SMITH FOR CHRIST

TEACHING THE WORD · WATCHING THE TIMES



DEEP DIVE

Luke

Chapter Twelve, Verses 1–59

Rich Toward God, Ready for the Master — leaven and sparrows, a fool with full barns, ravens and lilies, lamps lit at midnight, and a fire on the earth

NASB 1995 | VERSE BY VERSE | FOUR VOICES | WITH DIAGRAMS

With thousands crowding in, Jesus warns His friends against hypocrisy and fear, tells a man fighting over an inheritance about a rich fool, points to ravens and lilies, and then calls every slave to keep his lamp lit, because the Master is coming at an hour no one expects. Read through four teachers — **David Guzik**, **R.C. Sproul**, **C.H. Spurgeon** and **Matthew Henry** — with the Greek behind Luke's key words.

THE PASSAGE

Luke 12:1–59

fear · greed · worry · readiness · fire

THE METHOD

Verse by Verse

Color-coded by teacher

WHAT'S INSIDE

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Five movements from the crowd's crush to the road to the judge

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"For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also." — Luke 12:34

SECTION I · THE PASSAGE

Luke 12:1–59

Rich Toward God, Ready for the Master — Fear God, not men; trust the Father, not barns; and be found doing His will when He comes

† How to Read This Study

This study walks Luke 12 in 5 movements, in Luke's own order. Each movement opens with the full NASB 1995 text of those verses, marked with the Berean colors and shapes; then the Greek behind the key words; then the teachers, each in his own color — **David Guzik**, the pastor who walks the text verse by verse; **R.C. Sproul**, the theologian who presses every word for its doctrine; **C.H. Spurgeon**, the preacher who turns the doctrine into a call to the heart; and **Matthew Henry**, the Puritan commentator who gathers it into plain, practical counsel. The figures draw the passage so you can see where Luke is going. Read the Scripture first; then let each voice add its angle.

DAVID GUZIK · Enduring Word — R.C. SPROUL · Ligonier · St. Andrew's
C.H. SPURGEON · Metropolitan Tabernacle — MATTHEW HENRY · Commentary on the Whole Bible

HOW THIS STUDY IS MARKED — God — His character & actions; Command / instruction; Key repeated word; Sin / warning; Promise / blessing; Time / place / contrast

KEY VERSE · LUKE 12:32

"Do not be afraid, little flock, for your Father has chosen gladly to give you the kingdom."

† Before the Passage

Chapter 11 ended with the scribes and Pharisees "very hostile," "plotting against Him to catch Him in something He might say" (11:53–54). Chapter 12 opens "Under these circumstances" — the hostility outside the house and a crowd of "so many thousands" pressing in "that they were stepping on one another" (12:1). Jesus turns "to His disciples first of all," and the first word is the lesson of the Pharisee's table: beware the leaven of hypocrisy.

The chapter is still on the road to Jerusalem (9:51), and almost all of it is teaching. Much of it has parallels scattered through Matthew (chapters 6, 10, 24), but Luke gathers it around a few hard questions: whom do you fear, what do you own, what do you worry about, and what will the Master find you doing? The rich fool (vv. 16–21) and the master who serves his slaves (v. 37) are found only in Luke.

The world behind the chapter is a farming and household world. Sparrows were the cheapest meat in the market; ravens were unclean birds under the Law (Leviticus 11:15); wild flowers and dry grass were fuel for

clay ovens. A wealthy household had slaves and a steward who handed out rations. A wedding feast could run late into the night, and the night was divided into watches. A debtor could be dragged before a magistrate and thrown into prison until he paid the last small coin.

Behind it all is Jesus' own road. He speaks of "a baptism to undergo" and how "distressed" He is until it is accomplished (v. 50) — the cross He set His face toward in 9:51. John the Baptist had said the Coming One would baptize "with the Holy Spirit and fire" (3:16). Here Jesus says He has come "to cast fire upon the earth" (v. 49). The chapter ends with a call to read the present time and settle with God while still on the way.

I
MOVEMENT

LUKE 12:1–12

Fear Him, Not Them

Leaven, rooftops, sparrows, and the Spirit who gives words in the hour

[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."*

LUKE 12:1–12

"For God will bring every act to judgment, everything which is hidden, whether it is good or evil."

