

## The Gospel According To Luke

"A Jesus Who Is The Light"

Luke 11:33-12:3

### ***I. Piercing Light***

### ***II. Personal Light***

### ***III. Purifying Light***

Today we are continuing in our study of the book of Luke in our quest to try to get to know and understand Jesus and what He's all about. We're just moving through the book, chapter by chapter, verse by verse. Some passages focus on some action of Jesus, some miracle He did or interaction He had. Other sections focus on teachings He gave and things He said.

This week, the part we're covering is one of the teaching sections where Jesus says some stuff, gets invited over to this dude's house to talk about it and while He's there Jesus just kind of goes off on the guy. The whole thing gets started by Jesus talking about this spiritual analogy of light. The bulk of the ensuing discussion is Jesus shining light on some major disparities He saw. And then everything gets wrapped up by talking about light once again. So I titled my sermon for today, "A Jesus Who Is The Light."

So let's go ahead and read the text and pray over it and then I'll tell you how I want to work through it.

Luke 11:33-12:3

*33 "No one after lighting a lamp puts it in a cellar or under a basket, but on a stand, so that those who enter may see the light. 34 Your eye is the lamp of your body. When your eye is healthy, your whole body is full of light, but when it is bad, your body is full of darkness. 35 Therefore be careful lest the light in you be darkness. 36 If then your whole body is full of light, having no part dark, it will be wholly bright, as when a lamp with its rays gives you light."*

*37 While Jesus was speaking, a Pharisee asked him to dine with him, so he went in and reclined at table. 38 The Pharisee was astonished to see that he did not first wash before dinner. 39 And the Lord said to him, "Now you Pharisees cleanse the outside of the cup and of the dish, but inside you are full of greed and wickedness. 40 You fools! Did not he who made the outside make the inside also? 41 But give as alms those things that are within, and behold, everything is clean for you."*

*42 "But woe to you Pharisees! For you tithe mint and rue and every herb, and neglect justice and the love of God. These you ought to have done, without neglecting the others. 43 Woe to you Pharisees! For you love the best seat in the synagogues and greetings in the marketplaces. 44 Woe to you! For you are like unmarked graves, and people walk over them without knowing it."*

*45 One of the lawyers answered him, "Teacher, in saying these things you insult us also." 46 And he said, "Woe to you lawyers also! For you load people with burdens hard to bear, and you yourselves do not touch the burdens with one of your fingers. 47 Woe to you! For you build the tombs of the prophets whom your fathers killed. 48 So you are witnesses and you consent to the deeds of your fathers, for they killed them, and you build their tombs. 49 Therefore also the Wisdom of God said, 'I will send them prophets and apostles, some of whom they will kill and persecute,' 50 so that the blood of all the prophets, shed from the foundation of the world, may be charged against this generation, 51 from the blood of Abel to the blood of Zechariah, who perished between the altar and the sanctuary. Yes, I tell you, it will be required of this*

*generation. 52 Woe to you lawyers! For you have taken away the key of knowledge. You did not enter yourselves, and you hindered those who were entering."*

*53 As he went away from there, the scribes and the Pharisees began to press him hard and to provoke him to speak about many things, 54 lying in wait for him, to catch him*

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.

- Pastoral Declaration: This is the Word of the Lord.

- Congregational Response: Thanks Be To God.

Pastoral Prayer

A Jesus Who Is The Light. Everybody do something for me. Everyone close their eyes. Now open them. What did you see?

When you're eyes are closed you don't really see anything do you? Just some shadows or residuals of light from when you're eyes were open. How different is it once we open our eyes? All of the sudden our vision is filled with light and images of all different shapes, sizes and colors.

Can you imagine being blind? One of my good friends in grad school was blind. He wasn't born that way but went blind in high school. We would get together and play poker and other card games with these braille cards he had. He would always beat everyone and take our money.

Because he couldn't see our faces and we couldn't read his and he had this perfect image in his head of what his cards were without having to look at them. Moral of the story, never play poker with a blind person.

I got the chance to talk to him about it a number of times and learned a lot. The eye is one of the most incredible things. It is so complex in how it functions and what it does. It was the one piece of the human body that gave Darwin great doubt about whether his theory of evolution could be true. It amazes me that with all the technology, each generation of phone and TVs getting better and better...that nothing is as good as just being able to open your eyes and see something live.

Jesus in our text and story for today says, "your eye is the lamp of your body." When we have a healthy eye, we are able to see and experience the world and based on what we see our body acts and is formed and shaped in light of it. Now, almost always when Jesus or the Bible talk about light and darkness, it's making a spiritual analogy where light is good and from God and darkness is bad or evil.

