

*Mondovi: Our Savior's, Gilmanton & Montana: Salem United Methodist Churches*  
*8.10.2025, 9th Sunday after Pentecost, Rev. Hyuntae Kim, Ph.D.*  
*A New Dimension of Faith, Luke 12:1-12.*

Let us pray: Gracious Father God, breathe into us today through your Word, which is your very breath, and revive our souls, hearts, and even bodies, so that we may proclaim the work you have done for all the days of our lives. In the name of our Lord Jesus, we pray. Amen.

I bless you that today's message will be the Word that changes your life forever. Amen.

What is the highest concern for us who believe in Jesus? For me, it is this: How can I live every moment enjoying the presence of the Lord? In other words, how can I hear God's voice clearly and obey it so that his will may be accomplished on earth through me? I believe this should be the highest concern of every Christian. Of course, we have other smaller concerns—our crops need to grow well, we need to raise our children well, and so on. But all these should be connected to our highest concern, carried out with the desire that God's will be done in everything we do.

Today Luke tells us about a new dimension of faith. If we receive this Word with faith and say "Amen," we will step into that new dimension.

In verses 1–12, Jesus speaks these words to his disciples when "so many thousands of the people had gathered together that they were trampling one another" (v. 1). Many people come to Jesus for various reasons, but true disciples are few. My hope is that we will understand this Word as true disciples.

Jesus warns his disciples, "Beware of the leaven of the Pharisees, which is hypocrisy." In Scripture, the Pharisees represent those who are separated from Christ. This type of religion is an attempt to believe and live well without Christ—trying to attain righteousness by our own strength. Christianity is not a faith in which God remains outside doing his work while we go about doing ours independently. Rather, we live united with the Spirit of Christ, and his Spirit lives and works through us.

To live this way, Jesus first tells us to put away religion like that of the Pharisees. We must continually remove the leaven of the Pharisees from our lives. Whenever we are separated from Christ, the living Word, leaven begins to grow in us quickly. When we meet Christ through the Word—he who is a light stronger than the sun—every mold of sin disappears. Instead of merely keeping outward religious forms, we begin to experience the life of Christ within us. Our faith grows into one filled with deeper peace and greater joy.

In verse 2, Jesus says, "Nothing is covered up that will not be revealed, or hidden that will not be known." This means more than the exposure of the Pharisees' hidden sins. When the Light comes, all things are seen. As we learned last time, no one lights a lamp and puts it in a cellar or under a basket. In the same way, Christ will no longer be hidden but will be revealed through the lives of his disciples.

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Jesus says in verse 3, “Therefore, whatever you have said in the dark shall be heard in the light.” Here, what was spoken “in the dark” refers to Christ, the mystery hidden in the Old Testament, who is now proclaimed “in the light,” that is, in the new Gospel. “... and what you have whispered in private rooms shall be proclaimed on the housetops” means that what God has worked in your spirit will be made known to others.

In this new dimension of faith that Jesus is teaching, God is not a distant king to be worshiped from afar; rather, he is a friend who fellowships with us intimately in our spirit. That is why Jesus says to his disciples, “I tell you, my friends...” (v. 4). We speak truth and secrets to our closest friends. Here Jesus is saying, “What I am about to tell you is a truthful word given to my friends—receive it well.” What does he say next?

“Do not fear those who kill the body, and after that have nothing more that they can do. 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!” (vv. 4-5). Here, the One whom you should fear is none other than Christ Jesus himself. Jesus said, “Whoever has seen me has seen the Father” (John 14:9). The One who is our Friend is also the One we must fear—what a profound paradox. This “fear” does not mean being terrified, but showing reverence. If we do not fear him, we will inevitably treat him lightly. To fear Christ means to give careful attention and honor to his words and to cherish his will in our hearts.

If we do not do this, he becomes the One to be feared in a dreadful sense. If we reject his will, we will be thrown into the lake of fire. What is his will? It is to be his friend. If we refuse that friendship, we will be thrown into hell. Such is the authority of our Friend.

In Romans 11:22, the apostle Paul writes, “Note then the kindness and the severity of God: severity toward those who have fallen, but God’s kindness to you, provided you continue in his kindness. Otherwise you too will be cut off.” God possesses both kindness and severity, and we must know both. Only when we grasp his severity can we truly appreciate the greatness of his kindness. If we do not fear God, we—like the original branches—can also be cut off at any time, for we are Gentiles grafted in. How do we avoid being cut off? By continually remaining in God’s kindness rather than his severity. To dwell in his kindness is his will for us, and that is how we receive life. When we do so, our hearts overflow with songs of joy.

Jesus shows the greatness of God’s kindness through the example of “five sparrows sold for two pennies.” In Matthew’s Gospel, we read that two sparrows are sold for one penny (Matt 10:29). But here in Luke, five sparrows are sold for two pennies. According to Matthew’s calculation, two pennies should buy four sparrows—so where does the fifth come from? It is a “bonus” sparrow for free. Even such a sparrow, with no market value, is not forgotten before God. In the same way, God never forgets us. Moreover, as God’s children, when we—like sparrows—are carried off into the affairs of this world,

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losing our true worth (for anything without Christ is worth less than the price of a sparrow in God's eyes), he still remembers us and restores us into the high value of his divine will.