ECCLESIASTES 12:14

Ὑπόκρισις

HYPOKRISIS · "HYPOCRISY" · G5272

From the stage: a *hypokritēs* was an actor, one who answered from behind a mask. Jesus calls it the "leaven" (*zymē*, G2219) of the Pharisees — a small lump that works quietly through the whole batch. Verse 2's answer to a mask is unmasking: "nothing covered up that will not be revealed." The same root returns at the end of the chapter: "You hypocrites!" (v. 56) — the crowd that can read the sky but not the hour.

γέεννα

GEENNA · "HELL" · G1067

From the Hebrew *Ge Hinnom*, the Valley of Hinnom south of Jerusalem, where children had been burned to Molech (Jeremiah 7:31) and which became a picture of final judgment. Almost every New Testament use is from Jesus' own mouth; this is the only one in Luke. He uses it to comfort as well as warn: the One who has authority to cast into Gehenna is the same God who does not forget a sparrow (vv. 5–7).

ὁμολογέω

HOMOLOGEŌ · "CONFESS" · G3670

Literally "to say the same thing" — to agree out loud, to acknowledge publicly. Whoever confesses Christ before men, "the Son of Man will confess him also before the angels of God" (v. 8): the same verb for both, our confession and His. Its opposite is *arneomai* (G720), "deny" (v. 9) — the word Luke will use of Peter in the courtyard (22:57).

DAVID GUZIK · Enduring Word

Guzik notes how hypocrisy spreads: "Hypocrisy is like leaven in the sense that it only takes a little bit of it to affect a great mass." And it cannot last: "We can only be hypocrites before men, but never before God." Since God holds the final power over life and eternity, disciples need not fear their persecutors — Guzik retells, from Ryle, the martyrdom of Rowland Taylor. On verse 10 he separates a moment of weakness, like Peter's denial, from settled rejection of the Spirit's witness to Jesus: "It never has forgiveness because it never wants forgiveness God's way."

R.C. SPROUL · Ligonier · St. Andrew's

Sproul preached these verses in two sermons. In "Fearing God" (15 December 2013) hypocrisy is leaven — "It will spread like a cancer" — and every hidden thing will come out at the judgment, where "perfect justice will prevail." He provokes on purpose: "I cannot find anywhere in the Bible that God loves you or me unconditionally," because "The kingdom of God is ruled by a just and holy Creator, for whom we should have fear." Yet the same text says, "Do not fear, for you matter to your Father." In "The Unforgivable Sin" (29 December 2013) he concludes: "I do not believe any Christian ever does or ever will commit the unforgiven sin."

C.H. SPURGEON · Metropolitan Tabernacle

Spurgeon's exposition defines the sin plainly: "Hypocrisy leads a man to pretend to be what he is not." He calls it both iniquity and a kind of madness. The God to be feared is also the God who counts sparrows: "So particular is the care of divine providence." He presses verse 8 on the silent: "Mind what you are at, then, you who never confess Christ before men." On the unpardonable sin he thinks it a mercy that we are not told exactly what it is, like a warning sign on an estate whose vagueness keeps people well away from the danger.

MATTHEW HENRY · Commentary on the Whole Bible

Henry calls hypocrisy the Pharisees' characteristic sin — "It is the sin they are most of them found in" — and promises its end: "The day is coming when hypocrites will be stripped of their fig-leaves." The cure for fear is a greater fear: "God is to be feared more than the most powerful men," and with it a greater comfort: "Providence takes cognizance of the meanest creatures, even of the sparrows." "Those whom Christ owns for his friends need not be afraid of any enemies." Of those who deny Him, "Christ will not know them, will not own them, will not show them any favour."

II
MOVEMENT

LUKE 12:13–21

Rich Toward God

A quarrel over an inheritance and a farmer who planned for everything but his soul

13 *Someone in the crowd said to Him, "Teacher, tell my brother to divide the family inheritance with me."* 14 *But He said to him, "Man, who appointed Me a judge or arbitrator over you?"* 15 *Then He said to them, "Beware, and be on your guard against every form of greed; for not even when one has an abundance does his life consist of his possessions."* 16 *And He told them a parable, saying, "The land of a rich man was very productive.* 17 *"And he began reasoning to himself, saying, 'What shall I do, since I have no place to store my crops?'* 18 *"Then he said, 'This is what I will do: I will tear down my barns and build larger ones, and there I will store all my grain and my goods.* 19 *'And I will say to my soul, "Soul, you have many goods laid up for many years to come; take your ease, eat, drink and be merry."'* 20 *"But God said to him, 'You fool! This very night your soul is required of you; and now who will own what you have prepared?'* 21 *"So is the man who stores up treasure for himself, and is not rich toward God."*

LUKE 12:13–21

FIGURE · THE RICH FOOL TALKS TO HIMSELF



Count the words in red: the rich man says "I" six times and "my" five times and never mentions God — then God speaks once, and the "many years" become "this very night."

