a true confession of Who Jesus is- or it is a lie from the spirit of the Antichrist. There is no middle ground. Jesus Himself put it this way back in **Luke 11:23:**

He who is not with Me is against Me; and he who does not gather with Me, scatters.

... it's just that simple. So you can't just be gullible- you can't just trust that everybody's Message is from God simply because they claim that it is. When the Spirit of God is really speaking- what is said will be a true confession of Jesus Christ." So Christology- the Truth about Jesus Christ is the test that Jesus is God, and Lord, and Savior, and Master and that He is God Almighty in the flesh and He was born of a virgin and He was perfectly sinless and He died a vicarious, substitutionary death on the Cross as the Propitiation and He rose from the dead 3 days later and he bodily ascended into Heaven where He will come back. And Salvation is by Grace alone through faith alone in the finished Work of Christ alone- absent any and all human works. And anybody who does not confess this true Christology is not from God. So, for example- TD Jakes' message is not from God- because TD Jakes denies these things.

Now what we have to understand is that the Holy Spirit's testimony about Jesus Christ is the only way we know the Truth about Christ. You can't know the Truth about Jesus *intuitively*. Nobody can. So the Truth about Jesus is not something that you feel- this is not an emotion. Who Jesus is and what Jesus said and what He did is not a matter of opinion- Jesus is Who God the Holy Spirit revealed that He is and Jesus did what God the Holy Spirit moved upon 40 writers to say

that He did and Jesus spoke what God the Holy Spirit inspired Him to say.

So you can't find the Truth about Jesus through some mystical transcendental exercise. You can't find it by some esoteric experience or some high level of animated intuition or some personal musings in your own mind. You're not going to come to the Truth about Jesus from some inner voice or some inner feeling or from your dreams or your visions or your experience with angels.

This is what God the Holy Spirit put into the Bible about how we come to believe and trust and have confidence about what is true about Jesus Christ in **Romans 10:17**:

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

So Who is the Author of the Word concerning Christ? Who is the Author of God's Word? Who is the Author of the Old and New Testaments? Who is the Author of Objective, Propositional, Eternal, Absolute Divine Truth? God the Holy Spirit. The Apostle Peter said in **2Peter 1:20&21**:

20 But know this first of all, that no prophecy of Scripture is *a matter* of one's own interpretation,

21 for no prophecy was ever made by an act of human will, but men moved by the Holy Spirit spoke from God.

... it is God the Holy Spirit Who has Authored the Word. So the Holy Spirit is the Revealer of all Divine Truth and He is the Revealer of Jesus Christ.

Now we already know you cannot reject Christ and still know God. You can only know the one true living God if you know Jesus Christ.

Luke 10:16b

... he who rejects Me rejects the One who sent Me."

... so if you do not honor God the Son- you cannot honor God the Father. Jesus said in **John 8:42b**:

... If God were your Father, you would love Me,

... and the Apostle John said,

1John 2:23

Whoever denies the Son does not have the Father; the one who confesses the Son has the Father also.

... so if you don't *have* the Truth about Jesus Christ and if you don't *believe* the Truth about Jesus Christ- then you don't know God and you cannot know what is true of Jesus unless you have and believe in the Divine Revelation that has come by and through God the Holy Spirit. So those who confess Jesus Christ as Lord do so only because they've heard and believed the Truth about Christ- the Truth that is revealed in Scripture. And they've either read it or they've heard Scripture proclaimed or given to them in witness and in testimony.

Now we must understand that according to **2Corinthians 3:6**- it is the Spirit Who gives life. People do not possess life within themselves. Life must be *given* or it isn't possessed by humans at all. So God the Holy Spirit is the One Who regenerates or gives life as Jesus said in His conversation with Nicodemus in **John 3**. And according to **John 16**- it is God the Spirit Who convicts of sin and of righteousness and of judgment. And the Spirit does all this through Scripture- not in a vacuum and not in some mystical experience. It is the reading and illumination of the Word of God- which is Authored by God the Spirit- that the Holy Spirit uses to bring the sinner to the reality of his own sinfulness- because it is the Scripture that reveals the Law of God. And measured against that perfect Law- you come to understand that you're a sinner and that's how you become convicted of sin and righteousness and the judgment. So conviction is not a feeling that operates inside of you independent of the revealed Word of God being inside you. So the reality of true conviction is that it is only as good as the Truth that is in you.

For example-people say they are convicted about things all the time that they later find out were not really sins. At the time- they thought they were sins- but they weren't. So the "feeling" of condemnation that they experienced was not true- it wasn't really genuine conviction- because what they did wasn't really wrong. Therefore God the Holy Spirit did not convict that person of that act or that thought because that act or thought was not dishonoring to God.

So what they *thought* was genuine conviction turned about to be nothing more than human emotion- and something that the Holy Spirit did not orchestrate at all because He is the Spirit of Truth- not the Spirit of Emotion.

