

# LUKE—WEEK 17

WAKE UP!



F. Michael Slay  
*A DEEP Study*

**The Fellowship of Ailbe**

Luke 12:41–13:17 — Wake Up!

*The Cover Picture is The Rich Fool by Rembrandt Harmensz van Rijn (1606–1669)  
on display at Gemäldegalerie der Staatlichen Museen, Berlin*

Jesus says a number of frightening things. There will be division—father against son. To whom much is given, much will be required. You're just as bad as those who were killed by Pilate (or by a falling tower).

This is all quite shocking, but the disciples need this wake-up call.

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We are a spiritual fellowship patterned after the Celtic Revival. Our goal is to promote revival, renewal, and awakening, following the teaching of Scripture and the example and heritage of our forebears in the faith.

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Thank you.

Luke 12:41–13:17 — Wake Up!  
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1 Luke 12:41–48 (ESV)

*Peter said, “Lord, are you telling this parable for us or for all?” And the Lord said, “Who then is the faithful and wise manager, whom his master will set over his household, to give them their portion of food at the proper time? Blessed is that servant whom his master will find so doing when he comes. Truly, I say to you, he will set him over all his possessions. But if that servant says to himself, ‘My master is delayed in coming,’ and begins to beat the male and female servants, and to eat and drink and get drunk, the master of that servant will come on a day when he does not expect him and at an hour he does not know, and will cut him in pieces and put him with the unfaithful. And that servant who knew his master’s will but did not get ready or act according to his will, will receive a severe beating. But the one who did not know, and did what deserved a beating, will receive a light beating. Everyone to whom much was given, of him much will be required, and from him to whom they entrusted much, they will demand the more.*

Peter starts off by asking, “Lord, are you telling this parable for us or for all?” It seems that Jesus doesn’t answer him. Or does He?

Let’s begin with some things we know. First, Peter’s question is referring to the preceding parable about being ready. This amounts to asking if everyone is supposed to be ever-ready or just the disciples. Second, we know that the correct answer to Peter’s question is that this parable is for everyone, because it made it into the Bible, and here we are thousands of years later studying it.

And notice how Jesus responds. He just stays on His original point. He tells another parable that extends the lesson to say that the one who stays ready is *faithful and wise*. He also wraps it up with, “*Everyone to whom much was given, of him much will be required, and from him to whom they entrusted much, they will demand the more.*”

Peter’s question is silly and arrogant. Why wouldn’t *this parable* be *for all*? Does he really think the disciples are that special? Very few of Jesus’ lessons were just for His disciples, and those few tended to be specific, negative things about their immediate future.

Of course these lessons are general. Jesus makes this clear by just going on with the lesson.

Poor Peter. He makes a lot of verbal fumbles. Funny how Jesus uses them.

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It sounds like Jesus was talking about us when He said, “*Everyone to whom much was given, of him much will be required, and from him to whom they entrusted much, they will demand the more.*”

Everyone who lives in modern America has been given much, and so *much will be required*. Take this as a challenge. Jesus didn’t give us these blessings so we could party. He means us to use them.

Consider how you can apply your own special blessings to His service. Take stock of what you’ve been given, especially anything unique or unexpected. This includes talents, tools, and other resources. It can even include things that definitely don’t look like blessings. Big trials are big training.

These are gifts—meant for you to use. God is preparing you for His work.

2 Luke 12:49–53 (ESV)

*“I came to cast fire on the earth, and would that it were already kindled! I have a baptism to be baptized with, and how great is my distress until it is accomplished! Do you think that I have come to give peace on earth? No, I tell you, but rather division. For from now on in one house there will be five divided, three against two and two against three. They will be divided, father against son and son against father, mother against daughter and daughter against mother, mother-in-law against her daughter-in-law and daughter-in-law against mother-in-law.”*

This passage can be confusing. It seems to contradict the whole idea of Jesus as the Prince of Peace. However, this is referring to different things than what the “Prince of Peace” is referring to. The peace of God, which transcends all understanding, is our peace, not peace between believers and nonbelievers.

The first two sentences sound a bit cryptic, but they’re anticipating His death on the cross. Something is coming that He describes as casting *fire on the earth*. This something will come after His crucifixion, and it will divide nations and families. This fits what happens next to a T. At Pentecost, the Holy Spirit arrived in tongues of fire, just as John the Baptist said.

