

I want to share with you from my heart this morning about what Jesus has been showing me about the Spirit-filled life. The gist of it is this: You can not be in two places at the same time. That's both a physical reality and a spiritual principle. The same frustration we have when we try to do squeeze too many things into our calendars ... that's the frustration we feel when we try to live at both ends of the spectrum spiritually. We can not be in two places at the same time. That's the main theme of Luke, chapter 12 ... so let's go there together.

The chapter opens with Jesus surrounded by literally thousands of people. (Luke 12:1-3) *By this time the crowd, unwieldy and stepping on each other's toes, numbered into the thousands. But Jesus' primary concern was his disciples. He said to them, "Watch yourselves carefully so you don't get contaminated with Pharisee yeast, Pharisee phoniness.*

For a lot of Pharisees, that was the problem. They didn't know who they were unless they were following a rule. Of course, you don't have to be religious to fall into that trap. Some people don't know who they are without a drink in their hand. Some people don't know who they are without a title in front of their name. ... So many of our biggest mistakes happen because we don't know who we are ... But Jesus says (Luke 12:2-3) - *You can't keep your true self hidden forever; before long you'll be exposed. You can't hide behind a religious mask forever; sooner or later the mask will slip and your true face will be known. You can't whisper one thing in private and preach the opposite in public; the day's coming when those whispers will be repeated all over town.*

John Townsend and Henry Cloud talk about this in their book called *Boundaries*. They talk about the internal yes and the external yes. You know this ... You agree to go to a restaurant you don't really want to go to ... but ... when you get there, you find fault with everything and

make everyone around you miserable. Or you say “yes” to something at church, but internally you’re totally against it ... and the end result is that when you walk into the room ... the Holy Spirit gets boxed in by your attitude. And we wonder why we’re so frustrated ... why we feel victimized. We don’t know ourselves ... and so there is this constant struggle between our commitments and our feelings ... and some of us having been living like that for so long we don’t even realize we’re doing it. No wonder we’re so frustrated.

Does any of this sound familiar? Do you see how this could quench the Holy Spirit in your life? There’s no room for the Him to move in that kind of conflict ... so if you’re spiritually frustrated, maybe this is a question for you: **Does your inside match your outside?** Because folks, you can not be in two places at the same time. And as Jesus said, you’re not fooling anyone. Eventually you will be exposed. Probably already are. Frustrated people usually look it.

Back up one chapter to Luke, chapter 11. Jesus is talking to religious people again, and he says (Luke 11:39-40) - *"I know you Pharisees burnish the surface of your cups and plates so they sparkle in the sun, but I also know your insides are maggoty with greed and secret evil. Stupid Pharisees! (Listen to this) Didn't the One who made the outside also make the inside?"*

In other words, you’re not really hiding anything ... because the One who made you sees it all. You can play games with people and get away with it for a while, but there is no playing games with God. He sees ... *not* with condemning eyes, but with eyes of compassion. His deepest desire is to see you healed of that conflicted life that is trying *so hard* ... *striving* so much ... to somehow “fit in” on earth and still get to heaven. That’s a formula for frustration and the great news is that ... you don’t have to live that way.

In Luke 12:4-12, Jesus says (Luke 12:4-5) - *"I'm speaking to you as dear friends. (in other words, Jesus is not here to condemn us but to help us get honest about who we are) Don't be bluffed into silence or insincerity by the threats of religious bullies. True, they can kill you, but then what can they do? There's nothing they can do to your soul, your core being. (Listen to this) Save your fear for God, who holds your entire life—body and soul—in his hands.*

How radically different our lives would be if we could live fearing nothing but God!

The book I should have had you read this summer is called *Forgotten God*, by Francis Chan. Chan talks about the difference between someone who is filled with the Holy Spirit and someone who is just playing the religion game. He says, "This is the question I just can't get around: If its true that the Spirit of God dwells in us and that our bodies are the Holy Spirit's temple, then shouldn't there be a huge difference between the person who has the Spirit of God living inside of him or her and the person who does not? ... Yet, when those outside the church see no difference in our lives, they begin to question our integrity, our sanity, or even worse, our God. And can you blame them?"

Chan asks this pretty challenging question: if you were to take "church-going" out of your life, what would separate you from anyone else around you? How would the people in your office or in your neighborhood or in your home know ... just from your conversation and your attitude that you're a follower of Jesus? According to the waitress who served your last meal to you, or to the cashier who last rang you up, how important is Jesus to you ... according to *them*? **Does your conversation match your creed?** Again, this isn't particularly a Christian question. It is an integrity question. It's about knowing yourself.

It isn't really my question. It's the question Jesus is asking. He says (Luke 12:8-9) - *Stand up for me among the people you meet and the Son of Man will stand up for you before all God's*

angels. But if you pretend you don't know me, do you think I'll defend you before God's angels? Do you hear what he's saying? He's saying, "You know, every day I watch while you allow your fears and insecurities to mask what you claim about God. You talk like you don't know me, but you want me to talk like we're BFFs." And of course, grace covers a multitude of sins, but still ... you can't be in two places at the same time.