What Jesus is basically saying with the eye thing is we need God's light to shine into our hearts and our lives and drive out the darkness we have and have let in. And when Jesus gets invited over to this guy's house for dinner to expand on what He saying, what Jesus does is start casting light on this guy and his friends lives.

So there's three things having to do with what Jesus says I want to talk about: His tone, His concern and His solution in sermon points I'm calling, "Piercing Light", "Personal Light", and "Purifying Light." What I'm hoping we'll all walk away thinking about and believing today is "Jesus is the light we need."

## I. Piercing Light

With this first point I thought it would be good and helpful to talk about Jesus' tone. I mean when you're reading through this passage and trying to imagine and hear Jesus' voice in your head. He doesn't sound too happy. This doesn't sound like "nice Jesus", the one we see so much of the time in the story of Luke, just loving people, feeding people, healing them and telling them how much God loves them. This Jesus sounds a little more fiery. Check it out...

Verse 40 He says, "You fools!" This Jesus calls names. Pity the fool.

Six different times he dishes out woes. A "woe" is this expletive of pain or displeasure like "you make me sick" and has with it a curse or a threat of judgment. He says...

Luke 11:42 "Woe to you Pharisees!"

Luke 11:43 "Woe to you Pharisees!"

Luke 11:44 "Woe to you!"

Luke 11:45 "Woe to you lawyers also!"

Luke 11:47 "Woe to you!"

Luke 11:52 "Woe to you lawyers!"

Jesus ain't happy with these guys. These two groups were basically part of the church leadership of the day. The Pharisees were basically pastors who were hyper conservative, hyper critical, focused a ton on behavior and majored in the minors. The lawyers here are not like personal injury lawyers who settled court cases for money. They were experts in God's law, the Bible. So these guys are supposed to be the Bible scholars and theologians, the good Christians.

The Jesus Storybook Bible, we often read with our kids at home calls these guys the "extra-super-holy people." And Jesus is really hard on them, calling them names, calling curses down on them, and then calling them out on the duplicities of their hearts and lives.

So what I want to talk about for a few minutes is, "Why you being so mean Jesus?" His words are cutting and piercing.

One of the pictures of Jesus in the last book of the Bible, Revelation, is of Him having a sword coming out of His mouth and that's what we kind of see Jesus doing here in this story. With the righteous and holy flaming sword of His mouth, He cuts through these men and pierces them right in the heart.

So why is Jesus like this? Here's what I'd say. For these guys this is the most loving thing He could do. Throughout Jesus life He consistently opposed the proud and gave grace to the humble, just like God does to all people throughout all the stories of the Bible. Sometimes what we need, when we're being proud, duplicitous or hard...is someone to speak straight to us. Sometimes it's the only thing that will work.

In Jeremiah 23:29 in the Bible God says this, "Is not my word like fire, declares the Lord, and like a hammer that breaks the rock in pieces?"

Hebrews 4:12 in the Bible says this, "The word of God is living and active, sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing to the division of soul and of spirit, of joints and of marrow, and discerning the thoughts and intentions of the heart."

Often times throughout the story of Acts in the Bible, the story of the first thirty years or so of the church after Jesus went back to heaven, you see stories of people who were not Christians but after hearing the message about Jesus were “cut to the heart.”

It’s interesting how light works. I used to be into photography and would develop my own pictures in a dark room. It’s amazing how hard it is to get a room totally dark. Just the slightest crack of a door and a piercing beam of light stabs into the room.

So what I want to simply say today is sometimes we need the light of God’s word to pierce us. Sometimes we just need someone to shoot us straight. Sometimes we’re so concerning about never upsetting someone that we won’t speak the straight and simple truth to them when that’s what they actually need. Sometimes we’re just blind to our own faults and failures, it’s like we’re just stumbling around in the dark and we need someone to shine God’s light for us so we might get back on the path of walking with Him.

God’s light is a piercing light but it’s a good one. Today, do you need to be pierced and cut to the heart? Maybe you’re here and what you need most is to hear Jesus’ saying to you today, “You’re being a fool.” How you’re living and the decisions you are making are fooling, stop it! Wake up. Woe to you. If you don’t stop it and turn to me it ain’t going to turn out good.

Or maybe on the other end. Maybe you have a friend who really needs to be pierced by the truth of God’s Word and you’ve been afraid to say something because of how they’ll react to you? Be courageous. It’s not mean but loving to speak the truth, especially when you’re doing it because you really love and care for the person.

