

Wear Your Faith on Your Sleeve

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- [0 : 00] We'll take your Bibles and turn to the Gospel of Luke in chapter 11. Luke chapter 11. We're going to begin reading in verse 37 and read into chapter 12, into verse 12.
- That beautiful Lord that we just sang of is speaking to his people, speaking to us. Luke 11, 37. When Jesus had finished speaking, a Pharisee invited him to eat with him.
- So he went in and reclined at the table. But the Pharisee, noticing that Jesus did not first wash before the meal, was surprised. And then the Lord said to him, Now then, you Pharisees, clean the outside of the cup and dish, but inside you are full of greed and wickedness.
- You foolish people. Did not the one who made the outside make the inside also? But give what is inside, the dish, to the poor and everything will be clean for you.
- Woe to you, Pharisees, because you give God a tenth of your mint, rue, and all other kinds of garden herbs. But you neglect justice and the love of God. You should have practiced the latter without leaving the former undone.
- [1 : 25] Woe to you, Pharisees, because you love the most important seats in the synagogues and greetings in the marketplaces. Woe to you, because you are like unmarked graves, which men walk over without knowing it.
- One of the experts in the law answered him, Teacher, when you say these things, you insult us also. Jesus replied, And you experts in the law, woe to you, because you load people down with burdens they can hardly carry, and you yourselves will not lift one finger to help them.
- Woe to you, because you build tombs for the prophets, and it was your forefathers who killed them. So you testify that you approve of what your forefathers did. They killed the prophets, and you build their tombs.
- Because of this, God, in his wisdom, said, I will send them prophets and apostles, some of whom they will kill and others they will persecute. Therefore, this generation will be held responsible for the blood of all of the prophets that has been shed since the beginning of the world, from the blood of Abel to the blood of Zechariah, who was killed between the altar and the sanctuary.
- Yes, I tell you, this generation will be held responsible for it all. Woe to you, experts in the law, because you have taken away the key to knowledge.
- [2 : 54] You yourselves have not entered, and you have hindered those who were entering. When Jesus left there, the Pharisees and the teachers of the law began to oppose him fiercely and to besiege him with questions, waiting to catch him in something he might say.
- Meanwhile, when a crowd of many thousands had gathered so that they were trampling on one another, Jesus began to speak first to his disciples, saying, Be on your guard against the yeast of the Pharisees, which is hypocrisy.
- There is nothing concealed that will not be disclosed or hidden that will not be made known. What you have said in the dark will be heard in the daylight, and what you have whispered in the ear in the inner rooms will be proclaimed from the roofs.

I tell you, my friends, do not be afraid of those who kill the body, and after that can do no more. But I will show you whom you should fear. Fear him who, after the killing of the body, has power to throw you into hell.

Yes, I tell you, fear him. Are not five sparrows sold for two pennies? Yet not one of them is forgotten by God. Indeed, the very hairs of your head are all numbered.

[4 : 13] Don't be afraid. You are worth more than many sparrows. I tell you, whoever acknowledges me before men, the Son of Man will also acknowledge him before the angels of God.

But he who disowns me before men will be disowned before the angels of God. And everyone who speaks a word against the Son of Man will be forgiven.

But anyone who blasphemes against the Holy Spirit will not be forgiven. When you are brought before synagogues, rulers, and authorities, do not worry about how you will defend yourselves or what you will say, for the Holy Spirit will teach you at the time what you should say.

That's the reading of God's word. Let's hear the preaching of it. Good evening.

I always count it a great privilege to be able to be back with you all. I bring greetings from First Baptist Church in Warsaw, as well as my family who weren't able to be here tonight.

[5 : 26] So we want to look at Luke together. We read a good portion of it. We will really be focusing on the passage from Luke 12.

Now, if you weren't aware, the Winter Olympics just wrapped up today. Two weeks of lots of games, lots of competition.

My family and I enjoyed watching it. After the Summer Olympics, my daughter, Piper, she's five. She was ready to be a gymnast. And now, after the Winter Olympics, she is ready to be a figure skater.

So we had fun with the Olympics. And something that you experience at the Olympics that you see there is folks who are wearing their heart on their sleeve.

You see the joy. You see the sorrow. You see the disappointment. You see the frustration, the anger, the relief, the nostalgia. There's so many emotions that are experienced by those athletes.

