

# The Christian Arsenal

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## LUKE 12:1-59

This chapter covers several topics. We see the subject of hypocrisy covered in the first part of the chapter. We see greed and worry covered in the middle of the chapter. And in **verse 35** the Lord Jesus seems to switch gears and begins to speak about the fact that He is coming again.

The time of the earthly ministry of the Savior was rapidly drawing to a close, and He knows it is necessary to prepare His disciples for what will come **next**...and what will come after **that**.

### **Verses 35-40...**

Jesus is telling His disciples in a parable that they are to be dressed in readiness and they are to keep their lamps burning.

Jesus says in these verses that waiting for Him to return is like servants waiting for their master to return. The servant is prepared and ready to serve.

I believe we can liken His coming to company coming. Every time you and I are expecting company we do certain things.

We clean things we haven't cleaned in awhile. We change sheets that need to be changed. We dust things that we've neglected. It never ceases to amaze me how much dust and cobwebs suddenly appear in my house the moment I know that company is on their way.

Wouldn't it be nice if I just cleaned in such a way that my home was always prepared for company so that I wouldn't have to scurry about to make my home presentable?

Jesus also likened His coming to the head of the house being so prepared that if a thief came and tried to break into his home he could have prevented it.

And then Jesus said in **verse 40**: "You too, be ready; for the Son of Man is coming at an hour that you do not expect."

Then, Peter said, "Lord, are you talking to us or to everyone else as well?"

### **Verses 41-48...**

I want us to notice that in these verses we see **four types of people** who profess to be saved.

The first type are those who **profess to be Christian and are really saved and are really living for the Lord**.

Now, remember to whom Jesus is speaking. Back in **verse 1** of this chapter we see that there was **a great multitude** present and hearing His teaching.

Then, in **verse 13** Jesus speaks to **one man** who had come to Him with a question. Then, in **verse 22**, Jesus turns and speaks to His **disciples**.

So, He has spoken to **the whole multitude**.

He has spoken to **one man**.

He has spoken to His **disciples**.

And here He is speaking to **everyone who professes to be a believer**.

# The Christian Arsenal

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So, let's consider for a few moments these **four groups of professing believers**. And bear in mind that you can look at me on the outside, but you can't look into my heart. And I can look at you only on the outside, but I can't look into your heart.

I might look at you and you might look at me and say, "Why, there's one of the finest and godliest people I know," and on the inside there may be little that is fine or godly.

So, this morning as we consider this passage, I don't want you to look at **me** or the one sitting next to you. I don't even want you to look at what you are on the outside. I want you to look into your own **heart** and give your own **heart** an examination. **That's where God looks.**

God isn't concerned with the outside of us. God is concerned with what goes on in the depths of my heart. And we're living in a time when there is nothing left to be fulfilled before Jesus comes back. He can come at any time. He could come before our service ends today.

First of all, the first person identified here is the **person who is really saved and who is living for the Lord.**

## **Verse 42...**

The person who is really living for the Lord is one who is identified as a "steward." The word "steward" literally means "a household manager." The house did not belong to **him**. It's not **his house**. The house belongs to his **master** and he has been entrusted with the management of it.

And I want to tell you...all that God has given us to enjoy isn't really ours. He's only entrusted it to us to manage. He allows us to be in charge for one reason...that we will manage it for His glory!

We are to be stewards...**faithful stewards!** And not only are we to be faithful stewards, but we are to be sensible (or wise) stewards. The Bible draws a sharp distinction between spiritual wisdom and worldly wisdom.

For example, **David** made many mistakes and failed God in many ways. But David had enough spiritual wisdom to know that he needed to come back to God with repentance and with a broken and contrite heart.

But, think of **Solomon**. God gifted Solomon more than any other man. Solomon chose to use the worldly part of that God-given wisdom and neglect the spiritual part of that wisdom. He failed to live up his God-given potential.

Now, let me ask you:  
Which man used his wisdom wisely?  
Which man was a wise steward?  
Which man wasted his wisdom?

God told us in His word that if we lack wisdom all we have to do is ask and we'll be given wisdom...liberally, abundantly!

**And I truly believe the more we ask for wisdom, the more God loves to give it!**

God longs for His children to be faithful and wise stewards of that which He has entrusted to them.

# The Christian Arsenal

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The second person identified here is **the person who professes to be a Christian but is not really one at all.**

## **Verse 45...**

This person has no delight at all in the coming of the Lord. As a matter of fact, the idea of the coming of the Lord terrifies this person. They may have walked an aisle. They may have filled out a card. They may have even been baptized.

But, there has never been any fruit in their lives.

They live to gratify self.

