

Luke 12:54-59 Interpreting the Times.

Main Idea: People need to be reconciled to God before judgement comes.

v54-56 Jesus is now talking to the large crowds. Farming would have been a popular job occupation in that society. Jesus used a lot of farming images to talk to the people as they would have understood them clearly. The crowd would have known how to interpret the weather signs. However, Jesus was declaring that they could not interpret that the Messiah was among them. Among the crowd, there is a refusal to believe that Jesus is God's chosen one (e.g. Luke 11:15-23, 53,54, Luke 12:9). These people are spiritually blind and they don't understand the seriousness of the times that they live in. They have a hardened heart against the obvious miracles that Jesus has done throughout his ministry. Jesus is highlighting their intentional unbelief. It is the same today that people refuse to believe in the Lord Jesus Christ because their hearts are hardened towards him.

"...they can interpret accurately the weather signs in the heavens but cannot interpret the signs of God's heavenly intervention." Garland, *ECNT Luke*

Are you spiritually blind to the person of Jesus Christ? Is your heart hardened towards him?

"See to it, brothers and sisters, that none of you has a sinful, unbelieving heart that turns away from the living God. **13** But encourage one another daily, as long as it is called "Today," so that none of you may be hardened by sin's deceitfulness. Hebrews 3:12,13

If this includes you this morning perhaps you are in a place where you don't know Jesus personally as your Savior. You may have sat here for many Sundays or even many years and never acknowledged Jesus as your Savior. You might be visiting today and never knew that you needed a Savior.

2 For he says, "In the time of my favor I heard you, and in the day of salvation I helped you." I tell you, now is the time of God's favor, now is the day of salvation." 2 Corinthians 6:1,2

This is what Jesus is saying to the crowd, "I am here, believe in me as the Messiah today, believe in me as your Savior today." There is an urgency in his tone because judgement is coming.

What about the 'present times' we live in today?

Jesus is still calling out to the world. His offer of salvation is available to all and God wants none to perish at the judgement.

"And we have seen and testify that the Father has sent his Son to be the Savior of the world.

15 If anyone acknowledges that Jesus is the Son of God, God lives in them and they in God." 1 John 4:14

Jesus is drawing people from the world every day and will continue to do so until he returns. The offer of salvation is real.

"For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life. **17** For God did not send his Son into the world to condemn the world, but to save the world through him. **18** Whoever believes in him is not condemned, but whoever does not believe stands condemned already because they have not believed in the name of God's one and only Son." John 3:16-18

How do you live according to the present time we live in? With a sense of urgency or complacency?

If you are a believer today, what are you doing about those whose heart is hardened towards Christ?

What are you doing for the spiritually blind?

Are you shining the light and love for the Lord Jesus Christ? Do you pray for them?

"Jesus clearly reveals the nature of the time; yet they do not respond. So he issues a warning: settle accounts with the accuser, God, or else pay every last penny." Bock, *ECNT Luke*

v57-59 In this illustration with the judge, Jesus is urging the crowd to make peace before they meet the judge and he pronounces judgement on them. God is the judge and Jesus is telling the crowd to seek 'reconciliation' before it is too late. Jesus is pleading with the crowd to be saved before the judgement comes. Jesus is the only one who can reconcile man to God. If a person does not deal with their sin (debt to God) they will have to deal with God's punishment (hell).

"Jesus' point was that the unbelievers in the crowd needed to get things right with their adversary or "opponent" (Jesus) before the "judge" (God) sent them to "prison" (hell)!" Constable, *Notes on Luke*

"**9** Since we have now been justified by his blood, how much more shall we be saved from God's wrath through him! **10** For if, while we were God's enemies, we were reconciled to him through the death of his Son, how much more, having been reconciled, shall we be saved through his life! **11** Not only is this so, but we also boast in God through our Lord Jesus Christ, through whom we have now received reconciliation." Romans 5:9-11

"All this is from God, who reconciled us to himself through Christ and gave us the ministry of reconciliation: **19** that God was reconciling the world to himself in Christ, not counting people's sins against them. And he has committed to us the message of reconciliation. **20** We are therefore Christ's ambassadors, as though God were making his appeal through us. We implore you on Christ's behalf: Be reconciled to God. **21** God made him who had no sin to be sin for us, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God." 2 Corinthians 5:18-21

There needs to be reconciliation with God before judgement.

"Just as people are destined to die once, and after that to face judgment," Hebrews 9:27

"There are some things a man cannot afford to put off; above all he cannot afford to delay making his peace with God." Barclay, *The Gospel of Luke*

Have you made peace with your judge i.e. God?

What is holding you back?

Do you believe that hell is a reality?

How do you reconcile with God?

"I am the way and the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me. **7** If you really know me, you will know my Father as well." John 14:6,7

Practical points for praying:

Never stop praying for the lost.

Pray that Jesus will have compassion for your lost friends.

Pray that Jesus will meet believers where they are.

Pray that Jesus will call them by name.

Pray that Jesus will remove what binds them (from book by Will Davis, *Pray Big*).