God's kindness is so great that he even numbers the hairs of our head. If we go deeper, our head is Christ, and we are his members—meaning we are like the hairs growing from his head. As his “hairs,” we bring him glory. The Lord knows each one of us, counting us. If we drift away from him and disregard him, what are we doing to Christ? We are making him bald. Therefore, he says, “Do not fear.” Our whole life is within God's plan.

Then Jesus once again says, “And I tell you...” This kind of phrase signals a very important truth—one he wants us to understand deeply. “And I tell you, everyone who acknowledges me before men, the Son of Man also will acknowledge before the angels of God.” To acknowledge Jesus before people means to acknowledge him in our daily life. As Paul exhorts in Colossians 3:17, “... whatever you do, in word or deed, do everything in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through him.”

The original word for “acknowledge” means “to say the same thing.” That is, we say what the Lord says; our words align with his. When we do this, the Son of Man, at that very same moment, is acknowledging us before the angels of God. This is not something that happens only after we die; it happens simultaneously. There is an Old Testament example of this. While Job lived on earth worshiping God and fearing him, God in the heavenly courts was acknowledging him before his angels.

Going a little deeper: in the faith of the new covenant, Christ is in us. Therefore, when we acknowledge him in all things, He, from within us, acknowledges us — and we stand before him as God's messengers. We are recognized as God's angels who proclaim the gospel to the world. This is the new dimension of faith.

To deny the Lord Jesus does not simply mean to say, “I do not believe.” Even if we evangelize and preach, if the Lord Jesus is absent from our words, we are, in effect, denying him, and we cannot be God's messengers.

At the end of God's kindness there is severity. Thus, in verse 10, Jesus says, “And everyone who speaks a word against the Son of Man will be forgiven, but the one who blasphemes against the Holy Spirit will not be forgiven.” Peter denied Jesus, yet he was forgiven. Because Jesus came to serve as a servant, even rejection and scorn toward him could be forgiven. But in the era of the new covenant, when the Holy Spirit comes and bears witness, saying, “Jesus died for you, so believe in him,” to reject that testimony is to blaspheme the Holy Spirit — and that is something that will not be forgiven.

In verses 11–12, Jesus reveals his greater vision for his friends, saying, “And when they bring you before the synagogues and the rulers and the authorities...” Persecution will come in this order, but it also shows the order in which the gospel will spread.

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First, the synagogues represent the Jewish regions—our smaller, local communities. Second, the rulers refer to regional political leaders like Herod Agrippa. Third, the authorities are the emperors. This means the gospel of Christ will not remain at the level of Galilee—it will confront the entire world. Jesus gives us this promise: When that time comes, “do not be anxious about how you should defend yourself or what you should say, for the Holy Spirit will teach you in that very hour what you ought to say.” This new-covenant, new-dimension faith cannot be followed—or even imagined—through religious forms like that of the Pharisees.

Here is one simple, practical first step to confessing the Lord Jesus without fearing people or the world: make it your habit to frequently murmur God’s Word. As I mentioned earlier, to “confess” means that our words match the Lord’s words. Psalm 119:97 says, “Oh how I love your law! It is my meditation all the day.” In Scripture, the meditation God desires is not silent thinking, but speaking his Word softly with the lips. Even when you read the Bible, read it as though you are murmuring it. When you keep murmuring a single verse often, that Word itself—being Spirit and life (John 6:63)—becomes your prayer and your prophecy; and because Jesus acknowledges you at the same time, that Word will be fulfilled in your life. You will grow deeply intimate with the Lord.

For example, you could write Psalm 23:1 on a small card and carry it with you, reciting it fifty, a hundred, or even more times a day whenever you have a moment throughout the week. Like this: “The Lord is my shepherd; I shall not want.” As you do so, the Lord your Shepherd will become real to you in your daily life. Then, the following week, choose another verse. You might even select a verse from a recent sermon you heard. If children form this habit from an early age, the door to wisdom will be opened wide for them. I have often heard testimonies of people experiencing healing and restoration—depression lifted, rheumatoid arthritis healed, and much more.

Even if we are like sparrows of little worth, God remembers us. Are you trembling with fear about the future, about people, about disasters, about sickness, or any other kind of fear? When various fears crowd in upon us, let us meditate on God’s Word, confess the Lord, and fear him. Then, needless fears will flee, the Holy Spirit will grant us the strength to face the world, the faith to endure trials, and the radiant Christ will be revealed through us. Amen.

Let us pray: Lord Jesus, who possesses wondrous authority, we thank you for coming to serve us as a servant and for calling us your friends as we desire to follow you. We long to grow closer to you in the Holy Spirit. Place your Word continually upon our lips, that the breath of your life may ever enter us, filling us with abundant life, and enabling us to speak as the Holy Spirit gives us utterance. Thus, may we proclaim this your life to every tribe and nation. In your marvelous name we pray. Amen.