**If going to church and being a church member is self-serving then they'll go to church and even walk an aisle...but there has never been any heart change.**

***But, I want to tell you...there are degrees of punishment in hell and***

the one who **knows** to do good but doesn't **do** it...

the one who **knows** the Gospel, but doesn't **commit** to it...

the one who **hears** the Word but doesn't **believe** it...

the one who **takes the preacher by the hand** but doesn't mean it...

**...that person will suffer a much harsher punishment in hell than the one who never knows...**

The third kind of person is **the one who professes to be a Christian and really is saved, but lives in deliberate disobedience.**

## **Verse 47...**

Does this mean the believer goes to hell? No, it means he will be chastised by a loving Heavenly Father...**not to bring him down, but to lift him up.**

Have you ever looked back over circumstances of your life and you knew in retrospect that God was dealing with you?

I mean, was there ever a time in your life when you knew you were saved, but you were deliberately walking your own way? You just didn't care what God wanted of you...you were determined to do your own thing?

Perhaps at first, He dealt with you gently...but you didn't listen. Then, He dealt with you less gently...but you still didn't listen. And then, He beat you with many stripes.

And you looked back at all the calamities that came into your life, and you can say now...  
*"God was trying so hard to get me to turn my life over to Him and I was so stubborn... All that heartache and pain could have been avoided if I had just done what I knew to do."*

Whom the Lord He chastens. The book of **Hebrews** tells us that God disciplines those whom He loves. **Hebrews 12** tells us that if God didn't discipline us as His children, then we are illegitimate children and not really His children.

That same passage goes on to teach us that "...all discipline for the moment seems not to be good but sorrowful, yet to those who have been trained by it, afterwards it yields the peaceful fruit of righteousness."

Paul said in **1 Corinthians 11:31-32**, speaking to believers...

***"...if we judged ourselves rightly, we should not be judged.***

# The Christian Arsenal

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*But when we are judged, we are disciplined by the Lord in order that we may not be condemned along with the world."*

So, if you're really God's child and you're walking in deliberate disobedience, expect to be beaten with many stripes...**and know it's coming from a God who really is your heavenly Father and loves you enough to bring you back to Himself!**

And there is a fourth group mentioned here.

**Verse 48...**

This is the person **who professes to be saved and really is saved, but has never grown beyond just being saved.**

There are folks who have been evangelized but have never been disciplined. Some folks are saved in a big crusade and then the evangelist leaves and there is no "follow-up" program and folks really were saved...but there is no one to teach them the things of God...and they continue to do things they shouldn't do...

And God makes it very clear...ignorance is not bliss. All sin has a price. And He says they will be beaten with **few stripes**.  
**But, there will be some stripes.**

Listen, new Christians need discipling. Maybe the opportunity to be disciplined one on one by a mature believer isn't there...but every new Christian needs a Bible. And every new Christian needs to be informed that if they would faithfully read God's Word and diligently seek His face, the dear Holy Spirit would come along side him and teach him!

You know, I really doubt there are any folks here in this room who belong in this fourth group. I mean, week after week you and I are sitting under good, sound Bible preaching. The Pastor doesn't just discuss current events...he teaches the precious word of God to us. And God says, **"...to whom much is given, much is required..."**

Listen, God doesn't call Christians to know more of Him and His ways for self-edification **alone**. Self-edification is a good thing, but it's not the **only** thing!

When **we** know more, we can help **others** know more.

And we mustn't forget that God has rewards waiting for those who know and keep His word. I believe all of us want to lay crowns at the feet of Jesus one day!

Every professing Christian needs **to be sure and certain that he really is saved!**

Every saved person should diligently **seek to know the will of God.**

Every saved person should diligently **seek to obey the will of God.**

Every saved person should **live in the light that Jesus could come now!**

And that leads us to our next passage of Scripture...

**Verses 49-53...**

I believe we see in these few verses the determination of the Lord Jesus Christ...the **desire** of the Lord Jesus Christ...the **destiny** by which this determination and desire was to be accomplished...the **distress** Jesus endured and the **division** that many times results from belief in the Lord Jesus Christ.

The determination Jesus had. The desire Jesus felt. The destiny Jesus anticipated. The distress Jesus endured. The division Jesus brings.

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First, the **determination**. Jesus says here His determination was to cast fire upon the earth.

He came to cast the fire that lights our way...and the fire that purifies...and the fire that destroys.

The fire of Jesus **lights our way** to Him. Remember the story of Saul on the way to Damascus? He encountered a great light...so great a light that he was blinded for a time. This light was the Lord Jesus Christ pointing Saul of Tarsus to Himself.

Saul started out that day thinking he was going to Damascus to persecute more Christians, but when the light of Jesus got hold of Saul, he became Paul the **believer**...and Paul the **evangelist**...and Paul the **church planter**...and Paul the **preacher**...and Paul the **teacher**...and Paul the great **doctrine expositor** and **Scripture writer**...and Paul the **martyr**!

