

Luke 12

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Why is Jesus so obsessed with our eternal fate?

Chapter 12 and the first part of Chapter 13 is a lecture by Jesus including answering questions focusing on eternal life. I'll argue most of the Bible is in effect a manual on how God desires we live now! I like to argue the Bible is, "I'm God, you are not, accept it, and use your lives for My glory!" So why have a chapter-plus lecture discussing Jesus dying for our sins and the results of that? The truth is most people think being "good enough" is all we need to be saved! The unbiblical view is our good deeds outweigh our bad deeds! Getting those who trust in their works to be saved is always a challenge. Jesus "pounds the pulpit" that being good enough doesn't cut it! Of course we're not perfect, just perfectly forgiven. It requires accepting Jesus as God and Lord of our life! We're called to share that truth to be a witness for Him! He does not expect perfection, but I am positive works do matter in the sense we are not to waste the most valuable thing God gives us, our time!

Chapter 12 is a long one and summarizing it in a paragraph or two is a challenge. Let's see how I do at it: Jesus starts by condemning the Jewish religious leaders by saying in effect they think how they live is good enough to be saved. Jesus then tells us to fear God, not in the sense of losing our salvation, it is a reminder our works will be judged as a witness for Him. Then we get the important reminder if we'll confess Jesus is Lord and God, we are saved. In the times where we must take a stand for Jesus, we are not to worry in advance about what we'll say as God will guide us! Then Jesus tells a made-up story of a man who was so rich, he builds big storage facilities for himself not knowing he'll die that day. Jesus is not saying we can't plan for our future. If all one cares about is getting rich, it means we have wasted our lives! It leads to a lecture on not worrying about this life. I realize we all must deal with problems and often health issues. The point is worrying NEVER helps! I love the expression, "If we're going to worry, why pray and if we're going to pray, why worry?" Of course, life requires decisions and actions. Worrying never solves anything!

OK halfway through the chapter! By Verse 35 Jesus reminds us we always need to be prepared for His return. It does not mean ignoring sleep or our families. I remember hearing of a devout Christian when he was playing racquetball: He was asked, what would you do if Jesus returns in an hour? He said, "I'd finish my game!" Jesus wants us to use our lives to glorify Him, but we still can enjoy life as we use it as a witness for Him. Peter interrupts that issue to ask if it applies to all believers? Jesus in effect said, eternal punishment will be more severe for those who had knowledge of what God wants and rejects it! Jesus then said who God calls, He will demand more (being a witness for Him). Jesus also warns what He's saying will cause division as people want to prove themselves to God or simply ignore Him! Then we get an illustration that we can interpret the weather by being outside! He meant we can think about what a perfect God wants, and figuring out Jesus full payment for sin is necessary for salvation. Jesus finishes this section with an illustration about settling with our financial debts. The point is we need to admit we are sinners and require Him to redeem us.

OK, 59 versus in two paragraphs. I realize I missed lots of stuff. I know I'm preaching to the choir on the topic of salvation. The danger is we can easily think, "Hey God, aren't you impressed with me now for what I'm doing?" Therefore, it's important for all of us to reminder what God expects of us now to spend eternity with Him!

Let me give a few more comments on this chapter and hopefully give us a few things to consider about living the Christian life. Jesus begins by condemning Pharisees for being hypocrites. Keep in mind the Pharisees were considered the most devout Jewish people of that day. I'm sure they tried to practice all they taught. The issue of course is about trying to prove one's worth to God. Since nobody is perfect, I can see calling them hypocrites applies! The danger to us is thinking He is impressed by our works. To have a sense of gratitude for doing good works isn't the issue. He's preaching the danger of thinking we can earn points with God for doing such works!

We then get a quick message on fear of God versus fear of whatever happens in this life. Fearing God's a reminder that all of us will be judged. Believers won't be condemned for our sins, but we will have to give an account of how we lived as a witness for Him. That's why Proverbs begins with a reminder we are to fear God to be wise!

Next is a few words about being a witness for Jesus on how can we practically be assured we're saved? I would say it's simple, if we're willing to tell others we believe Jesus is God and died for every sin we ever committed (past, present and future), I'd argue we can't lose our salvation! Jesus then tells a made-up story of a wealthy man who increase his storage capacity due to having too much stuff. As I stated, this is not about saving for retirement. This is about only caring about our wealth as we don't know the date of our death.

Since Jesus is now scaring everyone half to death about not working hard enough since we never know when our life will end, it leads to a quick discussion about worrying. Does that mean we shouldn't have to earn money, and God will rain down food on us? No! Jesus' point is worrying what could happen is a waste of time! Worry takes years off our lives. Jesus states that God knows all things, and He knows we need to survive if that's His will for us! My favorite verse on worrying is Psalm 37:25! It essentially says we never see the righteous having to beg for food. God allows us to go through trials, but He will never forsake us! This also reminds me of the classic expression "we can take our treasure with us into the next life". We do it by "sending it to heaven ahead of us" by using our wealth to make a difference for Jesus!

In Verse 35 Jesus states to always be ready for His return. Of course we need sleep. The issue is we're always to have faith Jesus can return at any moment. Why is that? It's like knowing that people work a lot harder when the boss is standing over their shoulders! Living as if Jesus can return at any time, is a great way to keep us motivated. In Verse 41, Peter asks who does that principal apply to? Jesus gave a statement on being faithful. The issue is more than salvation, it's about what we do with our salvation! God wants us to use our lives for His glory as I state a lot! Jesus also adds a point about who is given a lot (responsibility as a believer, also means a lot will be required of that believer).

Three more points and I'll try to make it quick. The first is the fact belief in Jesus will cause division. I realize we know that, but it's a reminder to expect it! The second is about "interpreting the time"! He's using the weather as an illustration. Looking outside usually helps us judge the weather. Knowing that our time on earth is short and now is the time to be saved is key. Many people wrongly think, "I'll take care of that before I die", thinking they have many more years to live. That is an excuse to ignore God to live how they want. I realize we Christians know that, but Jesus is stating why we must commit now because no one knows how much time we have and it's a great argument to share.

Jesus final point of what is a long chapter is about "settling your debt before it's too late"! In effect, He is giving an altar call as only God can settle our debts. When I started this study, I mentioned the whole chapter and the first part of Chapter 13 is a lecture on getting right with God before it's too late. I know

my readers have already crossed that bridge. Think of these illustrations as teaching points we can use with people.

With that said, hope you like this study. I wrote a more detailed one some years back. If you want to read that, click on the link for the detailed study. It's still a joy to study this stuff and again I'm grateful for everyone who reads this.