πλεονεξία

PLEONEXIA · "GREED" · G4124

From *pleon*, more, and *echō*, to have: the itch to have more. The KJV says "covetousness." Jesus warns against "every form" of it (v. 15) — it wears many masks, including a fair-sounding request for justice in a family estate. Paul calls it "idolatry" (Colossians 3:5). The cure in verse 15 is a definition: life does not "consist" of possessions, even when there is an abundance.

ἄφρων · ἀπαιτοῦσιν

APHRŌN · APAITOUSIN · "FOOL" · "REQUIRED" · G878, G523

Aphrōn is "mindless," *a-* plus *phrēn*, mind: a man who has not thought. Psalm 14:1's fool says there is no God; this one simply leaves Him out of his plans. God's sentence is literally "this night they are demanding your soul from you" — *apaiteō*, to demand back what was lent, the verb of Luke 6:30. His soul was never his to keep; it was on loan, and the note came due.

DAVID GUZIK · Enduring Word

Guzik sees greed behind the man's request: "We often mask our covetousness by claiming we are on a righteous crusade." Jesus refuses to be made the family judge and goes to the heart. The rich farmer's trouble was not his harvest: "The man's problem was not in that he had treasure on earth; but that he was not rich toward God." He planned for every year but eternity, and his talk was all self: "Everything was about him, and nothing was about God." Guzik turns the usual fear around: "Most of us are afraid of poverty; we should be afraid of wealth."

R.C. SPROUL · Ligonier · St. Andrew's

Sproul's "The Parable of the Rich Fool" (12 January 2014) defines the sin: "Covetousness is the father of greed, of wanting more than you actually have." It is the opposite of contentment, a refusal to be grateful for God's goodness: "No one can honor God and have a heart full of gratitude to Him and be covetous." So "A Christian is a generous person." The rich man's motto is no accident: "'Eat, drink, and be merry' is the creed of the fool." Sproul insists the verdict is Christ's, not his: "This is not R.C. Sproul talking, this is Jesus." The man with full barns, before God, "is poverty-stricken."

C.H. SPURGEON · Metropolitan Tabernacle

Spurgeon's exposition treats the man in the crowd as an interruption to the Lord's preaching, and he draws a word for ministers pulled into every quarrel: "As a general rule, brother, you had better mind your own business." The rich farmer he reads as a selfish man who thought only of hoarding his harvest when he could have fed the poor, and he sees the irony of God's verdict on a man who saved for nobody but himself: "He was a fool to be laying up in store for others to scatter."

MATTHEW HENRY · Commentary on the Whole Bible

Henry opens with a warning for every reader: "Covetousness is a sin which we have need constantly to watch against." The rich man's question "What shall I do?" shows that "Disquieting care is the common fruit of an abundance of this world, and the common fault of those that have abundance." His language betrays him: "It was folly for him to call the fruits of the ground his fruits and his goods." He hoarded, planned without God and neglected his soul, and God named him rightly: "Carnal worldlings are fools, and the day is coming when God will call them by their own name."

III
MOVEMENT

LUKE 12:22–34

Seek His Kingdom

Ravens, lilies, a little flock, and treasure that does not wear out

22 *And He said to His disciples, "For this reason I say to you, do not worry about your life, as to what you will*
eat; nor for your body, as to what you will put on. 23 *"For life is more than food, and the body more than*
clothing. 24 *"Consider the ravens, for they neither sow nor reap; they have no storeroom nor barn, and yet God*
feeds them; how much more valuable you are than the birds! 25 *"And which of you by worrying can add a*
single hour to his life's span? 26 *"If then you cannot do even a very little thing, why do you worry about other*
matters? 27 *"Consider the lilies, how they grow: they neither toil nor spin; but I tell you, not even Solomon in all*
his glory clothed himself like one of these. 28 *"But if God so clothes the grass in the field, which is alive today and*
tomorrow is thrown into the furnace, how much more will He clothe you? You men of little faith! 29 *"And do not*
seek what you will eat and what you will drink, and do not keep worrying. 30 *"For all these things the nations*
of the world eagerly seek; but your Father knows that you need these things. 31 *"But seek His kingdom, and*
these things will be added to you. 32 *"Do not be afraid, little flock, for your Father has chosen gladly to give*