The fire of Jesus **purifies**. It purified Paul of his hatred of Christians and placed in Paul such a love for God and His kingdom that he devoted his life to bringing as many folks as he could to saving knowledge of the Lord Jesus!

The fire of Jesus **destroys**. It destroyed the works of the devil in Paul. Paul was doing the devil's bidding until the destroying fire of Jesus got hold of him.

So, that's the determination Jesus is speaking of here...He came to cast fire upon the earth. But, notice the **desire**... *"how I wish it were already kindled!"*

The **NAS** sounds so bland. This word "wish" in the **NAS** and the **NIV** and the **NKJV** is translated "will" in the **KJV** and is a much stronger word than it appears on the surface. It really means it was the **driving, compelling force** of His life. Jesus said, *"My earnest desire is to see this fire kindled."*

This is something that had not already taken place. And that brings us to the **destiny**. Before the fire could be kindled, something had to take place.

The fire of our Lord was not kindled by the fact that He was **virgin born** although He was born of a virgin.

The fire of our Lord was not kindled by the fact that He lived a **sinless life** although indeed He knew no sin.

The fire of our Lord was not kindled by the fact that He **performed miracles** although He performed many of them.

The fire of our Lord was not kindled by the mighty things He **preached** although no man ever spoke as He did.

The fire of our Lord was not kindled until Calvary! It was a baptism of suffering and shame. Jesus Christ came to die on a Cross for you and me! This was the baptism He had to undergo.

After the determination and the desire and the destiny...we see the **distress**.

**Verse 50...**

"Distressed" in the **NAS** is from the **KJV** word "straitened" and it is used only by Dr. Luke. It means *"be under intense pressure."*

Jesus was under so much pressure that He prayed that

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if there were any other way for the fire to be burned in the hearts of men,  
if there were any other way to light the way to Himself,  
if there were any other way to destroy the works of the devil,  
if there were any other way for this fire to be cast to the earth

...if this cup could be removed from Him and all this be done any other way...  
**"nevertheless not My will, but Thine, be done."**

But there **was** no other way. And because there was no other way, we need to know that Jesus fulfilled all that was required of Him. He did it willingly...and the Bible says, **"...with joy that was set before Him, He endured the Cross..."**

And all that brought about **division**. Jesus said that He didn't come the first time to bring peace to the earth, but that families would be divided against each other. **Verse 53...**

We were watching a program the other night on CNN. And it was a program that looked at evangelical Christianity as opposed to simply "Christianity."

This program followed a typical Southern Baptist family to church and visited with them in their and interviewed the parents and their children home and their Southern Baptist pastor was interviewed as well as Dr. Richard Land.

**Of course, the reporter also interviewed folks who called themselves Christians, but not evangelical Christians. What's the difference? The difference is that folks who profess to be Christians, but not evangelicals believe that Jesus really is not the only way to God. Therefore they believe that folks don't really need to be evangelized.**

At the end of this program the reporter said our country is **divided**...and it is divided **religiously** as well as other ways.

Well, what I wanted to tell the lady is this... "Jesus **said** it would be so!"

We live in a world that teaches inclusiveness. We must include everybody! We must honor the way others believe. We're all trying to get to the same place, we're just taking different paths. All "religions" are equally the same. One is as valuable and as godly as the other.

But, that's not what Jesus taught. Islam is **not** as good as Christianity. Judaism is **not** as good as Christianity. Buddhism and Hinduism and Mormonism and Shintoism and Ba'hai are all **as good as each other...but there is nothing like a personal relationship with the Lord Jesus Christ.**

Jesus said, **"No man comes to the Father except through Me."** And you either believe Jesus Christ told the truth or you believe He's a liar. The Bible says that the Cross is an offense. And when people take offense at the Cross, they will be offended by the stand you take for the Cross.

The Cross divided the world. The Lord Jesus said, "Do you suppose that I came to grant peace on earth? I tell you, no, but rather division."

Why? Peace was offered through Him. If men had received Him they would have had peace, but they spurned Him and as a result they have been divided. And I believe we have seen this so plainly from this past election.

Peace, lasting peace, real peace will not come until He comes again!

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His **determination** was to send fire. His **deep desire** was that it would get started. The **destiny** to accomplish this was the Cross. The **distress** was the intensity of the agony He would experience and in the end families and friendships and relationships would be **divided** because of the offense of the Cross.

Many of us could testify today that Christ has caused division in our families to one extent or another! And this can be so frustrating! But, all we can do is live before our unsaved family members as pure and as godly a life as we can. And we can pray. The same Jesus who died for you and me, also died for those lost members of our families!

