

Warnings and Encouragements

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[0 : 00] Well, I've spent a lot of time with my dad lately, and I'm not great seeing my parents as wrinkly as I like, but he's spent a lot of time with them, and that's a bit of a crossword buff, he's got one of those minds that sees words and does the cryptic crosswords with consummate ease.

It's really impressive to watch, if not annoying, but there's one of them, and if you sit down with him and he'll throw one at you, if he's stuck in your leg, I'd have never been able to answer any of these ever.

If you're stuck, then we're all stuck. But there's one of these crosswords which amuses me all, it's called the Wee Stinker. Did you do the Wee Stinker? Yeah, the Wee Stinker, absolutely.

Well, this is a wee stinker tonight. It's a bar. So we enter into, as you can tell from Ian's reading, we enter into a flow which is already, notice the first word?

Meanwhile, two weeks ago was the last teach on this, and we're in this massive flow, and really if we could take you back into chapter 11, you don't need to turn back into it, but just notionally, there was a real, real challenge in Jesus.

[1 : 24] He's casting a demon out of somebody. He was casting a demon out of somebody, the Lord has been to be one. And he gets challenged by the religious rulers, the right wingers, who say, hang on a minute.

The only way you could be doing this, and managing it, is because you have Satan or the El's involved within me.

They are challenging the spiritual authority and the power within him that he's able to exercise. That is the context of this whole blurb that we end up picking up in chapter 12, verse 1.

The meanwhile, the crowds are just clamoring to get into Jesus. The meanwhile is all the rammy that came after that, and him putting the boot in and the Pharisees and the lawyers and the scribes. We're still in that scenario. So meanwhile, what? Verse 1 of chapter 12. Meanwhile, what?

[2 : 32] The scribes and the Pharisees are continuing this hostility. This is a... Jesus is literally fronting up to these guys, and taking strips off them. He's utterly undoing their character.

You would have thought that maybe, in that kind of a scenario, he does an exorcism and successful, that he might back off a little bit from the religious rulers of today.

This was the top brass of spiritual authority. Now, he wades in more deeply, and he keeps going and going and going.

And as you can see, it's on verses 1 through 3. They're lying in a way. They're just waiting to find something to hang with. He's just being so kind, so clever, so on the money.

They're just...they're incensed. Are you one of those people who always has to be right? Or, at the very least, you know, has to say the last thing in an argument so you feel like you're right?

[3 : 39] You know that feeling? I think you're going to be off on that, probably. But some of us are going to be off on that than others. We've all got problems, don't we? But I mean... It's that... Nigos, he's getting...

And he always had the better off of them. But notice as well, as we start going through this early text 1, 2, and 3, verses 1, 2, 3, and 4, he's now specifically talking to the disciples.

And in the rammy of the streets, an exorcism which goes really well and is challenged to be erroneous, to be dodgy, he somehow finds a private moment to the Lord.

So, gather around that. I want to talk to you about something. This is a moment of ad hoc on the Ruth of discipleship, I suppose.

And he says, beware of the yeast of the Pharisees. And it's so helpful, so great when the New Testament does this, because we're all dummies, when it actually explains what stuff means.

[4 : 44] Unlike the yeast thinker, Jesus out of Luke records what the purpose of, or what the yeast is. It is the Pharisees' hypocrisy.

And now we know the subject of this new private session. Actually, topic-wise, it's the same as that whole swathe in chapter 11, where he's going poof, poof, poof, like forwards in a rugby game, cleaning out, cleaning out.

It's just relentless, he's just hounding these guys. And he does it to their faces. But this time, he has a private session and says, by the way, beware.

Hypocrisy. The top brass of this country, the spiritual elite, the ones who everybody was old when they walked past, they are hypocrites.

And it just kind of gets worse for these guys, these spiritual elite, these Pharisees, these scribes, these lawyers.

[5 : 57] Because, we go into verse 2, there's going to be a great reversal. A great reversal. All the shams and cover-ups.

