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Luke

Chapter 12 - An Unforeseen Disclosure

The Great Cover-Up (vs. 54-59)

Luke 12:54-59: And He was also saying to the crowds, “When you see a cloud rising in the west, immediately you say, ‘A shower is coming,’ and so it turns out. And when you see a south wind blowing, you say, ‘It will be a hot day,’ and it turns out that way. You hypocrites! You know how to analyze the appearance of the earth and the sky, but why do you not analyze this present time? And why do you not even on your own initiative judge what is right? For while you are going with your opponent to appear before the magistrate, on your way there make an effort to settle with him, so that he may not drag you before the judge, and the judge turn you over to the officer, and the officer throw you into prison. I say to you, you will not get out of there until you have paid the very last cent.”

At the beginning of Chapter 12, Jesus warns His disciples, "Beware of the leaven of the Pharisees, which is hypocrisy." We come to the end of this chapter, and He turns to the multitudes, and He says, "You hypocrites!" What is the passage about? Well, clearly, Christ has come as the great revealer. John will call Him the Light of the world. Ephesians will say that we become lights as He is in the sense that we actually expose sin by virtue of living godly lives. It's not going to be a popular walk, Jesus warns His disciples, and the world is not going to completely understand it. In fact, it's going to be divisive. His statement is, as you look at verse 49,

(Luke 12:49) "I have come to cast fire upon the earth; and how I wish it were already kindled!"

(Luke 12:50) But I have a baptism to undergo, and how distressed I am until it is accomplished!

(Luke 12:51) Do you suppose that I came to grant peace on earth? I tell you, no, but rather division."

Division. The Prince of Peace coming to make division. The point is clear as we go through the passage that the world doesn't think like we do, and we've been bamboozled in a way, because of the fact that we're so concerned about what everybody else is thinking. In fact, we live our life that way. He'll start off by saying, "Beware of the leaven of the Pharisees," because there was a lot of pressures, there was a lot of intimidation, there was a lot of influence by the "godly leaders" that were there. And their natural way of doing things was that they broadened their phylacteries; they would make their robes look all grand and glorious. And by outward appearance, they looked like the most holy people on the face of the earth. And He says, "They're just lying to you. And you've bought into it." You bought into the whole lying thing. Really, Christ is the great revealer, and we are, in many respects, the great dissemblers. That is to say that we're cover-up artists. And that's how we live our lives. Jesus is not just talking to the Pharisees and the Sadducees within the passage. He's saying it's permeated all of society. It's like leaven. It's infiltrated everything. And everybody thinks in these particular terms. And you have to ask yourself,

"Well, what would cause people to think that way?" And His answer would be, "Because you're afraid of man; you're not afraid of God. You're afraid of the wrong person."

He establishes that right at the beginning, if you look at the passage with me, in which He states in verse 4,

"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."

(Luke 12:5) But I will warn you whom to fear: fear the One who, after He has killed, has authority to cast into hell; yes, I tell you, fear Him!"

The fundamental problem is that we're afraid of what man thinks. And because we're afraid of what man thinks, we begin to in many ways just acquiesce to whatever they think. We become chameleons, as it were. That's why we have things like fads. You notice fads come into play. Why is it everybody wears those kinds of shoes or those kinds of pants or whatever at this particular time? And the pressure is powerful. Why is it everybody's wearing a mask? I mean, it just becomes so powerful that you

realize that the pressure of man begins to tell you how to live your life, and we begin to live our life according to what they think. What this does is it brings us an emptiness inside, and that emptiness causes us to feel like we have to be somebody, right? How do I be somebody? You ever heard that phrase? "I'm going to be somebody someday." I thought you were somebody when you were born, but maybe not. "But I need to be somebody." And so, what they do is they begin to find their value in the things they possess. Isn't that how we define "somebodies"? "Well, they have this, they have this, they own this, they possess this." That's how we define "somebodies". But Jesus will state in Chapter 12, as the one in the crowd says, "Teacher, tell my brother to give me my half of the family inheritance." Jesus said to him in verse 15, "Beware, and be on your guard against every form of greed; for not even when one has an abundance does his life consist of his possessions."

You're not somebody because of what you possess. The world will say that's what makes you somebody. And Christ says, "You believed the lie. You've gone along with

this lie." The thought is, "Well, You're right. I don't feel like somebody just because I have something, so I know the solution. I'll just get more!" And so, we tear down our barns, and we build bigger barns, according to the text, to try to find greater significance.

