

Why We Shouldn't Be Afraid
Luke 12:4-7

ETS: Jesus told His disciples to not be afraid

ESS: Believers have no reason to be afraid

OSS: I want believers to understand why they should not be afraid and why unbelievers should be afraid.

PQ: Are you Afraid?

UW: Fear

ME

Are you ever AFRAID?

WHAT are you afraid of?

- Afraid you **can't pay** your **bills**?
- Afraid you **won't have** a place to **live**?
- Afraid your **health** is **deteriorating**?

WHAT are you afraid of?

- Afraid of the **FUTURE**?
- Afraid of what **PEOPLE think** about you?
- Afraid of **Climate Change**?
- Afraid you'll be able to **keep your job** due to **robots** and **AI**

Maybe you have FEAR for your children or grandchildren based on the decisions they are making.

Are you AFRAID you might lose friends over your beliefs?

FEAR is a powerful EMOTION!

- You can use **FEAR** to **control people!**
 - Most people will do **almost anything** you tell them if they are **afraid** and you promise a **solution.**
- **Many wives** stay with **abusive husbands** or a **man** will stay with an **abusive woman** out of FEAR.

Governments, religious institutions, teachers, parents, etc. all use the power of FEAR to encourage or discourage activities.

Were you **AFRAID** of the **consequences** if you stayed out past curfew, so you made sure to get home on time?

Did the sentence, [“Wait until your father comes home”](#) strike terror in your mind?

FEAR can STOP you from taking a RISK

FEAR can KEEP you from speaking up

FEAR can MAKE you go against your better judgment

FEAR can PARALYZE you from making decisions

WE

WE have been BLESSED in AMERICA

- We can **WORSHIP FREELY**
 - The “**CHURCH**” has even had a **PROTECTED Status**
 - Even today, the **CHURCH** doesn’t have to **abide by all** the LAWS if they **violate our Beliefs**.
- WE have been able to **tell people about Jesus** without **fear** of being **arrested**.
- Many of our **POLITICIANS** state they are “**Christians**”
- **Christians** have won in **many court cases** brought against them for refusing to do something that is against their beliefs.

However, there is a **GROWING FEAR** that **CHRISTIANITY** is **increasingly** under **attack** in AMERICA.

- Statistically, Christianity is the **LARGEST** religion in AMERICA, but that number has been in a free fall in recent decades.
 - **1976**: 91% of the total population claimed to be Christians

- **2016:** 73.7% of the total population claimed to be Christians
- **2022:** 64% of the total population claimed to be Christians
 - What's shocking is that there has been almost a 10% decline in the last 6 years!
 - Almost 30% LESS of the population claims Christianity as their religion today than in 1976!
- Fortunately, Christians are not being KILLED in America like they are in **Afghanistan**, where Last year, the Taliban began the restoration of their oppressive rule by going door to door looking for Christian leaders to imprison, torture, and kill.
 - We have not experienced what Christians in a central Vietnam province have faced where government officials are competing to create "Christian-free zones." Authorities in these areas pressure relatives to drive Christians from their homes and communities. Some have been forcibly separated from their spouses, children, farm fields and even their wedding rings.

However, as our **nation continues to turn away from God** Christians, *who uphold traditional Biblical beliefs*, are

becoming more and more the **target of verbal attacks** and **lawsuits**.

- We read more and more stories of **Christian business owners** in America being taken to court for refusing to bake a **same-sex wedding cake** (*although Muslim bakers would not do that either, interestingly they are never asked to make such a cake!*)

There is a **growing FEAR** that as our country **grows more pagan**, those who **refuse to compromise** on Scripture's teachings regarding morality and salvation will become more and more **ostracized and ridiculed**.

- When you feel that you are **out-of-step with culture**, when you feel that **many** in the "**church**" are **against you** because you **won't reinterpret Scripture** to satisfy our **cultural whims**, a **sense of FEAR** can settle into your spirit!

There is a GROWING call, especially by **young people**, to become a SOCIALIST COUNTRY

- Notice the subheading: "**The next generation of socialists believes that the intolerable cannot be tolerated.**"

China has enacted a **Social Credit Score system** whereby they TRACK people

- People can be downgraded for **poor driving**, **eating on public transportation**, reading the **wrong things online**, **complaining** about public **policy**, playing too many hours of video games, etc.
- If your score is **too low** you can be **banned** from **driving**, have your **internet speed reduced**, etc.
- The idea is that “**Good citizens**” (*as defined by the government*) are **rewarded** and “bad citizens” are **punished**.
 - While this system is **voluntary**, it is expected to become **mandatory** in the future.

There is **FEAR** that this system will be **employed** by other **countries**...AFTER ALL, shouldn't “good behavior” be rewarded?