Likewise people sin all the time- many with horrific sins- without being convicted at all. And so both of these examples prove that since we are fallen and finite- what we "feel" is simply not reliable. And because that is true- we must know that true genuine Holy Spirit conviction *transcends* our ability to sense it or even recognize it- much less explain it. Therefore we need an *external* Source of unalterable Divine Truth that is not motivated by our feelings and that is not hindered by our ignorance and that is not affected by our sins and our biases and our prejudices to bring true and correct conviction into our lives. So that is why I say that our ability to be truly convicted by God the Holy Spirit is only as good as the amount of Divine Truth that we comprehend.

Now by this I am *not* saying that if you don't understand something that that means that it isn't really a sin and that God won't hold you accountable to it. I am *not* saying that. Sin is defined by God and your ignorance of sin is completely irrelevant- which is why we need to know. But your ability to be *convicted* of your sin is predicated on understanding Divine Truth- and so the more Truth you learn- the more convicted you will be and the less tolerant of sin you will be and the narrower the path you walk on will get. So simply because you are not convicted of something does not by itself mean that it is not sinful. And simply because you walk around condemned by something doesn't by itself mean that you have in fact sinned.

Nobody would have any concept of sin at all without the Law of God. You wouldn't know what Righteousness was without the Law. You wouldn't know what Judgment was unless God had laid down the punishment for the violation of His Law. So the Spirit brings conviction through the Word. He brings regeneration through exposure to and belief in the Word. And He brings new life through the Word and He brings Sanctification through the Word.

So how do you know for sure if the Spirit of God is speaking? What God says will be consistent with everything else God has said. If it is consistent with the Revelation of Jesus Christ and the Gospel in the Scripture and the Divine Truth about Righteousness and Holiness- then

it may well be true. What God the Holy Spirit says will not contradict what God the Holy Spirit says. So there is a Principle that we need to know:

You do not have to disobey one portion of Scripture to obey another portion. You do not have to reject one portion of Scripture to believe in another portion.

So the first test is the test of Christology. All genuine Holy Spirit Revelation will have a correct understanding about the Truth of Jesus Christ.

Now please look at **1Corinthians 12**. Now we are studying this section of Scripture on Sunday evenings and we have found out that the Corinthian church was a chaotic assembly of people. They had managed to import into church life just about everything that was bad from their pre-Christian days. They were so steeped in paganism that it found its way into the church. And perhaps the worst way was through the use of ecstatic experiences.

What occurred in the pagan mystery religions and in pagan cultic religions in the ancient Roman and Greek world was these kinds of esoteric things that were called *enthusiasmos* and *ekstasias* the Greek words from where we get our English word, "ecstasy" and "enthusiasm". And the concept was that when God came close- the people went into a euphoric emotional state that was said to elevate them closer to God.

And of course Jude and Paul taught that this was being spiritual at all- but was actually being "sensual"- which has to do with a complete absence of the Spirit. So the irony of these mystery religions was that the people who laid claim to being the most spiritual people on earth were actually the most Spirit *devoid* people on earth and were deceived into thinking that sensuality was the height of spirituality when in fact they were completely dominated by their carnal flesh.

And the proof of that is that in these pagan groups were found the most awful kinds of sexual and immoral deviancies that the human mind could comprehend such as sickening gluttony and the combination of drunkenness and sexual orgies- including homosexual activities conducted with temple priests.

These people literally got themselves worked up state of physical and emotional euphoria through the fast repetitious playing of music and chanting in unintelligible guttural languages and would dance

around and swoon and faint- all the while believing that somehow in this kind of condition they could commune with God. And so they were literally operating in a state of emotional intoxication through these kinds of ecstatic and esoteric mystical experiences.

And because the people of Corinth were all steeped on these things- when Christianity came to them- they brought these pagan practices into the Church and synchronized them with true Biblical and true spiritual aspects until they became totally confused.

And the place they found to attach them was in the exercise of genuine spiritual gifts. The Holy Spirit had given to the church certain spiritual gifts or abilities for people to minister to each other. But these Corinthians had perverted that wonderful operation of God the Holy Spirit by bringing into the category of spiritual gifts these pagan esoteric experiences.

And they were so bizarre that in **1Corinthians 12:1&2**- the Apostle Paul writes this,

1 Now concerning spiritual *gifts*, brethren, I do not want you to be unaware.

2 You know that when you were pagans, *you were* led astray to the mute idols, however you were led.

And this is a technical term describing their ekstasias or their ecstasies,

... to the mute idols however you were led.

... in other words- they went whichever way the dumb idol took them; whichever way the demon took them that impersonated the dumb idol. So these people were in demonic religion and they abandoned themselves to those things and they just flipped out and let demons take them anywhere they wanted to take them and they honestly thought this was how they could commune with God.

And that's exactly what they brought into the church in the name of speaking in tongues, in the name of communing with God, in the name of some ecstatic union with God they were doing these very things that came out of paganism. And so in verse 3 Paul showed how severe it was when he said.

1Corinthians 12:3

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.

... what? What was he saying here? "No one by the Spirit of God says Jesus is accursed." What's he saying? This Church had people literally standing up- cursing Jesus. And Paul said that is not by the Spirit of God. But these people were allowing for it because it was supposedly a supernatural manifestation. Somebody saying Jesus is anathema in a church? No one saying that would be led by the Spirit of God. And on the other hand, look at the latter part of verse 3,

... and no one can say, "Jesus is Lord," except by the Holy Spirit.

