Grace to You :: *Unleashing God's Truth, One Verse at a Time*

A Certain Cure for Hypocrisy, Part 2
Scripture: Luke 12:8-9
Code: 42-169

If you would open your Bible to the twelfth chapter of Luke, we find ourselves in the opening section of this great chapter. In fact, chapter 12 probably should run all the way through chapter 13 verse 9 because from 12:1 to 13:9 is a single discourse by our Lord, a single sermon, interrupted a couple of times by questions but nonetheless a discourse given on the same occasion in the same place to the same people. You begin to get the feel for the subject at hand here in His opening words. Chapter 12 verse 1, "Under these circumstances," or it could be translated it, "Meanwhile, after so many thousands of the multitude had gathered together that they were stepping on one another, Jesus began saying to His disciples, first of all, Beware of the leaven of the Pharisees which is hypocrisy."

Hypocrisy, that is a word that carries with it a tone of disgust. The very word hypocrisy or hypocrite leaves a bad taste in your mouth. Synonyms like phony, or fake, or fraud, or even liar don't seem as distasteful as hypocrite. And that's probably because words like phony and fake and fraud and liar are generally tied to the material world where truth, frankly, is negotiable in the rush to success and prosperity. But hypocrite, that's a word that goes into another zone, it almost has a realm of its own. It has religious overtones. Hypocrite is a word that seems to be most often used to speak of spiritual deception, not cheating someone out of their money, or their earthly possessions, or their earthly success or prosperity or well-being, but cheating someone out of their eternal soul. Being a hypocrite has far more serious implications, eternal ones. Religious hypocrites who pretend to know God, who pretend to have spiritual truth, who pretend to know the way to conquer death and enter heaven, spiritual hypocrites who pretend to be good, pretend to be holy, pretend to be righteous, pretend to speak for God, to represent God, pretend to have some power over evil that others don't and pretend to have the ability to convey all that to those who will follow them. Those kinds of hypocrites are the most dangerous liars of all because they do not have what they say they have. They are not what they say they are. They do not do what they say they do. And they cannot give what they say they can because they do not have what they say they have.

In fact, all false religion in the world is hypocrisy, all of it. Everything but the true gospel because all false religion claims to know the truth about God, the truth about time, and eternity and the way to heaven. And they don't. And they are the most dangerous and damnable of all deceivers. And I suppose there should be a word that belongs uniquely to them. In Greek the word, *hupokrisis*from which we get a transliterated word hypocrite, or hypocrisy, the word simply referred to an actor and in

ancient Greek culture an actor engaged in a rather honorable profession. But in the New Testament, that word was taken out of the drama world and placed into the religious world and it took on a despicable significance. Of all things that someone might be deceived about, that which has to do with their eternal soul, is the most important and therefore those who tell eternally damning lies do infinitely greater harm than any temporal fraud. Actors tamper with people's emotions. And people pay for that. They go there to laugh. They go there to cry. They go there to be frightened. They want that momentary catharsis that a play or a film brings to them. They want those actors to tamper with their emotions for a little while, a couple of hours at the most. Religious hypocrites don't tamper so much with people's emotions, they tamper with people's souls and people pay but they pay here and they pay forever in hell for the eternal destruction that the hypocrites brought.

That is why all religious hypocrisy is so horrendous and all false religion and false teachers are hypocrites. In our Lord's day the reigning hypocrites were the Pharisees and the scribes. They were basically the purveyors of the dominant form of Judaism. There were some other fringe groups, Essenes that were sort of counter-culture, social outcasts, lived out in the desert by themselves and sort of died away. There were political zealots at the same time. There were some religious liberals known as Sadducees. But the dominant force of religious culture imposed upon the people of Israel at the time of Jesus, it had been developing and refining for 400 years, was Pharisaism. The scribes, you will remember, were the lawyers among the Pharisees who were the theologians who designed the system and the Pharisees themselves were the practitioners and the sellers of that system. And they basically had imposed it upon all of the people of Israel who willingly bought into it. It was a system of self-righteous works and ceremonies by which a person could enter the Kingdom of God and receive eternal salvation.