Jesus says (Luke 12:10) - *"If you bad-mouth the Son of Man out of misunderstanding or ignorance, that can be overlooked. But if you're knowingly attacking God himself, taking aim at the Holy Spirit, that won't be overlooked."* "Taking aim at the Holy Spirit" is a great way to put it. It can happen when someone hears about Jesus and the forgiveness that comes through him and chooses to reject that. And it can *also* happen when religious people get nervous and put a muzzle on experiences that make room for the Holy Spirit to move. It happens when we shoot people down who are trying to live a surrendered life. Because face it ... we get aggravated when Spirit-filled people won't play the game of being both where they are and where we are. It's a defensive move. We do it so we won't have to change.

This is all about spiritual location ... and about how to get ourselves unstuck so we can move with the Holy Spirit. And we're getting it from Luke 12 that a lot of times the frustration comes from the inconsistencies between what we say we believe and how we actually live. We're asking some diagnostic questions: does your inside match your outside? Does your conversation match your creed? And here's a big one: **Does your spending match your speech?** Because giving is so central to the Christian message that to ignore it is to ignore the heart of the gospel.

I have a question for you. Who in here has an i-Phone? The rest of you, I'm just guessing, *wish* you had an i-Phone. It is a strange quirk of our culture that we have begun to define ourselves

by our phones. And if not by our phones, by our computers. Mac users feel superior to PC users. Notebook users feel superior to desktop users. And into that mentality, Jesus says (Luke 12:15) - "*Take care! Protect yourself against the least bit of greed. Life is not defined by what you have, even when you have a lot.*" In his other book, *Crazy Love*, Francis Chan asks the \$24,000 question, "Do you want to see God more than you desire security?"

Three weeks ago, we were in Charleston walking around down by the battery. And the houses in that part of Charleston are just exquisite, so classy. And three weeks ago, I was just hitting vacation mode and my spirit was still weary and I have to confess that all I could think as I was walking those neighborhoods was how much I'd like to have that life ... that house. And hearing those thoughts in my head ... I had to confess something ... that for a long time now ... I've been secretly wanting the kind of house and furniture and artwork that ... when people walk into our house ... they would say, "Wow! All this! And she's so sold out to Jesus, *too!*"

Do you hear the disconnect? I'm having to confess that somewhere inside I still want to be in both places at once ... even though life is not defined by what we have. Jesus says Holy Spirit living leads to Holy Spirit spending. My commitment to Jesus and my hunger for the Holy Spirit means that my life, by definition, is going to look different and my pay-off is going to look different. So when we look for a physical pay-off while we're striving for a spiritual life ... well, no wonder we get so frustrated. No wonder it feels like striving! Jesus says a spiritually growing life is fed by a spiritual approach to *everything* ... even our finances. He says (Luke 12:33-34) - "*Be generous. Give to the poor. Get yourselves a bank that can't go bankrupt ... It's obvious, isn't it? The place where your treasure is, is the place you will most want to be, and end up being.* Because ... news flash! ... ***you can not be in two places at the same time!***

The last section of Luke, chapter 12 hits this point again. He asks: **Do your habits match your heart?** Jesus says (Luke 12:35-38) – *Keep your shirts on; keep the lights on! Be like house servants waiting for their master to come back from his honeymoon, awake and ready to open the door when he arrives and knocks. Lucky the servants whom the master finds on watch! He'll put on an apron, sit them at the table, and serve them a meal, sharing his wedding feast with them. It doesn't matter what time of the night he arrives; they're awake—and so blessed!*

Then he tells this story about a master who puts his staff in charge while he is gone ... but really ... he's talking to us and he's talking about hypocrites and he's talking about motives. And about how all this is eventually going to come to an end. And the ones who will feel best about it all are the ones who lived with integrity. And Jesus says (Luke 12:40) - *So don't you be slovenly and careless. Just when you don't expect him, the Son of Man will show up."*

In other words, all of this is heading someplace. Life has a point, a destiny. And you're either flowing with it or you're frustrating it. Those who are flowing with it will change. And will find life Jesus said (Luke 12:49) – *I've come to start a fire on this earth – how I wish it were blazing right now! I've come to change everything, turn everything rightside up – how I long for it to be finished! Do you think I came to smooth things over and make everything nice? Not so. I've come to disrupt and confront!*

Here's the point: The Holy Spirit of God wants to live in you, and he **wants to change your spiritual location.** He wants to move you into the center of His plan. And maybe you've been trying to make that happen and can not understand why it doesn't. Maybe one of these questions will help you figure out where the disconnect is. Does your inside match your

outside? Does your conversation match your creed? Does your spending match your speech?
Do your habits match your heart?

If you're wondering why you are so frustrated in your faith ... or so frustrated in your life ...
why progress just isn't happening ... why healing isn't happening ... why you don't "feel" God
... maybe it is because you're trying too hard to be in too many places at once. But here's the
deal: **God** wants to relieve you of that stress. What decision do you need to make today to get
your life in line with that reality?