Well, let's quickly look at our last passage today...

## **Verses 54-59...**

This is a deep teaching. On the surface it looks like a teaching on predicting the weather. It looks like a teaching on settling disputes out of court, but there's so much more that Jesus was teaching you and me.

Back then folks told what the weather was going to be by looking at the sky. When they saw a cloud rising in the west, they knew a shower was coming. When they felt a wind blowing in from the south, they knew it would be hot.

They didn't have sophisticated weather predicting devices. They didn't have Doppler and all the things we have today. But, even without all our modern technology, these folks still could somewhat discern what the weather would be on a given day.

But, Jesus called them hypocrites! He said, **"You can discern the weather, but you cannot discern the present time."**

What did Jesus mean? Jesus meant they professed one thing, but really believed another.

Look back at **Luke 10:23...**

**"And turning to the disciples, He said privately, "Blessed are the eyes which see the things you see, for I say to you, that many prophets and kings wished to see the things which you see, and did not see them, and to hear the things which you hear, and did not hear them."**

Jesus was saying that the prophets and the kings of old looked forward to the time when God would come to the earth and become flesh. They didn't understand it all. But, they knew the Messiah would come and that meant God Himself would come.

And Jesus says to the disciples, **"Those kings and those prophets were looking forward to a time when the Messiah would come and you're seeing Him right here. Now is the time."**

So, you take that from **Luke 10** and you come back to **Luke 12** and you see that Jesus is saying, **"Folks, you can tell the way the wind is blowing and you can tell if it's going to rain, and you claim to be looking for your Messiah to come and I want to tell you...He's already here...and you don't even have enough spiritual discernment to recognize Him."**

And then Jesus mentions four different personalities...

The **adversary**...the one who brings charges against you.

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The **magistrate**...the one who decides whether the charges are valid.

The **judge**...the one who will settle the case and render the verdict for or against you.

The **officer**...the one who is going to carry out the punishment prescribed.

**And may I say to you that Jesus Christ, in reality is all four of these personalities.**

**Jesus is the one who brings charges against you.**

**Jesus is the one who is in charge of things.**

**Jesus is the judge who will render the verdict for or against you.**

**Jesus is the officer who will execute the punishment.**

And what does Jesus say? He is saying, ***"Listen, when you're walking with your adversary on your way to the magistrate...do whatever you need to do to keep your case out of court!"***

See, when Jesus came to earth the first time He was the Lamb of God. He was the Great Shepherd. He was the precious Redeemer. He was the wonderful Savior...

But there is coming a day when He will return to earth to rule and to reign and to judge.

The first time He came, He was meek and mild and drew folks to His side...even John, the apostle, leaned on His breast. But, remember how John described Jesus in the book of **Revelation?**

He had hair as white as snow.

Out of His mouth came a sharp two-edged sword.

His feet were like burnished bronze.

His voice was like the sound of many waters.

His eyes were like a flame of fire.

And remember what John did when He saw Him? He fell at His feet as a dead man. And Jesus said, ***"Don't be afraid. I am the first and the last.***

***I am the Alpha and the Omega... I'm the Jesus you knew...I just look different than when you last saw me and I come for a different purpose."***

One day every person will stand before Him. And the books will be opened. Every thing you've ever done is written there.

Another book will be opened and this is the book of life. And if you're truly saved, that book will have your name written in it.

And I want to tell you this...it won't matter how many times your name is mentioned in the works books...how many good deeds you've done in this lifetime... It won't even matter if your good deeds have far outnumbered your bad deeds.

What really will matter is if your case was settled out of court.

If it was, then your name will be found in the book of life.

**Revelation 20, the last verse:**

***"And if anyone's name was not found written in the book of life, he was thrown into the lake of fire."***

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That's why Jesus came. He came so that we could have our case settled out of court. But, it's up to you and me to accept the great provision He's made for us.

That's what salvation is. Salvation keeps us from hearing, "Depart from Me, I never knew you. Salvation keeps us from having the last verse of **Revelation 20** apply to us.

That's what missions is. That's what evangelism is.

**It's one beggar telling another where he can find bread.** It's one **forgiven** sinner telling an **unforgiven** sinner how to find forgiveness.

Ron Dunn:

"The **worst** thing that could ever be said about me has already been said about me by God... 'You're a sinner.'

And the **best** thing that could ever be said about me has already been said about me by God... 'You're My child.'"

God is a God of wrath and judgment...but He is also a God of love....

**May God give you and me an urgency in our spirit**

- 1) to make certain we're saved...**
- 2) to make certain our heart is right before Him...**
- 3) to do all we can to help others to have the same urgency...**

And that's our lesson for today...