



NOTES FOR FURTHER STUDY

Supplemental Texts

Ex. 4:10-12; Due. 32:39; 1 Sam. 2:1-10; 14:45; 2 Sam. 14:11; 1 Kings 1:52; 2 Kings 5:7; Pss. 34:8-14; 111:10; 115:11; Dan. 7:13-14; Mark 3:20-33; 8:38; 13:9-11; Matt. 10:16-20, 26-33; 12:11-12, 24-37; Luke 15:8-10; 21:12-18; John 15:13-17; Acts 4:5-20; 2 Tim. 2:11-13; Heb. 10:31; James 2:23; 1 John 5:16-17; Rev. 3:5: 20:11-15

Study Summary

After Jesus warns His disciples about the hypocrisy of the Pharisees, He takes a moment to warn them about the persecution they will face. Just as He has faced opposition from opponents like the Pharisees and teachers of the law, so too will His disciples. Jesus encourages His disciples to remain faithful in the midst of persecution, declaring that the Father cares for them and the Spirit will give them what they need to glorify the Father, Son, and Spirit even in the most difficult situations.

Historical & Theological Background

Godly Fear: Godly fear is giving God the proper awe and wonder that He is due in a way that affects how one orders and lives their life. "This kind of fear is continually regarded in the Bible as a necessary ingredient in right living. It is an attitude compounded of a recognition of the greatness and the righteousness of God on the one hand and our readiness to sin on the other. Fear of this kind guards against presumption and must find its place in a right faith." It is different from other kinds of fears for it does not leave one in a state of anxiety and worry, but rather peace and wonder, for the One who alone is to be feared is also the One who loves us beyond comprehension. As C. S. Lewis says of the Lion from *The Chronicles of Narnia*: "He isn't safe. But he's good."

Hell: "Hell here is *Gehenna*, which is not to be confused with *Hades*, also translated 'hell' in the older versions. *Hades* is a general name for the place of departed spirits, whereas *Gehenna* carries the notion of punishment. The word derives from the Hebrew *gē Hinnōm*, 'the valley of Hinnom'. This was a valley adjacent to Jerusalem where in earlier days children had been offered in sacrifice to the god Molech (Lev. 18:21; 1 Kgs 11:7, etc.). Josiah ended all this (2 Kgs 23:10), but the valley was regarded as accursed (Jer. 7:31ff.; 19:6)." Hell "is the place of final punishment" where all God's enemies are sent after the final judgement that Christ will undertake at His second coming (Rev. 20:11-15).

The Sin: The two sins spoken of in 10 are referenced in Mark and Matthew as well. It is difficult to decipher exactly what these sins are, but it seems the first sin refers to a rejection of Jesus that in the end is not final—there is still an opportunity of repentance—while the second sin "refers to" a persistent "conscious and wicked rejection of the saving power and grace of God towards man." "Matthew and Mark put" the second sin "in connection with the Beelzebul controversy" (Luke 11:14-26) "and this helps us with the meaning. Then Jesus' opponents attributed His works of mercy to the devil. They called good evil. People in such a situation cannot repent and seek forgiveness: they lack a sense of sin; they reject God's competence to declare what is right. It is this continuing attitude that is the ultimate sin." "We must understand this, not of the uttering of any form of words, but of the set of the life." "This blasphemy is so serious because it concerns the whole person, not a few words spoken on any one occasion." Someone who persists in a lifelong rejection of the work God has accomplished in Jesus is not able to receive forgiveness because they have rejected the only means of salvation.

[Works referenced and cited: Howard Marshall, *The Gospel of Luke: A Commentary on the Greek Text*; Leon Morris, *Luke: An Introduction and Commentary*; Horst Robert Balz and Gerhard Schneider, *Evangelical Dictionary of the New Testament NIV Biblical Theology Study Bible*; GE.D.A. Carson]

DISCUSSION PRIMER

Take some time this week to read Luke 12:4-12 slowly and prayerfully. Ask yourself these questions: What do I fear? Am I resting in the loving care of God? Am I depending on the Spirit's power and guidance to represent Jesus and His Kingdom to the world around me?

TEXTUAL INVESTIGATION

LUKE 12:4-12

Big Idea: Rightly Placed Fear

Fallen Condition Focus: Fear and Rejection

- Who does Jesus tell the disciples to fear in 4-5? Why? (See 1 Sam. 2:1-10)
- What is godly fear and how is it different from other kinds of fear? (See Pss. 34:8-14, 111:10 & HTB)
- What is hell (5)? (See Rev. 20:11-15 & HTB)
- How does Jesus encourage His disciples in 6-7? Read 1 Sam. 14:15, 2 Sam. 14:11 and 1 Kings 1:52. What further meaning does this biblical context give to 7?
- What is the meaning of Jesus' warning in 8-9? How does it foreshadow what was to happen later in the ministry of the Church? (See 11 & Acts 4:5-20)
- Jesus speaks of two sins in 10, what are they? (See Luke 11:15, 1 John 5:16-17 & HTB)
- What promise does Jesus give in 12?

Gospel Connection: What word does Jesus use to address the disciple in 4? Read John 14:27, 15:13-19, and 16:33. From where does our assurance come from?

TEXTUAL INTERSECTION: How does the text intersect with our lives?

- How does the world continue to reject Jesus and persecution the Church today?
- Have you ever experienced persecution for your faith? If yes, share what that was like and how God provided for you in the midst of that trial.
- Do you ever struggle with fearing people rather than fearing God? What helps you put your fear in the right place?
- How does godly fear manifest itself in your life? What does it mean to find our assurance and comfort in God, yet fear Him as well?
- How might the world be tempting us to disown Jesus today? Give examples from your own life.
- What comfort do we have in the promise of Jesus in 12? (Consider Ex. 4:10-12 & Luke 21:12-18) Are you depending on the power and guidance of the Spirit?

REPLICABLE QUESTIONS

Read *Luke 12:4-12* and explore together what the passage reveals about:

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| 1) The character and purposes of God? | 4) Our identity in Christ? |
| 2) The fallen human condition? | 5) Our obedience to Christ? |
| 3) The gospel of Jesus Christ? | 6) Our relationship to others |

TEXTUAL APPLICATION: "So, what now?"

Have each participant identify a personal take-away in light of this study. Is there . . .

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| • a command to obey? | • a beauty to behold? | • a mission to fulfill? |
| • a promise to claim? | • a truth to believe? | • an example to follow? |
| • a sin to repent of? | • a service to render? | • a person to tell? |