... and that is a very important statement. No one will ever be able to honestly confess Jesus as "Lord" except by the Sovereign Work of the Holy Spirit. And so I say again, you can't get to God except through Jesus and you can't get to Jesus Christ except through the Holy Spirit. And it's not the Holy Spirit in a vacuum- absent the Word- it's the Holy Spirit working internally from the hearing of the external Word which the Spirit has Authored. And this is absolutely foundational.

A full and true confession of Jesus Christ as Lord is only possible by the Sovereign Work of the Holy Spirit through exposure to the written Revelation of the external Scriptures- which He Authored and accompanied by the internal Work by which He regenerates, illuminates and sanctifies. Now go back to **Luke 12:10**:

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.

Now this verse has been misused, misapplied, and misrepresented probably more than any other verse in the Bible. And yet it is very serious- so we need to know what it means. So what does it mean to blaspheme the Holy Spirit? Some people think it means to deny or to reject anything that anybody does or says that they attribute to the

Holy Spirit. And that puts instant credibility on whatever they do or say because it strikes fear into the heart of God-fearing people.

And the worst and the most bizarre and the most destructive activities have been carried out with little or no resistance due to the fact that anyone who honestly loves Jesus and wants to serve the Lord does not want to blaspheme the Holy Spirit. And so out of fear that they might do that- great sins and excesses and abuses have been carried out on people- all in the name of the Holy Spirit.

So somebody's tongues, or somebody's encounter with God, or somebody's revelation, or somebody's word of wisdom, or somebody's word of knowledge, or somebody's claim that the Lord led him to do this, or led him to do that or that God spoke this or that to them- all of that is carried out all the time and when honest Christians use the very tests that God the Holy Spirit put into the Bible to see if those things are from God or not- this verse is thrown in their faces in order to shut them down.

So right off jump street- let me say that this verse has absolutely nothing to do with that at all. That use of blasphemy has nothing to do with the context of this passage or its meaning. So let's find out what it does mean. Verse 10 begins with:

And everyone who speaks a word against the Son of Man, it will be forgiven him...

... now think about this. How can you be forgiven of that? Isn't that pretty bad? But the reality is that there wouldn't be any Christians if you couldn't be forgiven of speaking against Jesus. Do you understand that every person before they're converted is a blasphemer? So what does it mean to blaspheme? It means to reject or to deny Jesus Christ. It means to say or think or act against Jesus Christ. And every single human being on earth is guilty of that. So either the one who speaks against Jesus can be forgiven or else nobody gets saved.

And when the Holy Spirit comes- He convicts the world of sin and righteousness and judgment, of sin because they believe not on Me. So that is the blasphemy. And every sinner is a blasphemer of Christ. Before I was saved, I was. Before you were saved, you were. That is one of the things that we were saved from- the Wrath of God against our blasphemy.

Mark 3:28

"Truly I say to you, all sins shall be forgiven the sons of men, and whatever blasphemies they utter;

... so you can blaspheme God Himself and God will forgive it. You blasphemed God every time you broke His Law. You blasphemed God every time you denied the Sovereignty of God in your life. You blasphemed God every time you argued with God or complained about what God did or used your own logic instead of trusting in what God said.

You blasphemed Jesus Christ when you didn't acknowledge Him as Lord and Savior. And you have been forgiven of that. In **Matthew 12:31a** Jesus said,

Therefore I say to you, any sin and blasphemy shall be forgiven people...

... so the first thing we have to understand is that if God doesn't forgive blasphemy- then nobody is ever going to get saved because all sin is blasphemy. So that is what Salvation does- it forgives the sinner's blasphemy. And that is true of every human who has repented and believed. We've all repented of our blasphemy and been forgiven of it. So right off the bat we need to understand that blasphemy is not some unique extraordinary evil or some isolated attitude or act or expression that only a few people engage in. It's the way of all the human race. It's blasphemy to break God's Law. It's blasphemy to ignore God. It's blasphemy to reject Christ. And everyone who has ever been saved has been forgiven of blasphemy. So blasphemy is forgiven. Now look back to the last part of

... now why is that? Isn't God the Father as Holy as God the Holy Spirit? Isn't Jesus as Holy as the Father and the Spirit? Aren't they all one? Yes. So why can you blaspheme God the Father and God the Son and be forgiven and yet not be forgiven if you blaspheme God the Spirit? Is God the Holy Spirit more sacred than the Father or the Son? No.

All this means is that God the Holy Spirit is the Revealer of Truth and Salvation through Jesus Christ. So if you speak evil against the Truth- or if you reject the Truth that God the Holy Spirit has Authored-

then you can't be saved because there's no Salvation other than by hearing and believing the Gospel.

Now there is a lot to say about this subject and in order to do this justice- I want to devote an entire sermon to it- so I'll stop right here and pick back up, Lord willing, next week about what blasphemy against the Holy Spirit is and is not.

Amen. Let's pray.