- Just think how much we could **improve our culture's health** and **reduce overall medical costs** if your **credit card** would **not pay** for **sugary foods** because you are **overweight** and you were “**forced**” to purchase only “**healthy**” foods!
- Just imagine how we could cut down on “**unsafe**” **drivers** if your car was **not allowed to start** and you were forced to take public transportation.
- Imagine how we could **stop political dissension** if your internet were slowed to a crawl, and your

articles or videos were banned because you disagreed with public policy!

The technology to do these things is here now!

- There is a growing call to only tolerate those who agree with certain viewpoints and to **disagree** is considered **intolerant** and “The next generation of socialists believes that the intolerable cannot be tolerated.”
 - In today’s world, if you disagree, you are branded as “**ANTI....**” or you have some sort of “**PHOBIA**”

Concerns like this are causing many to grow **increasingly FEARFUL** that one day Biblical Christianity may not be “**tolerated**” and living as a Biblical Christian may result in “**punishments**” like a **low social credit score**.

GOD

Turn to Luke 12

Background

The GLOVES are OFF!

- Jesus called the **Pharisees** “**Greedy and Evil**”

- (Something NO ONE would think about doing!)
- Jesus blasts the **PHARISEES** with 3 woes
 - Accuses them of **greed, pride, and contaminating** the people
- Jesus blasts the **EXPERTS** with 3 woes
 - Accuses them of **hypocrisy, killing** the prophets, and **withholding knowledge** of God from the people!

The **GLOVES** are OFF!

- **Luke 11:53-54** “When he left there, the scribes and the Pharisees began to oppose him fiercely and to cross-examine him about many things; 54 they were lying in wait for him to trap him in something he said.”
- It is clear **TENSION is BUILDING** between JESUS and the religious leaders!
 - Now, they are **ACTIVELY** waiting to “**Trap**” Jesus!

THEN in **Chapter 12:1-3**, Jesus accuses the PHARISEES of HYPOCRISY and WARNS His followers against them!

- If there was any **HOPE** on the **part** of the **Pharisees** that they could **get Jesus into their “camp,”** that HOPE was GONE!

- (Perhaps that is why they'd invite Jesus to eat at their houses! They were hoping to win Jesus over to their side.)

I think the **APOSTLES/DISCIPLES** are **seeing TENSION** is building!

- *Perhaps in their minds*, the religious leaders would have accepted Jesus as the Messiah, but now it seems that there is an **unrepairable RIFT** between them.

I can imagine the **disciples** talking and saying, “HOW are we going to lead a movement if JERUSALEM (i.e., the religious leaders) is against us?”

- I have a feeling that **FEAR is starting to settle** into the **disciple's hearts** and minds!

After all, didn't Jesus just say that the EXPERTS in the Law “Will (future) KILL the Apostles”?

Jesus knows OUR Hearts, and I believe He KNOWS that FEAR is starting to creep into the apostle's/disciples' hearts!

- *They signed up to follow Jesus, not be KILLED!*

When FEAR settles into your heart...

- What do you need to REMEMBER?
- HOW do you counteract FEAR?

Luke 12:4 “I say to you, my friends, don’t **fear** those who kill the body, and after that can do nothing more.

What is Jesus saying to His Followers?

Don’t Be Afraid

We’ve been **journeying** through the **Gospel of Luke** for over a year.

- Do you ever recall Jesus calling His disciples and apostles “**Friends**”? **NO!**
 - The **ONLY TIME** so far that Jesus specifically called someone “**Friend**” was when He healed the **paralytic man** lowered through roof in Luke 5.
 - **Luke 5:20** “Seeing their faith he said, “**Friend, your sins are forgiven.**”

Why does Jesus call His disciples “**Friends**” at this point?

- Because He wants them to know **where they stand with Him**
 - His disciples/apostles are His friends as **OPPOSED** to the Pharisees and Experts in the

Law who are seeking to “Trap” Jesus and “vehemently opposing Him.”

- Those who FOLLOW Jesus out of FAITH and REPENTANCE is His “Friends”
 - Those who OPPOSE Jesus are His **ENEMIES**

As Jesus said in **Matthew 12:30** “Anyone who is not with me is against me, and anyone who does not gather with me scatters.”

IF you are a **FOLLOWER** of Jesus, you are **His FRIEND!**

- That FACT ALONE should be ENOUGH to drive out FEAR!

FAST FORWARD to the night Jesus was ARRESTED

- Jesus knew that the next three days would be the culmination of FEAR for His disciples
 - Everything that they were AFRAID would happen was about to happen!
- Right before Jesus is ARRESTED, Jesus once again calls His disciples “Friends” in John 15.
 - This time Jesus tells them in **John 15:13** “No one has greater love than this: to lay down his life for his friends.”