Now all those leaders were hypocrites, of course. The Sadducees were hypocrites and the Essenes were hypocrites and the Herodians who attached themselves more to the political side of things and associated with Herod the Tetrarch were hypocrites. And, of course, the Pharisees and the scribes were hypocrites. Jesus called them all hypocrites, but most commonly He called the Pharisees and the scribes hypocrites and did so publicly because the people needed to know the truth. Any faithful teacher of the truth has to expose error. It's a part of protection. So Jesus came with a positive message of salvation. He came with a positive message of heaven. He came with a positive message of forgiveness. But He also came on the assault, attacking the reigning false system of His day. And He said of the Pharisees, "You, sons of hell, are making twice sons of hell out of your converts."

So when Jesus came, He had to confront the reigning hypocrisy...the reigning false religion. In order to bring the truth to people it had to be compared to the lies. And the lies by virtue of the truth were exposed. In the early years of Jesus' ministry, there was tremendous interest initially, tremendous

curiosity, tremendous attraction and even from some of the Pharisees and the scribes...wondering at the very outset if indeed He might not be the Messiah. And they had even submitted themselves to the baptism of John who was the forerunner and said this is the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world. But when Jesus began to reveal the truth and He began to expose their hypocritical damning deception, curiosity turned to hatred and they began to plot how they might kill Him.

Now they had to spin his life someway in the conventional wisdom of the time. They had to get people to think a certain way about Jesus different than, of course, Jesus wanted them to think. He wanted them to know that He was God, that He came from God, that He was God, God in human flesh, the Messiah, the Savior of the world. But they had a different spin they put on Jesus. They circulated relentlessly throughout Galilee and Judea that He did what He did by the power of Satan. This is the ultimate blasphemy to call God Satan and to attribute to Satan what God was doing. And it shows the vitriol that occupied the place in their hearts. And that's why back in chapter 11 after they said that in verse 15, He cast out demons by Beelzebul the ruler of the demons. He's got demon power. That's why in verse 29 Jesus said, "This generation is a wicked generation...wicked generation." And He begins to pronounce judgment upon them. And at the end of chapter 11, as you remember, from verse 37 to the end, He goes to lunch at a Pharisee's house and there are a lot of other Pharisees there and some of the scribes are there and He pronounces six curses on them...curses because they have blasphemed Him and they are indeed a wicked generation. They are dominant hypocrites who have basically won over a whole nation to their apostate perverse religion.

The crowd now, and it's huge, it's tens of thousands of people, as I showed you the Greek numbers in verse 1 here, it's tens of thousands of people and most of them are becoming hostile cause they're buying in to the Pharisees conventional wisdom and spin. But in the middle of this mass of people who are turning against Jesus and not too many months from now will scream for His blood which will be shed on the cross, in the middle of this mass of increasingly hostile people, hostility being generated by the Pharisees and the scribes, there are some disciples, verse 1 says, after so many thousands of the multitude had gathered together, they were stepping on one another, He began saying to His disciples...that's the word *mathetes*and it means a learner. There were still some people there who were saying, "I haven't made up my mind," who were students that doesn't mean by disciple that they were one of the Twelve necessarily, it doesn't mean that they were fully committed to Jesus back in John 6, it says, "Many of His disciples walked no more with Him," they left Him. It just means they were learners. They were still in the process of being exposed and to one degree or another open to Him. And the message that He wants to give to those who haven't turned against Him, who haven't hardened their hearts is this, "Beware of the leaven of the Pharisees which is hypocrisy." You must be aware of the deadly danger of false religion. Hypocrisy is like yeast, that's what leaven is. It permeates. Beware of their influence. Just as you put fermented dough in a new pile of dough and it permeates and causes it to expand, so you get in contact with these Pharisees and they will influence you. Beware, your eternal soul is at stake.

And so the question is asked, as we begin chapter 12, how does one avoid that? Jesus says beware of the leaven of the Pharisees which is hypocrisy....how? How can I protect myself from false religion? And it's all around us, every religion in the world and every form of apostate Christianity, an unbiblical Christianity is a false religion, it is a form of hypocrisy and its leaders are hypocrites. Everything but the true gospel falls into the category of hypocritical religion which has tremendous power to influence people...how do we avoid it? How do we avoid it?

