

The Fear that Frees: How the Fear of God Overcomes All Other Fears

Luke 12:1-12 ▪ January 18, 2026 ▪ Nick Braitto

The Father _____ **you, so you can drop the** _____. (w. 2-7).

The Son _____ **you, so you can stand** _____. (w. 4-5, 8-10)

The Spirit _____ **you, so you can step out in.** (w. 11-12)

Luke 12:1-12

¹In the meantime, when so many thousands of the people had gathered together that they were trampling one another, he began to say to his disciples first, "Beware of the leaven of the Pharisees, which is hypocrisy. ²Nothing is covered up that will not be revealed, or hidden that will not be known. ³Therefore whatever you have said in the dark shall be heard in the light, and what you have whispered in private rooms shall be proclaimed on the housetops.

⁴"I tell you, my friends, do not fear those who kill the body, and after that have nothing more that they can do. ⁵But 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!

⁶Are not five sparrows sold for two pennies? And not one of them is forgotten before God. ⁷Why, even the hairs of your head are all numbered. Fear not; you are of more value than many sparrows.

⁸"And I tell you, everyone who acknowledges me before men, the Son of Man also will acknowledge before the angels of God, ⁹but the one who denies me before men will be denied before the angels of God. ¹⁰And 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. ¹¹And when they bring you before the synagogues and the rulers and the authorities, do not be anxious about how you should defend yourself or what you should say, ¹²for the Holy Spirit will teach you in that very hour what you ought to say." (ESV)

Personal Reflection or Group Discussion Questions

Open: In what kind of situations do you find it easiest to be bold about your faith? In what situations do you find it most difficult or intimidating?

Read & Discuss: Luke 12:1-12

1. Jesus begins by warning against “the leaven of the Pharisees, which is hypocrisy” (v. 1). Hypocrisy is often driven by a fear of what people think of us. How is the reality that everything hidden will eventually be “known” and “proclaimed” (vv. 2–3) meant to impact the way we live? Should this scare us—or why not?
2. Jesus calls us to not fear those who can “kill the body,” but to fear the One who has “authority to cast into hell” (vv. 4–5). Why could we say that the fear of God is a “fear that frees” us from the fear of man? Can you think of a time when a concern for God’s opinion helped to reduce your concern for the opinion of others?
3. Jesus mentions that even sparrows (inexpensive birds sold at the market) are not “forgotten before God” (v. 6). If God keeps track of sparrows and the hairs on your head (v. 7), how should being deeply “known by the Father” reshape our perspective when we feel insignificant to or overlooked by God? What are some other Scriptures that reinforce this idea?
4. In verses 8–10, Jesus speaks about the importance of acknowledging Him before others. How should knowing that Jesus owns and claims us shape the way we act in our workplace, school, or neighborhood? Why is it sometimes tempting to stay silent about our relationship with Him? What have you gained or lost when you have acknowledged Him in the past?
5. Jesus promises that when we are brought before authorities or put on the spot, the “Holy Spirit will teach you in that very hour what you ought to say” (vv. 11–12). How does knowing we are “empowered by the Spirit” give us courage to open our mouths when we have an opportunity to speak about Jesus? If you’ve experienced something like this before, encourage your group by sharing what happened.
6. What are some other situations besides standing up for the Gospel where we may feel a great need for God’s help to do what He’s asked us to do? How should we approach such situations in a way that both honors God and frees us to obey?
7. Looking at the whole passage, how does the combination of God’s great authority over us (v. 5) and His intimate love for us (v. 7) together create a balanced view of God? Why do we need to hang on to both truths if we’re to stop fearing the world?

Apply: If you truly believed that you were fully known, claimed, and empowered, what is one “fear of the world” that would lose its grip on your life? How can you rely on the Spirit’s empowerment to acknowledge the King in that space this week?

Pray: Pray for a proper fear of God that drives out all lesser fears. Ask the Father to impress upon our hearts the value we have in His eyes, ask the Son to give us the courage to claim Him publicly, and ask the Spirit to give us the words we need when we feel overwhelmed.