Jesus is the light we need. And His light comes to us through His Word that pierces our heart. Here’s the thing, when we’re pierced it’s painful at first. But once we enter into it we always end up feeling better and being better. No surgeon ever operates because he wants to hurt a person, but he cuts a person open in order to heal them. And that’s what Jesus our great physician does for us. He cuts us in order that our hearts might be healed.

So let’s talk about our heart issues in our next point for today, “Personal Light.”

## II. Personal Light

In this point what I’d like to do is quickly go through each of the woes. In each of them what Jesus is really doing is trying to get beneath the surface with these guys, so He uses six different practical illustrations to show how much they needed the light of God to shine into their hearts.

Jesus is the guest of honor in this Pharisee’s home who invited Him over for dinner. Now, it was normal custom anytime you went to someone’s house for dinner to wash your hands before the meal. They would have a wash basin right near the table.

However, the reasons they washed was not because of sanitary reasons. It was for religious ones. The idea was that idea sprung from the principle that bad company corrupts good morals. Which is true, if the only people you hang with is bad company.

But these guys took it so far to think to say that you don’t even want to touch something another person of lesser spiritual standing has touched because that somehow associates you as being equal with them. So they had all these rules about, not only washing your hands but the outside of the cup so there was a clean separation.

Jesus walks in and I think intentionally doesn't wash at all and just sits down. And the dude is offended. It says in verse 38 he was "astonished to see that [Jesus] did not wash before dinner."

Jesus, I imagine takes a cup that likely had some residue on the inside of it, looks at it and says, you're like this cup. You wash the outside of it, you look good on the outside but inside you're all dirty...full of wickedness. And then in verse 40 He basically says, you need a bath, God wants to clean you and starts addressing everything that need cleaning.

This happens so easily with us. We can look like we have it all together on the outside. Even projecting that image. But inside we are dirty and falling apart. Jesus says that's no good. So in these six woes Jesus gets really personal addressing areas where we need God's light in our hearts.

#### Woe 1 - The Gifts of Greed // Luke 11:42

Now in Jesus day, pretty much everybody went to church and at church pretty much everyone gave. Today we give money, back then they gave goods and because it was goods you could see what everyone gave. How about that? What if you knew what each person gave at church or if someone didn't give anything at all. I'm sure our church would never have any money problems then, but it'd be for the wrong reasons.

Jesus says these guys would give mint, rue and herbs which were some of the cheapest things you could give. They didn't give wine, grain or oil which were worth a lot more. Because of that they had more money. Pharisees and lawyer scribes were typically wealthy. But they were not generous with their wealth blessing and helping those in need. Instead they hoarded it.

Jesus says that's neglecting the justice and love of God. This kind of justice isn't courtroom justice but equity in God's kingdom, with things the way they should be, like a loving family where no one goes hungry or is in need. There's always enough to go around if we all care for one another.

Proverbs 3:27 says, "Do not withhold good from those to whom it is due, when it is in your power to do it." The Bible has strong warnings against greed.

Hebrews 13:5 says to "Keep your life free from the love of money."

And Titus 1:7 says God's people are not to be "greedy for gain."

Listen, beware. Jesus says woe to you if you think life is all about making money and that you will be happy if you get a lot and hoard it. That's what our culture says and it's wicked and just makes our hearts dirty when we believe it and live that way.

#### Woe 2 - The Seat of Pride // Luke 11:43

Synagogue is an old school word for church and what Jesus is basically saying is these guys loved being up on stage and having everyone look at them and think they were great. They loved sitting outside the church in the marketplace and having people look at them and think, "if I really loved God I'd be like that." They liked people thinking they were better.

Oh how dangerous and deceptive pride is. C.S. Lewis says this in his book, "Mere Christianity",

"The essential vice, the utmost evil, is pride. Unchastity, anger, greed, drunkenness, and all that, are mere fleabites in comparison: it was through pride that the devil became the devil: pride leads to

every other vice...a self-righteous prig who goes regularly to church may be far nearer to hell than a prostitute."

Pride and especially spiritual pride are so dangerous. I get so concerned about the social media culture we live in where everything is about followers and likes constantly screaming out, "look at me, look at me." When we want others to look at us Jesus says woe. Be careful. It leads down a dangerous road. One that will kill you.

#### Woe 3 - The Graves of The Dead // Luke 11:44

With this one Jesus is basically says, you're dead inside, a worthless unmarked grave who has nothing to offer anyone. Jesus got this one from The Walking Dead.

Life is about relationships and God means for His people to be life-giving people. If you're a person who is always negative and critical you're not a life-giving person, you're a life sucking person. You don't help anyone and the truth is no one really likes being around you.