All of the gossipy, gnarly moments. They're going to be broadcast on the loudest, clearest PA system known to man. All of the dodging goings on in the back rooms.

The curtains will go up. And the bare-bought will be there. There will be a great reversal, Jesus says to his disciples.

What's being whispered behind closed doors. All scheming. God sees them. He's heard all. They will be on display.

There will be a compass for these hypocrites. And it was these types of people who set the spiritual standard.

[7 : 06] I actually have to think that these guys, at some point, well and on, these were actually really devoted guys. And somewhere they went wrong.

These are the types of Jewish society who would have been in the in-cred, the dead search for God's special spiritual mosaic. Well done guys.

You have been faithful. Coming out of exile and back into the land. You are the ones. Jesus has saved them. His queen of opposite ways.

That's not what's happening at all. They are hypocrites. And it was called yeast understandably because what they were modeling as a spirituality took cold.

It's really interesting that you go through the gospels and all the gospels. There's all sorts of pejorative teachings going on to unpack this. I think one of the ones I was thinking of in the drive of the way here this evening was, you know, and some of these people you've infected, Jesus says to them, you've made them twice the child of the hell that you are.

[8 : 22] That's how much responsibility is on your head. You don't screw these people up. They're a ways away over there. What are you doing over there?

No wonder he went in hard. Why he went in with both feet, studs out. Don't be fooled, he says to the band as he pulls them round in.

Or get involved. One day, if you're involved in that, it will be your bare bottle on stage 2 when the curtain goes up. One. One.

One. One Speaker. One moment. For the very folk that everybody felt were a huge reward. Game change. He says to them, how's your apartments?

Game change. He says to them, how's your heart? Because this needs to be bacon in the lung for grace.

[9 : 30] We get to verses 4 and into 7 and Jesus keeps pursuing this thread of Christ. It's not just a critique, it's a proper character assassination of 71 people in the college of Edinburgh and the spiritual authority of the land. He is really, really going for it.

He's criticizing their spirituality. Why? This law, this peace, this hypocrisy lived in fear.

These 71 Pharisees lived in fear, literal fear, the Roman authorities of the day. They cosied up to the powers. They were in with them.

They were complicit in all the goings-on. You see that in the crucifixion story? Get rid of the powers. We'll have him.

They were using every angle possible. These guys were closing up to power. They would be totally twisted and seduced by it. They were despised by the ordinary people in a way.

[10 : 48] They're in the powers. They're not in us. Ordinary people. We're done for. there's clear shrewd thing going on at the top level so don't have fear of Roman authority Jesus says to his band

of disciples remember that's the moment he's got them in the huddle don't let that fear of Roman authority who can't do awful things or we won't walk down that road with the folks hanging on those crucifixes we've got enough warnings do not worry about that scenario rather we really need to think about when that body is linked and hanging and is breathing no more that he can take that same person and cast them into hell even then after everything they've got that's who you should be very and it's just what he's been saying all along

I think Jesus is actually saying these guys because of their hypocrisy could very well end up in hell the very people we thought we were in are the very people who are going to be out don't do the call tree fear thing of the Pharisees he says to him that is not the end of it fear the God who can cast into hell and that's interesting because there's a bit of a there's a real change here and all of a sudden he's talking about sparrows and hair it's quite a shift change it feels to me all of a sudden and why is he using that quite strange one okay we're a bird lover like me then it's just a welcoming moment for me birdies but this hypocrisy of the Pharisees was such that it kept the ordinary folk completely count out kept people normal people people that weren't considered special spiritual that didn't wear fancy robes that didn't know the theological parlance there's a fancy robe in their place this feast of the Pharisees was condemned because it prevented many from being engaged with God it was doing the complete opposite of what the Pharisees thought they were doing they prohibited things that didn't matter at all like how you do sound like them oh do you wipe them inside you cut this way or this way okay what are you what are you

