

Luke 12:1-59 (NLT2) ¹ Meanwhile, the crowds grew until thousands were milling about and stepping on each other. Jesus turned first to his disciples and warned them, “Beware of the yeast of the Pharisees - their hypocrisy. ² The time is coming when everything that is covered up will be revealed, and all that is secret will be made known to all. ³ Whatever you have said in the dark will be heard in the light, and what you have whispered behind closed doors will be shouted from the housetops for all to hear! ⁴ “Dear friends, don’t be afraid of those who want to kill your body; they cannot do any more to you after that. ⁵ But I’ll tell you whom to fear. Fear God, who has the power to kill you and then throw you into hell. Yes, he’s the one to fear. ⁶ “What is the price of five sparrows—two copper coins? Yet God does not forget a single one of them. ⁷ And the very hairs on your head are all numbered. So don’t be afraid; you are more valuable to God than a whole flock of sparrows. ⁸ “I tell you the truth, everyone who acknowledges me publicly here on earth, the Son of Man will also acknowledge in the presence of God’s angels. ⁹ But anyone who denies me here on earth will be denied before God’s angels. ¹⁰ Anyone who speaks against the Son of Man can be forgiven, but anyone who blasphemes the Holy Spirit will not be forgiven. ¹¹ “And when you are brought to trial in the synagogues and before rulers and authorities, don’t worry about how to defend yourself or what to say, ¹² for the Holy Spirit will teach you at that time what needs to be said.” ¹³ Then someone called from the crowd, “Teacher, please tell my brother to divide our father’s estate with me.” ¹⁴ Jesus replied, “Friend, who made me a judge over you to decide such things as that?” ¹⁵ Then he said, “Beware! Guard against every kind of greed. Life is not measured by how much you own.” ¹⁶ Then he told them a story: “A rich man had a fertile farm that produced fine crops. ¹⁷ He said to himself, ‘What should I do? I don’t have room for all my crops.’ ¹⁸ Then he said, ‘I know! I’ll tear down my barns and build bigger ones. Then I’ll have room enough to store all my wheat and other goods. ¹⁹ And I’ll sit back and say to myself, “My friend, you have enough stored away for years to come. Now take it easy! Eat, drink, and be merry!” ²⁰ “But God said to him, ‘You fool! You will die this very night. Then who will get everything you worked for?’ ²¹ “Yes, a person is a fool to store up earthly wealth but not have a rich relationship with God.” ²² Then, turning to his disciples, Jesus said, “That is why I tell you not to worry about everyday life—whether you have enough food to eat or enough clothes to wear. ²³ For life is more than food, and your body more than clothing. ²⁴ Look at the ravens. They don’t plant or harvest or store food in barns, for God feeds them. And you are far more valuable to him than any birds! ²⁵ Can all your worries add a single moment to your life? ²⁶ And if worry can’t accomplish a little thing like that, what’s the use of worrying over bigger things? ²⁷ “Look at the lilies and how they grow. They don’t work or make their clothing, yet Solomon in all his glory was not dressed as beautifully as they are. ²⁸ And if God cares so wonderfully for flowers that are here today and thrown into the fire tomorrow, he will certainly care for you. Why do you have so little faith? ²⁹ “And don’t be concerned about what to eat and what to drink. Don’t worry about such things. ³⁰ These things dominate the thoughts of unbelievers all over the world, but your Father already knows your needs. ³¹ Seek the Kingdom of God above all else, and he will give you everything you need. ³² “So don’t be afraid, little flock. For it gives your Father great happiness to give you the Kingdom. ³³ “Sell your possessions and give to those in need. This will store up treasure for you in heaven! And the purses of heaven never get old or develop holes. Your treasure will be safe; no thief can steal it and no moth can destroy it. ³⁴ Wherever your treasure is, there the desires of your heart will also be. ³⁵ “Be dressed for service and keep your lamps burning, ³⁶ as though you were waiting for your master to return from the wedding feast. Then you will be ready to open the door and let him in the moment he arrives and knocks. ³⁷ The servants who are ready and waiting for his return will be rewarded. I tell you the truth, he himself will seat them, put on an apron, and serve them as they sit and eat! ³⁸ He may come in the middle of the night or just before dawn. But whenever he comes, he will reward the servants who are ready. ³⁹ “Understand this: If a homeowner knew