- In less than **24 hours**, they'd watch in horror as Jesus laid down His life for His "**Friends**."

So, it appears Jesus made it a point to call His followers "**friends**" at two points where FEAR was present.

- The **1st time** in **Luke 12** where the **disciples** and **apostles** are beginning to experience **FEAR of the future**
- The **2nd time** in **John 15** right before the **FEARS** of the **disciples** and **apostles** would **actually come true**.

Luke 12:4 "I say to you, my friends, don't **fear** those who **kill the body, and after that can do nothing more**."

- Remember, Jesus made a passing reference in **Luke 11:49** that the Pharisees and Experts in the Law "**will kill**" the apostles!
 - The apostles did not "Sign up" to be killed!
 - Clearly, that statement struck FEAR into their hearts!

So, Jesus reminds them that they are His "**Friends**" and that do not need to be afraid of PHYSICAL DEATH

- WHY shouldn't WE fear Physical death?

Notice, even if you are killed for following Christ, that is the **WORST** they can do to you!

- You might be thinking “the worst”?
 - Remember, we are ALL going to die unless we live to see the return of Jesus!
 - NO ONE is getting out of this life alive!

Remember, what Jesus told His disciples at the beginning way back in **Luke 6:22-23**?

- **Luke 6:22-23** “Blessed are you when people hate you, when they exclude you, insult you, and slander your name as evil because of the Son of Man. 23 “Rejoice in that day and leap for joy. Take note—your reward is great in heaven, for this is the way their ancestors used to treat the prophets.”
 - If you are **excluded, insulted, slandered** and even **killed** for following Jesus, your “**reward is great in heaven.**”

As Jesus says in **Luke 12:4**, they may **kill your body**, but that is all they can do to you!

- **OUR bodies are going to die** anyways!
 - Yes, being martyred for Christ may “*Speed up*” your **death**, but it also *moves you into heaven faster!*

Jesus goes on to put things into perspective: **Luke 12:5** “But I will show you the one to **fear: Fear** him who has

authority to throw people into hell after death. Yes, I say to you, this is the one to **fear!**"

- Jesus repeats the word "**FEAR**" **3x's** in this one verse!
 - Jesus says the one to FEAR is the One who can throw people into HELL after death!

In Luke Jesus refers to HELL

- In fact, this is the **ONLY time Jesus** refers to **HELL** in Luke.
 - The other times Jesus refers to where people go after death, He refers to "Hades" (LK 10:15; 16:23)
- What's the difference?
 - Are they the same?

In the OT days both wicked and righteous people were said to "descend to Sheol"

- Sheol was a HEBREW generic term for the grave and the afterlife

In Jesus' day, the **Greek** term "**Hades**" was used to describe the *place of the dead*.

- SO, in the Greek translation of the OT (called the Septuagint) that was around in Jesus' day, the word "Hades" was used to describe the place of the dead.

Since the OT teaches that both the righteous and wicked go to **Sheol** (later called “**Hades**”), it was believed that there are two compartments **in the afterlife**.

- One compartment was called **Paradise**, which is where the “**righteous**” people go
 - Jesus told the thief on the cross who believed in Him, “**Today, you will be with me in paradise.**”
- The other compartment was a **place of torment** (also called “Hades”)
 - If you read Jesus’ parable of **Lazarus and the Rich Man** in **Luke 19**, you will see this taught.

So, when Jesus said this in **Luke 12:5**, it seems odd that He didn’t say “**Hades**” because that is where it was believed people went, **INSTEAD**, He used a **NEW WORD** “**Hell**”

- Notice how Jesus describes the scene “**Fear him who has authority to throw people into hell after death**”
 - WHO: “**Him who has authority**”
 - WHAT: “**Throws people into Hell**”
 - When: “**after death**”

Jesus **never taught** that people are “**thrown into Hades**”

- In **Luke 10:15**, Jesus refers to “**going down to Hades**”

- In **Luke 16:22-23**, Jesus just says “**The rich man also died and was buried. 23 And being in torment in Hades**”

So, Hell and Hades must be different or Jesus wouldn't have used **two different distinct** words nor would He have used **two different ways to describe entrance** into them.

- The word translated as “**Hell**” is **Gehenna**
 - **Gehenna** was actually the **Greek name** for the **valley of Hinnom**, which is the narrow valley **south of Jerusalem**.¹
 - In the **OT time period**, there was a sacrificial site called **Topeth** in this valley where children were burned alive by the wicked to the god Molech.
 - In the **NT time**, **refuse** was often burned in the valley
 - Thus, Gehenna was seen as a place of **FIRE!**

What is the answer?

