

Matthew 10:26-27

Introduction

I had originally considered the possibility of covering six verses in this study (26-31), but then it took me two and a half days just to come to a point where I think I understand the meaning of the first two verses (26-27). The commentaries were extremely helpful on the one hand, but on the other hand they could never seem to agree with each other. I found that to understand verses 26-27, I needed to understand the parallels to these verses in Luke chapter eight, Luke chapter twelve, and Mark chapter four (see chart at the end of this study). But there is plenty of controversy surrounding the meaning of the passages in Mark and Luke as well. In some ways, the verses in Matthew mean the same thing as in the parallels. But in other ways the meaning is entirely different. Even in Mark and Luke, there are different meanings behind the same words (all depending upon the *context*). At the same time, the similarities between Matthew, Mark, and Luke are also very important! So, since I can only cover two verses in this study, I thought I would take you through a *very little bit* of the process of interpretation. And as we go through the process, we'll stop along the way to reflect on some of the different lessons that we can learn from Mark and Luke.

“So have no fear of them.” The disciples are not to fear those who will deliver them over to courts and flog them in their synagogues and malign them by calling them Beelzebul. Why?

“For nothing is covered that will not be revealed, or hidden that will not be known.” What does Jesus have in mind here? We should *want* to know! What are the covered and hidden things that will one day be revealed and known? And what does this have to do with having no fear of suffering and persecution? How would you interpret this? The saying, “nothing is covered that will not be revealed, or hidden that will not be known” is a proverb that can mean *different* things and be applied in *different* ways. As we have already seen, it appears four times in the Gospels and in three different contexts (once in Matthew, once in Mark, and twice in Luke).

I. Luke 11:39-12:5 (See Chart)

In this example, Jesus has just finished exposing the *hypocrisy* of the Pharisees. The Pharisees are those who cleanse the *outside* of the cup and of the dish, but *inside* they are full of greed and wickedness. They are like unmarked graves, and people walk over them without knowing it. They build the tombs of the prophets – whom their fathers killed! After condemning the Pharisees, Jesus warns His disciples, “*Beware* of the leaven of the Pharisees, which is hypocrisy.” Don’t fall into the same trap. Don’t be guilty of the same sin. Why?

“Nothing is covered up that will not be revealed, or hidden that will not be known.” Who you really are on the inside will one day be publicly revealed for all to see. Hypocrisy and pretending is futile and pointless because all will one day be made known. So beware of hypocrisy!

- ✓ Romans 2:15-16 – They show that the work of the law is written on their hearts, while their conscience also bears witness, and their conflicting thoughts accuse or even excuse them on that day when, according to my gospel, God judges the secrets of men by Christ Jesus.

- ✓ 1 Corinthians 4:5 – Therefore do not pronounce judgment before the time, before the Lord comes, who will bring to light the things now hidden in darkness and will disclose the purposes of the heart. Then each one will receive his commendation from God.
- ✓ Ecclesiastes 12:14 – For God will bring every deed into judgment, with every secret thing, whether good or evil.

In Luke chapter twelve, Jesus goes on to say to His disciples: “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.” There are secrets to all of us. All of us have private lives that few people see, or perhaps not even anyone – things that we’ve said to ourselves, thought to ourselves, things that we’ve said to someone else in private, or done with others without anyone else knowing. These things may not be bad, just so long as we remember that one day God will *bring to light every secret thing* – whether *good* or *evil*. I wonder how each and every one of us would change today if we really began to live in light of this truth. Who is the person who is wise, and who fears the Lord? He is the one who remembers that nothing is covered up that will not be revealed, or hidden that will not be known. Whatever we have said in the dark shall be heard in the light, and what we have whispered in private rooms shall be proclaimed on the housetops.

Is this, then, the proper meaning and application of the proverb in Matthew chapter 10 – We don’t need to be afraid, because one day the secret and hidden injustices of persecution will be revealed and made known in the light of God’s judgment (cf. Hendriksen; Blomberg)? This is very true, and it’s certainly very encouraging and comforting. The wickedness and injustices of this world will all one day be exposed and brought to light. Then...