Jesus follows up then with His warning in verse 1 by saying there are three duties, three duties required for those who would escape hypocrisy and enter into the truth. Number one, honor God...honor God. Number two, honor Christ. Number three, honor the Holy Spirit. To put it simply, the only people who are going to heaven, the only people who know God, the only people who will have their sins forgiven, the only people who will receive eternal life are those who have engaged the Trinity. Honor God, honor Christ, honor the Spirit...God is mentioned in verse 5 as the one who after He has killed has authority to cast into hell, and God is mentioned again in verse 6 as the One who doesn't forget anything. Christ is mentioned in verse 8 as the Son of Man, and the Holy...and again in verse 10 as the Son of Man. And the Holy Spirit is mentioned in verse 10 and in verse 12. This is one of those classic trinitarian passages of Scripture. You cannot come to God apart from being a trinitarian.

There are people who want to say, "Well, you know, there are folks all over the world and as long as they believe in whatever they know about God, that's enough." No. You must honor God, you must honor the Son and you must honor the Spirit.

Now last time we looked at the first one, honor God. I don't want to go back over that again except to say it's critical to honor God for three reasons. Number one, He will uncover what is hidden, that's in verses 2 and 3. "Nothing is covered up that will not be revealed, hidden that will not be known. Whatever you said in the dark will be heard in the light. What you whispered in the inner rooms will be proclaimed upon the housetops." In other words, the day is coming when God will tear off the hypocrite's mask. You had better honor God. You had better be bent on honoring God because God will uncover what you really are. You might hide it from people, you can't hide it from Him.

Secondly, when it is uncovered, I warn you, verse 4, "Don't be afraid of those who kill the body and after that have no more that they can do." That's people. All people can do is kill your body. "You need to fear the One who after He has killed has authority to cast you into hell." Your body dead, your soul goes forever into hell. Yes, I tell you, fear Him. Fear God because He will uncover what is hidden and He will punish the hypocrites in hell forever.

And the third reason to fear Him, He knows everything. Verse 6, "There's not a single sparrow, insignificant cheap sparrows bought by poor people to eat like hors d'oeuvres, five of them for two cents, and not one of them is unknown to God." The very hairs of your head are all numbered by God. You have reason to fear the true and living God, He will uncover what is hidden, He will punish hypocrites in hell, and He knows everything.

Now the question is, how do we do that? And that's exactly the question the Lord expects to be asked at this point. How do I truly fear God? And you come with that to the second necessary duty, honor the Son. Honor first God the Father. Honor the Son. Look at verse 8, "And I say to you," that is a phrase repeated back in verse 4, it's transitional, it is in the logical flow of the thought progression. "And I say to you," now how do you honor God? "I say to you, everyone who confesses Me before men, the Son of Man shall confess him also before the angels of God. But he who denies Me before men shall be denied before the angels of God." It all comes down to Christ. If you do not honor Christ, you cannot honor God. Listen to what it says in John 5:23, "He who does not honor the Son does not honor the Father." It's that simple. He who does not honor the Son, does not honor the Father. You cannot honor God without honoring His Son. In John 8:41 and 42 they said to Jesus, "We have one Father, even God." They thought they honored God, the Jews did. "We have one Father, even God." And then Jesus said this to them, "If God were your Father, you would love Me for I proceed forth and have come from God." You can't love God and not love Me. You can't honor God and not honor Me. And then He spun around and said, "You are of your father, the devil." In John 14:6 He said, "No man comes to the Father but by Me...no one." You can only know God as God is. And who is God? Ephesians 1:3, "Blessed be the God who is the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ." He is to be known as the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ. That is one with Christ. Second Corinthians 1:3, "Blessed be the God, even the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ." And so it goes through the New Testament. First Peter 1:3, "Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ." And Colossians chapter 1 and verse 3, the same thing, "We give thanks to God, the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ." Second Corinthians 11:31, Romans 15:6, 2 John 3, God is always known as the God who is also the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ. That is the God who is one in essence and nature with Christ. God is only known through Christ and God is only honored when Christ is honored.

And I want you to notice the all-inclusive character of the statement in verse 8, "Everyone who confesses Me before men, the Son of Man shall confess Him also before the angels of God." This is an all-inclusive demand...everyone, everyone, everyone. That is to say there is no way to God but by Me, as John 14 indicates. Everyone who confesses Me before men will be confessed by My Father before the angels and by Me as well. It's a sober warning, a really sober warning to the religious people. The same thing is stated by our Lord on another occasion, as recorded in Matthew 10:32,

you find a comparative verse in Matthew 10:32.