Jesus says are you joking people were these things really that matter for God's people so when he says that a whole bunch of sparrows are valuable verse 6 but then he goes on saying and you are way more valuable to God than even these creatures that God sees drop down from the edge dead here was a moment just a moment where Jesus gives somebody that kind soothing worth of encouragement in life we're not we're not we thought we were the sprats that word of encouragement that allows the shoulders to go alright that's me more valuable here's on head these guys were brown beaten by this distorted twisted sinister thing that was the spiritual leadership of the day we go to verse 8 and Jesus starts talking then and those that acknowledge the son of man everyone who acknowledges me before others the son of man will also acknowledge before the angels of God that's an interesting statement by the way and it's interesting because

I found myself doing it and I don't know if you were doing it jumping and assuming this will be known who the son of man is but it's interesting the way Jesus phrases he says everyone who acknowledges me before others the son of man will also acknowledge before the angels of God as if the son of man is making somebody different or at least that's the way my life went am I ready at first who is this son of man he's repenting to die he said this is this is the son of man let me read that little bit to you he's going to come up to him that's the son of man was given dominion and glory and kingship that all peoples nations and languages should serve him this dominion is an everlasting dominion that shall not pass away and his kingship is one that shall never be destroyed we're talking about a human being who's going to be the judge of all the earth says Daniel 7 everyone will serve him he is an everlasting king and anybody that acknowledges this Jesus here and now the angels of God will vouch for that person yes

I was watching I saw they were the ones who got rosy cheeked and smiled when they were able to mention the name of Jesus they were the ones but the scribes and Pharisees didn't acknowledge Jesus in any way let's get back to our flow here what's his point he's challenging hypocrisy he's challenging and daunting you fear and going if you don't acknowledge me here and now the same God that can cast you in the earth once your bodies went on the cross he can do even more than that you need to acknowledge the one who he sent who was in the beginning anyway and this is the context of this section of the book they challenge the authority and the power by which he's doing this exorcism of a demon you can't be doing that and people are gathering around and you know collecting a man followers this is just not all you know you must be doing this by some other form of magic and spiritual power it's not on track you've got to be because we're the ones in charge we're the spiritual we're the ones that set the toll we're the ones that give the rules we're the one doctor they didn't believe this Jesus and neither of the angels of God lacked them and they would not and did not acknowledge him apart from a bit later on in the news you see little glimpses there's a moment in Acts beautiful moment but it's embarrassing

[18 : 47] I think it's like Acts 5 or Acts 15 maybe 15 you see you know around the crucifixion you see you know others it's fascinating they start to come in and we work a wee bit some of them their antennae going up and we work hang on a minute what are we doing what mentality story and you can put the boot in Jesus on me you can dishonor me with the angels of God they'll bring the coming eventually and you can put the boot in me now and I'm willing to forgive that says Jesus the blasphemy of the Holy Spirit I'm sorry that one's the only thing God is not going for that for that God is so sorry let's say if I'm for that why is that and this is the least thinker part of passage right why can you blaspheme the son and not spirit do you know one of my kind of rubbish little analogies it's a bit like you know

I can moan about my mom you can't go to my mom I'll be all over you I'll ruin your life in a second that's the best I've got my hands it's just a bit like that that's how I emotionally feel it when I read this story Jesus says a curious thing in verse 20 20 if you go back to the previous chapter in the context of the exorcism and he's challenging this exorcism which precipitated all this stuff so chapter 11 verse 20 he says this he says this on screen for if it's by the finger of God that I cast out the demons then the kingdom of God has come upon you what's the finger of

God I mean it's a nice image well if you compare the same story this is where it's so handy I don't know if you ever do this really really handy you can actually get this online and stuff man where the same stories in you know man's mark and look and there's lots of them pretty similar or the same or in slightly different contexts they put them side by side so you can see them all and go oh actually that one's slightly different or that one's taught in a slightly different context to that one and it's very interesting and if you read about the same exorcism the same teaching that we're doing now from Luke in Matthew you get following and if I cast out demons by Beelzebul by whom your own exorcists cast them out therefore they will be your judges but if it's by the spirit of God that I cast out demons then the kingdom of God has come to you brothers and sisters

