

# Parables from Luke 12

Passage	Subject	Cross References
Luke 12.1-12	Teaching the Disciples (Part 1)	Matthew 10.16-33
Luke 12.13-21	Interruption <b>Parable</b> of <i>A Certain Rich Man</i>	Unique
Luke 12.22-34 Luke 12.35-40	Teaching the Disciples (Part 2) <b>Parable</b> of <i>The Faithful Servants</i>	Sermon on the Mount: Matthew 6.25-34 Matthew 24.42-44
Luke 12.41-53	Interruption <b>Parable</b> of <i>The Faithful Stewards</i>	Matthew 24.45-51
Luke 12.54-59	Teaching the Crowd (Part 3)	Matthew 16.1-4
Luke 13.1-9	Interruption <b>Parable</b> of <i>The Fruitless Fig Tree</i>	Unique. See and compare Matthew 24.32-33, Mark 12.1-12, Luke 20.9-19

The parables in Luke 12 concern the subjects (disciples) of the kingdom and their typical manner of life. This is contrasted to the way in which the Pharisees lived and acted. They were hypocritical (v.1) and covetous (v.15), but God's people are faithful. It is faithfulness which forms the theme of the remaining verses in the chapter.

## **Teaching the Disciples – Part 2 (Luke 12.22-34)**

These verses were spoken primarily to the disciples (cf. v.22) and must link to the preceding verses as the Lord Jesus uses the word 'therefore'. There is a continuation of the theme of the characteristics of true disciples, in particular God's **care** for them (cf. vv.4-12) and an expansion of the moral of the preceding parable, cf.v.21: '*So is he (a fool) that layeth up treasure for himself, and is not rich toward God.*' True disciples are rich towards God. They put His priorities **first** and themselves **last**.

Consequently, true disciples should never be **anxious** ('take no thought', v.22) with regard to trivial things like what they should eat, or what they should wear (cf. Luke 9.1-6, 10.1-17). This might seem insignificant, but during the tribulation the world will seek after eating and drinking (cf. vv.29-30, Matthew 24.37-39), but true disciples will be persecuted and unable to buy or sell (Revelation 13.17).

Two examples are given to encourage the disciples: the ravens (v.24) and the lilies (vv.27-28). With regard to **food** (v.23), consider the **ravens**. Unlike the rich fool, the ravens (an unclean bird, cf. Leviticus 11.15) do not sow or reap, neither do they store food in barns, yet God feeds them. If God so cares and feeds the insignificant ravens, how **much more** will He feed us? There is no need to **worry** about it! Worrying has no positive value. We cannot add one cubit (1.5ft, 45cm) to our height, something insignificant, by worrying. Why then worry about more important things (vv.25-26)? With regard to **clothes** (v.23), consider the common **lilies** of the field. They have no means of working or weaving, yet God clothes them in greater glory than even King Solomon (v.27). How can this be? King Solomon's glory was merely **extrinsic**. When he removed his clothes, the glory was gone, whereas the lily of the field has an **intrinsic** beauty that cannot be removed.<sup>1</sup> The lily does not compete with other plants, but is gentle and delicate with its flower head appearing just above the grass of the field. Both withered lilies and dried grass were often gathered into bundles and used for making a fire (v.28). If God so cares and clothes the insignificant lilies, how **much more** will He clothe us?

There are two important practical lessons from these verses (vv.22-34): **worrying** and **seeking**.

- **Worrying (vv.22-28).** Given God's care for the small and insignificant, we should not be unduly anxious about our physical lives. *Philippians 4.6: Be anxious for nothing; but in every thing by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known unto God.* It is worry or concern about worldly and temporal things which 'disturbs our peace, dampens our joy and silences our praise'. However, there are certain things we should be anxious about, e.g. **caring** for other believers (cf. 1 Corinthians 12.25, Philippians 2.20) and **sitting**

<sup>1</sup> **Note.** What a beautiful contrast between the Pharisees and the Lord Jesus. They wore garments of extrinsic righteousness, i.e. they appeared from the outside to be holy, but on the inside they were full of iniquity. **Matthew 23.27-28: Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! for ye are like unto whited sepulchres, which indeed appear beautiful outward, but are within full of dead men's bones, and of all uncleanness. Even so ye also outwardly appear righteous unto men, but within ye are full of hypocrisy and iniquity.** Contrast the Lord Jesus who is intrinsically holy (1 John 3.5).

before serving (Luke 10.38-42). Note also the teaching of 1 Corinthians 7.32-35 concerning marriage, families and anxiety!

