



## The Gospel According to Luke Wk. 59 "How to Avoid Hypocrisy" By Pastor Jody May

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### Luke 12:1-7 ESV

#### Beware of the Leaven of the Pharisees

**12** In the meantime, when so many thousands of the people had gathered together that they were trampling one another, he began to say to his disciples first, "Beware of the leaven of the Pharisees, which is hypocrisy. <sup>2</sup> Nothing is covered up that will not be revealed, or hidden that will not be known. <sup>3</sup> Therefore whatever you have said in the dark shall be heard in the light, and what you have whispered in private rooms shall be proclaimed on the housetops.

#### Have No Fear

<sup>4</sup> "I tell you, my friends, do not fear those who kill the body, and after that have nothing more that they can do. <sup>5</sup> But I will warn you whom to fear: fear him who, after he has killed, has authority to cast into hell. Yes, I tell you, fear him! <sup>6</sup> Are not five sparrows sold for two pennies? And not one of them is forgotten before God. <sup>7</sup> Why, even the hairs of your head are all numbered. Fear not; you are of more value than many sparrows.

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### Introduction: How shall we avoid Hypocrisy?

As we catch up to Jesus at this point in the story, He has started making His way back down South towards Judea. We have come to the **intermission** in Luke's Gospel. He has left the North and it seems He has amassed quite the following since His lunch date at the Pharisees home. The text says it was a "*myriad*" an indescribable large number, in the Greek they didn't have a word big enough to describe the amount of people. It seems that since Jesus left that Pharisee's house that the news of this event spread. Perhaps, people started gathering to see the fight that was about to break out in the schoolyard. The tone between Jesus and the Pharisees just hit the pitch where Jesus had condemned them for their religious and idolatrous behavior, and we are told that they now are lying in wait to catch Him in His words to prosecute Him. This was no longer a debate, it was open hostility against each other and only one side was going to make it.



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It was in the midst of this scene that Jesus gives what seems like a personal message to His disciples all within ear shot of the masses. He finally states what His beef is with the Pharisees, He sums it up in one word, a word I didn't hit on yet because I wanted to wait until Jesus brought it up, but now it's a good time to talk about it.

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

**The Woes, the contamination of their spiritual eyes causing blindness, the thing that makes Jesus aggressive towards them is their hypocrisy...**

In the Greek it is the word *hypokrisis* - hü-po'-krē-sēs. The acting of a stage player. It's what the Greeks used to describe the actors in square that would pretend to be other people. The pharisees to Jesus were someone pretending to be what they were not. And these acts they were putting on were leading others into following them. They would pretend to know the ways of God, they would live them out, would claim that everyone was not able to do it, and therefore this earned them the special privilege amongst the oppressed.

Jesus was concerned because soon He would not be with His disciples and they would be the ones that would have to confront the religious superior people. The warning is to beware/ be mindful/ don't get taken off guard because just a little bit of what they have can ruin you. That's what leaven does, it permeates its' host, spreads through dough like a virus, and causes the bread to rise, to change at a cellular level.

### **1 Corinthians 15:33 ESV**

**Do not be deceived: "Bad company ruins good morals."**

The religion that the pharisees practiced would not just taint but could ruin what Jesus has been building up for His disciples. It is a picture that points back to Exodus. When the Jews celebrated Passover, they ate unleavened bread to symbolize the haste in which they left Egypt. The Gospel is the same way, you take it as it is, you don't add anything to it, and when the world wants to mess



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with it: to add extra religious practices, to add extra teachings, to add extra steps for Justification, to add **LEAVEN** you run as fast as you can! **The Gospel + anything you want to bring to the table is blasphemous**, because like RC said to me one time, **the Gospel IS God's story not mine**, it is His story of saving me not me making a way to get to Him, it is by God's Grace alone I and you are saved.