> *you the kingdom*. 33 *"Sell your possessions and give to charity; make yourselves money belts which do not wear out, an unfailing treasure in heaven, where no thief comes near nor moth destroys.* 34 *"For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also*.
>
> LUKE 12:22–34

FIGURE · TWO "HOW MUCH MORE" ARGUMENTS

TWO "HOW MUCH MORE" ARGUMENTS · LUKE 12:22–34

CONSIDER THE RAVENS · v24	CONSIDER THE LILIES · vv27–28
they neither sow nor reap; no storeroom nor barn	they neither toil nor spin; grass alive today, burned tomorrow
"and yet God feeds them"	**"if God so clothes the grass"**
"how much more valuable you are than the birds!"	"how much more will He clothe you?"

worry cannot add a single hour (v25) · the nations seek these things; your Father knows (v30)

DO NOT	SEEK	RECEIVE	GIVE
keep worrying v29	His kingdom v31	the kingdom, gladly given, little flock v32	treasure in heaven; the heart follows vv33–34

Read each column down from the creature to the Creator, then across the bottom: stop worrying, seek His kingdom, receive it as a gift, and put your treasure where your heart should be.

μετεωρίζομαι

METEŌRIZOMAI · "KEEP WORRYING" · G3349

Found only here (v. 29). Literally "to be lifted up into the air, held in suspense" — our word "meteor" comes from the same root. A mind suspended between hope and dread, never landing; the KJV says "of doubtful mind." The ordinary word for worry in verses 22, 25 and 26 is *merimnaō* (G3309), to be pulled in different directions. Jesus answers both with a Father who "knows that you need these things" (v. 30).

μικρὸν ποίμνιον · εὐδόκησεν

POIMNION · EUDOKĒSEN · "FLOCK" · "CHOSEN GLADLY" · G4168, G2106

Poimnion, a flock, is used only five times in the New Testament — here and of the church in Acts 20:28–29 and 1 Peter 5:2–3. "Little flock" is tender, not small-minded. *Eudokeō* means to be well pleased, to delight in: "your Father has chosen gladly" (KJV "it is your Father's good pleasure"). It is the verb the Father spoke over Jesus at His baptism: "in You I am well-pleased" (3:22). The Father gives the kingdom with the same delight.

DAVID GUZIK · Enduring Word

Guzik pairs the two sins of this chapter: "Greed can never get enough, worry is afraid it will never have enough – neither have their eyes on Jesus." The ravens teach trust, not laziness: "Birds don't just sit with open mouths, expecting God to fill them." And worry is useless: "Worry accomplishes nothing; we can add nothing to our lives by worrying." The cure is to seek the kingdom, and the little flock is safe: "Better a little flock with the Good Shepherd than a big flock with a hireling." Verse 34 is not advice: "it is a simple fact."

R.C. SPROUL · Ligonier · St. Andrew's

Sproul's "The End of Anxiety" (26 January 2014) separates two things English blurs: "Eagerness is related to joy and anxiety is related to fear." The command not to fear rests on Christ's presence — Psalm 23 and the promise "I am with you always." The ravens and lilies do not excuse idleness; we work without paralyzing fear, because "Worry all you want; you will not add an hour to your life." Seeking the kingdom is the main business of the Christian life: "Seeking the kingdom of God is the activity of the converted person." His counsel on verse 34: "Put your heart and your treasure with the kingdom of God."

C.H. SPURGEON · Metropolitan Tabernacle

Spurgeon's exposition gives two short rules: "The best cure for the cares of this life is to care much to please God," and "Much care argues little faith." On giving: "Put some of your estate where it cannot be lost." His sermon "Little but Lovely" (No. 3549) on verse 32 sees a little flock and a great Shepherd — "Few in number though they were, he calls them a flock" — and comforts weak believers: "A drop of water is as much water as the whole volume of water in the sea." "Doubting, like toothache, is more distracting than dangerous," for "Your Father's good pleasure will not be frustrated."

