

***Eternity—Don't Leave Earth Without Getting Prepared***  
***(A Study in Luke 12)***

**Prepare Yourself for Eternity**  
**Luke 12:4-13**

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**Series Introduction:** Over the next four weeks, I want to challenge you about eternal things. I want to challenge you concerning your preparation, your priorities, your perspective, and your practices. When we think about eternity, it's the only thing that really matters. As far as I see things Biblically, there are only a few things that last forever: God, the Word of God, and people. We must pour our lives in to these things. Intellectually, we know this to be true, but, practically, we live so opposite to this theological belief. We are going to challenge each other on this premise over the next few weeks.

Incidentally, and as a way of following up on this message series, we are going to have a couple of opportunities to put our belief into action. Because these matters of eternity are so tied to our materialistic pursuits, we have arranged for two conferences to follow this preaching series—one for our staff and one for you. The staff of our church is going to be required to attend a seminar on financial stewardship, personal finances, including debt management on Monday, August 4—the Monday following the conclusion of this sermon series. I want to set the bar high as your leaders and lead by example and integrity in the matters of our financial stewardship. Another seminar will be for all of us. We have partnered with an organization called *The Carpenter's Plan* whose purpose is to lead individual's to follow God's plan in matters of God's financial temporary blessing on them. Now, I am requiring our staff to go to the Seminar provided for them. I cannot require you to attend the Seminar designed for you. However, I hope that you will see the benefit in being led to think about the stewardship of your wealth both in your lifetime and beyond your lifetime.

Today, we begin with thinking about our eternal destiny. Nothing of material blessing matters if we are not ready ourselves for eternity. The most important matter about the kingdom of God is whether we are part of the Kingdom of God.

**Text:** <sup>1</sup> In the meantime, when an innumerable multitude of people had gathered together, so that they trampled one another, He began to say to His disciples first *of all*, "Beware of the leaven of the Pharisees, which is hypocrisy." <sup>2</sup> For there is nothing covered that will not be revealed, nor hidden that will not be known. <sup>3</sup> Therefore whatever you have spoken in the dark will be heard in the light, and what you have spoken in the ear in inner rooms will be proclaimed on the housetops.

<sup>4</sup> "And I say to you, My friends, do not be afraid of those who kill the body, and after that have no more that they can do. <sup>5</sup> But I will show you whom you should fear: Fear Him who, after He

has killed, has power to cast into hell; yes, I say to you, fear Him!

<sup>6</sup> “Are not five sparrows sold for two copper coins? And not one of them is forgotten before God. <sup>7</sup> But the very hairs of your head are all numbered. Do not fear therefore; you are of more value than many sparrows.

<sup>8</sup> “Also I say to you, whoever confesses Me before men, him the Son of Man also will confess before the angels of God. <sup>9</sup> But he who denies before men will be denied before the angels of God.

<sup>10</sup> “And anyone who speaks a word against the Son of Man, it will be forgiven him; but to him who blasphemes against the Holy Spirit, it will not be forgiven.

<sup>11</sup> “Now when they bring you to the synagogues and magistrates and authorities, do not worry about how or what you should answer, or what you should say. <sup>12</sup> For the Holy Spirit will teach you in that very hour what you ought to say.”

<sup>13</sup> Then one from the crowd said to Him, “Teacher, tell my brother to divide the inheritance with me.”

**The question of your eternal destiny is the most important question of your life.**

Over the next four weeks, I want to talk to us about eternal matters. We are going to take a look at what is really important in life. But, we begin here in talking about our own eternal destiny. After all, the Bible tells us in Hebrews that “man is destined to die once and after that face the judgment.” (Hebrews 9:27) Our eternal destiny is the most important question of our lives, and whatever the second most important question is a distant second place.

Four things in this text in Luke 12 point to the importance of the question of our eternal destinies.

1. The Certainty of Judgment—In this text, we see that God’s judgment is penetrating. Nothing will be hidden. In addition, His judgment is perfect.
2. The Reality of Hell—People do not like to talk about the reality of Hell, but Jesus did.
3. The Possibility of Persecution—People in Jesus’ day were persecuted for believing in Him. However, in light of the reality of Hell, a person could not let persecution stop them from committing themselves to Jesus.
4. The Comparability of Earthly Things—In light of eternal life, nothing of earthly temporariness matters. Amazing, isn’t it, that people could be focused on the things of this world when eternity is the real question? Someone interrupted Jesus’ teaching to ask about earthly stuff. We do the same thing. Jesus spoke a parable that ended with

this warning, “Fool! This night your soul will be required of you; then whose things will those things be which you have provided?”

Do you know for certain where you will spend eternity? All other questions can wait until you know the answer to this question.

**The answer for the question of your eternal destiny is solely in Jesus.**

Rabbi Schmuley Boteach, a national syndicate radio show host, said in a debate on Larry King Live, “I am absolutely against any religion that says that one faith is superior to another. I don’t see how that is anything different than spiritual racism. It’s a way of saying that we are closer to God than you, and that’s what leads to hatred.”<sup>1</sup> How do you defend against this kind of assessment of Christianity?

- The Reality—God is the only one with power over Heaven and Hell. It is not real popular to say that God sends someone to Hell. We would rather say that the person chose Hell or that their sin sends them to Hell. However, the reality is that God, and God alone, has the power of both Heaven and Hell. Jesus is the only one who can bridge the gap that sin has caused in our relationship to God.
- The Reason—Why is Jesus the only one? He is both God and man.
- The Reassurance—But here is the reassurance. God does not want us to go to Hell; He wants us to go to Heaven. Notice how quickly in verse 6 the scene shifts. We ought to fear God, but when we do, we have nothing else to fear.
- Your Response—What are you going to do with Jesus?

**Your decision concerning your eternal destiny ought to affect every area of your life.**

There are only a few things that are going to last forever—God, people, and the word of God. We ought to be pouring our lives into these things. Once we have made our decision about Jesus, our priorities should change, our perspective should change, and our practices should change. The easiest way to determine whether we have an eternal perspective or an earthly perspective is considering our calendar (how we spend our time) and our checkbook (how we spend our money).

I have recently read a book entitled, *When the Game is over, It all Goes Back in the Box*, by John Ortberg. Ortberg takes his title from playing Monopoly with his grandmother when he was a child. Ortberg suggests that in life like Monopoly, it all goes back into the box. You can accumulate all the properties, place hotels on all the properties, and cause everyone else to go bankrupt. However, when the game is over, it all goes back in the box. Ortberg’s thesis is

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<sup>1</sup>Transcript from Larry King Live, January 12, 2000.

absolutely correct so long as we do not miss this one thing. Our eternal souls will last forever. Our soul will either last forever with God in Heaven or apart from God in Hell. Eternity! Don't leave earth without being prepared!