Those who have the love and life of God flowing into their hearts overflow with His peace, love and joy which is a blessing to others. When we cut other people down, talk behind their back, or always finding fault with a person it's a sign we've got spiritual deadness inside and Jesus say woe. Beware that's worthless, God means you to be so much more, that you might help, uplift and encourage people made in His image.

#### Woe 4 - The Burden of Perfection // Luke 11:46

Sometimes we like to say, "nobody's perfect" as an excuse. But there's also a reality to that sentiment. If our own personal expectation of ourselves or expectation of others is that they would do everything right all the time, that's impossible and having that expectation will not only exhaust your own soul but it will tear down the souls of others.

Jesus is saying here that these guys had all these expectations of how people should be and what they should do, but they themselves were hardly doing any of it. The picture of a person traveling with another person and one person is carrying everything.

Being a Christian isn't meant to be this spiritual competition to see who can climb up the hill the fastest. It's meant to be a journey where we help each other up the mountain because seeing the glory of God is worth it.

If you're killing yourself to do everything right in your life and think that's what everyone else should be doing too, Jesus says woe. Beware. What's going to happen is you're going to kill yourself.

#### Woe 5 - The Rejected Word // Luke 11:47-51

The Prophets were the writers of the first part of the Bible, the Old Testament and the Apostles were the writers of the second part of the Bible, the New Testament. The first part is all the things God had written down as His Word before Jesus, testifying and looking forward to Jesus. The second is all the things God had written down as His Word after Jesus, testifying and looking backward to Jesus. So this woe is about the rejection of God's Word.

Jesus brings up two figures from the Bible, Abel the first Prophet and first man ever to die in the Bible and then Zechariah, the last Prophet in the Bible before Jesus came.

Genesis 4 tells us the story of Abel and Cain who were the sons of Adam and Eve, the first man and first woman. Abel was killed by His brother Cain who rejected God's Word and committed the very first murder.

2 Chronicles 24 tells us the story of Zechariah who was a Prophet during the time of King Joash over Israel. King Joash basically decided stop going to church and instead of worshiping YHWH, the God of the Bible, he decided to worship the god Asherim and led the country in that way. Zechariah the prophet spoke up about it saying, "Why do you break the commandments of the LORD, you will not prosper (2 Chron 24:20)." In response the king had him stoned to death inside the church.

When it comes to the apostles, the disciples of Jesus, we know from church history that everyone of them were killed, but John because they tried multiple times putting him in burning vats of oil and what not but he wouldn't die, so they banished him to the island Patmos where he wrote the book of Revelation. All the other ones were killed by people who rejected their message from God about Jesus. Some were crucified, some were beheaded and some were stoned.

Now these are extreme examples, killing people, but the reason every one of them were killed was for speaking God's word. So the principle here is the danger of rejecting God's Word.

When we rely on our own experience or our own truth as the authority of our lives we are rejecting the authority and truth of God's Word He has given us to build our lives upon and to guide our way.  
(repeat)

Psalms 119:105 says "Your Word is lamp to my feet and a light to my path."

And 2 Timothy 4:1-4 warns us saying, "1 I charge you in the presence of God and of Christ Jesus, who is to judge the living and the dead, and by his appearing and his kingdom: 2 Preach the Word...3 For the time is coming when people will not endure sound teaching, but having itching ears they will accumulate for themselves teachers to suit their own passions, 4 and will turn away from listening to the truth and wander off into myths."

God has given us this book as His Word to be received and believed in. When we reject it and its truths for different ideas, different opinions and different gods, Jesus says woe. You will be held accountable for what you heard and turned away from.

Woe 6 - The Key To Foolishness // Luke 11:52

Several times throughout the book of Luke Jesus encourages His hearers to enter the kingdom of God by believing in Him as the King and Savior sent from God.

King Solomon, who we talked about last week, wrote a few books of the Bible, one of them being the book of Proverbs where he wrote down the wisdom God promised to him.

The book starts out in the first chapter saying this, Proverbs 1:7 "The fear of the Lord is the beginning of knowledge."

Then, towards the beginning of the next chapter he says, Proverbs 2:6 "For the Lord gives wisdom; from his mouth come knowledge and understanding."

So what Jesus is saying in this last woe is that He Himself is the key to knowledge, that it's through Him that people enter the kingdom of God. Jesus is wisdom in the flesh, who speaks the word of God

and gives knowledge and understanding. To reject Jesus and to discourage others from believing in and receiving Him is ultimate foolishness.