MATTHEW HENRY · Commentary on the Whole Bible

Henry traces worry to its root: "Our inordinate cares are owing to the weakness of our faith." The lilies make no preparation for their own clothing, "they toil not, they spin not," and God dresses them. His rule of life: "Mind the affairs of your souls with diligence and care, and then trust God with all your other affairs." The church is small and weak — "Christ's flock in this world is a little flock; his sheep are but few and feeble" — but the kingdom is theirs, so "Sit loose to this world, and to all your possessions in it."

IV
MOVEMENT

LUKE 12:35–48

Be Ready

Lamps lit for the Master, a thief in the night, and a steward who must give account

35 "*Be dressed in readiness, and keep your lamps lit*. 36 "*Be like men who are waiting for their master when he returns from the wedding feast, so that they may immediately open the door to him when he comes and knocks.* 37 "*Blessed are those slaves whom the master will find on the alert when he comes; truly I say to you, that he will gird himself to serve, and have them recline at the table, and will come up and wait on them.* 38 "*Whether he comes in the second watch, or even in the third, and finds them so, blessed are those slaves.* 39 "*But be sure of this, that if the head of the house had known at what hour the thief was coming, he would not have allowed his house to be broken into.* 40 "*You too, be ready; for the Son of Man is coming at an hour that you do not expect*." 41 *Peter said, "Lord, are You addressing this parable to us, or to everyone else as well?"* 42 *And the Lord said,*

"Who then is the faithful and sensible steward, whom his master will put in charge of his servants, to give them their rations at the proper time? 43 "Blessed is that slave whom his master finds so doing when he comes. 44 "Truly I say to you that he will put him in charge of all his possessions. 45 "But if that slave says in his heart, 'My master will be a long time in coming,' and begins to beat the slaves, both men and women, and to eat and drink and get drunk; 46 the master of that slave will come on a day when he does not expect him and at an hour he does not know, and will cut him in pieces, and assign him a place with the unbelievers. 47 "And that slave who knew his master's will and did not get ready or act in accord with his will, will receive many lashes, 48 but the one who did not know it, and committed deeds worthy of a flogging, will receive but few. From everyone who has been given much, much will be required; and to whom they entrusted much, of him they will ask all the more.

LUKE 12:35–48

FIGURE · WHEN THE MASTER COMES



Each row pairs what the master finds with what follows; the outcome depends on readiness, faithfulness and how much the servant knew.

περιζώννυμι

PERIZŌNNYMI · "GIRD" · G4024

To gird around, to tie up the long robe with a belt so a man can run or work. Verse 35 says literally "let your loins be girded" (NASB "Be dressed in readiness"), the posture of Israel eating the Passover ready to leave (Exodus 12:11). Then the shock of verse 37: the master "will gird himself" — the same verb — and serve his slaves at table. The Lord who asks His servants to be dressed for work dresses Himself to wait on them (compare 22:27).

οἰκονόμος

OIKONOMOS · "STEWARD" · G3623

From *oikos*, house, and *nemō*, to manage: the household manager, often a trusted slave, who handed out the rations. He owned nothing he managed. Paul uses the word for apostles, "stewards of the mysteries of God" (1 Corinthians 4:1), and Peter for every believer, "good stewards of the manifold grace of God" (1 Peter 4:10). Peter asks whether the parable is for the Twelve (v. 41); Jesus answers with a steward — leaders first, but no servant is exempt.

DAVID GUZIK · Enduring Word

Guzik reads the passage as a call to live ready for Jesus' return. Like a thief, He gives no notice: "A thief never announces his coming; he comes at a time when you would not expect him." And there is no postponing it: "Ready or not, one day the master will come." The unfaithful steward shows what happens when expectation fades: "A poor steward lives without the expectation of his master's return, and it shows in several areas of life." Readiness is moral as well as watchful: "Jesus here clearly connected the readiness for His return to a life of love, spiritual focus, and self-control."

R.C. SPROUL · Ligonier · St. Andrew's

Sproul's "The Faithful Steward" (9 February 2014) starts with the servants waiting up with lamps burning, ready at any hour. Then he stops at verse 37 — the master serves the servants — and marvels: "What a master." We talk about our faithfulness to Christ and forget His faithfulness to us. A steward manages another man's goods: "The steward did not own the house," and "My money is His." The abusive steward is a professing believer who was never converted: "You cannot have saving faith and live like the unfaithful steward." "There is no neutrality with the Word of God."