- **Seeking (vv.29-34)**. This is the practical outcome of the teaching in vv.22-28. We should not seek after material things (vv.29-30). To 'seek' means to 'set your heart on' or make something your 'supreme passion'. What we seek is what drives and directs our lives. The world seeks after material things, but disciples of the Lord Jesus should ever be seeking after the things of God (v.31). We are to make it our supreme passion to store up spiritual treasure in heaven (v.33), 'for where your treasure is, there will your heart be also' (v.34). *Note. We spend our time, strength and money on what we value, therefore, the movement of our time, strength and money demonstrates the movement of our hearts. Does our money show that we value 'things' more than God, or God more than 'things'.*

### **The Parable of the Faithful Servants (Luke 12.35-40)**

A false disciple will store up earthly treasures. Consequently, he almost certainly will not be gazing heavenward watching for the return of the Lord. True disciples must be watching and waiting. The strict interpretation of this parable (cf. v.41) is in relation to the faithful remnant during the tribulation. They will then be waiting for the return of the Lord Jesus from the wedding ceremony with His bride (cf. v.36, Revelation 19.5-10). However, we can make a clear application to us as believers today for we 'wait for His Son from heaven' (1 Thessalonians 1.10). The characteristics of a true disciple in the light of the Lord's coming are that we:

- **Walk** with loins girded (v.35). At the time of the Lord Jesus, long flowing garments were tucked up (girded) under the belt to avoid hindrances and tangles (cf. Exodus 12.11, 1 Kings 18.46). Likewise, true disciples should ever remember that they are on a pilgrim pathway and nothing should hinder their progress towards the ultimate goal of being conformed to the image of Christ (Romans 8.29, 2 Corinthians 3.18). There is a mission to be accomplished! We must beware of **obstacles** (Hebrews 12.13) and always walk the pathway of **truth** (Ephesians 6.14). Girding the loins also has reference to the mind. *1 Peter 1.13: Wherefore gird up the loins of your mind, be sober, and hope to the end.* That is, we are to put out of our minds everything that impedes spiritual progress. Stop mentally slacking. Loose thinking leads to loose living.
- **Witness** with lights burning (v.35). There is a testimony to be maintained. This emphasises the good works which are to mark our pathway and should be seen by men. *Matthew 5.15-16: Neither do men light a candle, and put it under a bushel, but on a candlestick; and it giveth light unto all that are in the house. Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven.* John the Baptist was a burning **and** a shining light (John 5.35). Burning implies zeal and fervency. Shining implies clarity and brightness. John was not only passionate and enthusiastic (burning), but his works and teachings were clear and consistent. As true disciples we should burn inwardly (Luke 24.32) and shine outwardly.
- **Wait** with eagerness (v.36). We 'wait' in order that we might open unto Him immediately. Our hearts are waiting for Him so we are ready to open immediately without having to get ready. The house should be permanently tidy so as to open up to Him immediately. Lives and hearts may be full of rubbish when men are not waiting for Him (cf. Ezekiel 8, Nehemiah 3). The Scriptures teach we should be waiting for Christ **confidently** (1 Thessalonians 1.10) and **eagerly** (Hebrews 9.28). The Thessalonians needed to be sobered and taught to abide quietly, whilst the Hebrew believers needed encouragement to stand on tip-toe in keen anticipation.
- **Watch** with readiness (vv.37-40) in order that we might be blessed (v.37). As those who watch we have our eyes open, looking for Him. There should be no sleeping (Romans 13.12). Watching helps us to avoid temptation's fall (cf. 1 Peter 5.8) when it is combined with praying (Matthew 26.41, Colossians 4.2). The coming of the thief is entirely unexpected just as the time of the coming of Christ is unknown. As the thief comes in the night, so Christ will return in the night watches (night of moral darkness) as the Morning Star to signal the breaking of day (millennium). The night is far spent (Romans 13.12, Ephesians 5.8). We are encouraged to watch so our houses are not 'broken through'. This could imply loss of reward for the true disciple, or more likely loss of earthly treasure and indeed a spiritual inheritance for the false disciples such as the Pharisees. They had been storing up treasures on earth (cf. Matt. 6.19-20, 25.29-30).

There is a beautiful promise of blessing for the true disciple, v.37 *Blessed are those servants, whom the lord when he cometh shall find watching: verily I say unto you, that he shall gird himself, and make them to sit down to meat, and will come forth and serve them.* Christ shall return to His waiting faithful people and afford them rest ('sit down') and sustenance ('meat'). Note the tenses of His service: past (Mark 10.45), present (Hebrews 7.25) and future (Luke 12.37). He truly is the Perfect Servant, the Wise Servant (Isaiah 52.13), the Righteous Servant (Isaiah 53.11) and the Elect Servant (Isaiah 42.1).