The result is, as He turns to His disciples, He says, "Look, let me tell you something. This only brings anxiety." The more you have, the more you think you have to have, and the more you think you have to have, the more it doesn't work. As Ecclesiastes 2 will say, "Vanity, vanity! All is vanity. I got everything I wanted. Everything my eye could see, I got. And I still felt horrible. I couldn't have joy. I couldn't have peace. In fact, I realized that all those things came from God." So, Jesus began to explain where all this hypocrisy has brought you. And that is, it's just brought you misery. It's brought you anxiety. Now, you're worried about what you're going to eat. Now, you're worried about whether you're going to have clothes. "Am I going to have enough money for retirement?" I heard the other day on the radio, "I need to have over \$1,000,000 for retirement." I'm going, when is that going to happen? So,

my solution is, I'm not going to retire. I wasn't planning on retiring anyway. But the world will tell you all these things, and it just breeds anxiety. In fact, you're going to see the words mentioned over and over again in Chapter 12, "Don't be anxious, don't be anxious, don't be anxious." In fact, He'll actually say in verse 29, "Stop worrying. Don't keep worrying about these things. Don't be afraid." And these things, these possessions will bring me some sort of security, right? And God goes, "No, it'll bring you anxiety." Why? Because you base your value on what you have. Now, what happens if you lose it? You're worthless. That's why people jump out of buildings when the stock market falls. Because they base their value on what they have. But here's an interesting thought. But if your value is not based on what you have, but just on the fact that God loves you, how secure are you? So, He puts within the passage, "I take care of the birds. Aren't you more valuable than the birds? So, just trust Me. You're valuable just because I said so and because I love you." And so, He's trying to get people to think differently, but of course, this great mob is thinking in terms of, you

know... And quite frankly, if I start thinking that way, what will everybody else think? What will my family think? They're going to think I'm crazy. They're going to think I'm nuts. So, Jesus says, "Okay, I'll admit to that. It's going to divide the family. Three will be against two, two will be against three." He says, "Mother, the father, sister, brother, they're all going to be divided. You're going to have some that agree with you, some that don't. If in fact this is what you're worried about, then you'll never make the decision to follow Me, if you're worried about what everybody else is thinking." The very people that go around saying, "Well, I don't want to be divisive. It's all about unifying everybody." The same people that say that would throw away their mother for a dollar. And fundamentally, this is one of the things that He's proven within the passage. You'll be divided over money. "Tell my brother to give me my half of my inheritance." Isn't that what it says in the text? Well, wait a minute. You're not throwing your brother under the bus just because he owes you some money, are you? Yeah. But taking a stand for God, "Oh, no, that's divisive. I don't want to be divisive. I want to be unifying."

Pharisees were coming to Jesus in Matthew 19, and they go, "Can't we divorce our wives for anything?" And so, Jesus goes, "Well, wait a minute, from the beginning it wasn't so. God created man and woman, just one of each." So, you're clinging to them and holding to them and you're being faithful. The point of the matter is that they had laws in which they could divorce their wife if they burned their food. But everybody's afraid, "I don't want to be divisive." You're divisive all the time over so many things. You'll argue with your relatives about all kinds of stupid stuff, who's playing football or whatever. You'll fight over it. You don't mind dividing over that, but when it comes to, "Oh, well, I can't mention Jesus because it'll offend somebody." What do you mean you can't mention Jesus? It's time to make a decision.

So, this passage is about time. What time is it? And it's time to make a decision. Stop listening to everybody else. Stop worrying about how they're going to respond. The great cover-up is that you're actually feeling like "Don't rush me on the decision. Quite frankly, it's too complicated. It's something I can't really assimilate in my

