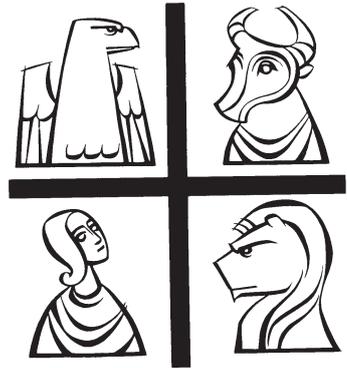


# Reading Luke in Lent

## Gospel of Luke 12:1-21



### Beware of the Leaven of the Pharisees

- <sup>1</sup> 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.  
<sup>2</sup> Nothing is covered up that will not be revealed, or hidden that will not be known.  
<sup>3</sup> 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.

### Have No Fear

- <sup>4</sup> 'I tell you, my friends, do not fear those who kill the body, and after that have nothing more that they can do.  
<sup>5</sup> But I will warn you whom to fear:  
fear him who, after he has killed, has authority to cast into hell. Yes, I tell you, fear him!  
<sup>6</sup> Are not five sparrows sold for two pennies? And not one of them is forgotten before God.  
<sup>7</sup> Why, even the hairs of your head are all numbered.  
Fear not; you are of more value than many sparrows.

### Acknowledge Christ Before Men

- <sup>8</sup> 'And I tell you, everyone who acknowledges me before men, the Son of Man also will acknowledge before the angels of God,  
<sup>9</sup> but the one who denies me before men will be denied before the angels of God.  
<sup>10</sup> And everyone who speaks a word against the Son of Man will be forgiven, but the one who blasphemes against the Holy Spirit will not be forgiven.  
<sup>11</sup> And when they bring you before the synagogues and the rulers and the authorities, do not be anxious about how you should defend yourself or what you should say,  
<sup>12</sup> for the Holy Spirit will teach you in that very hour what you ought to say.'

### The Parable of the Rich Fool

- <sup>13</sup> Someone in the crowd said to him,  
'Teacher, tell my brother to divide the inheritance with me.'  
<sup>14</sup> But he said to him,  
'Man, who made me a judge or arbitrator over you?'  
<sup>15</sup> And he said to them,  
'Take care, and be on your guard against all covetousness, for one's life does not consist in the abundance of his possessions.'  
<sup>16</sup> And he told them a parable, saying,  
'The land of a rich man produced plentifully,  
<sup>17</sup> and he thought to himself, "What shall I do, for I have nowhere to store my crops?"  
<sup>18</sup> And he said, "I will do this: I will tear down my barns and build larger ones, and there I will store all my grain and my goods.

- <sup>19</sup> And I will say to my soul, ‘Soul, you have ample goods laid up for many years; relax, eat, drink, be merry.’”
- <sup>20</sup> But God said to him,  
“Fool! This night your soul is required of you,  
and the things you have prepared, whose will they be?”
- <sup>21</sup> So is the one who lays up treasure for himself and is not rich toward God.’

## Reflection

On the journey to Jerusalem the focus of Jesus’ preaching is what it means to be a disciple. In a passage which stretches into the next chapter Jesus talks to the crowd. It is a varied speech, sometimes it is directed just to the disciples, some to everyone; sometimes he is interrupted. The whole passage gives us a flavour of the dynamics of his preaching.

The direction in which they are heading maybe Jerusalem but Jesus reminds the disciples of their ultimate destiny — the kingdom of heaven. Though the future may be testing Jesus gives strength and inspiration. This ultimate goal is set in contrast with people’s care for material possessions. In the parable one connection which the hearers may have made is with Joseph, who in the book of Genesis, filled barns with grain. The difference is that Joseph’s action was so that there would be enough to share in times of famine; where as the Rich Fool seems to gather grain as an expression of his wealth.

- What thoughts and possessions do we need to de-clutter so that we can follow Jesus more closely?

## Prayer

O God,  
the giver of every gift that endures,  
only by your grace can we rightly understand the wonder of life  
and why it is given.

By the word of your Son  
challenge our foolishness,  
confront our greed,  
and shape our lives  
to the wisdom of the gospel.

We ask this through our Lord Jesus Christ, your Son,  
who lives and reigns with you in the unity of the Holy Spirit,  
God for ever and ever.  
Amen.