The hypocrisy of the Pharisees is that they claimed to be the only ones living for God proven by their over-hyped religious behavior, pledges, and routines while they broke the first 3 commandments loving themselves over loving God. Which was shown when they refused to be baptized by JB in the wilderness.

And this is where we need to wake up today and focus in a little harder today. We need to remember that Luke is writing this between 62-65 AD, after Paul, his best friend, had written the other Epistles. Letters that combat Gnosticism, Judaism, and Paganism in the churches. After Paul has confronted Peter publicly for trying to disengage from relationship with Gentile Christians in Antioch in fear from Jewish Christians. Luke wants us to hear from eyewitness accounts that the leaven of the Pharisees is alive and well and growing in the churches because people are prone to add religious practices to the Gospel for it helps them to stomach better the bitter part of the gospel. **You cannot make yourself better for God, Jesus has completed that work, and now you must believe it is enough.**

BUT in the middles of all of this God has provided for us the answer in the Gospel, there is a way to combat our instincts for self-idolatry. The answer comes in paying attention in how we view God.

**Answer: By honoring God**

**<sup>5</sup> But I will warn you whom to fear: fear him who, after he has killed, has authority to cast into hell. Yes, I tell you, fear him!**

That is a pretty **scary verse** isn't it? BUT it is also helpful. First, it tells you what drives the desire to pretend to be something you're not: the fear of men. Secondly, it doesn't deny the motivating behavior, but it explains who it should be directed to: God. **We practice hypocrisy BECAUSE we are afraid of what people**



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think of us. **BUT we are better served by fearing God, HONORING HIM, with that deserved respect.**

### Proverbs 9:10 ESV

The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom, And the knowledge of the Holy One is understanding.

Fearing/Honoring God is the knowledge we gain from scripture today to help us avoid the sin of Hypocrisy. Now let's learn why our God is deserving of this HONOR.

### 1. Because God REVEALS ALL TRUTH (that's what light does)

<sup>2</sup> Nothing is covered up that will not be revealed, or hidden that will not be known.

<sup>3</sup> Therefore whatever you have said in the dark shall be heard in the light, and what you have whispered in private rooms shall be proclaimed on the housetops.

The picture here is in those days the private rooms were in the middle of the house away from the outside walls, you talked in secret in there if you did not want to be heard. Instead, all our secret deeds are proclaimed from the top flat roof where you call to neighbors or look to see who is at the door. **This is more than just omniscience (all knowing) it is the fact that what is known will be revealed.** This is a principle of the Kingdom Jesus finds it necessary to repeat.

### Luke 8:17 ESV

For nothing is hidden that will not be made manifest, nor is anything secret that will not be known and come to **light**.

In this saying He quotes another one of his descendants, a man known to be wisest king in Israel's past, Solomon. A man that learned from his mistakes the truth about God where Jesus in perfection knew about God taking in this truth by faith.

### Ecclesiastes 12: 13-14 ESV



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The end of the matter; all has been heard. Fear God and keep his commandments, for this is the whole duty of man. <sup>14</sup> For God will bring **every deed** into **judgment**, with every **secret thing**, whether **good** or **evil**.

This is one of the most documented truths in scripture: God knows all and because of that He must judge all. Our God is never fooled by hypocrisy, Jesus knew the heart of the Pharisees, and He knows yours too.

### 1 Timothy 5:24-25 ESV

The **sins** of **some** people are **conspicuous**, going before them to **judgment**, but the sins of others appear **later**. <sup>25</sup> So also **good works** are **conspicuous**, and even those that are not **cannot remain hidden**.

This fundamental truth of the knowledge of God also brings peace to the believer's soul, for God knows a true good work, and will look past the work and will judge the intent of the heart. AND because God is just all works, good and bad, will not go unweighed, unaccounted for, unpunished for nor unrewarded., God knows all, and will judge the smallest and most hidden thing, we now then can **lay down the burden of being judges, condemning others and rewarding ourselves**, and let God handle all the verdicts.