exactly when a burglar was coming, he would not permit his house to be broken into. ⁴⁰ You also must be ready all the time, for the Son of Man will come when least expected.” ⁴¹ Peter asked, “Lord, is that illustration just for us or for everyone?” ⁴² And the Lord replied, “A faithful, sensible servant is one to whom the master can give the responsibility of managing his other household servants and feeding them. ⁴³ If the master returns and finds that the servant has done a good job, there will be a reward. ⁴⁴ I tell you the truth, the master will put that servant in charge of all he owns. ⁴⁵ But what if the servant thinks, ‘My master won’t be back for a while,’ and he begins beating the other servants, partying, and getting drunk? ⁴⁶ The master will return unannounced and unexpected, and he will cut the servant in pieces and banish him with the unfaithful. ⁴⁷ “And a servant who knows what the master wants, but isn’t prepared and doesn’t carry out those instructions, will be severely punished. ⁴⁸ But someone who does not know, and then does something wrong, will be punished only lightly. When someone has been given much, much will be required in return; and when someone has been entrusted with much, even more will be required. ⁴⁹ “I have come to set the world on fire, and I wish it were already burning! ⁵⁰ I have a terrible baptism of suffering ahead of me, and I am under a heavy burden until it is accomplished. ⁵¹ Do you think I have come to bring peace to the earth? No, I have come to divide people against each other! ⁵² From now on families will be split apart, three in favor of me, and two against—or two in favor and three against. ⁵³ ‘Father will be divided against son and son against father; mother against daughter and daughter against mother; and mother-in-law against daughter-in-law and daughter-in-law against mother-in-law.’” ⁵⁴ Then Jesus turned to the crowd and said, “When you see clouds beginning to form in the west, you say, ‘Here comes a shower.’ And you are right. ⁵⁵ When the south wind blows, you say, ‘Today will be a scorcher.’ And it is. ⁵⁶ You fools! You know how to interpret the weather signs of the earth and sky, but you don’t know how to interpret the present times. ⁵⁷ “Why can’t you decide for yourselves what is right? ⁵⁸ When you are on the way to court with your accuser, try to settle the matter before you get there. Otherwise, your accuser may drag you before the judge, who will hand you over to an officer, who will throw you into prison. ⁵⁹ And if that happens, you won’t be free again until you have paid the very last penny.”

When God gives a nation over to its sin, more and more violence will occur. At the time of Noah, we read: **Genesis 6:5-6 (NLT2)** ⁵ The LORD observed the extent of human wickedness on the earth, and he saw that everything they thought or imagined was consistently and totally evil. ⁶ So the LORD was sorry he had ever made them and put them on the earth. It broke his heart. **Genesis 6:11 (NLT2)** ¹¹ Now God saw that the earth had become corrupt and was filled with violence.

This week’s news, filled with violence breaks our hearts. Please know God sees every bit of it and yes, God Himself is grieved. The day is coming when God will be grieved no more, and all violence and violent people will come to an end. The Bible tells us that on this earth it will be like the days of Noah, violence everywhere prompting Jesus to put a complete end to all of it.

Yes, one day God will no longer put up with any violence and He will come in fire, destroying the heavens and earth as we know it and righteousness will reign, God's righteousness forever and ever.

I find many helpful truths in Luke chapter 12 of how we are to live in the days that take place immediately before Jesus comes again. 1. The hypocrisy of Christian leaders will be revealed for many if not all to see. God exposes sin for God's purposes. God's act of love and grace of exposing sin is similar to what an x-ray does. A person can look so good on the outside, but an x-ray shows what is happening on the inside. X-rays can save a person's life if what is bad and unhealthy is found in a timely fashion. When a Christian's sin catches up to him or her, God is kind because He is giving the person a chance to repent, to plead to God for mercy for forgiveness of sins and then be completely forgiven. The Christian leader's sin may cause great pain for his or her followers, but God can use that pain for all of us to place our eyes solely on Jesus, who never sinned, and not base our faith on human beings and their behaviors. In the end times, great hypocrisies of leaders in the church will be found out. God's judgement begins with the church, a cleansing before He puts an end to all sin and violence at the second coming. Jesus warns us and tells us "To Beware." I know mailmen have learned the hard way to pay attention to the sign, "Beware of dog." Chapter 12 is filled with several bewares for us to pay attention to. *¹ Meanwhile, the crowds grew until thousands were milling about and stepping on each other. Jesus turned first to his disciples and warned them, "Beware of the yeast of the Pharisees - their hypocrisy. Just a little bit of yeast infects, impacts an entire bowl of dough for bread. Yeast stands for evil, the hypocrisy of the religious leaders at the time of Jesus and now for our time today.*

² The time is coming when everything that is covered up will be revealed, and all that is secret will be made known to all." Before Jesus comes again, as unrighteousness and evil are rampant, God will also be doing a cleansing job in the church. God will cause our hidden sins to

be exposed. God's cleansing can be compared to fire where the Holy Spirit purges us, burns the dross out of us so to speak. We will no longer be able to hide our sins, especially in the last days.