*John answered them all, saying, “I baptize you with water, but he who is mightier than I is coming, the strap of whose sandals I am not worthy to untie. He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit and fire. — Luke 3:16 (ESV)*

*When the day of Pentecost arrived, they were all together in one place. And suddenly there came from heaven a sound like a mighty rushing wind, and it filled the entire house where they were sitting. And divided tongues as of fire appeared to them and rested on each one of them. And they were all filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak in other tongues as the Spirit gave them utterance.—Acts 2:1–4 (ESV)*

The book of Acts follows with many vivid descriptions of division. Here’s one.

*When many days had passed, the Jews plotted to kill him, but their plot became known to Saul. They were watching the gates day and night in order to kill him, but his disciples took him by night and let him down through an opening in the wall, lowering him in a basket. — Acts 9:23–25 (ESV)*

Christians have always suffered rejection and persecution. We were promised that.

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Christ still divides families. Is yours divided? Do you know someone who is heartbroken by their divided family? What can you do to help?

Since the Lord’s clear instruction was that families would be divided, there’s no promise that these divisions won’t happen or that they will go away.

While we should always ask for God’s blessing and healing, it’s more important to seek His will and direction. Painful situations have a purpose and are often a prelude to big tasks.

Remember, the goal is His glory.

3 Luke 12:54–59 (ESV)

*He also said to the crowds, “When you see a cloud rising in the west, you say at once, ‘A shower is coming.’ And so it happens. And when you see the south wind blowing, you say, ‘There will be scorching heat,’ and it happens. You hypocrites! You know how to interpret the appearance of earth and sky, but why do you not know how to interpret the present time?*

*“And why do you not judge for yourselves what is right? As you go with your accuser before the magistrate, make an effort to settle with him on the way, lest he drag you to the judge, and the judge hand you over to the officer, and the officer put you in prison. I tell you, you will never get out until you have paid the very last penny.”*

Everything in this passage is straightforward except one thing. Jesus says, “*You know how to interpret the appearance of earth and sky, but why do you not know how to interpret the present time?*” Okay, that makes sense, but why does that make them hypocrites?

Hypocrite here means *pretender*, literally “play actor,” or “thespian” What are they pretending to be?

The paragraphs before and after don’t address this directly; our main clue is in the example given. Weather forecasting is obviously about the future—what’s going to happen next. Jesus’ criticism is also obviously about not knowing what’s coming.

In fact, since the beginning of this chapter, Jesus has been talking about the future. First Jesus says, “*Nothing is covered up that will not be revealed.*” Then, “*Fear him who, after he has killed, has authority to cast into hell.*” Next, He says, “*The one who blasphemes against the Holy Spirit will not be forgiven.*”

Then He tells the parable of the rich man who built bigger barns to store his bumper crop. “*Fool! This night your soul is required of you.*” Next Jesus tells us not to worry about this life saying, “*Consider the lilies, how they grow.*” Then He teaches us to be ready, *for the Son of Man is coming at an hour you do not expect.*

Jesus’ accusation of hypocrisy puts an exclamation point on all this. Without it, He would just be saying, “Y’all should *know how to interpret the present time.*”

Instead, He’s saying. “There’s no way you’re unaware of what’s going on; you’re just faking it.”

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In one sense, Jesus is accusing His listeners of cowardice. It’s not that they don’t see what’s going on and believe it; it’s that they can’t be bothered to do anything about it. “Yeah, it’s all true, but I’m busy.”

That’s why they’re hypocrites; they’re pretending not to notice.

America is full of couch potato Christians—faith without action. Yikes.

*So, because you are lukewarm, and neither hot nor cold, I will spit you out of my mouth.* — Rev. 3:16

We need a revival.

4 Luke 13:1–9 (ESV)

*There were some present at that very time who told him about the Galileans whose blood Pilate had mingled with their sacrifices. And he answered them, “Do you think that these Galileans were worse sinners than all the other Galileans, because they suffered in this way? No, I tell you; but unless you repent, you will all likewise perish. Or those eighteen on whom the tower in Siloam fell and killed them: do you think that they were worse offenders than all the others who lived in Jerusalem? No, I tell you; but unless you repent, you will all likewise perish.”*

*And he told this parable: “A man had a fig tree planted in his vineyard, and he came seeking fruit on it and found none. And he said to the vinedresser, ‘Look, for three years now I have come seeking fruit on this fig tree, and I find none. Cut it down. Why should it use up the ground?’ And he answered him, ‘Sir, let it alone this year also, until I dig around it and put on manure. Then if it should bear fruit next year, well and good; but if not, you can cut it down.’”*

No one seems to know for sure exactly what Pilate did to the Galileans, but it was nasty enough to get back to Jesus, and He uses it as a launching point for another lesson on repentance. He brings in another example, where 18 were killed by the collapse of a tower.