[6 : 28] They're not hiding their feelings. Many of them are not hiding their feelings. They make them public. You've seen those athletes. They've worn their heart on their sleeve. Well, tonight, from Luke 12, our passage is going to challenge us, not necessarily to wear our heart on our sleeve, but to wear our faith.

To wear our faith on our sleeve. Four different ways that Jesus is going to teach us, his people, to wear our faith on our sleeve. To clearly make known that we belong to Jesus.

To clearly make known that we are united to him. That we are followers of Christ. So four ways. We want to look at each of those from Luke chapter 12.

Well, let's look at the first way. And it is this. That we live with integrity. We live with integrity. If you look back at Luke 12, I'll go ahead and read those three verses one more time.

And this is from the ESV. 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.

[7 : 42] Nothing is covered up that will not be revealed or hidden that will not be known. 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.

So we see here that the crowds are gathering around Jesus. People want to see him. He is absolutely becoming a local celebrity in these people's eyes.

They are clamoring to see him. But what's interesting and not very surprising is that Jesus is not into all of the fanfare. He is not seeking to get autographs with the crowds.

He is not kissing babies. He's not crowd surfing to the boat and then sailing off on the lake. He does the opposite of what we ordinary, finite, sinful people would do.

We would likely embrace that. We would want the popularity. Some of us are like, I don't want any of that. But we would embrace something of that. But in some ways, he turns away from the crowd and he turns to his disciples, shifts his focus away from the crowd and he says this to his disciples.

[8 : 49] He says that they should beware of the leaven of the Pharisees, which is hypocrisy. In other words, he tells his disciples, live with integrity.

And in that context, what that meant was, don't be like the Pharisees. They're hypocrites. They say one thing, but then they do another. They live one way in public, but they live another way in private.

They teach others to do things, but then they themselves, they don't do them. And the reverse is also true. They teach others to not do things, but they themselves do those things.

So they say one thing, but they do another. They do not live consistent lives. They have no integrity. That is basically here, a summary statement for everything that Jesus had said that we read in chapter 11.

That's the hypocrisy that Jesus is talking about. These religious leaders, they wanted to look super spiritual to people's eyes. They want to look the part of being close to God.

[9 : 56] But then you peel back the curtain. You look at their lives, and Jesus oftentimes is doing that with them. And we see, nope, we see their sin. We see their wickedness.

We see that they are far from God, that they want to present themselves like they're God's representatives, when in fact, Jesus helps us see, no, they are God's enemies. And so Jesus gives us a warning here.

Don't be like the Pharisees. Live with integrity. Because, and here's the real kicker, because one day, your inner self will be revealed.

So what you are on the inside, who you are, right now, that's between you and God. I can't see your heart. You can't see my heart. We can't know each other's motives.

We can't know, do we really love God? Does that person really love God or not? And so in a sense, you could be faking it. I could be faking it.

[10 : 56] We could all be faking it. Just like the Pharisees. We wash our hands, but our hearts are rotten. That's possible. It's possible. Well, you know who wore their faith on their sleeve in a sense in Jesus' day?

The Pharisees. Now, obviously, it was a distorted faith. Jesus had those harsh rebukes, those woes to those Pharisees for the kind of faith that they had.

But from an outside perspective, they wore their faith on their sleeve well to the public. They were very public about their religiosity.

They just had no integrity. And so when Jesus calls us to wear our faith on our sleeve, he starts with integrity. It's the foundation for going public with our faith, for acknowledging Christ, for making Christ known.

We have to start with integrity. Who you are on the inside, that matters first and foremost. We want to share Jesus with others. We want to integrate our faith into everyday conversations.

[12 : 01] Let's do that, but let's make sure that we do it with integrity. integrity. Because if we lack integrity, it is going to come out. Sooner or later, the act will be up.

Sooner or later, everything will be made known. God is going to lay everything bare. Our thoughts, our intentions, our motives, our desires, they're all going to be clearly revealed.

You're not going to be able to fake it till you make it. You might be able to fake it, but one day, you will stand before your maker. And so we live with integrity now.

And there are all kinds of ways that come to mind that we can be tempted to not live with integrity. We can be tempted to greet people warmly on a Sunday morning and then talk poorly about them on a Monday morning.

We can be tempted to talk about how much we love the word, but then we fail to read it regularly. We can be tempted to be patient and to speak kindly to our kids in public and then to lash out at them at home.