"³ Whatever you have said in the dark will be heard in the light, and what you have whispered behind closed doors will be shouted from the housetops for all to hear!" This is one of my least favorite verses in the Bible. I am a person of many words and at times too many words. When our sins are revealed and out in the open, what we have said privately, thinking no one was listening, will be available for all to hear. Jesus tells us one day we will give an account to every word spoken. That is not something I am looking forward to. I intentionally do not use social media. What some of our members have put on social media makes it back to me through the grapevine and it embarrasses me. As a Christian, you represent Jesus. Would Jesus be pleased with what you put out there on social media? I will say it this way. Beware of God's cleansing power when it comes to our speech, our words. I think even our motives will be revealed in order to be cleansed. What was said in the darkness will be brought out in the light. It is time to wash our mouths out with soap.

With the violence of this past week, I have read articles of who is getting blamed. One political party will blame the other because of their words spoken at a political rally or at a press conference. It is always someone else's fault. It is so easy to blame people you dislike for it gives you a sense of control, trying to stay sane in the insanity of it all. The Bible is so clear about the power of words. Words can give life and words can kill. On judgment day, each person will be held accountable for their own actions. No excuses will be accepted by God. There will be no blaming on that day. In my own opinion, I wish more emphasis would be put on mental health and Christian teachings than gun control. Get rid of all the guns and the mentally ill will find other ways to do the same amount of killing. It is best to use our words to help people, to encourage people, to speak truth in love, to find help for those who are about to do great acts

of harm. Parents, neighbors, relatives can often see these devastating traits but do not do anything about it. Yes, God will put an end to all violence and that we can be thankful for. The violence grieves God more than it grieves us.

“⁴⁰ You also must be ready all the time, for the Son of Man will come when least expected.” Jesus is giving us this teaching so we will always be prepared to meet our Maker. Jesus is telling us these atrocities will happen so beware and do not get caught unaware; do not get caught sleeping when God has so much for us to do and be for the sake of Jesus. As God cleanses us, He does so for His purposes. A cleansed vessel can be used all the more by Jesus. The more Jesus has of you, the greater His power will be working through you.

“⁴⁹ I have come to set the world on fire, and I wish it were already burning!” Jesus is completely holy and pure. There are no impurities in Jesus. The fire of God’s Presence burns away sin, reveals sin, exposes sin, and humbles us to repent and empowers us to live holy lives. That which burns away sin is also used of God to bring healing to the soul. God’s Holy Presence takes over more of your life and your witness of Jesus becomes stronger than ever.

“³¹ Seek the Kingdom of God above all else, and he will give you everything you need.” ³² *“So don’t be afraid, little flock.”* Put Jesus first above all else and then we never need to live in debilitating fear of anyone or anything. ⁴ *“Dear friends, don’t be afraid of those who want to kill your body; they cannot do any more to you after that.”* ⁵ *“But I’ll tell you whom to fear. Fear God, who has the power to kill you and then throw you into hell. Yes, he’s the one to fear.”* A proper, healthy Christian’s fear of God, putting God in His rightful place in your life, eases and eventually takes away our unhealthy fear of people and circumstances. Our lives are in God’s hands, and we will not be brought home to heaven until God’s appointed time.

“³⁵ Be dressed for service and keep your lamps burning, ³⁶ as though you were waiting for your master to return from the wedding feast. Then you will be ready to open the door and let him in the moment he arrives and knocks.” ³⁷ *The servants who are ready and waiting for his*

return will be rewarded. I tell you the truth, he himself will seat them, put on an apron, and serve them as they sit and eat! ³⁸ *He may come in the middle of the night or just before dawn. But whenever he comes, he will reward the servants who are ready.”* The second coming of Jesus will usher in a banquet, the best banquet of all, a wedding feast where we, the Bride of Christ, the church, will be fully united to Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. God will be our God and we will be His people. God Himself will serve the meal, will serve us. And yes, will we be ever thankful for all that God has done, is doing, and will do. God makes everyone and everything pure, holy, and right. We have so much to be thankful for. Eat away. Amen and Amen.