

Luke 16:14-18

Introduction: Jesus responds to those who mock His teaching by addressing them head-on.

- 1) Jesus teaches us that God condemns mere external righteousness—16:14-15
 - a) The Pharisees scoffed at Jesus because they understood His teaching—16:14
 - i) Activity # 1: ¹⁴ *Now the Pharisees, being money-lovers, were listening to all these things*
 - (1) They stated publicly that they were acceptable to God, and that God proved His pleasure in them by making them wealthy. (Pentecost)
 - (2) But in light of 16:13, they are presented as hating God.
 - ii) Activity # 2: *and (the Pharisees) were showing contempt for (turned their noses up at) Him.*
 - (1) The opposition of 15:2 intensifies here.
 - b) Jesus reminds the Pharisees of God’s perfect knowledge—16:15 ¹⁵ *And He said to them,*
 - i) Principle # 1: mere external appearance of righteousness reveals internal spiritual bankruptcy—“**You^{pl}** (emphatic) *are those declaring yourselves righteous before people, but (you can’t fool God because) God knows your^{pl} hearts.*
 - (1) God knows the heart: Cf. 1st Sam. 16:7; 1st Chron. 28:9; Ps. 7:9; Prov. 17:3; 21:2; 24:12; Jer. 11:20; Acts 1:24; 15:8; Rom. 8:27; 2nd Cor. 11:11
 - (2) Pharisees and self-righteousness: cf. 18:9
 - ii) Principle # 2: mere external appearance of righteousness is disgusting to God—*For what is highly valued among people is **detestable** (emphatic) in the sight of God.*
 - (1) God knows you Pharisees are not righteous, because the things you value and base your opinions on, He hates. And the things He values, you do not value, as see in your attitude toward these tax collectors and sinners, and your views on money, and on divorce. (Magill)
- 2) Jesus teaches us that the teaching about the Kingdom does not change God’s Word—16:16-18
 - a) While God has been consistent in His revelation, the Old has given way to the New—16:16
 - i) The promise in prior revelation: ¹⁶ *The Law and the Prophets were until John;*
 - ii) The fulfillment in current revelation: *since then the kingdom of God ...*
 - (1) *has been announced* [εὐαγγελίζω],
 - (2) *and everyone is forcing himself into it.*
 - (a) By declaring himself righteous.
 - iii) The righteous demands of God’s holiness must be satisfied before people can enter His kingdom. (Pentecost)

- b) God's standard has remained the same; the eternal authority and sufficiency of God's Word—16:17
 - i) The Law will not change—16:17
 - (1) ¹⁷ *But it is easier for heaven and earth to pass away than for one tiny stroke of a letter (distinguishing Resh from Dalet, ר and ד) of the Law to drop off.*
 - (2) Though the Pharisees try to force themselves in on their own terms, God's Law will not be set aside. Not one Law will be set aside when granting entrance into His kingdom, either for tax collectors or for Pharisees. No one will enter it without repenting of their version of Law-breaking. (Magill)
 - c) Jesus reveals an authoritative, high standard (even stricter than the Law)—16:18
 - i) Jesus attacks the at-times veiled covetousness of the Pharisees
 - (1) Principle # 1: ¹⁸ *Everyone who divorces his wife and marries another is committing adultery;*
 - (a) Remember the two primary rabbis. Hillel took a rather liberal position, what Shammai took a rather strict position.
 - (2) Principle # 2: *and everyone who marries a woman divorced from her husband is committing adultery.*
 - ii) Desiring someone else's wife is covetousness.
 - iii) The change in the era from the Law and the Prophets to the Kingdom of God does not change the moral standards in terms of commitment to God and others. (Bock)
 - iv) The Pharisees condemn tax collectors and sinners, but they themselves are violating God's Law in this area, and teaching others to do so. Jesus is charging them with adultery, an adultery that they legalized with their traditions. The self-justifying sinners like them are the ones rejected by God, not the repentant sinners. (Magill)
 - v) Jesus sets the standard for the Kingdom in general principles. He does not give every possible scenario concerning divorce.
- 3) We see a similar thing when we look at sheep. Sheep in a green pasture appear to be rather clean. But when snow falls on that same pasture, the sheep suddenly appear to be dirty. The sheep haven't changed any, but the background has. In a similar way, when we compare ourselves to the background of man's standards, we come up reasonably clean. However, when we compare ourselves to the snow-white righteousness of God as revealed in His Word, we see that we are all unclean. (Evidence Bible)