mind. I have to work through it. I don't fully understand everything that's involved in making this decision for Christ. And quite frankly, the bottom line is, can you really, really know the truth?" I mean, wasn't that Pilate when Jesus comes up to him, and He goes, "I came to give you truth," and Pilate goes, "What is truth?" It's more convenient to become an agnostic than it is to make the decision to follow Christ. Just say, "Truth can't be known." Just say, "Well, you know, that's your interpretation." Really? Scripture is so clear to me. It just boggles my mind when people go, "Well, that's your interpretation." I usually just take them straight to John 3:16. I go, "Okay, so let's talk about it. 'For God so loved the world.' What does that say to you? Is that confusing? Is there great ambiguity in that phrase? 'That He gave His only begotten Son; that if you'll believe in Him, you won't perish but have everlasting life.' Now, what do you have to do to have everlasting life? What's confusing about the verse?" "Oh, I don't know. Can we really know? It's your interpretation." What interpretation? That's what it says. And so, we're throwing up all kinds of excuses, but quite frankly, we're just putting up facades, and we're lying to

ourselves. We're the great dissemblers. We like to cover up and we like to hide, but Christ is a great revealer. And so, He comes to them in this last portion, and He goes, "Okay, let's talk about cover-up." And He does it in a very unique way because, of course, He's the Great Sage, isn't He? The wisdom of God.

Chapter 12, if you look with me; we begin to see the hand of God. And as we come to the end of Chapter 12, that's a long chapter when you think about it and all the things that He's been saying, but it all is really culminating to this verse 54 through 59. It is the great cover-up exposed.

Verse 54 reads this way,

"And He was also saying to the crowds..."

So, we haven't stopped talking to the multitudes. And once again, you go back to the beginning of the chapter in verse 1, and it says the multitudes, remember, were trampling over one another to see Him. And He begins to warn them of the hypocrisy.

(Luke 12:54) "And He was also saying to the crowds, "When you see a cloud rising in the west, immediately you say, 'A shower is coming,' and so it turns out."

In that particular land, God had so worked it to where there was a time to plant and there was a time to reap, and there was a time of dryness and there was a time of the rain. And the rain would almost always come from the west, from the Mediterranean, and God would have the winds blowing in from the west, and then it would rain. So, hey, you're a genius. "I see the clouds coming from the west, it's going to rain." Right.

"... immediately you say, 'A shower is coming,' and so it turns out.

(Luke 12:55) And when you see a south wind blowing, you say, 'It will be a hot day,' ..."

Well, where is it coming from? The south, right? Where's the heat? From the south, right? Coming from the desert of Egypt, coming up from that particular realm, and of course, that would be the dry season that would come in.

"... and it turns out that way."

In other words, you see patterns, don't you? "Yeah, we see patterns." And in those patterns, you make assessments. "Yes, we make assessments in those patterns." And you analyze. You're very analytical. You're so smart. You're so very analytical. And so, you can actually prognosticate; you can predict what's going to happen by just the winds and the clouds. Wow, you weathermen are just really great, wonderful people.

So, you would think that He would be patting them on the back, but He says in this in verse 56,

(Luke 12:56) "You hypocrites! ..."

Liars; you who cover up.

"... You know how to analyze the appearance of the earth and the sky, but why do you not analyze this present time?"

"I don't know. It's so complicated." It's like looking at the weather going, "It's so complicated. There's clouds coming from the west. It's so complicated." Why don't you say that? But you can come up with a conclusion. You know it's going to rain. And you feel the dry wind coming

from the south. You know it's going to be a hot day. That's just a simple deduction, right? "Yeah, but we can't really make a decision to follow You. Too complicated. Things are too difficult. I mean, you're asking me to think through something." I like the way Moses put it, "Life or death. Which one do you want?" How complicated is that?

(Luke 12:56) "You hypocrites! You know how to analyze the appearance of the earth and the sky, but why do you not analyze this present time?"

Now, the word "time" that he uses in the text is dealing with a specific time that is marked out by certain decisions. In other words, you have a certain amount of time to make a decision. You know how you have those times that are coming? And that's why He's going to go into this interesting example in which He goes, "Let Me tell you an example of this." He talks about a guy going to a judge, right? And in time, going to a judge, you have a certain time to make a decision because you're on your way to go see a judge. So, when do you start making a

decision? Now, because you're on your way to go see a judge.

So, His statement is in verse 57,

(Luke 12:57) "And why do you not even on your own initiative judge what is right?"

In other words, "I haven't thought about it. Maybe I've been too busy. Maybe I just haven't felt moved to do anything." He goes, "Well, you seem to be moved to say something about the weather. Why aren't you moved to say something about your eternal soul?" "But You know how complicated that is."

(Luke 12:58) "For while you are going with your opponent..."