- ✓ Psalm 58:11 – Mankind will say, “Surely there is a reward for the righteous; surely there is a God who judges on earth.”
- ✓ James 5:7-8 (cf. vv. 1-6) – Be patient, therefore, brothers, until the coming of the Lord. See how the farmer waits for the precious fruit of the earth, being patient about it, until it receives the early and the late rains. You also, be patient. Establish your hearts, for the coming of the Lord is at hand.

But is this the meaning of our text this morning? Almost certainly not. First of all, notice the difference in *context* between Luke and Matthew. In Luke 12, Jesus says to “beware of the leaven of the Pharisees, which is hypocrisy”. But in our text, there are no problems with hypocrisy. The persecution appears to be out in the open and public. Instead, Jesus says to beware of men, for they will persecute us and malign us. And then He goes on not to give a warning against hypocrisy, but to give a *command* that we have no fear of them.

But second of all, and most importantly, notice the difference in what Jesus goes on to say. What is it that is “covered up” in Luke? “Whatever [the disciples] have said in the dark.” What is it that is “hidden”? “What [the disciples] have whispered in private rooms.” But in Matthew, what is it that is “covered”? Not what Jesus disciples have said in the dark (or even what their persecutors have said in the dark), but what Jesus Himself has said to His disciples in the dark! In Matthew, what is it that is “hidden”? Not what Jesus’ disciples have “whispered in private rooms” (or even what their persecutors have whispered), but what the disciples have *heard*

whispered from Jesus! So then, in Luke, what the disciples have said in the dark and whispered in private rooms shall be heard in the light and proclaimed on the housetops (whether they like it or not). But in Matthew, it is what Jesus has whispered and said in the dark that the disciples are now commanded to say in the light and proclaim on the housetops. The things that are covered *will* be revealed. And Jesus calls His disciples to start the work of revealing by saying in the light what He has told them in the dark. The things that are hidden will be made known. And Jesus calls on His disciples to begin the work of making things known by proclaiming on the housetops what He has whispered to them in private rooms. Do you see how different this is from Luke chapter twelve? But there is a similar meaning and application of this proverb in Luke 8 and Mark 4.

II. Luke 8 (cf. Mark 4; See Chart)

Jesus says to His disciples, “To you it has been given to know the *secrets* (the covered and hidden things) of the kingdom of God, but for those outside they are in parables, so that ‘seeing they may not see, and hearing they may not understand’”. The first thing we need to know is that in the Bible secrets are not secrets in the sense that nobody has ever heard them, but rather in the sense they would have remained unknown if they had not been revealed and explained by God (Dan. 2; Rev. 1:20; 10:7; 17:5, 7; Rom. 11:25; 16:25; 1 Cor. 2:1, 7; 4:1; 13:2; 14:2; 15:51; Eph. 1:9; 3:3-4, 9; 5:32; 6:19; Col. 1:26-27; 2:2; 4:3; 2 Thess. 2:7; 2 Tim. 3:9, 16). In the Bible, even after a secret has been publicly proclaimed for all the world to hear, it can still be called a secret, because it is still something that can only be known through divine *revelation*, and only truly known through divine *illumination* (God opening the eyes of our hearts to see). So now Jesus goes on to show how this truth is illustrated in the parable of the sower and the different soils – where different people *hear* and respond to the secrets of the kingdom of God in different ways:

“The ones along the path are those who have *heard*; then the devil comes and takes away the word from their hearts, so that they may not believe and be saved... the ones on the rock are those who, when they *hear* the word, receive it with joy. But these have no root; they believe for a while, and in time of testing fall away. As for what fell among the thorns, they are those who *hear*, but as they go on their way they are choked by the cares and riches and pleasures of life, and their fruit does not mature. As for that in the good soil, they are those who, *hearing* the word, hold it fast in an honest and good heart, and bear fruit with patience.”