Now let me just talk about what it means to confess Me before men and what it doesn't mean when Jesus says, "As the Son of Man He'll confess us before the angels of God." The word "confess" needs to be understood because when we hear confess we think of somebody who confessed to a crime. But you know there's a kernel of truth in that that gets back to the core of the meaning. When somebody confesses, is this not true? They are saying they are owning up to what is true. Is that right? When you say you confess, you're really owning up to what is true. If I confess to doing something, if your child confesses that they did something wrong, if you confess your sin, you are owning up to what is true. And that's exactly what it means. To confess, *homolegese(?)*, *logeo*is the verb to say, *homo*, homogeneous, homogenized means the same, something the same. Homo sapiens, having to do with all of us being the same as humans. *Homo*as opposed to *heteros*which means different, it is to say the same thing. What does that mean? Well that's the technical meaning of the word, the word actually means to say what is true, to state about something what is true...says one Greek lexicon. So when you're confessing Me, you are saying what is true about Jesus...person, work, words. And He says, "This confession is before men." It has to be...it has to be. It cannot not be because if you make that confession in your heart, there will be a regeneration and a new birth and a conversion and a sanctification that will result in a manifest transformation. So we're not talking about sayers here, we're not talking about people who just had it on their lips, people who wanted me with their lips. We're not talking about those people in the Sermon on the Mount who were the sayers and not the doers. We're talking about those who manifest their confession before men, not just with their lips but with their life. Now there are many people who give the lip service, you know, Matthew 7:21, 22, "Many will say unto Me on that day, Lord, Lord, we did this, we did that, we did this." He says, "Depart from Me, I never knew you." You know, you honor Me with your lips and your heart is far from Me. "I don't know you, depart from Me you workers of iniquity."

The bottom line is, whatever you say, you are workers of iniquity. That's what characterizes you and that's evidence that's never been a transformation. That's not a confession. We're talking about the kind of confession that is manifest publicly, that is to say what is true about Jesus Christ, both with your lip and with your life.

Now how do you do that? How do we kind of get to the core of that? Well true salvation comes only to those who honor Christ. And to honor Christ is to acknowledge...listen...all that is true about Him. It's to acknowledge all that is true about Him, about His person, about His work, about His words..."This is My beloved Son in whom I am well pleased," the Father said, "listen to Him." And, of course, the Pharisees and the scribes and the Jews that followed them, they were trying to honor God while they were cursing His Son. You know, you can't not say what is true about Christ and honor God, you dishonor God by rejecting or denying Christ because God Himself has said, "This is

My beloved Son in whom I am well pleased, listen to Him."

In 1 John chapter 4, just to fill in some on this for your thinking, because it's so basic and foundational, listen to what it says in 1 John 4:15, "Whoever confesses that Jesus is the Son of God, God abides in him and he in God." Whoever says the truth that Jesus is God, deity, fully deity, fully God, God abides in him and he in God. You cannot know God apart from affirming the deity of Jesus Christ. One letter later, 2 John verse 7, "Many deceivers have gone out into the world, many...religious deceivers...and they are those who do not...same Greek word...confess Jesus Christ is coming in the flesh, this is the deceiver and the Antichrist." So you must confess that Jesus is God and you must confess that Jesus is man...that He is God, fully God, fully man.

And then turn to Romans, if you will, chapter 10. This is a hallmark passage. Romans chapter 10, this is at the very core of the gospel. Romans 10 talks about...in verse 8...talks about preaching the Word of faith, calling people to faith through preaching. And what must people do? Verse 9 and 10, Romans 10: 9 and 10, "If you confess," here we are with the same word again, "with your mouth Jesus as Lord," stop there. You must confess Jesus as God, you must confess Him as man, and you must confess Him as Lord. God has to do with His deity, Man has to do with His humanity, Lord has to do with His sovereignty. And, of course, that basically is born out of, verse 9, the fact that you believe in your heart that God raised Him from the dead. "If you confess with your mouth Jesus is Lord and believe in your heart that God raised Him from the dead, you will be saved." You will be rescued from sin and death and judgment and hell. And then he affirms it in verse 10, "For with the heart man believes, resulting in righteousness, with the mouth he confesses, resulting in salvation." Salvation and righteousness being the same, being parallel. You believe and consequently you confess with your mouth and you support with your life. If you want to be right before God, if you want to receive salvation, righteousness is a positive term, salvation is a negative term. Righteousness means you're perfect before God. Salvation means you have been delivered from sin and death and judgment and hell. You must confess that Jesus is Lord.