Actually, the Persaic translation actually makes reference to your creditor. So, your creditor comes and he brings you to appear before the magistrate because you haven't paid your debt. That's fundamentally the setup here. So, on your way there, wouldn't you make an effort?

Wouldn't you actually put some plan in this discussion and all of a sudden, couldn't you possibly at this moment

grow a conscience? At this moment, couldn't you have a sense of right and wrong? "Maybe I should have paid the guy." Couldn't you have had just a strike of humility and maybe just apologize and try to get things right? I mean, wouldn't this be a good time to do that?

"For while you are going with your opponent to appear before the magistrate, on your way there make an effort to settle..."

Actually, here again, Persaic version is pretty interesting. "Give him back the money." That's the way it's put in the text.

"... so that he may not drag you before the judge, and the judge turn you over to the officer..."

Which, by the way, another way of translating it is the "punisher" or the extractor of money. They'll beat you to death until they get it from you.

"... and the officer throw you into prison."

(Luke 12:59) I say to you, you will not get out of there until you have paid the very last cent."

He's going to drag it out of you. Now, the whole point of the passage is that on your way, you're going to be thinking something like, "Maybe I need to get right." And if you were to ask the individual, "What time is it?" He would say, "It's time for me to pay my debt." That's what he would say. "It's time for me to get right with the people that I've wronged. It's time for me to get my life right."

There's a passage in Jeremiah, if you'll turn with me in Jeremiah 37, 38, which is very interesting when you consider this particular text; as when Jeremiah is going before King Zedekiah, of course he's gone to him at other times. This is almost the last draw of sorts as he comes before him, and he warns him. And here again, the bizarre thing is that Babylon is already surrounding the nation. They know that they're coming, but everybody is denying his workers, his people, his entourage, the people that he supposed are his counsel. They're telling him, "Don't listen to Jeremiah. He's a stick in the mud. He's just a party pooper. He's just not going to do anything that would be good for us. He's not thinking of us. Quite

frankly, every time Jeremiah talks, and he says that we're going to be taken over by Babylon, it hurts our feelings." So, Jeremiah 37, in a way, reveals that particular point.

And you come to Chapter 38, and they took Jeremiah, and they cast him in the cistern. Of course, they wanted to kill him. And at first, they put him in. And of course, as you read on, an Ethiopian that was a friend somehow finds a way to come before the king to get him out. Jeremiah gets out again, and then he comes before Zedekiah.

And when he comes before Zedekiah, if you look with me in Jeremiah 38:14, it says,

(Jeremiah 38:14) "Then King Zedekiah sent and had Jeremiah the prophet brought to him at the third entrance that is in the house of the LORD; and the king said to Jeremiah, "I am going to ask you something; do not hide anything from me."

(Jeremiah 38:15) Then Jeremiah said to Zedekiah, "If I tell you, will you not certainly put me to death? Besides, if I give you advice, you will not listen to me.""

And nothing was truer than that.

Now, what makes this time very interesting is Chapter 37. And Chapter 37 really reveals that God had done something very, very interesting. You remember how it was a tendency always of Israel to kind of go back to Egypt and put their trust in Egypt? Well, at this particular time, he had Egypt coming up from the south. And they were starting to attack Babylon, which means Babylon had actually surrounded the area of Judah. So, they had them surrounded and they were coming in. They were actually besieging them. And Egypt had come up and so they dropped the siege and started focusing on Egypt. And God turned to Jeremiah, and He says, "Now, I know what they're going to say. They're going to say, 'We're going to be saved by Egypt.'" He said, "Don't think for a moment that's going to happen. Egypt is there for to give you time. But when the time is up, I'm going to move them and they're going to come in." So, God was giving them time to change. And in particular, Zedekiah. He comes to Zedekiah. "Okay," Zedekiah says, "Tell me the truth."

And so, Jeremiah says this in verse 17,

(Jeremiah 38:17) "Then Jeremiah said to Zedekiah, "Thus says the LORD God of hosts, the God of Israel, 'If you will indeed go out to the officers of the king of Babylon, then you will live, this city will not be burned with fire, and you and your household will survive.

(Jeremiah 38:18) But if you will not go out to the officers of the king of Babylon, then this city will be given over to the hand of the Chaldeans; and they will burn it with fire, and you yourself will not escape from their hand.'"