[13 : 04] We can be tempted to say that we're praying for somebody, but in reality, we just forget and we don't and we just say that we do. Who are you when no one's looking?

Or to use Jesus' words here in Luke 12, who are you when you're in the dark? Who are you when you whisper in private rooms? So we're called to live our faith, to wear our faith on our sleeve.

We're called to boldly, to clearly make our allegiance to Christ known. And the first way to do that is to live with integrity. We must be a person, we must be a people of integrity to represent King Jesus well.

Well, let's consider the second way that we are called to wear our faith on our sleeve here in Luke 12, and that's by fearing God. Verses 4 to 7. By fearing God.

Let's look at those again. I tell you, my friends, do not fear those who kill the body and after that have nothing more that they can do. But I will warn you whom to fear. Fear him who after he has killed has authority to cast into hell.

[14 : 09] Yes, I tell you, fear him. Are not five sparrows sold for two pennies? And not one of them is forgotten before God. Why, even the hairs of your head are all numbered. Fear not, you are of more value than many sparrows.

So Jesus is striking at the heart of a very real temptation. Fearing what other people can do to us because of our faith. Now he's going to come back to this a couple of times in the passage.

But taken to the extreme, this fear is a fear of even potentially being killed for one's faith. That will hinder us from wearing our faith on our sleeve. That kind of fear, it will cripple us.

And so Jesus, he reshapes how we think about fear and who we should really fear. He's teaching us here that fear isn't really the ultimate problem. Fear really is a healthy attitude when it's a response to rightly understanding who God is.

Fear of man and what man could do to us, that's not where our fear should lie. So Jesus, he's not removing fear entirely from the equation. He's helping us to better understand who we should fear and why.

[15 : 20] We fear God not man. And we fear God because he wields power, not just over our bodies, but over our souls. Mere mortals, they can harm our bodies, but God can cast us into hell.

That's where the torment is eternal, where the suffering never ends. And so there's a real call here to fear God and don't fear people. The more that we get that truth, the better that we are at wearing our faith on our sleeve.

So with that being said, what do we do with verse 7? Jesus says, he has just hammered home that we are to fear God. So why does he say the opposite in verse 7?

Now he says, fear not. He had just said, fear him who after he has killed has authority to cast into hell. And now he says, fear not. So which is it?

Do we fear God or not? And the answer is yes. Right? It's always yes. The answer is both. In a sense, we absolutely fear God.

[16 : 25] And in another sense, we don't. And so there's a tension here. One extreme is not fearing God enough. And the other extreme is fearing God too much.

And so Jesus is helping us to see that there is this sweet spot of fear. And if we can understand and embrace this sweet spot of fear, then we're going to be all the better equipped to boldly and clearly make known our allegiance to Christ.

We will more faithfully wear our faith on our sleeve. So which extreme are you tempted toward? And that might honestly change depending on the day, depending on the circumstances.

Maybe today, you're tempted to not fear God enough. You treat him flippantly. You don't have a healthy appreciation of how holy and majestic and powerful he is. how full of wrath he is towards sin.

Maybe today, you're tempted to treat him like the man upstairs. And Jesus is swiftly saying that is a completely wrong way to think about God. If you need a reminder of how holy and powerful and majestic God is, read Isaiah 5.

[17 : 30] Read Exodus 32. Read like the last five chapters of Job. Let me just read the first five verses of Job chapter 38. Then the Lord spoke to Job out of the storm.

First of all, that should be enough. He spoke to him out of a storm and he said this, Who is this that obscures my plans with words without knowledge? Brace yourself like a man. I will question you and you shall answer.

Where were you when I laid the earth's foundation? Tell me if you understand. Who marked off its dimensions? Surely you know. And that's just the first five verses. God is not to be trifled with.

Don't make light of God. Don't downplay who God is because when we downplay who God is, when we make light of God, guess what often happens as well? We find ways to make light of our sin.

We find ways to think that sin isn't a big deal. We don't feel compelled to wear our faith on our sleeve. I can live like the world and it's okay. So Jesus is reminding us that there is an appropriate fear of God.

[18 : 31] Those who ultimately refuse to fear God, those who refuse to put their trust in him to be saved from their sins, those who live for themselves and they embrace all that the world has to offer, they will be cast into hell by the very God that they rejected, by the very God that they made light of, by the very God that they did not appropriately fear.