There are some *to whom it has been given to know* the secrets of the kingdom of God. These are the ones who, hearing the word, hold it fast in an honest and good heart. For these privileged people, the meaning of the parables is always becoming more and more clear so that the secret is no longer veiled and hidden, but understood and grasped by faith. But those on the outside are not so privileged. These are the ones who hear the word, but then the devil comes and takes away the word from their hearts, or in time of testing they fall away, or they are choked by the cares and riches and pleasures of life. To these people the parables, in the end, remain parables. The secret of the kingdom remains veiled and hidden because it has never been truly grasped and understood by faith. These are the people who remain in unbelief. But though the secret of the kingdom is veiled to some and revealed to others, it is proclaimed to *all*! Regardless of whether there is good soil or not in which the seed can take root, the seed is still to be sown. The seed is

the word of God, and the word of God must be proclaimed, the secrets of the kingdom must be announced. So Jesus goes on to say:

“No one after lighting a lamp covers it with a jar or puts it under a bed, but puts it on a stand, so that those who enter may see the light.” This sounds like our text in Matthew chapter ten where Jesus says: “What I tell you in the dark, say in the *light*, and what you hear whispered, proclaim on the housetops.” Jesus goes on to say in Luke and Mark, “For nothing is hidden that will not be made manifest, nor is anything *secret* that will not be known and come to light.” One day the secrets of the kingdom will be acknowledged by all.

✓ Philippians 2:10-11 – Every knee [will] bow, in heaven and on earth and under the earth, and every tongue *confess* that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.

Here the point is not that one day the secret thoughts, words, and deeds of men will come to light on the day of judgment, but rather that one day the secrets of God’s Word will be manifested to all, and the whole world will **admit** the truth of what they have rejected (and will continue to reject). So Jesus concludes:

“Take care then how *you hear*, for to the one who has, more will be given, and from the one who has not, even what he thinks that he has will be taken away.” Notice the difference between this conclusion (“Take care then how you *hear*”) and the conclusion in Luke 12 (“Therefore whatever you have *said*”). The one who by faith has understood the secrets of the kingdom will be given more and more of an *understanding* of the secrets and a deeper and deeper *joy* in the truth. But the one who has denied the secret of the kingdom through unbelief will lose even what understanding he thought he had. Who is the one who is wise? Who is the one who fears the Lord? Let us be careful how we hear. Let us be careful that as the secrets of the kingdom are publicly proclaimed to us Sunday after Sunday, we hear and respond in faith. To the one who has, *more* will be given. But from the one who has not, even what he thinks that he has will be taken away.

So now let’s summarize some conclusions before we return to Matthew chapter ten. Every time the proverb appears about nothing being covered that will not be revealed, or hidden that will not be known, it’s referring (at least ultimately) to the day of Christ’s return to this earth. This is the day when all hidden things will be made manifest and all secret things will come to light. In Luke 12 the things that are hidden are the things that people (whether believers or unbelievers) have said in the dark and whispered in private rooms. *These things* will one day be heard in the light and proclaimed on the housetops. So Jesus warns us against all hypocrisy. But in Luke 8, the things that are hidden are the secrets of the kingdom. The secrets of the kingdom are publicly proclaimed, but they are veiled to those who fail to respond in faith. One day, however, even unbelievers will be compelled to admit the truth of God’s Word – when the truth of the Gospel is *revealed* in power and great glory. Now let’s return to Matthew.

III. Matthew 10: 26-27 (See Chart)

In Matthew, just as there is no reference to the hypocrisy of the Pharisees (cf. Luke 12), so there is also no reference to the secrets of the kingdom of God being veiled to those who fail to believe

(cf. Luke 8 and Mark 4). In Matthew chapter ten, the covered and hidden things are the things that Jesus has whispered to His disciples in the dark (v. 27). The point here is not that the Gospel is veiled to some even when it is publicly proclaimed. The point here is that the full riches of the Gospel have not yet even been *proclaimed!* So much of what Jesus said and did in His earthly ministry could not be fully understood much less proclaimed to the world until *after* His death, burial, resurrection, and ascension to the right hand of God. There was *much* that Jesus whispered into the ears of His disciples in private that they themselves would not fully understand until after His resurrection from the dead.