Listen, to reject Jesus, to dismiss His teachings, to not even consider all that He said and did and what it might mean is ultimate foolishness. Only an utter fool would not consider someone and something that could potentially be the key to understanding everything. If Jesus really was and is God, who came to earth and lived and died to solve humanity's deepest problems and meet its ultimate needs, then it's the most foolish thing one could ever do to not consider what He says and offers.

Jesus says woe, woe to such foolishness. He stands ready and willing to all who come to Him. Jesus said, "I am the way, the truth and the life (Jn 14:6)." He said seek Him and you will find Him and then you will know the truth and the truth will set you free.

And that's the six woes. Six warnings. Six pleas. Six piercing stabs of truth into the human heart and mind, which show us how much we need Jesus' light.

Jesus was gracious in saying all that He did. He didn't have to. He did so in hopes that they would hear and respond. But they didn't. The scene ends in verse 53 with them angry and upset trying to figure out how to arrest Him, which they ultimately accomplish in probably about a year or so after this when they seize Him and have Him nailed to a cross.

They rejected His words and His warnings. Don't make the same mistake today. Jesus is the light we need. Open your eyes and let His light come in, clean out the darkness and enliven your soul.

Which brings us to a final and short point, "Purifying Light."

### III. Purifying Light

Luke, the human author of this book of the Bible we're working through, is writing things down and recording them according to God's instruction, the Holy Spirit divine author, and one of the things we see him doing is arranging things in a literary, cohesive way. So the beginning of chapter 12 serves as both a conclusion to the story we looked at today and an introduction to Jesus' next sermon. What Luke cleverly inserts here in this transition paragraph is some words about light.

First, Jesus says in verse 1 that the lives, beliefs and teachings of the Pharisees is like yeast or leaven. If you've ever made bread or watched someone do it then you know about yeast. Yeast is this micro-organism you add to dough, just a little bit of it. You knead it into the dough and then set it out and in the course of a couple hours the dough rises, tripling in size, and then you put it in the oven and out comes bread.

Jesus says the Pharisee way is like dark poison yeast, where just a little bit of it corrupts the whole thing. Instead we are to embrace Jesus and His teaching, which will prove to be true on the day when everything will be revealed, uncovered and made known, which the Bible says happens when He returns in all His glorious light with all the angels of heaven.

For those who listen to the warnings of His woes, they will be vindicated. For those who reject them, their corruption and darkness will be seen by all. In lieu of that, the call for us is to embrace the light of Jesus here and now.

So I'll conclude with one final passage from the Bible. John 8:12 where Jesus said these words, "I am the light of the world. Whoever follows me will not walk in darkness, but will have the light of life."



You can trust Jesus. His light is good. It drives out the darkness and gives us light. It's a purifying light that gets rid of all the junk. All we have to do is open our eyes and let Him in. Jesus is the light we need. Jesus is the light we need.

## Conclusion

Well, let's conclude. I started out the sermon today talking about my blind friend. His name is Andy. Here's a picture of him.

My blind friend Andy is now a pastor at a local church in Orange County and runs a blog called, "Ask The Blind Pastor" where he tells some of his story. He writes...

"When I was 19, going on 20 years old, I started to lose my eyesight. A disease called Leber's Optic Neuropathy. It's a degenerative disease that causes blood to stop going to the optic nerve. It kills the optic nerve.

In losing my eyesight, I felt like I was losing my identity. When the loss of my freedom and ability to do what I wanted when I wanted sank in, I was angry. One day, the frustration boiled over, and I punched a hole in the door to our basement.

God came super close to me in the middle of my darkest moments. God surrounded me and showed me that even though I couldn't see with my eyes, I could see with my heart. I can see the light of Jesus, His goodness and love flooding in, purifying me and driving out all the things I'd longed for and hoped in that were not Him.

I can't see with my eyes but walk in the light of Christ who has given me the light of life."

Friends, Jesus is the light we need. On the cross He died for all the darkness and rose again on the third day so He could give us His eternal light and life.

We celebrate this each week in this special ceremony called "communion" or "the Lord's Supper" where we take a piece of bread as Jesus' perfect life and we dip it in the wine or the juice as His perfect blood given for all of our sin and we rejoice in the life He has given us.

Jesus is the light and in Him we taste and see the light of life.

Let's all stand and reads our words of confession for today, followed by some words of pardon and assurance as we prepare to respond to the Word of God.

## *Confession*

Lord without You we are blind. We need your light to cleanse our hearts which fill up with greed, pride, deadness, self-love, rebellion and foolishness. Open our eyes we pray.

## *Assurance*

Jesus is the light! He has defeated all darkness! Opened our eyes and shone His life and love into our hearts!