So maybe you're tempted towards treating God that way. Well, Jesus is correcting that way of thinking. He is saying, no, no, we need to fear God.

But maybe you're tempted in the opposite direction. Maybe you're tempted to view God as cold and calculating and you fear him, as I've heard it said, with hopeless terror.

Well, Jesus is reassuring those of us who are in Christ. No, God loves you. He cares for you. Just as we had read from Psalm 125, he surrounds us with protection.

Yes, take holiness seriously. Don't minimize sin. Don't minimize how awesome and powerful and worthy of obedience God is, but also, don't cower in fear.

[19 : 43] Don't be hopelessly terrified. Now, if you're here tonight and you're not in Christ, you do have every reason to cower. God will cast your soul into hell if you don't repent and trust in Christ.

That is the ultimate end for those who reject God. Now, God is also saying he warmly welcomes those who come to him. So turn from your sin and trust in Christ.

So if we're in Christ, there's absolutely this sweet spot of fear where we remember that he is great and he is awesome and he is majestic and he is also gentle and he's faithful and he's compassionate towards us.

The same God who hates sin and pours out his wrath on it, that same God has reached down into the pit and pulled us out by pouring out his wrath upon his son. He's adopted us.

He's welcomed us into his family. As Paul says in Ephesians 1, in him we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of our trespasses according to the riches of his grace which he lavished upon us.

[20 : 48] So let's remember who God is. Let's live in that sweet spot of appropriately fearing him and as we do that, we wear our faith on our sleeve because our fear is not directed toward other people.

We're not afraid of what other people think of us or what they might say to us or what they might do to us. We're not afraid of how we'll be treated by others because we've shifted that fear from people to God and we have this proper fear of God, a healthy fear of God that empowers us to then fearlessly live for him.

So that's the second way that we clearly make known that we belong to God, the second way that we wear our faith on our sleeve. Let's look at the third way and that is that we acknowledge Christ.

We acknowledge Christ. So you can read with me again verses 8 and 9 or 8, 9 and 10. And I tell you, everyone who acknowledges me before men, the Son of Man also will acknowledge before the angels of God.

But the one who denies me before men will be denied before the angels of God. 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.

[22 : 02] So the first part of these verses is incredibly straightforward. The second part, not so much, we'll get to that in just a moment. But the first part, very straightforward. It's somewhat obvious, but it's also fundamentally necessary.

Those who wear their faith on their sleeve, those who live boldly for Christ, they acknowledge Christ before others. You've probably heard the saying at some point in your life, preach the gospel always and when necessary, use words.

Here's the problem with that. Words are always necessary to preach the gospel, to acknowledge Christ. How we live is important too.

But you can't preach the gospel. You can't acknowledge Christ without using words. We must use words so that people know who it is that we live for. So we must use our mouth to wear our faith on our sleeve.

And so the Bible is calling us to live a public faith. Too often, we make it private. We think in terms of the private, the intimate relationship with Jesus. And there is an intimacy.

[23 : 07] There is a personal nature to our faith. But there is also a public aspect to our faith. We embrace opportunities to make Christ known.

We're not ashamed of our allegiance to Christ. Here in Luke 12, the disciples were faced with some serious threats because of their faith. We're going to see later in the book of Acts, if you continue reading, you see that the governing authorities, the religious leaders, they were first antagonistic towards Christ and then they were antagonistic towards his followers.

And so, we're going to read the verses soon that Jesus addresses that threat, the threat of being brought into the courts, being questioned for their faith. People all over the world face similar threats today.

The first that comes to my mind, Christians in Afghanistan. Their lives are at risk because they are Christians. Now, most of us aren't in those kinds of positions to that degree.

We're not being brought before ruling authorities. We're not being questioned for our faith. But we face social pressure all the time to downplay our identity as Christians, to downplay our belief in God's word, to fit in more with everyone around us, to go with the flow.

[24 : 22] Don't talk about your faith. Don't live a life that's consistent with your faith. Don't live a life that's submitted to some ancient book. Just fit in. Just be camouflaged.

And here, Jesus is calling us to courage. Jesus is calling us to boldness. Graciously, winsomely, and clearly make Christ known.

Those that we come in contact with, those that we have relationship with, those with whom we can, we share Christ. We share what he's done in our lives. We talk about God's faithfulness to us.

We tell others about the hope and the peace that we have. And so here, we're called don't fit in just because it's easier. Don't sit back and be quiet because talking about Jesus is weird or it's socially awkward.