C.H. SPURGEON · Metropolitan Tabernacle

Spurgeon's exposition calls verse 37, where the returning Lord serves His servants, "a wonderful passage." He reads the thief and the hour as double-edged: "This is a warning to Christ's own people; but it is still more a warning to those who do not know him." He refuses to soften the punishment of the unfaithful servant — "Truly, our Lord uses very strong words" — because the severity is meant for the hearers' good. He ends by urging ministers and members alike to weigh how much has been entrusted to them, and whether their service matches it.

MATTHEW HENRY · Commentary on the Whole Bible

Henry describes the church's posture: "Christ's servants are now in a state of expectation, looking for their Master's glorious appearing." The lamps are for lighting the master home, and the reward is astonishing: "Here is such an instance of honour done them as is scarcely to be found among men." He answers Peter's question with Mark 13:37 — "What I say unto you, I say unto all" — and adds that "Ministers must be both skilful and faithful." The stripes teach degrees of guilt: "Ignorance of our duty is an extenuation of sin," but "The knowledge of our duty is an aggravation of our sin."

V
MOVEMENT

LUKE 12:49–59

Fire, Division, and This Present Time

A baptism to undergo, a divided household, and a debt to settle on the way

49 *"△ I have come to cast fire upon the earth; and how I wish it were already kindled!* 50 *"But △ I have a baptism to undergo, and how distressed I am until it is accomplished!* 51 *"Do you suppose that I came to grant peace on earth? I tell you, no, but rather division;* 52 *for from now on five members in one household will be divided, three against two and two against three.* 53 *"They will be divided, father against son and son against father, mother against daughter and daughter against mother, mother-in-law against daughter-in-law and daughter-in-law against mother-in-law."* 54 *And He was also saying to the crowds, "When you see a cloud rising in the west, immediately you say, 'A shower is coming,' and so it turns out.* 55 *"And when you see a south wind blowing, you say, 'It will be a hot day,' and it turns out that way.* 56 *"You hypocrites! You know how to analyze the appearance of the earth and the sky, but ⚠ why do you not analyze this present time?* 57 *"And why do you not even on your own initiative judge what is right?* 58 *"For while you are going with your opponent to appear before the magistrate, on your way there make an effort to settle with him, so that he may not drag you before the judge, and the judge turn you over to the officer, and the officer throw you into prison.* 59 *"I say to you, you will not get out of there until you have paid the very last cent."*

LUKE 12:49–59

"For son treats father contemptuously, Daughter rises up against her mother, Daughter-in-law against her mother-in-law; A man's enemies are the men of his own household."

MICAH 7:6

βάπτισμα · συνέχομαι

BAPTISMA · SYNECHOMAI · "BAPTISM" · "DISTRESSED" · G908, G4912

Baptisma is an immersion. Jesus has already been baptized in the Jordan (3:21); this baptism is still ahead — the cross, where He would be plunged into suffering and wrath (compare Mark 10:38). *Synechō* means to hold together, to press in on every side; the KJV says "straitened." Paul uses it of being "hard-pressed" between two desires (Philippians 1:23). Jesus walks toward Jerusalem hemmed in by the cup He must drink.

διαμερισμός

DIAMERISMOS · "DIVISION" · G1267

Found only here (v. 51): a parting, a splitting apart, dissension. Matthew's parallel says "a sword" (10:34). Verse 53 echoes Micah 7:6, the prophet's picture of a family turned against itself in a faithless age. Jesus does not want families broken; He says that loyalty to Him will divide those who embrace Him from those who reject Him, even under one roof — "five members in one household … three against two and two against three" (v. 52).

καιρός · δοκιμάζω

KAIROS · DOKIMAZŌ · "TIME" · "ANALYZE" · G2540, G1381

Kairos is time as an opportunity or season, not clock time (*chronos*): the right moment. *Dokimazō* is to test, examine, approve after testing, the word for assaying metal. The crowd could test the clouds from the west (the Mediterranean) and the south wind (the desert), but would not test "this present time" — the season of the Messiah standing in front of them. Verse 59's "cent" is the *lepton* (G3016), the smallest copper coin, the widow's mite of 21:2.

