

Luke 12:1-12. Christ Warns His Disciples Against Hypocrisy

by Favell Lee Mortimer

The Lord warns his disciples against hypocrisy, promising to preserve them through faith and forgive their sins, except for blasphemy against the Holy Spirit.

Scripture: Matthew 10:19, Luke 12:1-2, Luke 12:4, 1 Peter 1:5

Topics: "Hypocrisy", "Judgment Day"

Description

Favell Lee Mortimer preaches about Jesus warning his disciples to beware of the hypocrisy of the Pharisees, emphasizing the danger of being tainted by this sin even for sincere followers of Christ. The Lord motivates his disciples to guard their hearts against hypocrisy by highlighting the coming judgment day when all hidden things will be revealed. Jesus foresees the trials his disciples will face, encouraging them not to fear those who can harm the body but to trust in him to keep them from hell and be with them in their time of need.

Transcript

We have lately read the Savior's warnings to the Scribes and Pharisees; now we find him addressing his own disciples. An immense multitude had been collected by his fame, and were eagerly listening to his wonderful words. Before them all, He plainly said to his disciples, "Beware of the leaven of the Pharisees, which is hypocrisy." This was not the first time he had uttered this warning. On one occasion his disciples had not understood what he meant by the leaven of the Pharisees; but now all understood, for he explained the metaphor, and declared that hypocrisy was the leaven to which he alluded.

And are the sincere disciples of Christ in danger of being infected by hypocrisy? Yes, even they may be tainted by this sin, though they cannot be given up to its power; for God will preserve them through faith in his name. Peter, and Barnabas, and several other Christians, were once guilty of an act that bordered on hypocrisy--it is called in Scripture "dissimulation." They dissembled with regard to eating with the Gentiles, and were publicly rebuked by the apostle Paul. (See Gal. 2.)

The Lord suggested a powerful motive to guard the heart against hypocrisy--the discoveries and exposures of the judgment-day. Then all that has been hid will be known. Not only will the mask be torn from the deliberate hypocrite, but the veil which has been cast over any part of the conduct of true believers will be lifted up.

The Lord foresaw all the temptations that would assail his beloved disciples, and he endeavored to strengthen them to meet their trials. One of their most powerful temptations would be (not to put on, as the Pharisees did, the appearance of religion, but) to conceal the love they really felt for their Lord. He knew that bloody crosses and burning flames would be used by their enemies to induce them to deny his name. How tenderly he addresses those who would be called to suffer for his sake! "I say unto you, my friends, Be not afraid of them that kill the body." He does not promise his disciples to preserve them from death--but he does promise to keep them from hell. He does not promise to prevent their being brought before rulers and magistrates; but he does promise to be with them in the painful hour, and to teach them by the Holy Spirit what to answer.

How little Peter thought that he should ever be tempted to deny the Son of man! How little he knew that there was comfort for him in these words--"Whoever shall speak a word against the Son of man, it shall be forgiven him!" He spoke against the Son of man when he said in the judgment-hall, "I know not the man;" and when he confirmed his words by oaths and curses. Our Lord knows not only what trials we shall suffer, but what sins we shall commit. It is most comforting to think that though all sin will be followed by sorrow, yet that there is only one sin that cannot be FORGIVEN. It is the blasphemy against the Holy Spirit, and consists (as we believe) in continuing to oppose the Gospel from deliberate malice, while, at the same time, the Holy Spirit has convinced the mind of its truth. This was the sin of the Pharisees. Though they were fully convinced that Christ was the Son of God, they were determined to hinder the people from believing in him.

Some of Christ's true disciples have been overcome by fear when placed before the bar of cruel judges, and have been tempted to deny their Lord. But how bitterly did Jerome of Prague, and our own Cranmer, bewail their sin; and how fully did the Lord testify his forgiveness by the support he afforded them when bound to the stake! No human heart can conceive the Lord's tenderness for his persecuted people. Could a father forsake a child who had fallen into trouble on his account? Can Jesus forsake his people when suffering for his sake?

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