Now what does this say to confess Jesus as Lord? What...what do you mean by that? Well I think Jesus defines it in very clear terms. I mean, there are a lots of passages talking about the lordship of Christ all over the place. In fact, it might interest you to know that in the book of Acts where you get the chronicle of apostolic preaching, the preaching of the Apostles in the early church, Jesus is called Savior twice in the whole book of Acts. And He's called Lord 92 times. And in the New Testament, Jesus is called Savior less than ten times, and He's called Lord more than 700 times. So this idea that Jesus is Lord is not some minor detail here. And when we say confess Jesus as Lord, what are we saying? Do you understand what's involved in that?

Well I can help you with that. Let's go back to Luke again, only not back to chapter 12 for a moment, let's go back to chapter 9 of Luke because here again is that salient benchmark text, Luke 9:23, and it...verses 23 to 25, so powerful, and He was saying to them all...this is sort of His universal message, "If anyone wishes to come after Me, you want to come to Me, you want to receive My message, you want to follow Me, here's what you're going to have to do. Let him deny himself and take up his cross daily and follow Me." That, friends, is a total takeover of one's life. It's the end of you I mean, you can saved, as I pointed out in the book Hard To Believe,you're not adding Jesus to your life, you just lost your life. You're not having Jesus come along and fix up your dreams and fulfill your ambitions, you just said no to your dreams and your ambitions and yes to His sovereignty.

What does it mean to deny yourself? Remember when we studied that text and I told you, to deny yourself the Word, deny...it means to refuse to associate with? Oh, you want to follow Jesus, do you, then the first requirement is you refuse to associate with the person you are any longer. You just died. Paul says, "For me to live is...what?...is Christ...is Christ." I'm crucified with Christ. I died with Him there, I don't have a life of my own, I don't have a will of my own, I don't have a plan of my own. I don't have an ambition of my own, my ambition is to be pleasing to Him. It's the end of you.

So what we're talking about here in confessing Jesus as Lord is absolute and complete self-denial. It's a kind of...it's a kind of personal suicide. And then He says, "Take up your cross daily." And that's not some mystical idea, it means get ready, you might need to die. Very, very practical, it might cost you your life. They were used to crosses, they were everywhere, by the thousands the Romans had stuck them up on the highways in Israel to put fear in the hearts of the people. Corpses hanging on them all the time, being eaten by birds. They knew what it was to lose your life for a cause. And Jesus said it might cost you your life. Then He said, "Then follow Me." So it's self-denial, self-sacrifice, and self-submission. And verse 24 says this is how you save your life. This is how you save your soul. If you hold on to your life, you'll lose it. If you lose it and therein is the summation of what he said in verse 23, the summation of denying yourself, taking up your cross daily and following Me is losing your life. And the only way you'll ever save your life is to completely abandon it. When you confess Jesus as Lord, you are saying I'm a slave, You're the master, I'll do whatever You ask. You say, "Why would somebody say that?" Because they want forgiveness of sin and heaven so desperately. It's only the desperate who repent and confess.

So what you're doing when you confess Jesus as Lord is you're confessing the truth that He is in fact the absolute and utter sovereign of the universe and has every right to be the sovereign over your life, and particularly because you are so desperately hopeless in running it yourself. And left to yourself, you'll run your life right into hell. Lord means sovereign ruler. Now back to the twelfth chapter again.