- ✓ John 2:22 – When therefore he was raised from the dead, his disciples remembered that he had said this, and they believed the Scripture and the word that Jesus had spoken.
- ✓ John 12:16 – His disciples did not understand these things at first, but when Jesus was glorified, then they remembered that these things had been written about him.
- ✓ John 13:6-7 – [Jesus] came to Simon Peter, who said to him, “Lord, do you wash my feet?” Jesus answered him, “What I am doing you do not understand now, but afterward you will understand.”
- ✓ John 16:12-13 – I still have many things to say to you, but you cannot bear them now. When the Spirit of truth comes, he will guide you into all the truth.

The disciples’ first missionary journey will be the beginning of a witness and mission that will be lifelong. So as Jesus sends His disciples out, He gives them instructions for the future. Of course, on this first journey, they cannot yet proclaim what they don’t yet understand – the things Jesus has whispered into their ears in private. But one day they will understand. And *then* they must *boldly* proclaim the Gospel truth in the full light of day and publicly from the housetops. Sometimes we don’t fully appreciate the amazing privilege it is for us to be living in the days of fulfillment, when we can understand the riches of God’s salvation in Jesus Christ.

- ✓ 1 Peter 1:10-12 – Concerning this salvation, the prophets who prophesied about the grace that was to be yours searched and inquired carefully, inquiring what person or time the Spirit of Christ in them was indicating when he predicted the sufferings of Christ and the subsequent glories. It was revealed to them that they were serving not themselves but you, in the things that have now been announced to you through those who preached the good news to you by the Holy Spirit sent from heaven, things into which angels long to look.

Just imagine being the apostles who, though they believed, could not understand the things Jesus said to them in the dark and whispered to them in private. And then just imagine the day it all clicked and the lights went on. What joy and boldness then filled their souls to proclaim in the light what had been whispered to them in the dark – to announce from the housetops what had been told them in private. What joy and boldness should fill *our own* hearts now that the manifold riches of our salvation have been fully revealed!

But now let’s go back to the beginning. Jesus says first of all: “So have no fear of them, for nothing is covered that will not be revealed, or hidden that will not be known.” **In spite of its small and hidden beginnings, and in spite of any attempts by the world to silence the message of the Gospel by persecuting and maligning those who proclaim it, the Gospel will be revealed in all the world – it will be known among all the nations** (cf. Calvin). Nothing can

stop it. Jesus sends us out to proclaim a message that is never in danger of being quenched or extinguished, but a message that will ultimately conquer the world. The gospel of the kingdom *will be* triumphant and victorious. It *will* rule the day when Christ returns. So then why should we be timid and fearful? Jesus *commands* us: “Have *no* fear of them... what I tell you in the dark, *say in the light*, and what you hear whispered, *proclaim on the housetops*.”

- ✓ 2 Timothy 1:7-8 – God gave us a spirit not of fear but of power... Therefore do not be ashamed of the testimony about our Lord... but share in suffering for the gospel by the power of God.

When we are timid and fearful in our witness, then we have failed to grasp by faith the *promise* of our Lord: “Nothing is covered that will not be revealed, or hidden that will not be known.” The Gospel will rule the day when Christ returns. Even today, despite any appearances to the contrary, the Gospel is *only* advancing and *never* retreating. So don’t be timid and fearful, but rather be filled with power and boldness to proclaim the good news of a *conquering* and *victorious* Gospel!

