

PERSECUTION FEAR

Luke 12:1-12

Yeshua §111

If someone asked you point blank, "Are you a Christian?" What would you say?

If they asked you here at church?

If they asked you at the grocery store?

If someone asked you at work in front of your boss and peers?

If the philosophy professor at SDSU asked you in front of the class?

If a Black Lives Matter activist at a BLM rally in Balboa Park asked you?

What increases as we move from church to BLM rally?

Our sense of being threatened. When threatened, we feel fear. That fear, what I'm calling *persecution fear*, brings with it temptation. Persecution fear brings the temptation to deny our relationship with Jesus in order to escape harm. A clear biblical example is Peter (John 18:15-18; 25-27).

Jesus knew and taught His disciples they would be persecuted (Matt. 10:24-25). Persecution will tempt them to deny Him. In our passage today, Jesus trains His disciples how to defeat *persecution fear temptation*.

STUDY PASSAGE (LUKE 12:1-12)

1 In 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. 2 Nothing is covered up that will not be revealed, or hidden that will not be known. 3 Therefore 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. 5 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! 6 Are not five sparrows sold for two pennies? And not one of them is forgotten before God. 7

Part 1.	The Coming of the King
Part 2.	The Authentication of the King
Part 3.	The Controversy over the King
Part 4.	The Training of the Twelve by the King
Part 5.	The Opposition to the King > Instruction of the Disciples
Part 6.	The Preparation of the Disciples by the King
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Part 10.	The Death of the King
Part 11.	The Resurrection and the Ascension of the King
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Why, 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, 9 but the one who denies me before men will be denied before the angels of God. 10 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. 11 And 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, 12 for the Holy Spirit will teach you in that very hour what you ought to say.”

The crowd seems hostile to Jesus. Jesus had dined at a Pharisee's home and while there, sternly rebuked both pharisees and lawyers (Luke 11:37-54). It was permissible in that day for uninvited guests to come and listen when an important person was a guest in someone's home. Perhaps a few townspeople witnessed Jesus berate their spiritual leaders. Taking up the insult, they may have incited the crowd against Jesus.

Whatever the case, circumstances were such that Jesus felt compelled to train His men how to defeat persecution fear. First, He warns them *to not be hypocrites* like the Pharisees.

Hypocrisy is hiding who you truly are.

Pharisees hid their greed and wickedness by outward shows of piety (tithing, fasting, praying etc.). Persecution fear will tempt disciples to hide their true relationship to Jesus by denying they know Him.

In verses 2-7 Jesus gives three reasons to not give in to the temptation to deny Him:

LUKE 12:2-3 (ESV)

2 Nothing is covered up that will not be revealed, or hidden that will not be known. 3 Therefore 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.

Denying Jesus will be futile. Even if they deny knowing Jesus, the truth will become known just as it did in Peter's case.

In verses 4-5:

LUKE 12:4-5 (ESV)

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

If you're going to suffer, it's better to suffer at the hands of men who are limited in what they can do than to suffer at the hands of God who is not.

In verses 6-7, Jesus gives another truth to defeat persecution fear.

LUKE 12:6-7 (ESV)

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

When they do suffer persecution, it will not be because God has abandoned them. God values them greatly, knows them intimately and will be with them in the midst of their sufferings.

In verses 8-12 Jesus gives four more truths to defeat persecution fear. In verses 8-9 He reveals reward for faithfulness.

LUKE 12:8-9 (ESV)

8 “And I tell you, everyone who acknowledges me before men, the Son of Man also will acknowledge before the angels of God, 9 but the one who denies me before men will be denied before the angels of God.

At the Judgment Seat of Christ, Jesus will publicly praise to the Father and angels those disciples who remained faithful in the face of persecution. Further, He will confirm their right to receive their inheritance as co-heirs (partners) of Christ (Rom. 8:17; 2 Tim. 2:1-13). For the twelve disciples, their inheritance is to reign over the twelve tribes of Israel (Matt. 19:28). Disciples who deny Jesus, will, at the Judgment Seat of Christ, be rebuked for their unfaithfulness and their inheritance denied them (2 Tim. 2:12b).

In verse 10 Jesus reveals it is possible to be restored for denying, but not for blaspheming.

LUKE 12:10A (ESV)

And everyone who speaks a word against the Son of Man will be forgiven,

One who gives way to temptation and denies Jesus can be forgiven and restored to fellowship as was Peter (1 John 1:9; John 21:15-19).

LUKE 12:10B (ESV)

...but the one who blasphemes against the Holy Spirit will not be forgiven.

But a disciple who goes so far as to agree with Jesus' enemies that Jesus is empowered by Satan, will not be forgiven. They have joined that generation in rejecting Jesus by blaspheming the Holy Spirit and committing the unpardonable sin (Matt. 12:22-32). This possibility was limited to that generation of men and women to whom Jesus came in His first coming.

Jesus' final instructions on defeating persecution fear are found in verses 11-12.

LUKE 12:11-12 (ESV)

11 And 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, 12 for the Holy Spirit will teach you in that very hour what you ought to say."

When they face their persecutors and the temptation to deny Jesus is intense, Jesus assures His disciples they will not be left on their own. The Holy Spirit will be with them actively guiding them in what to say to their accusers.

We are living in post-Christian America. Hatred of Christianity and Christians is on the rise. We need to shift our thinking to be like that of our persecuted brothers and sisters. We need to be thinking about and preparing ourselves to be faithful rather than looking back and bemoaning how things have changed.

Except for blaspheming the Holy Spirit, everything Jesus taught His disciples applies to us today. These are the truths that will enable us to defeat persecution fear and the temptation to deny Jesus. These are the truths that will enable us to remain faithful and to receive the commendation of our Lord Jesus.

**The one who conquers and who keeps my works until the end, to him
I will give authority over the nations,**

REVELATION 2:26