And Jesus says, "Everyone who confesses Me before men, the Son of Man shall confess him also before the angels of God." If you deny yourself and accept Me, then I will affirm you in the glory of heaven before the angels of God. And that scene is a judgment scene. That is a picture that is given to us in the twenty-fifth chapter of Matthew looking into that scene of judgment. Verse 31, "When the Son of Man comes in His glory, all the angels with Him," here He comes, Son of Man, same title that He uses there of Himself in the twelfth chapter of Luke, and that was the most common way He referred to Himself. It was a messianic title taken out of Daniel 7:13 and 14. "When the Son of Man comes in His glory and all the angels with Him, then He'll sit on His glorious throne and all the nations will be gathered before Him and He'll separate them from one another as the shepherd separates the sheep from the goat. He'll put the sheep on His right hand, the goats on the left. And the King will say to those on His right, 'Come, you who are blessed of My Father, inherit the Kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world.'" The day is coming when He sets up His throne and all the angels of God are there and everybody is separated and the sheep who are on His right go into the Kingdom, and the goats on His left are cast out of His presence forever. The end of the chapter, end of Matthew 25 and verse 46, "And these will go away into eternal punishment but the righteous into eternal life." And this happens before the watching angels of God. And so what Jesus is saying here is about judgment. And I told you, as we get to this point in His life, He says a lot about judgment and that's His point here. Judgment is coming. "Everyone who continues to affirm that I am who I said I am, who acknowledges the truth concerning Me will find that I will acknowledge the truth concerning Him before the angels of God." When it comes to that judgment, just as you have denied yourself and accepted Me, I will affirm you in the glory to come. On the other hand, verse 9 says, "He who denies Me before men shall be denied before the angels of God." You're going to wind up with the goats.

This is how to stay out of heaven...just deny Christ, *arneomai*in the Greek, it means to disown, to reject. And that's exactly what the Pharisees and scribes had done. And so Jesus is saying to these people who are still the *mathetes*, they're still the learners, they're still on the fence, they're still making up their mind, He's saying...Look, if you will acknowledge what is true about Me, My person, My work, My words, some day I'll acknowledge you before the angels of God at the judgment. But if you deny Me like these others have, I'll deny you before the angels of God. I will say, "Depart from Me, you workers of iniquity, I don't know you...I don't know you."

It's straightforward, clear-cut, inescapable. Heaven will belong to those who honor God by honoring the Son. You cannot honor the Father without honoring the Son. It's impossible. I have for years strongly argued in the two most important books, I think, that I've written, one called The Gospel According to Jesus, the other The Gospel According to the Apostles, once titled Faith Works.In those two books I argued about the issue of the lordship of Jesus Christ. And when The Gospel According to Jesuscame out, it was stunning, it was stunning. The publishers said they thought they might sell

25,000, I think the first year they sold a quarter of a million and this is a theological book, technical kind of heavy book. But it was dropped like a bomb in the middle of evangelicalism and people were stunned to take a look at the gospel that was being preached, which was not the biblical gospel, which was not...which was not a lordship gospel which had been stripped of repentance and stripped of confession of Jesus as Lord, and stripped of submission, and stripped of self-denial, and stripped of obedience and reduced to nothing more than praying a prayer, accept Jesus into your life, ask Jesus into your heart, invite Jesus into your own life, make a decision for Christ.

By the way, those are familiar phrases, none of which is biblical. Nowhere in the Bible do we ever read the phrase "accept Jesus...ask Jesus into your heart...invite Jesus into your life...or make a decision for Christ." What you will read is if you want to come after Me, deny yourself, take up your cross, follow Me, repent, believe, confess Me as God, confess Me as man, confess Me as Lord. And I wrote those books endeavoring to awaken the church and they're still around and it's still as critical because the church in its dullness and theological ignorance continues to perpetuate a cheap and shallow gospel even today. So I took another shot at the issue with the book Hard To Believe, but the church has now become to resilient against that truth, much more resilient than it used to be, and I'll tell you why. In the day when I wrote The Gospel According to Jesusthe church was still tied to its theology. Okay? Theology mattered. And if you could expose the error of theology, you created a furor. Nowadays it's not theology that drives the church, it's pragmatism and theology is not an issue. Don't confuse me with that. There's a sort of indifference. You write a book on pragmatism and you'll draw the interest of the church. You write a book on doctrine and they're not sure why you're wasting your time. How do you awaken a church in theological error when theological error doesn't matter. But it does matter. The gospel invitation has always been a call to self-denial, it's always been a call to submission, it's always been a call to sacrifice, it's always been a call to repentance and Jesus never eased up. And you must confess Him. You must deny yourself or deny Him. Take your choice. He says you can deny Me and I'll deny you. Or you can confess Me and I'll confess you. But confessing Me means denying yourself. That's what the gospel offers. It is an invitation to give up your life. It's an invitation to say I will lose my life to find it.