DAVID GUZIK · Enduring Word

Guzik sets out several readings of the fire — judgment, the power of the Holy Spirit, or the spread of the gospel after the cross — noting that "In Jewish thought fire is almost always the symbol of judgment." The baptism is the cross: "He wasn't sprinkled with suffering; He was immersed in agony." Family division is a real cost: "When you follow Jesus faithfully, there may very well be division for His sake." On the weather signs, "Jesus rebuked the people of His day because they did not discern this time." He lists signs that may point to Christ's return, adding, "None of these guarantees that the return of Jesus is soon," and urges settling with God now.

R.C. SPROUL · Ligonier · St. Andrew's

Sproul's "The Dividing Christ" (23 February 2014) admits the words jar modern ears, then takes them at face value. The baptism is the cross, where Jesus bore the Father's wrath: "This was real judgment." "This was real fire." He notes that Jesus, not the apostles, gives most of the New Testament's teaching on hell. Christ's coming forces a decision: "Christ divides between those who embrace and put their trust in Him, and those who ignore Him or reject Him." "Whether you are for or against Christ is the most critical standpoint you will have for eternity." So: "Do not wait until the last judgment to come to Him."

MATTHEW HENRY · Commentary on the Whole Bible

Henry says the division is not Christ's fault: "Christ is not the Author of it, as it is the sin of the incendiaries, the persecutors," though "the preaching of the gospel will give occasion for discord among the nearest relations." So "let not the disciples of Christ promise themselves peace upon earth." The crowd's blindness is everyone's danger: "It is the folly and misery of man that he knows not his time." The magistrate of verse 58 is Christ, "to whom all judgment is committed," and the time to settle is now: "Now is the accepted time, now or never."

VI THEME

CROSS-REFERENCES

The Passage in the Whole Bible

From the Shepherd's psalm to the judgment seat of Christ

> *"The LORD is my shepherd, I shall not want."*
>
> PSALM 23:1

> *"Instruct those who are rich in this present world not to be conceited or to fix their hope on the uncertainty of riches, but on God, who richly supplies us with all things to enjoy."*
>
> 1 TIMOTHY 6:17

> *"Make sure that your character is free from the love of money, being content with what you have; for He Himself has said, "I WILL NEVER DESERT YOU, NOR WILL I EVER FORSAKE YOU,""*
>
> HEBREWS 13:5

> *"For even the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give His life a ransom for many."*
>
> MARK 10:45

> *"But Jesus said to them, "You do not know what you are asking. Are you able to drink the cup that I drink, or to be baptized with the baptism with which I am baptized?""*
>
> MARK 10:38

> *"For you yourselves know full well that the day of the Lord will come just like a thief in the night."*
>
> 1 THESSALONIANS 5:2

> *"For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ, so that each one may be recompensed for his deeds in the body, according to what he has done, whether good or bad."*
>
> 2 CORINTHIANS 5:10

R.C. SPROUL · Ligonier · St. Andrew's

Sproul grounds the chapter's "Do not fear" in the Shepherd's presence — Psalm 23 and Christ's promise, "I am with you always."

SECTION II · STUDY HELPS

At a Glance

Four voices, one chapter

Four teachers, one long chapter of teaching. Guzik walks it verse by verse and keeps the return of Christ in view; Sproul preaches it as hard doctrine — the fear of God, the unforgivable sin, the reality of hell — without losing the Father's care; Spurgeon's expositions and his sermon on the little flock comfort the weak; Henry turns every line into counsel. They differ on what the "fire" of verse 49 is and on how to speak of God's love, and they agree that no one can stand neutral before Christ.

THE MOVEMENT	GUZIK · the text	SPROUL · the doctrine	SPURGEON · the heart	HENRY · the counsel
I · Whom to fear	Hypocrisy spreads like leaven; the unforgivable sin never wants forgiveness God's way.	Fear a holy Judge; no true Christian commits the unforgivable sin.	Hypocrisy is pretending; providence counts sparrows; confess Christ.	Hypocrites lose their fig-leaves; Christ's friends need fear no enemy.
II · The rich fool	Greed hides behind a crusade; all about him, nothing about God.	Covetousness is ingratitude; eat, drink and be merry is the fool's creed.	Mind your own business; he laid up for others to scatter.	Not his fruits but God's; worldlings will be called by their name.
III · Ravens and lilies	Greed never has enough; worry fears it never will.	Eagerness is joy, anxiety is fear; seek the kingdom first.	Care much to please God; even a little faith is real faith.	Cares come from weak faith; sit loose to this world.
IV · Be ready	Ready or not, the master will come; readiness is love and self-control.	What a Master — He serves us; no neutrality with the Word.	A wonderful passage; our Lord uses very strong words.	Waiting for His appearing; knowledge aggravates sin.
V · Fire and the time	Immersed in agony; division may be the price; settle now.	Real fire, real judgment; Christ divides; do not wait.	— (no Spurgeon sermon on vv49–59 sourced here)	No peace promised on earth; now is the accepted time.