I believe that the finger of God reference is a reference to the spirit as we see here from Matthew and so if you challenge as the Pharisees and the scribes did the power by which the demons were cast out you blaspheme the Holy Spirit himself who did and provided the power the context is the exorcism this spectacular moment when somebody is freed from an evil spirit in public Jesus was filled with the Holy Spirit like many of us are and it was by that same power that the exorcisms took place so if you were to challenge that as the Pharisees did that this was an act of Satan himself the blasphemy Jesus said man that was not good no chance you get to blame the Holy Spirit for being saved to mistake the Holy Spirit being saying ah you're done you're totally done do not mistake the spiritual authority and power by which I am doing things you need to acknowledge me before others the very thing that you seem incapable of doing so we go to verse 12 of our passage back into chapter 12 so when you get dragged before the very authorities who run this vain spirituality this hypocrisy driven by fear when you get dragged before these authorities Jesus says to the disciples in the huddle don't worry because the really enjoyable thing is the same [24 : 33] Holy Spirit that gets blasphemed he's the one who can't get the words you need to say when they are twisting the story and making you look like a liar the very same power that I was able to exercise that demon with will give you the language you need even though your knees are knocking you're shaking you're not a confident person you don't have self esteem you'll be fine no see he doesn't give them any respite you are going to get into trouble lads he doesn't free them from that God the Holy Spirit will be on your side lads you are the unlesened to fishermen with the really broad accents that are unrefined and haven't had any education and you're from the north and not from the posh southeast and yet you're the ones that are going to end speaking for God and against the ones that you thought were the spiritual elite in that interest of everything to turn out the ones who thought they were the spiritual elite were the aggressors of God himself themselves of God and against the earth and the earth would be not much to surprise this same hypocrisy and fear as the living in world today fancy that smoothing that the holy spirit power and supernatural acts

I've heard that before I've heard that a lot no that's not real that's not real that's not possible they're just making it up they're just acting they're just messing about I can't cope with that that's freaking me out I'm not going I'm just going to pretend that's not there whatever it is this kind of spiritual reverse snobbery actually a fear which turns out to be in worst case scenario a blasphemy has already been anticipated in the same gospel master master said John we saw someone driving out demons in your name and we tried to stop him because he's not an army band follower he's not an

army brigade don't stop him

Jesus says for whoever is not against you is for you well he's not in your church so you think you should stop him ah well I I didn't know that's not right that's not right when the Holy Spirit in all his power is used in a way to honour Jesus whether it's spectacular or whether it seems to be kind of underplayed in the mundane when it's gentle and deaf and subtle and yet so rule of the Spirit when this is stopped or railed against or insulted there we have the blasphemy of the Holy Spirit boy is that alive and wild today whenever there is an undermining of or a dulling down of or an ignoring or a repressing or an explaining way of the

Spirit we are in grave danger of this unforgivable sin notice how Trinitarian these passages look well it's amazing God is mentioned as God and Jesus is presented as the instructor and as he refers to himself and who I actually think links himself with the son of man from Daniel 7 and the Holy Spirit is present too there's a Trinitarian syntax and you just see it everywhere after a while he lists it's like seeing the matrix code you know it's just there you're just so blinking obvious you know this is so great this doesn't get any easier for himself by the way from this passage it's all very hard whenever there is a form of spiritual leadership that exerts considerable influence there must always be a check and balance against arrogance whenever there is a sense that one or many are held in authority by crowds of people there will always be the temptation to falsely use that power it's seductive well intentioned power influence or leadership can very quickly descend into a realm of fear for those who are unknown and when an atmosphere of paranoia is created by spiritual leaders they have already been caught in the honey trap of sinful power mongering when control social control like the