(Jeremiah 38:19) Then King Zedekiah said to Jeremiah, "I dread the Jews..."

We'll put it another way. "I dread my own people. They've told me that I shouldn't cave on this one."

"... who have gone over to the Chaldeans, for they may give me over into their hand and they will abuse me."

(Jeremiah 38:20) But Jeremiah said, "They will not give you over. Please obey the LORD in what I am saying to you, that it may go well with you and you may live.

(Jeremiah 38:21) But if you keep refusing to go out, this is the word which the LORD has shown me:

(Jeremiah 38:22) 'Then behold, all of the women who have been left in the palace of the king of Judah are going to be brought out to the officers of the king of Babylon; and those women will say, "Your close friends Have misled and overpowered you..."

In other words, "You listened to the wrong people. You should have listened to Jeremiah. And women are going to tell you that," which was the greatest insult. (No offense to women.) But the point is that he was going to say, "You're worried about being embarrassed? You're going to be embarrassed if you don't obey God. That's what's going to happen." Zedekiah never could. He had to cave, and they came in; they stormed; they burned the city. They took his sons, they slayed them in front of him, and then they burned out his eyes. So, the last thing he saw was the death of his sons. "I'm afraid of what everybody else is thinking."

I want to show you a passage in Amos. It gives an interesting example if you look with me in Amos 4. And in Amos 4, it was certainly another time and a different time with the Assyrians and everything like that. But if you look

with me in Amos 4, God was saying, "Look, here's the deal. The time is coming when they're going to grab you, they're going to take you into captivity, and this is how they're going to get you. They're going to put fish hooks in you. They're going to put hooks right in your body, and they're going to drag you, just like a fish. That's what they're going to do. So, you want to get right, right?" So, they already knew that the ominous influence was there. Nevertheless, "We're not getting right." So, what God begins to do is work among them; giving them signs that they needed to repent.

And the way that it goes is,

(Amos 4:6) "But I gave you also cleanness of teeth in all your cities And lack of bread in all your places, Yet you have not returned to Me," declares the LORD.

(Amos 4:7) Furthermore, I withheld the rain from you While there were still three months until harvest.

Then I would send rain on one city And on another city I would not send rain;

One part would be rained on, While the part not rained on would dry up."

What is He talking about? "Did you notice how I just showed you who needs to get right and who doesn't?"

(Amos 4:8) "So two or three cities would stagger to another city to drink water, But would not be satisfied; Yet you have not returned to Me," declares the LORD.

(Amos 4:9) "I smote you with scorching wind and mildew; And the caterpillar was devouring Your many gardens and vineyards, fig trees and olive trees; Yet you have not returned to Me," declares the LORD.

(Amos 4:10) "I sent a plague among you after the manner of Egypt; I slew your young men by the sword along with your captured horses, And I made the stench of your camp rise up in your nostrils; Yet you have not returned to Me," declares the LORD."

The text ends this way, if you look at the end of verse 12,

(Amos 4:12) "... Prepare to meet your God, O Israel."

Now, all the way, He's been showing signs. If you go, "I'm a little confused. Why is it raining in their yard and not in mine?" And God says, "Okay, so you know how to analyze

everything else. You can't stop and think, 'Maybe I'm the problem'? You can't see that?"

(Amos 4:13) "For behold, He who forms mountains and creates the wind And declares to man what are His thoughts, He who makes dawn into darkness And treads on the high places of the earth, The LORD God of hosts is His name."

God is doing a work. He's doing a work among you. Seek Him that you may live.

Chapter 5 just goes on. How many times does it say it?

(Amos 5:4) "... "Seek Me that you may live."

(Amos 5:6) "Seek the LORD that you may live..."

(Amos 5:14) "Seek good and not evil, that you may live..."

It's not a complicated decision for all of us analytical people, but the problem is that we suppress the truth in unrighteousness. We cover it up. We're great cover-up artists, and we're just not being truthful. Jesus says, "You don't know what time it is?"

Luke 21, if you look there with me, Jesus warns them as He's coming to the close of His ministry. He said,

"Something's going to happen and probably in your lifetime."

It reads in verse 20,

(Luke 21:20) "But when you see Jerusalem surrounded by armies, then recognize that her desolation is near."

What is He talking about? He's talking about AD 70, in which Jerusalem was surrounded and then ultimately destroyed, not one stone upon another, so that even today they don't know exactly where the temple was.

