

The Gospel of Luke 12.13-59

“How then shall we live?”

10 & 14 December 2023

Structure of Luke's Gospel

- 1 Preface: Sponsor, method and purpose.
- 2 Birth narratives: Dawn of the promised new era.
- 3 John's mission: Introduce the Messiah.
- 4 Jesus' mission: Messiah's message and work.
- 5 **Journey: Messianic signs and teaching. Luke 9:51**
- 6 Jerusalem: Confront Israelite and Roman rulers.
- 7 Crucifixion: Last supper, arrest, trials, death.
- 8 Resurrection: Alive, appearance, and proofs.
- 9 Ascension: Gives Holy Spirit, mission to nations.

Jesus' advice for the public 12:13-21

Read Luke 12:12-15

Guard against all kinds of greed

- Humor: Who made me arbitrator?
- Inheritance: To distribute possessions per cultural or legal rules.
- Greed: To desire more, or to seek more than what one needs or possesses.
- Query: “A good man leaves an inheritance to his children's children” (Pro. 13:22).

Read Luke 12:16-17

What shall I do?

- Surplus: What are some biblical examples of abundant harvests?
- Query: What ought to be done with a surplus harvest?
- Danger: Low-priced food in local markets can destroy small farmers' livelihood!

Read Luke 12:18-21

Three 4th & 5th centuries manuscripts omit verse 21.

Later ones insert: “Who has ears, let him hear.”

You fool!

- Query: What was this man's main sin?
- Fool: aphron = “lack of prudence or good judgment, foolish, ignorant” (BDAG).
- Query: What is every rich man's main concern about his inheritors?
- Scripture: “What use is money in the hand of a fool, since he has no intention of acquiring wisdom?” (Pro. 17:16).

Jesus' advice for disciples 12:22-40

Read Luke 12:21-26

12: 22: Two ancient manuscripts omit "his." It is likely original.

On material wealth

- Jesus: Avoid becoming greedy.
- Greeks: Acquire needs and seek no more.
- Cynics: Own nothing.
- Essenes: Communal sharing.
- Paul: Be content with food and cover.
- Europeans: Conquer, exploit colonies.
- Asians: Exploit labour for national wealth.
- Americans: Exploit the world's resources.
- Africans: Ensure each one's fair share.

Read Luke 12:28-30

"Your Father knows"

- Query: In what ways have we learned from world, to worry about our material needs?
- Query: What is the fundamental Christian value related to meeting material needs?
- Query: What are some other basic human needs that ensure survival and health?
- Query: What about lazy Christians? "If anyone is not willing to work, [then] let him not eat" (2 Thess. 3:10).

Read Luke 12:31-33

12:31. Several mss from the 3rd century and later read, "seek the kingdom of God."

12:33. "give to the poor" in Greek is a singular noun meaning "give benevolence," which is to meet others' urgent needs.

- Query: Who in Scripture sold their possession to give to the poor? (Acts 2)
- Query: Which possessions were Israelites not allowed to sell? (Homes and land)

Read Luke 12:39-40

"The Son of Man will come!"

- Query: What current events require that Jesus return sometime soon?
- Promise: "The Son of Man will come!"
- Caution: "At an hour when you do not expect him."
- Hour: "3 a point of time as an occasion for an event, time" (BDAG, *Grk-Eng Lexicon*).

Jesus' advice for everyone 12:41-48

Read Luke 12:41-44

"All his possessions"

- Query: What does this teach about life in the kingdom after Jesus' return?
- Query: How can many persons all be in charge of all Jesus' possessions?

- Query: If Jesus has millions of faithful servants, then how could he put them all in charge of all his possessions.
- Reply 1: Each one in charge of a small part.
- Reply 2: Jesus was speaking of himself.
- Reply 3: Jesus was employing hyperbole?
- Reply 4: We believers are collectively the ‘good servant’ in contrast to the wicked generation that rejected him.

Read Luke 12:47-48

The Master's Will		
	Who know his will	Who do not know his will
Who do his will	Receive many rewards	Receive few rewards
Who do not do his will	beaten with many blows	beaten with few blows

Godly judgement must be as merciful as justice allows, and no harsher than what justice requires.

More advice for disciples 12:49-53

Read Luke 12:49-53

“Fire on the earth”

- Fire: An ancient symbol for end-times judgement against the wicked.
- Baptism: An ancient rite symbolizing cleansing from sin or from evil.
- Patrilocal: Brides usually came to dwell with their husbands’ family.
Matrilocal? “A man shall leave his father and his mother and hold fast to his wife” (Gen. 2:24).
- Division: Disagreements over what?
- Tactics: How to minimize family discord over faith in Jesus?

More advice for the public 12:37-44

Read Luke 12:54-56

“How is it that you do not ...”

In verse 56, equally ancient manuscripts from the 3rd century and later read:

- How do you not interpret...?
- How do you not know (how) to interpret...?

Either scribes inserted “know” to conform to the preceding clause (“you know how”), or they omitted the word to heighten Jesus’ criticism (“you do not”).