It was commonly thought that things like these were divine retribution for sin. Jesus uses these incidents to point out that everyone’s sin is worthy of that level of punishment.

Then He gives a brutal example. A fig tree that doesn’t produce figs deserves the ultimate punishment. The analogy is chilling. Should a cobbler that fails to produce shoes be “cut down”?

As tough as it is, that’s exactly what Jesus means here. The unrepentant are useless to the kingdom and might as well be disposed of.

Jesus’ teaching often has great shock value. It’s blunt, but apparently anything less just won’t get the job done.

We are slow learners.

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The Lord’s patience here is just amazing. He’s on the road to Jerusalem, where He will be crucified for our sins. He knows what’s coming, and it weighs on Him dreadfully.

And He’s surrounded by idiots.

Okay, that’s over the top, but it’s exactly how you or I would have felt in this situation. Every time someone asks Him a question it’s dumb enough to make you want to throw up your hands in despair and say, “I quit.”

But He doesn’t. Incredibly, His love keeps Him on task.

“I’m so thankful for the active obedience of Christ. No hope without it.” — J. Gresham Machen

5 Luke 13:10–17 (ESV)

*Now he was teaching in one of the synagogues on the Sabbath. And behold, there was a woman who had had a disabling spirit for eighteen years. She was bent over and could not fully straighten herself. When Jesus saw her, he called her over and said to her, “Woman, you are freed from your disability.” And he laid his hands on her, and immediately she was made straight, and she glorified God. But the ruler of the synagogue, indignant because Jesus had healed on the Sabbath, said to the people, “There are six days in which work ought to be done. Come on those days and be healed, and not on the Sabbath day.” Then the Lord answered him, “You hypocrites! Does not each of you on the Sabbath untie his ox or his donkey from the manger and lead it away to water it? And ought not this woman, a daughter of Abraham whom Satan bound for eighteen years, be loosed from this bond on the Sabbath day?” As he said these things, all his adversaries were put to shame, and all the people rejoiced at all the glorious things that were done by him.*

There’s an important word-play here. When Jesus says, “*Woman, you are freed from your disability.*” the Greek word for freed is “le-loo-oh.” When Jesus says, “*Does not each of you on the Sabbath untie his ox or his donkey from the manger and lead it away to water it?*” the Greek word for untie is “loo-oh,” which literally means “loose.” Then, when Jesus says, “*And ought not this woman, a daughter of Abraham whom Satan bound for eighteen years, be loosed from this bond on the Sabbath day?*” He uses “loo-oh” again.

So, all these things are some form of loosing. His point is that “loosing” is obviously okay on the Sabbath; they do it all the time. He’s also implying that this wasn’t a healing; it was an **exorcism**.

What is obvious to us now wasn’t obvious to *the ruler of the synagogue* then. He was *indignant because Jesus had healed on the Sabbath*. So, Jesus shows that it wasn’t healing. In other situations, Jesus does heal on the Sabbath (see Luke 14:1-5) and defends that directly, but here He employs a different strategy.

It’s a nice bit of apologetic judo and it wins instantly. *As he said these things, all his adversaries were put to shame, and all the people rejoiced at all the glorious things that were done by him.*

But His goal isn’t to win, or to embarrass *his adversaries*. It’s to dispose of a distraction quickly so that He can get back to the main message—the kingdom of God.

It’s like His whole life is one giant lens focusing everything on the kingdom of God.

We have a lens too—scripture and our daily devotional/prayer time. They focus us on kingdom things and help keep worldly cares from dominating our thinking. How’s that working out for you? Are you able to “get away” for a while and give God your full attention? Or are daily devotions just a duty?

If your quiet times aren’t what they should be, take a moment to reassess. Ask the Lord for help planning your QT.

Maybe you need help getting a genuine quiet time away from distractions.

*Questions for reflection or discussion*

1. Because of our many blessings, should we feel especially obligated?
2. What's the best way to handle a non-believing loved one? What can you do that will bring glory to God?
3. Are we missing a "sign of the times"? Is the proliferation of Couch Potato Christians a crisis or just "their problem"?
4. Do you ever worry that your prayers might sound stupid to God?
5. What's the secret to an effective Quiet Time? What are the keys to an ineffective one?