(Luke 21:21) "Then those who are in Judea must flee to the mountains, and those who are in the midst of the city must leave, and those who are in the country must not enter the city;

(Luke 21:22) because these are days of vengeance, so that all things which are written will be fulfilled.

(Luke 21:23) Woe to those who are pregnant and to those who are nursing babies in those days; for there will be great distress upon the land and wrath to this people;

(Luke 21:24) and they will fall by the edge of the sword, and will be led captive into all the nations; and Jerusalem

will be trampled under foot by the Gentiles until the times of the Gentiles are fulfilled."

Why? Because you did not know the time of your visitation. What is the time? God has given this reprieve, this time, this moment in which Christ's grace is walking in your midst and He's given you time to get right with God and you think that He's not going to do anything? God says in Psalm 50, "I kept quiet and you thought I was just like you. I'm giving you grace." God's not slow about His promise, but He's not willing that any should perish. God's holding back. But why is He holding back? To give you opportunity to make decisions. This is the time. What time is it? It's time to make a decision. Well, you can't read the times? The clouds are coming. We see all these things happening around us on the earth today. But you don't know what time it is? It's time to make a decision. God's given us reprieve. God's given us a moment. God's given us this time in which we can get right with God. This is a time of preparation. Prepare to meet your God, right?

If you look in Luke 23, as Jesus is heading to the cross, the women begin to surround Him, and they begin to weep over Him going to the cross.

(Luke 23:27) "And following Him was a large crowd of the people, and of women who were mourning and lamenting Him.

(Luke 23:28) But Jesus turning to them said, "Daughters of Jerusalem, stop weeping for Me, but weep for yourselves and for your children.

(Luke 23:29) For behold, the days are coming when they will say, 'Blessed are the barren, and the wombs that never bore, and the breasts that never nursed.'

(Luke 23:30) Then they will begin TO SAY TO THE MOUNTAINS, 'FALL ON US,' AND TO THE HILLS, 'COVER US.'

(Luke 23:31) For if they do these things when the tree is green, what will happen when it is dry?'"

The point is that it did happen. And Titus, the general of Roman soldiers, surrounded Jerusalem. They starved them out. And women were eating their children. And

people were burning. And it was a horrible time. Why? Because they didn't recognize the time of their visitation. God was given them this moment. "I would have gathered you like a hen gathers her chicks, but you wouldn't have Me. Therefore, I leave you desolate." And desolation came.

God's given us opportunities and we perceive them as maybe license to do wrong. We perceive it as, I don't know, "Maybe we have a good excuse." I didn't see that. I always think of the story of the blind man in John 9, in which the blind man's healed. And the parents are asked, "Who healed your son?" "We don't know anything about that." It says, "Because they were afraid to be thrown out of the synagogue." If they agreed in any way that it was Jesus, they'd be thrown out of the synagogue. They just can't get involved with this. And a lot of people are living that way, "I just can't make a full commitment to God because of this or because of that." And Jesus goes, "What, you don't recognize the time?"

On a personal note, if you turn with me to the Book of Colossians. I was thinking about this, such a great passage.

It says,

(Colossians 3:1) "Therefore if you have been raised up with Christ, keep seeking the things above, where Christ is, seated at the right hand of God."

I've got to keep my focus on God. God has a way of turning our heads right. Have you noticed that? Because I can get so involved in the affairs of everyday life that I'm not thinking right. And quite frankly, I'm not preparing. Everybody's worried about, "Well, my kid's going to do this. We're going to be great." You have no idea what tomorrow is going to bring. You have no guarantees. Besides the fact that I don't care what barn you're building, or what you're tearing down. It doesn't have to be financial. It could be a name for yourself or whatever. "I'm going to be recognized. I'm going to be somebody." Stop. You're wasting your time on stuff that doesn't matter. Do you have any idea what time it is? God has

given us this miraculous moment in time to get right with Him.

And as verse 2 goes on and says,

(Colossians 3:2) "Set your mind on the things above, not on the things that are on earth."

Now, it says this very strange and interesting verse,

(Colossians 3:3) "For you have died and your life is hidden with Christ in God."