Teaching our Children

Read Luke 12:2

1. What are the things that are “covered up” and “hidden”? (Read Luke 11:39-48 and 12:1)
2. When and how will these things be “revealed” and made “known”? (Read Luke 12:3 and see additional Scriptures at bottom of page 1 and top of page 2)
3. In light of these things, how will a wise person live his life? (**Read Luke 12:1b**)

Read Luke 8:17

1. What are the things that are “hidden” and “secret”? (Read Luke 8:9-10)
2. How is God’s word a secret? (Explain to your children that though the “secret” of God’s word is proclaimed to everyone, it still remains hidden *to those who do not have faith*; now read the parable of the soils in Luke 8:11-15)
3. When and how will the secrets of God’s Word be “made manifest” and “come to light” even to those without faith? (Read Philippians 2:10-11 on page 4)
4. In light of these things, when the “secrets” of God’s Word are proclaimed, how will a wise person hear and respond? (With humble faith and obedience! **Read Luke 8:18**)

Read Matthew 10:26

1. What are the things that are “covered” and “hidden”? (Read Matthew 10:27)
2. Why were so many of Jesus’ words to the disciples “covered” and “hidden” and not proclaimed out in the open? (See Scriptures at top of page 5)
3. Jesus said, “Nothing is covered that will not be revealed, or hidden that will not be known”. What did this mean? (In the end, the Gospel will be proclaimed in all the earth and be heard among all the nations. It will certainly not remain a whispered secret!; see bolded section at bottom of page 5)
4. In light of the fact that the Gospel will conquer the world and be victorious in all the earth, how will a wise person proclaim the Gospel? (**Read Matthew 10:26-27** – He will proclaim the Gospel boldly and without being timid or fearful.)

Matthew 10:17, 23, 25-28

[** Notice the three very different conclusions to the same proverb.]

“**Beware** of men, for they will deliver you over to courts and flog you in their synagogues... If they have called the master of the house Beelzebul, how much more will they malign those of his household. *So have no fear of them...*”

“...for nothing is COVERED that will not be REVEALED, or HIDDEN that will not be KNOWN.”

** “What I tell you IN THE DARK, say in the LIGHT, and what you hear WHISPERED, proclaim on the HOUSETOPS.”

“And do not fear those who kill the body but cannot kill the soul. Rather fear him who can destroy both soul and body in hell.” (ETC.)

Luke 11:39-47, 53-54; 12:1-5

“Now you Pharisees cleanse the outside of the cup and of the dish, but inside you are full of greed and wickedness... you are like unmarked graves, and people walk over them without knowing it... Woe to you lawyers also! ... For you build the tombs of the prophets whom your fathers killed...” The scribes and the Pharisees began to press him hard and to provoke him to speak about many things, lying in wait for him, to catch him in something he might say...

“**Beware** of the leaven of the Pharisees, which is hypocrisy.”

“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.”

“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. Yes, I tell you, fear him!” (ETC)

Luke 8:10-18

“To you it has been given to know the **SECRETS** of the kingdom of God, but for others they are in parables... Now the parable is this: The seed is the word of God. The ones along the path are those who have **heard**... And the ones on the rock are those who, when they **hear** the word... And as for what fell among the thorns, they are those who **hear**... As for that in the good soil, they are those who, **hearing** the word...”

“No one after lighting a lamp covers it with a jar or puts it under a bed, but puts it on a stand, so that those who enter may see the light (cf. Mt. 5:16).”

“For nothing is HIDDEN that will not be made manifest, nor is anything SECRET that will not be known and come to light.”

** “Take care then how you **hear**, for to the one who has, more will be given, and from the one who has not, even what he thinks that he has will be taken away.”

Mark 4:10-25

“To you has been given the **SECRET** of the kingdom of God, but for those outside everything is in parables... Do you not understand this parable? ... The sower sows the word. And these are the ones along the path, where the word is sown: when they **hear**... And these are the ones sown on rocky ground: the ones who, when they **hear** the word... And others are the ones sown among thorns. They are those who **hear** the word... But those that were sown on the good soil are the ones who **hear** the word...”

“Is a lamp brought in to be put under a basket, or under a bed, and not on a stand (cf. Mt. 5:16)?”

“For nothing is HIDDEN except to be made manifest; nor is anything SECRET except to come to light.”

“If anyone has ears to hear, let him hear.” And he said to them, “Pay attention to what you **hear**: with the measure you use, it will be measured to you, and still more will be added to you. For to the one who has, more will be given, and from the one who has not, even what he has will be taken away.”