And if someone takes it a step further and they harass you, they malign you, they speak harshly to you because you're a Christian, Jesus is telling us, acknowledge me. Don't deny me. Acknowledge me.

[25 : 23] Acknowledge me before men. That's verses 8 and 9. Those two verses, pretty straightforward. The next verse, verse 10, not so much. Lots of questions that have arisen from this verse.

What does it mean to blaspheme the Holy Spirit? What is this that we're not forgiven for? What is Jesus talking about here? Jesus says, back in verses 8 and 9, very clearly, those who acknowledge me will be acknowledged in heaven.

Those who deny me will be denied. And verses 8 and 9 help us to understand verse 10. Context is king. Jesus said these words in verse 10 right after verses 8 and 9.

The one who denies him denied before the angels of God. Right there, Jesus is getting at a final condemnation before God. That kind of denial that Jesus is talking about, it's a persistent, unrepentant unbelief.

It's not like a one-time denial. We think about Peter. Peter, on the night that Jesus was crucified, he did what? He denied Christ. He did it three times in that night.

[26 : 36] And yet, Peter was forgiven. Peter was restored. Peter went on to write scripture. That was a moment of sinful weakness. That was a moment of sinful doubt, sinful fear.

But the kind of denial that Jesus is talking about here in Luke 12, that is a firm, complete denial. The one who is denied before the angels of God is standing before God condemned.

So that's different. So then, what is Jesus talking about in the next verse? Verse 10. Well, he's continuing in a train of thought. A person who blasphemes the Holy Spirit and is not forgiven is a person who has a clear knowledge of Christ.

A clear knowledge of the Holy Spirit working through him. And instead of rightly recognizing the Spirit's work through Christ, they deny him and his work through Christ.

Not just like this one-time situation, this is a continual, persistent refusal to acknowledge the Spirit and what he is doing that is made clearly known through Christ.

[27 : 46] The religious leaders serve as an example to us. In the Gospel of Luke and all of the Gospel accounts, Jesus is out healing people, he's exercising demons, and he's doing it all by the power of the Holy Spirit.

But instead of recognizing the work of the Holy Spirit, instead of rejoicing in the grace of God, instead of rejoicing at the kingdom expanding and God's work going forth, the religious leaders look at it and say, no, Jesus, you're doing that through the power of Satan.

They saw the work of the Spirit and yet their hearts were hardened. They rejected the work of the Spirit over and over again. They saw Christ and they opposed Christ. They failed to rightly recognize the work of the Spirit.

It was a firm, complete denial. It was a hardened heart, a heart that is dead in sin, that has never been brought to life by the grace of God. And Jesus is saying that person will not be forgiven because that person has no faith.

And so if God in his mercy, if God in his grace has redeemed you, he has given you a new heart, then you are not one who commits the unforgivable sin because remember this truth, you have been, what?

[29 : 00] Forgiven. How can you do something unforgivable because you have been forgiven? You have been justified. You have been declared right in God's courts.

God has already forgiven you. Now we may waver. We may doubt. We will sin. We may be guilty of Peter's sin, a moment of denial, but not the sin of blasphemy against the Holy Spirit, not a sin of complete and persistent denial of Christ, a denial that leads to the denial before the angels of God.

That denial is the denial that leads to condemnation. So oftentimes you maybe have heard something like this. If you fear that you've committed the unforgivable sin, then that fear itself is evidence that you haven't because you're showing that God has given you desire to seek him.

You're showing that God has given you faith. You're showing that your heart is not hard, so keep working out your salvation with fear and trembling. Keep living to make Christ known, to acknowledge him before men and not to deny him.

Keep working hard to live an unashamed public faith. faith. And as we do that, there is real comfort in what Jesus says next. This is our fourth and our final way to wear our faith on our sleeve.

[30 : 18] We trust God to speak through us. We trust God to speak through us. Let's look at verses 11 and 12. 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, for the Holy Spirit will teach you in that very hour what you ought to say.

So Jesus addresses a real fear here. What if I speak up? And what if I make known that I am a follower of Jesus Christ? But then what if others question me?

What if others corner me? And I don't know what to say. But Jesus comforts us. Jesus encourages us. The Spirit will give you words to say.

