

Luke 12:3

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

Therefore whatsoever ye have spoken in darkness shall be heard in the light; and that which ye have spoken in the ear in closets shall be proclaimed upon the housetops.

Analysis

Therefore whatsoever ye have spoken in darkness shall be heard in the light; and that which ye have spoken in the ear in closets shall be proclaimed upon the housetops—Jesus applies the principle of inevitable revelation specifically to speech. Words whispered in darkness (ἐν τῇ σκοτίᾳ) and spoken in the ear in closets (πρὸς τὸ οὖς ἐν τοῖς ταμείοις, in the innermost private chambers) will be proclaimed upon the housetops (κηρυχθήσεται ἐπὶ τῶν δωμάτων). The verb *kērychthēsetai* (κηρυχθήσεται, shall be proclaimed) is the same used for gospel preaching—what was secret will be publicly announced.

The contrast between the darkest privacy and the most public exposure is deliberate. First-century homes had flat roofs where announcements were made to the surrounding area—the ancient equivalent of broadcasting. The therefore (διὰ τοῦτο) connects this to verse 2's principle: since nothing remains hidden, disciples should practice radical integrity. Speak in private only what you're willing to have publicly known. This demolishes the sacred/secular divide—no "off the record" comments before God. Every careless word will be brought into judgment (Matthew 12:36).

Historical Context

Palestinian homes featured inner rooms (ταμεῖα, tameia) used for storage and private conversations, providing maximum privacy. Flat rooftops served as

gathering spaces and platforms for public announcements (cf. Matthew 10:27). The cultural context made Jesus' imagery vivid—what you whisper in the most private space will eventually be shouted from the most public platform. This warning was particularly relevant for disciples facing persecution. Their faithfulness in secret would eventually be vindicated publicly. Conversely, any secret compromise or denial would be exposed. The principle applies eschatologically—the final judgment will publicize all hidden deeds and words.

Related Passages

Matthew 25:31 — Final judgment

Romans 2:1 — Judging others

Colossians 1:16 — All things created through Christ

Psalm 19:1 — Heavens declare God's glory

Study Questions

1. What would change in your speech if you knew every private conversation would be made public?
2. How does this verse challenge the notion that some thoughts or words are private and therefore inconsequential?
3. What comfort does this promise of public vindication offer to those whose faithfulness is currently hidden or unrecognized?

Interlinear Text

ἀνθ	ὅ	ὅσα	ἐν	τῇ	σκοτίᾳ	εἴπατε	ἐν
Therefore	that which	whatsoever	in	G3588	darkness	ye have spoken	in
G473	G3739	G3745	G1722		G4653	G2036	G1722
τῷ	φωτὶ	ἀκουσθήσεται	καὶ	ὅ	πρὸς	τὸ	οὖς
G3588	the light	shall be heard	and	that which	in	G3588	the ear
G5457		G191	G2532	G3739	G4314		G3775
ἐλαλήσατε	ἐν	τοῖς	ταμείοις	κηρυχθήσεται	ἐπὶ	τῷν	
ye have spoken	in	G3588	closets	shall be proclaimed	upon	G3588	
G2980	G1722		G5009	G2784	G1909		
δωμάτων							
the housetops							
	G1430						

Additional Cross-References

Matthew 10:27 (Light): What I tell you in darkness, that speak ye in light: and what ye hear in the ear, that preach ye upon the housetops.

Matthew 12:36 (Parallel theme): But I say unto you, That every idle word that men shall speak, they shall give account thereof in the day of judgment.

Ecclesiastes 10:20 (Parallel theme): Curse not the king, no not in thy thought; and curse not the rich in thy bedchamber: for a bird of the air shall carry the voice, and that which hath wings shall tell the matter.