Pharisees becomes the hallmark of those who should be sensitively earning the respect of the many those leaders have already fallen when leadership becomes a kind of a reds under the bed scenario like the Americans in the 60s are you a colleague I knew you were a colleague I knew you were coming we'll do you in the streets and work with everyone it's you isn't it I was just paranoid I was there could you wipe your bow left ways or right ways when that kind of a reds under the beds spirituality starts to manifest itself we have lost the plot and what Jesus is saying to his disciples is hey this yeast doesn't just stay with the leadership people copy it and then believe that it goes out everywhere beware of the yeast of the families and such was the demise of these guys during [31 : 43] Jesus day he was absolutely desperate Jesus is looking for people who will speak up for him and acknowledge him publicly boy that's one of the hardest things to do when you first start following or if you fall out of the habit of doing it isn't it in Scotland today some of us shoot back from using the words Jesus of Nazareth because we don't know how to do it without getting a pejorative reaction and we think we'll be written off at work forever I'm not saying there's not a good way of doing that I'm just trying to acknowledge the emotional stress that some people seem to feel around that but Jesus is saying he's looking for people to outwardly do this to go rosy cheek with pride at his name it's speaking as me in this life so that the angels of

God grow I remember the time when you were at the pub on Friday night after work and you said to that get all over there remember that those things will be remembered this is the kind of trinitarian God who wants you to live a life of power in the spirit a life of liberty free from fear and hypocrisy and being pound under the beds social control leadership I love this is my favorite ever picture of the trinitarian this is William Blake he just had a wee note book in his pen I just love it so I talked it up so let's talk about how trinitarian his passage is he wants more than that too

Jesus' sensibilities and values seem to be tuned to a different wavelength from ours and the process of returning ours is far from easier and comfortable you notice that in this passage there's not much comfort in this passage he comes into our crowd in Jerusalem and insists on purging the citadel of our religious faith life of all its trash clutter and corruption and until he's done so he can do little or nothing with us but finds us indignant and rather willing and afraid rather than joyful and we fear the possible costs to ourselves and our way of living and understanding we abandon ourselves to the claim that makes upon us and we find so challenging we resent this blunt instrument he seems to bring in and we dismiss him we ignore him we side gliding but before long he persists in his claim of our lives he persists on his claim he wants you to know and learn about spiritual warfare and the holy spirit he wants you to know how to live the vitality of the spirit and to trust hang on a minute if we can trust the father and trust the son how can we not trust the holy spirit when it's the same god what is up with that

I don't get that come on guys he is utterly trustworthy and yet completely unsafe he is a god that wants to lift up people who are bereft of encouragement starving for a kind word for a mentor to come alongside that nourishes and helps with real life he is a god that values you way more than the bonnie me sparrows in the hedge he knows you he notices the details he calls on you tonight and sends a warning shot across all of our bowels beware of the yeast of the Pharisees be the kind of person that becomes accustomed to experiencing the power of the spirit that knows how to avoid the seduction of power that hears the words in a stressful situation deep within and go God's telling me what to say here I thought I was on my own in that moment he says to his little brigade the very one they have blasphemed is the very one you will learn will give you the very life and joy in the midst of the deepest stress this is the kingdom of God let's pray Lord Jesus like fantasies where parents will neither prefer to not to deal with you sensing your uninvited approach and rush to make excuses not to be a lot of please things are too difficult to stand to delegate on and work on stuff is not right time and so often we want to come only on our own terms and we want to reinforce and to understand our ways of thinking and behaving to endorse and let you support our plans for bringing in the kingdom of God but when you come to us it is always on your terms and not on ours be be quietly but firmly insist no negotiation no diplomatic compromises just faithful correspondence to the [38 : 53] Father and so you upset that caring we arranged after the course of our lives just like you did the parents and the scribes and so you leave us with a little choice we can't agree Lord Jesus forgive us when we become fantasies when we are ready to cause accommodating you to be true aid flood our lives with the spirit Lord may you never go near that last way come to us again so that we will be ready to welcome you with open arms putting ourselves our plans and our priorities and not you on the cross in Jesus name I love you