The Spirit will teach you what to say. Now we have to say this as well. Very quickly, we have to say this. These verses don't give us a license to be lazy, to neglect to study the Word, to neglect to learn the truth, and then to neglect to be able to articulate the truth to others.

This is not a license to say, well, I'll just kind of wait and hope and we'll see what happens. Probably going to say some really awesome things when I'm in a difficult situation. That's not what these verses are saying. Jesus is not pitting preparation against trust.

[31 : 41] He is not saying that preparing well and trusting in the Lord are mutually exclusive realities. We can only do one or the other. He's not saying that. There is all kinds of scripture that commands us to be students of the Word, to know what the Bible says so that we might provide a defense when we're questioned.

1 Peter 3.15 In your hearts, honor Christ the Lord as holy, always being prepared to make a defense to anyone who asks you for a reason for the hope that is in you.

It's almost like Peter, in writing that letter, had heard Jesus' words because he had. Jesus is talking here in Luke 12 about being anxious when we have to make a defense.

And Peter is talking about being prepared to make a defense. Both speak in the context of making defenses. And when we bring them together, we get this. We are called to prepare.

Know what you believe and know why you believe it. And at the same time, here's where Luke 12 comes in. Don't be anxious when confronted. Don't be worried. Trust the Lord that the Holy Spirit will give you the words.

[32 : 53] So work hard, be prepared, and at the same time, trust the Lord to speak through you. Fear and doubt. A lot that our Lord has said about that here.

They can cripple us. Fear and doubt can absolutely cripple us. It is impossible to live confidently and boldly for the Lord while we are anxious and uncertain and fearful.

It's impossible to do all of that at the same time. And so Jesus has given us four ways that we wear our faith on our sleeve. Some have challenged us, like acknowledge me before men.

Some have comforted us, like trust God to speak through you. But all four have encouraged us that we might wear our faith on our sleeve, live with integrity, fear God, acknowledge Christ, and trust God to speak through us.

So let's wear our faith on our sleeve. Let's remember each of these four ways to do it. And let's also remember this, that we can't do any of these things in our own strength. We can't just muster the courage.

[34 : 00] We can only do it in the grace that God gives. That's why it is always fitting to end a sermon in prayer, because that prayer is a plea. Lord, you've spoken to us through your word.

You have called us to obedience, but we can't obey without the strength that you provide. So we have to ask God for his help. Help us, Lord, to live for you, to not hide in the shadows, to not passively sit back, to not just go with the flow of the world.

We need God's help to live with integrity. We need God's help to fear him rightly. We need God's help to acknowledge Christ before men. We need God's help to trust him to speak through us.

And it doesn't matter if we're thinking about our personalities here. It doesn't matter if we're a naturally confident person or if we're a naturally self-assured person or if we're a naturally outgoing person or if we're a naturally reserved person.

It doesn't matter if we consider ourselves naturally persuasive or if we think I would just stumble over my words. If you're in Christ, then you're called in the context that you live in to live with clarity and with boldness for him.

[35 : 08] And we need the grace of God to do that. And if you're here tonight and you're not in Christ, you need God's grace also. Turn from your sin. Turn from your love of self and trust in Jesus Christ to save you from your sins.

Because he died on the cross and he rose again. Be reconciled to God today. Be made right with God today. Be made new today. And if you are in Christ, let's work hard to obey him.

To do what he says in Luke 12. And then now let's ask him to give us that grace to obey. Let's pray together. Father God, we are challenged by what Jesus says in Luke 12.

I'm convicted because so often I find excuses to not live a public faith. I find excuses to not speak up and say that I'm a Christian.

And so God, we pray that you would be our help. That you would speak through us. That you would give us courage and boldness.

[36 : 21] That you give us wisdom as we have opportunity. That you would give us clarity of mind to speak the truth of the gospel. To speak of the ways in which you have richly blessed our lives.

To be a joyful people who faithfully live for you. Lord, we acknowledge readily that we cannot do that in our own strength. And so we pray that you would by your spirit work in our hearts.

That you would by your spirit make us to be people of integrity. Make us to be people that rightly fear God. Make us to be people that acknowledge Christ and make us to be people that trust you even as we are faced with opposition.

Lord, you are a faithful God. You're a good God. We thank you for your word. That you speak to us through it. We pray that your spirit would do work in our heart even as we go from here this evening back into another week.

We pray that you would help us to be a people who live lives that are truly worthy of the gospel. It's in Jesus' name we pray. Amen.