### 1 Corinthians 4:5 ESV

Therefore **do not** pronounce **judgment** before time, before the Lord comes, who will bring to light the things now hidden in darkness and will disclose the purposes of the heart. Then **each one** will receive his **commendation** from God.

Let us not be worried about those that may escape their just dues because of hypocritical behavior but like Paul with Peter let us be more concerned bringing to bear the full weight of the Gospel to a matter. Speak the Gospel in truth and love to believers. Maybe we don't need to be so concerned with offending others, **IF** when we speak to people, they understand **we love them** and because of Christ we love His Truth more.

Ok, so to tackle the ease in which humans become hypocrites, pretending to be something we are not, let us remember the **best defense is a good offence**. Let



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us work at honoring our Father God, Because, 1<sup>st</sup> He's all knowing and will judge all that is done, and now here's the second reason why we should fear and honor Him:

### 2. Because God Sends HYPOCRITES to HELL.

**4** "I tell you, my friends, do not fear those who kill the body, and after that have nothing more that they can do. **5** But I will warn you whom to fear: fear him who, after he has killed, **has authority to cast into hell**. Yes, I tell you, fear him!

At first glance you may think that doesn't make much sense. If I go around in life not fearing those who can kill me wouldn't that get me killed? I mean, I stay clear of people like that, I hope you do too. But what it means is that **don't be afraid of those who the worst thing that they can do is end your life**. Like Paul's thought process in **2 Cor. 5:8 that if someone kills me, I am with God**. **Your control over me in this world ends with my life, that's a limited threat**. Look, if you decide to take my life, you are doing me a favor my struggle is over!

**BUT** the way **fear works in hypocrites** is that they base their whole way of life living in fear of man, they will portray the character/false identity the world wants so it can remain in its' favor. **The world's systems are controlled by Satan and his legions why would we be wanting to earn their approval to get things they promised when we are to live in the Kingdom of God?** BTW Satan is not king in Hell, he can't throw you in there, he'll be a punished in hell along with everyone else. If you are in here today and you don't know Jesus as your savior you are the victim, you are under the control of Satan, he is controlling your behavior with promises of worldly blessings that in the end lead to Hell.

You may also not really believe in Hell, you may think it is made up? This word in the Greek is different than Hades or Sheol, it is the Greek word for Hell. Meaning there is an actual destination for those that do not fear God and prefer to live as hypocrites. **The word here is *geena* ge'-en-nä; Gehenna comes from *ge* meaning "valley" and Hinnon which you would find today southwest of Jerusalem down off the plateau**. In the OT it was where the places of idolatry were set up to Baal and Molech and even some of Judah's wicked kings (Ahaz and Manasseh) would



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make sacrifices there. They dug a big hole there, filled it full of wood, lit it up, and when it got going real hot they would sacrifice their own children.

Jeremiah prophesied the destruction of this place, that God would come against it. Ultimately God pronounced judgment on His people and all religious practices were wiped out in Jerusalem. But before that the last good king Josiah, tore down all the high places of pagan worship and turned that valley into a garbage dump, where things were taken to be burned. It became known as Ghenna, a place of constant burning and brimstone, a word that you would use as a curse word. This is the word that the Jews began to use, that Jesus uses, to describe the place that is set aside for those that are far from God. It is a dark, unenjoyable place of eternal destruction where no work happens, life is wasted, there is no joy and all is consumed as waste.

Jesus is lovingly bringing us to this realization: the wages of sin are death and God judges all so there will be a price to pay upon his return.

### **Matthew 24:50-51 ESV**

The master of that servant will come on a day when he does not expect him and at an hour he does not know <sup>51</sup> and will cut him in pieces and put him with the **hypocrites**. In that place there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth.

