

'On the road'

Luke's account of the life and ministry of Jesus

Luke is up front about his intention in writing his gospel record: it was to help a man called Theophilus to have the confidence to trust in Jesus as Lord and Saviour. He wanted to bolster the embryonic faith of this man in the face of both the hostility he was likely to face and the adversity which almost certainly would be his experience.

The aim of this study of Luke's gospel, therefore, is to help us all "*fix our eyes on Jesus, the author and perfecter of our faith*", to the end that we "*run with perseverance the race marked out for us*" (see Heb.12.1-2)

You can find the background to this series [here](#).

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22. Luke 11.53-12.12 [w/b Sunday 21st October 2018]

“.. I will show you Whom you should fear ...”

This next section is the sequel to the challenging words of Jesus at the meal to which He'd been invited (11.37-52): that narrative in turn needs to be seen against the backdrop of the reaction to His driving out a demon that was mute (11.14-16) and the consequent teaching Jesus gave (11.17-36).

The Pharisees placed great emphasis on the 'form' of godliness, that which was outward and visible - rather than what Paul refers to as the 'power' of godliness (2 Tim.3.5). Jesus elaborates now on why such 'formality' is both inadequate and dangerous.

[Despite your best intentions, there may not be time for all the questions to be addressed in your Community Group! It may be helpful to try and ensure that in this study you cover questions 4, 5, and 6. As always try to leave good time for shared prayer!]

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1. Read Luke 11.53-12.12. Reading the whole passage will give you a feel for what's going on here: in the face of the growing opposition of religious leaders, Jesus issues a series of warnings.

How, in a single word, would you describe the effect on you of what Jesus says here? Explain what lies behind your choice of that word.

What is Jesus warning against?

2. Read Luke 11.53-12.1. Jesus 'put the cat among the pigeons' with the barrage of 'woes' He'd addressed to the Pharisees; and in so doing He attracted a large crowd.

What is the 'hypocrisy' against which Jesus warns His disciples?

Why do you think Jesus was careful to address His disciples first, rather than the crowds, at this point?

3. Read Luke 12.2-3. The 'trigger' for the catalogue of 'woes' and its sequel here was the Pharisees' preoccupation with the 'externals' of religion (see 11.37-41).

What is the point which Jesus is impressing on His disciples?

How do you react to these verses? How does this square with the promise of forgiveness?

4. Read Luke 12.4-5. Fear is clearly a valid response: but Jesus stresses that it's important that our fear is rightly directed.

Of whom should we be afraid, according to Jesus here? And why should we be afraid?

Is it appropriate to 'frighten' people into faith by stressing the prospect of hell?

5. **Read Luke 12.6-7.** Having just urged His disciples to *be afraid*, He provides an immediate balance by exhorting them, "*Don't be afraid!*"

If you have the time, **read Psalm 139**: why is the psalmist so glad to be known so completely by the Lord?

What truths about God does Jesus want to help His disciples grasp in what He says here?

How do these verses comfort and encourage you?

6. **Read Luke 12.8-10.** If every truth about us is to be made public, we're going to need someone to plead our cause, and vouch for us!

Read Matt.7.21-23 where the issue is similar: on what basis does Jesus say He will 'vouch for' us on the final day?

Jesus' statement about the so-called 'unforgiveable sin' needs to be seen against the backdrop of **11.14ff**: how does a person blaspheme against the Holy Spirit?

Why will such a stance not be forgiven?

7. Read Luke 12.11-12. Having again just given His disciples cause to 'worry' (about the prospect of disowning Him and blaspheming against the Holy Spirit), Jesus exhorts them now *not* to worry!

What sort of situation is Jesus envisaging His disciples having to face?

What is the encouragement He gives to them (and us)?

Can you think of situations when you've been very aware of the Holy Spirit teaching you '*what you should say*'?