LUKE 12:1–59 · A COMPARATIVE READING

† Key Insights to Carry

- **A mask cannot survive the light.** Hypocrisy is an actor's word (*hypokrisis*). Guzik: "We can only be hypocrites before men, but never before God." Whatever is whispered will be proclaimed upon the housetops (v3). THE GREEK
- **The fear that ends all fears.** Fear the One who can cast into hell (v5) — the same God who forgets no sparrow and numbers every hair (vv6–7). Henry: "Those whom Christ owns for his friends need not be afraid of any enemies." HENRY
- **Worried about the unforgivable sin?** Sproul: "I do not believe any Christian ever does or ever will commit the unforgiven sin." Guzik: it is the sin that "never wants forgiveness God's way." SPROUL
- **Greed wears a halo.** The man asked for a fair share of an inheritance. Guzik: "We often mask our covetousness by claiming we are on a righteous crusade." GUZIK
- **Six I's, five my's, no God.** The rich man's monologue (vv17–19) never mentions God. His soul was on loan — *apaitousin*, "they are demanding it back" (v20). THE TEXT
- **Suspended in midair.** *Meteōrizomai* (v29), found only here, pictures a mind hanging between hope and dread. Spurgeon: "Much care argues little faith." THE GREEK

- **The Father gives the kingdom gladly.** "Chosen gladly" (v32) is *eudokeō*, the word the Father spoke over Jesus at His baptism (3:22). THE GREEK
- **The Master puts on the apron.** The servants gird themselves to wait (v35); the master girds himself to serve them (v37). Sproul: "What a Master." SPROUL
- **Much given, much required.** Knowledge raises accountability (vv47–48). Henry: "The knowledge of our duty is an aggravation of our sin." HENRY
- **Read the season.** They could read clouds and wind but not *kairos*, the hour of the Messiah (v56). Settle on the way, before the Judge (v58). THE TEXT

† Questions for the Table

1 **Where am I wearing a mask — saying one thing in public and another in the "inner rooms" — and what would it cost to take it off?**

Nothing covered up will not be revealed.

12:1–3

2 **Whose opinion do I fear most right now? How does Jesus' word about sparrows and numbered hairs change that fear?**

Fear Him; do not fear — you are more valuable than many sparrows.

12:4–7

3 **If God said "this very night" to me, what have I prepared, and whose would it be? Where am I rich toward myself and poor toward God?**

Everything was about him, and nothing was about God (Guzik).

12:16–21

4 **What do I worry about most, and what would it look like to "seek His kingdom" in that very area this week?**

Your Father knows that you need these things.

12:22–31

5 **Look at my bank statement and my calendar. Where is my treasure — and so where is my heart?**

The correlation … is a simple fact (Guzik).

12:33–34

6 **If the Master came tonight, what would He find me doing with what He has entrusted to me — my family, my money, my time, the men I serve?**

From everyone who has been given much, much will be required.

12:42–48

Luke 12 asks a man what he fears, what he owns, what keeps him up at night, and what he will be doing when the Master comes. Jesus answers with a Father who forgets no sparrow and gladly gives the kingdom, and a Master who will put on an apron and serve His ready servants. Fear Him, trust Him, give freely, keep your lamp lit — and settle with God while you are still on the way.

Teaching the Word. Watching the Times. — Smith For Christ

† Sources

Each teacher's section summarizes the pages below in our own words; short quotations are verbatim from them. Matthew Henry (1662–1714) completed his *Commentary* himself through the Gospels and Acts. Henry's Commentary and C.H. Spurgeon (1834–1892) are in the public domain; Guzik and Sproul are summarized — consult each author's own work.

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