You know the Gospel isn't always elegant, but it is still glorious! Warning labels on medicine bottles can distract from the cure that the medicine is offering you inside of them BUT they can save your life just as well as taking the medicine that is in them **by keeping you from doing something stupid and killing yourself**. The **Gospel is the same way, it is good news that comes with a warning**. Maybe the best thing we can do in our witnessing to our family and friends is **not sugar coat the Gospel**. There are churches full of people talking about how God loves them unconditionally and universally, accepting people without their admittance of sin and guilt. **That is a false doctrine taught by hypocrites. The truth is that Jesus went through a literal hell to bring us that love and that if we don't believe that fact, that He dies in our places, and by accepting that free gift we agree to live for Him now not ourselves, then we are doomed to go their ourselves.** In the



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end all has been recorded, the facts are revealed, and perfect justice is administered.

### Revelation 20:12-15 ESV

And the dead were judged by what was written in the books, according to what they had done. <sup>13</sup> And the sea gave up the dead who were in it, Death and Hades gave up the dead who were in them, and they were judged, each one of them, according to what they had done. <sup>14</sup> Then Death and Hades were thrown into the lake of fire. This is the second death, the lake of fire. <sup>15</sup> And if anyone's name was not found written in the book of life, he was thrown into the lake of fire.

Bottom line - we don't fear the world that at worst can take our life, we fear a God that has the power and the right to send us to Hell. AND here's the good news of the Gospel this morning, **Jesus incarnated in the flesh so He could warn you of this future, He lived the perfect life to provide you a way to escape**, don't ignore the offer, and don't try to pretend to be something you're not, honor the gift of the Father this morning and please heed the warning of Hell.

And if you are worrying about will God get it right, would He punish you unjustly or not reward you rightly for what you have done here is the third way we honor/fear God to fight hypocrisy:

### 3. Because Nothing ESCAPES God's EYES.

<sup>6</sup> Are not five sparrows sold for two pennies? And not one of them is forgotten before God. <sup>7</sup> Why, even the hairs of your head are all numbered. Fear not; you are of more value than many sparrows.

God wants us to know that after these severe warnings, that for His people, there is not this desire of God to see His children shivering in a corner frightened to live life in fear of getting things wrong. God knows and so should you, that **avoiding life gets you as much condemned as living a life of pure evil, both rob glory from God**. God wants His children to embrace this fact. That you are of value to Him, that He knows all things about your life, and put your trust in Him for this Salvation that saves you from Hell.



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Sparrows were a bird you could buy in Bible days. It was food for the poor, like picking up a couple of chicken wings from KFC for 2 bucks, my generation called it console change food. Jesus reminds us that the cheapest of animals is known by God and even the number of hairs on your head, which none will perish unless He wills it, not one sparrow will be consumed unless He oks it, and nothing will happen to you without His knowledge. If even the smallest of all God's creatures are under the careful gaze of God, then know that God's people cannot escape His gaze and can receive help in time of need and even in time of temptation when we want to act like hypocrites.

As we look to the beginning of Advent next week, I want to draw our attention to the last prophet in the OT, to one of the last things he says. **God's desire is not to send His people to Hell but to save them from it.** Malachi gave the same warning for the people that were waiting for Jesus back then as we have heard today.

### Malachi 3:16-17 ESV

Then those who feared the Lord spoke with one another. The Lord paid attention and **heard them**, and a book of **remembrance** was written before him of those who feared the Lord and esteemed his name. <sup>17</sup> "They shall be mine, says the Lord of hosts, in the day when I make up my treasure possession, and I will spare them as a man spares his son who serves him.

Let us endeavor to fight our own hypocrisy and remember to honor our Father God today because all things will be revealed and declared, all hypocrites will be sent to hell, and because God knows all things, but He will spare those who fear Him rightly, Glory be to God.



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**PRAY**

**COMMUNION**

**BENEDICTION**

Go in the name of the Father, that is to be feared and honored above all other gods.

Go in the name of the Son, that displayed the wrath of God in Himself, so that believing in His work by faith we will be saved.

Go in the name and the power of the HS, that enables us to fear God rightly sealing our salvation and causing our names to be found in the book of life.