I tell you, I get so weary of doing interviews on the radio in places and Q & A's and talking about this and people think, you know, that this is some foreign message. And you say to them, "You know, Jesus didn't come to fulfill your dreams, He didn't come to fulfill your ambitions, to bump you up a few notches on the satisfaction scale, to make your marriage better, straighten out your slice and help you hit more home runs. That's not why He came. He came to take over and in return for that you receive the forgiveness of sin, eternal life, and the peace and joy and power of the Spirit of God. And you, when you lose your life, gain it. True conversion is never evidenced by remembrance of an event, or a remembrance of a prayer, or remembrance of a feeling. True conversion is evidenced by a confession of Christ with lip and life. That is to say, a verbal confirmation of one's submission to the

lordship of Christ that is supported by an obedient life. And John said it as clearly as it could be said, 1 John 3:10, "By this the children of God and the children of the devil are obvious. Anyone who doesn't practice righteousness is not of God. Anyone who doesn't practice righteousness is not of God." So you look at the pattern of their life. This is not just confessing with your mouth, this is a full life confession. If you acknowledge before the watching world that you believe all that is true about Christ, including His deity, His humanity, His saving work and His lordship, and it's evident in your life, then He'll acknowledge you before the angels of God. But if no matter what you might say your life is a denial of Christ, then He'll deny you at the judgment before the angels of God.

Jesus said then you want to miss hell, you want to escape hypocritical false religion...only one way. You must honor the true and living God, the God who will uncover all hypocrisy, the God who has the authority and the power to send souls to eternal hell and the God who knows everything, nothing escapes Him...and the only way you can honor that God is to honor His Son. Whoever honors the Son, honors the Father and honoring the Son means that you confess, that is to say you say that it is true, all that Jesus is and said and did.

And that takes you to the third duty, to honor the Spirit. And I'm going to do that next time but I'm just going to give you a hint. Summing up this rich trinitarian core of the gospel is the fact that you can't honor the Father until you honor the Son, and listen to this, you can't honor the Son until you honor the Spirit. You say, "What do you mean?"

Look at 1 Corinthians chapter 12, just two verses I want to have you think about between now and next Sunday...1 Corinthians chapter 12 verse 3, end of the verse, listen to this, "No one can say Jesus is Lord except by the Holy Spirit." No one can say Jesus is Lord except by the Holy Spirit. You can't know the Father until you know the Son, you can't know the Son except through the work of the Holy Spirit. And one other text, 1 John chapter 4 and verse 2, "By this you know the Spirit of God." How do you know the Spirit of God? "Everyone that confesses that Jesus Christ has come in the flesh is from God."

How do you know the Spirit? The Spirit is always at work in the people who make the true confession of Christ, right? You can't know Christ without the work of the Spirit. It's the Spirit that shows us Christ. It's Christ that shows us the Father. The way to Christ is through the work of the Spirit. The way to the Father is through the work of the Son. And so what is here, what our Lord is saying here is like a summation of all the whole trinitarian power and purpose in redemption. We're going to find out next time about honoring the Spirit. Let's bow in prayer as we close.

Our God, we...we thank You for the work of Your Spirit. We could not honor You, could not honor the Son, we could not say Jesus is Lord except by the Spirit. And if we couldn't say Jesus is Lord, then we would never honor You, we would never know You. And so we thank You, Lord, we thank You. How staggering it is, absolutely staggering to contemplate Your trinitarian majesty and infinite glory

and to understand how all Father, Son and Holy Spirit are engaged in this unimaginable work of redemption of unworthy sinners such as we are. We thank You, Lord, for reducing this incomprehensibility to simplicity so that we understand that You want us to fear You because You're holy, because You're righteous, because You're omniscient, because You're the Judge and executioner. But You want us to fear You in a positive sense through faith in Your Son so that You become to us our kind and loving and gracious Father. And we know that only happens through the amazing work of the Spirit. All of us, Lord, would want to avoid hypocritical false religion that lies and deceives and we thank You that the truth is found only in Your Word and in You, Father-Son-and Holy Spirit. Lead every heart to that truth and to that self-denial and confession of Jesus as Lord. We pray in His name.

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