

Don't Be a Dumb Smart Person

Luke 12:54-59

My dad used to say that *"The surest way to kill a church is to preach every Sunday to the lost."* I think he knew what he was talking about, having himself pastored one of the fastest growing churches in the nation. When you preach verse by verse through the Scripture, as in Luke, you find yourself imitating Christ. Abe once told me, "If people have a problem with your message, they need to take it up with Christ." He's on to something. In the book of Luke, Jesus mostly speaks to His disciples. In this text, He turns to the crowds – the smart, sophisticated, scions of society – and speaks evangelistically to them.

I. Most people are pretty smart when it comes to discerning temporal things (vs. 54-55).

In verses 54 and 55 Jesus says to the people, "you see a cloud rising in the west" and you deduce, correctly so, that rain is coming. Then you feel "wind from the south" and you know, correctly so, that it is going to be hot. These folks are like Oklahomans. They are able to know the *future weather* because of *present circumstances*. Of course, in Israel, the desert was to the south, and the sea (Mediterranean) was to the west. Our directions may be different, but our discernment is the same. All Oklahomans pay a great deal of attention to the "signs" and can tell you what's coming in the things that matter (weather, football, oil, etc...), just like "the crowds" in Jesus' day could forecast.

II. Most people smart about temporal things have little discernment about eternal things (vs. 56-57).

Christ says, "You hypocrites! You know how to analyze the appearance of the earth and the sky, but why do you not analyze the present time?" Jesus has performed miracles among the people. He says He is the Messiah, the Savior of the world. The people of His generation did not acknowledge Him.

- *The scepter had departed from Judah (Israel's lost the ability for capital punishment (Gen. 49:10).
- *Daniel's 70th week had been fulfilled, for the Magi came looking for the King of the Jews (Dan. 9:24).
- *Elijah (John the Baptist), the one called the forerunner of the Messiah, had come (Isaiah 40:3).
- * Our Lord's miracles attested that He was the Messiah – but "crowds rejected Him."

From the annunciation to Zacharias and Elizabeth through the very works and words of Jesus, the evidence is massive from one end of Israel to the other, wherever Jesus has gone. There's no way to escape it. "How is it," Jesus says, "you are able to make accurate conclusions about temporal things with minimal evidence, but you won't draw an accurate conclusion about Me? Why not analyze Me? Why won't you discern the evidence?" How else can you accept the Truth? ("what is right" v. 57).

III. The dumbest smart person is the one who rejects the Person and work of Jesus Christ (vs. 58-59).

The first message the Messiah preached was based on the Messianic prophecies of Isaiah 61:1-2. *"The Spirit of the Lord is upon Me because He anointed Me to preach the gospel to the poor. He has sent Me to proclaim release to the captives and recovery of sight to the blind, to set free those who are downtrodden, to proclaim the favorable year of the Lord." And He closed the book and He gave it back to the attendant and sat down and the eyes of all in the synagogue were fixed on Him and then He said to them, "Today, this scripture has been fulfilled in your hearing."* (Luke 4:18-21). The favorable year of the Lord is that moment in history when God's favor falls, the long-awaited moment when God's favor falls, when God's salvation comes, because God's Savior has arrived!

1. If you've got any sense, you will settle your issues of guilt before you arrive at the Judge.
2. The only way by which the Judge will accept payment for your debts is through sacrifice.
3. "I am the Lamb of God who takes away the sins of the world."