- The answer is revealed in Jesus' last REVELATION to Us.

¹ Allen C. Myers, [*The Eerdmans Bible Dictionary*](#) (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1987), 406.

- **Revelation 19:20** states that the “beast” (Anti-Christ) and the false prophet are “**Thrown alive into the lake of fire**”
- **Revelation 20:10** Satan is “**thrown into the lake of fire**”
- **Revelation 20:14-15** “**Death and Hades were thrown into the lake of fire. This is the second death, the lake of fire. 15 And anyone whose name was not found written in the book of life was thrown into the lake of fire.**”

Notice that entrance into “**HELL**” is always one of being “**THROWN**” into it!

- Again, there is NO COINCIDENCE that Jesus uses the word “**Thrown**” and the word “**Hell**” in the same sentence.
 - Those who REJECT GOD are ultimately “**THROWN**” into Hell!

WHO Throws them into Hell? Jesus says the “**One who has authority**” and according to Revelation, it is the One who is seated on the Great White Throne—GOD!

Jesus’ POINT: Don’t be afraid of people because they can only KILL the BODY, but FEAR GOD because He can throw you into HELL *after death*.

- In other words, there is **TORMENT** *after death* for those who **REJECT GOD'S LOVE, GRACE, and MERCY.**

This is **SCARY STUFF!**

The world has almost **8 billion people** in it today- probably the most people that have ever lived on this planet at one time!

- **FEAR:** God is going to **FORGET** about ME!
- **FEAR:** I'm not **VALUABLE ENOUGH** to GOD!

What is Jesus saying to His Followers?

You are Valuable

If those **FEARS** are running through your mind, listen to what Jesus says: **Luke 12:6** "Aren't five sparrows sold for two pennies? Yet not one of them is forgotten in God's sight."

What is Jesus saying?

- Apparently, sparrows were **CHEAP** according to humans in Jesus' day, but God does not judge them by human standards: They are "**not forgotten in God's sight.**"
 - **REALITY:** For many people, **human life is cheap.** After all, there are now 8 billion of us!

- So what if **a few million** are **extinguished** – especially if they are not **“on board”** with the culture!

Jesus knew there would be a day when many of His followers would be rotting in a prison cell and wondering if God forgot about them, so Jesus tells us in advance: God knows you are there!

What is Jesus saying to His Followers?

God Knows You

Luke 12:7 “Indeed, the hairs of your head are all counted. Don’t be **afraid**; you are worth more than many sparrows.”

If your FEAR that God is allowing you to go through difficulties is because you are somehow less valuable to Him than someone else, Jesus reminds us that **“the hairs of your head are all counted”**

- Have you taken the time to count the hairs on you head? NO!
 - But God knows the number!

Again, this is difficult to FATHOM, but I cannot FATHOM how Google does what it does!

- I was researching for this sermon and Google said it found “About 37,600,000 results (0.67 seconds)” for “Asian slave in America”
 - How is that possible?
- How is it possible that your GPS can detect where you are located while doing the same for perhaps millions of other people?

I cannot fathom the speed and capabilities of modern technology, but I clearly see the RESULTS!

I cannot fathom how God “knows the hairs on all the people on the planet” but He does—which is one reason He is GOD!

Notice what Jesus says at the end: “Don’t be afraid; you are worth more than many sparrows.”

- So, If God knows about the sparrows, which were considered cheap food, then why should I think He doesn’t know about me!
 - After all, Jesus says “you are worth more than many sparrows.”

In **Luke 12:4-7** Jesus tells His followers “don’t fear” and “Don’t be afraid.”

- When Jesus repeats something, He is emphasizing a point!

WHY does Jesus tell His followers “**don’t fear**” and “**Don’t be afraid**”?

- Because our NATURAL TENDENCY when facing **trials, tribulations**, and the **unknown** is to be afraid!

YOU

What is Jesus saying to His Followers?

Don’t Be Afraid

If you are a FOLLOWER of Jesus, you are a “**Friend of God**”!

- Jesus loves you so much, He laid down His life for you!

What is Jesus saying to His Followers?

You are Valuable

What is Jesus saying to His Followers?

God Knows You

What is Jesus saying to those who **REJECT** Him?

BE AFRAID

Unless you “**Repent**” you will spend an eternity apart from God’s love, mercy, peace, joy, and grace!

- To be separated from God results in “**torment**”
 - Do you want to spend eternity “Grinding your teeth in anger at God”?
 - Do you want to live in a **perpetual state of ANGER and ANGST?**

That’s NOT God’s DESIRE FOR YOU!

PQ: Are you Afraid?