The word "hidden" is "*kryptō*," where you get the word "crypt". That is to say that in this world, the glory that is waiting for us has not yet appeared. It's hidden. People can look at a Christian, and they go, "You don't look too glorious." And I can say, "I haven't been glorified yet. But I'm heading there. It's been hidden in Christ." But I was thinking about this phrase, "for you have died". See that? That's in what is called the "aorist active", which means that that you actually chose this. And it was at a point in time where you said, as it goes on, "What if I died too?" It goes on and says, well, you've died to things like the things of the world.

Verse 5 reads,

(Colossians 3:5) "Therefore consider the members of your earthly body as dead to immorality, impurity, passion, evil desire, and greed, which amounts to idolatry."

I mean, once you begin to worship money, you're worshiping another idol, right? So, you just realize how superfluous and needless and wasteful, full of dissipation that is.

I certainly have been dealing with my mother now getting ready to pass away, and I see her packing her bags. There have been days which I don't know exactly what she means. She would say, "I just want to go home." I don't know if it's North Carolina or if it's with the Lord. But I've had the opportunity to take her to bed every night. It's interesting, it's kind of reversed. She used to tuck me in as a kid and pray with me. And so, I sort of put her in bed and pray with her. And it's a very interesting time because really throughout the day, she doesn't communicate with me much. But at that moment when she's in the bed, she's very communicable. And so, she's talking with me about things. And I don't think she realizes exactly who I

am. I think most of the time she thinks I'm her brother, but it's inconsequential. I mean, yesterday she was only awake for 2 hours, so for 22 hours she was sleeping. But she's starting to get some bed sores, which we're a little concerned about. And because of that, she's starting to feel some pain, which she's saying that she's hurting, which I feel bad about. But when she's sitting up, she's sitting in a chair and she faces the outside. And if she says it once, she says it 100 times, "It's so pretty outside." And she just keeps saying that over and over again. "So pretty outside." Sometimes I'll kind of listen to her because she'll pray in her bed. When I'm gone, we have it on a monitor so we can hear it in stereo if we wanted to. But she's praying to herself, praying to the Lord. And I was hearing her the other night, and she's just thanking Him for everything. And I'm saying, "Thanking Him? You're in pain. You can't move. You can't walk. Your life is not only ending, but you're not even able to really communicate with people very well." She's just thanking God. She's thanking God for this, thanking God for that. And the other night, I heard her say this, and she repeated it over and over again. She said, "Thank You for Your mercy,

thank You for Your grace." And she kept repeating that. You know what this passage says? If you died, you know one of the things you'd do? Give thanks.

The passage says this,

(Colossians 3:12) "So, as those who have been chosen of God, holy and beloved, put on a heart of compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness and patience;

(Colossians 3:13) bearing with one another, and forgiving each other, whoever has a complaint against anyone..."

You know, those things just don't seem important if you're thinking about things above, are they? If you're getting right with God. If you're getting ready to die, if you're on the road to meet the Judge, what are you thinking about? I'm not thinking about boasting myself, getting things, buying new things. I'm thinking about, "Am I doing the will of God?" Put on a heart of compassion, humility, gentleness, and forgiving one another.

"... whoever has a complaint against anyone; just as the Lord forgave you, so also should you.

(Colossians 3:14) Beyond all these things put on love, which is the perfect bond of unity.

(Colossians 3:15) Let the peace of Christ rule in your hearts..."

You're not going to have peace on the earth, but you are going to have peace in your heart.

"... to which indeed you were called in one body; and..."

For goodness' sake, on your road to see the Judge,

"... be thankful."

Can you imagine the last thing that you say before you see Him is, "Thank you"? Can you imagine how that prepares the way?

It goes on and says this in verse 16,

(Colossians 3:16) "Let the word of Christ richly dwell within you, with all wisdom teaching and admonishing one another with psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing with thankfulness in your hearts to God.

(Colossians 3:17) Whatever you do in word or deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks through Him to God the Father."

So, how do you spend your time? You're on your road to meet the Judge. You don't have much time. What are you doing?

Closing Prayer:

Father, we just ask You to prepare our hearts as we realize more than ever what time it is. And we give You thanks for giving us this reprieve, this moment. We see the wind. We feel the wind blowing from the south. We see the storms coming from the west. We know this is You telling us, "It's time to get ready." And so, we are. We give you thanks in Jesus' name.

With your heads bowed and your eyes closed, you prepare your heart.