

THE DESTINY OF MONEY LOVERS

Luke 16:14-31

Although those seeking personal gain have left love for God for a new "lover," and have sought to destroy His message, it would condemn them for spiritual adultery.

WHAT ARE WE LIVING FOR?

As Jesus has been facing the issue of rejection by the leaders of Israel,

He's been drawing closer to their real motives.

He's eliminating the "smoke screens"

and revealing the real issue for them.

It's not theological. It's not religious. In fact, it's not even political!

Now they're going to show it to us.

THEY'RE MOTIVATED BY THEIR LOVE FOR MONEY.

That's what they're living for. *How about us?*

Our Lord issues a serious warning for anyone living for money.

Whatever you think about money's value for the near view,

it won't cut it for the long haul!

In light of eternity, money isn't worth risking your life for!

GOD'S PEOPLE SHOULDN'T LIVE FOR MONEY,

WE SHOULD LIVE TO PLEASE HIM.

Pharisees used the unacceptable people who followed Him:

-tax collectors and sinners--as an excuse (15:1-2).

Their complaint causes Jesus to explain the significance of His ministry.

He uses three parables to demonstrate God's concern for the lost.

Like the jealous older brother of the prodigal,

they're fighting God's decision to save the wayward

because of love, in spite of their lack of merit.

[In Luke 16, our Lord focuses in on their real problem:]

Danger of a Pharisaic attitude about money 16:1-31

Though esteemed by the people as religious,

they're serving for personal gain.

They resist Jesus because He threatens their position.

For the disciples 16:1-13

Jesus instructs his followers concerning the danger of the love of money.

They should be faithful with the Lord's resources and use them with a view toward the future (= eternity).

As He's speaking to His followers, the Pharisees are standing by.

As He deals with the issue of faithfulness in the use of funds,

and using your treasure with eternity's values in view,

they begin to mock Him.

Therefore, Jesus turns his comments toward them.

For the Pharisees 16:14-31

PROBLEM IDENTIFIED 16:14 [16:10-14]

10 "Whoever can be trusted with very little can also be trusted with much, and whoever is dishonest with very little will also be dishonest with much. 11 So if you have not been trustworthy in handling worldly wealth, who will trust you with true riches? 12 And if you have not been trustworthy with someone else's property, who will give you property of your own?"

13 "No servant can serve two masters. Either he will hate the one and love the other, or he will be devoted to the one and despise the other. You cannot serve both God and Money."

14 **The Pharisees, who loved money, heard all this and were sneering at Jesus.**

What's the real problem?

What are they living for? **MONEY!!!**
 They're "lovers of silver"—They're seeking personal gain.
 They make fun of Jesus' comments about money
 because He just hit them right between the eyes.
 They respond by "turning up their noses" in derision!
 They don't want to hear that kind of warning.
 The Pharisees react against His message,
 because of their **love of money**.
 They oppose Him, but want to appear as righteous, religious leaders.
 What they really want to do is *destroy* Him.

WARNING DELIVERED 16:15-18

Their first goal:

16:15a

*He said to them, "You are the ones who **justify yourselves** in the eyes of men, . . ."*

The Pharisees are trying to prove how holy they are.
 They have a self-righteous, "holier-than-thou" attitude
 and want to convince everyone else that they deserve it!
 They want everyone to be impressed
 with what religious people they are!

Human Perspective

16:15b

*"You are the ones who justify yourselves **in the eyes of men**, . . ."*

People look at them and are impressed by their "holiness."
 From a human perspective they look pretty good.

God's Perspective 16:15c "but God knows your hearts."

What is highly valued among men is detestable in God's sight."

God sees the heart--He knows what's on the inside.

From that perspective they don't look so hot!

What He sees is *detestable--lit., "nauseating"--disgusting*.

Their second goal 16:16 *"The Law and the Prophets were proclaimed until John. Since that time, the good news of the kingdom of God is being preached, and everyone is forcing his way into it."*

Has to do with God's revelation

—until John's arrival, the law and the prophets was the basis.

Beginning with John's arrival, there's a new message—prophesied in O.T. (Malachi, e.g.), but
NEW—THE GOSPEL OF THE KINGDOM OF GOD.

MESSIAH HAS COME! "Good news" has been announced.

What has happened to that great announcement???

"Everyone is exerting force toward it!"

Two possibilities grammatically:

(1) "Everyone is using force to try to get into it"

(2) "Everyone is using force against it"—i.e., trying to destroy it.

The context clarifies His point: *From the time John came,*

Israel's religious leaders have been trying to destroy the message!

THEIR GOAL IS TO DESTROY HIM AND GET RID OF THE MESSAGE!

If this goes through, they lose everything!

Their potential 16:17

Are they likely to succeed? Will they be able to destroy God's plan?

*"It is easier for heaven and earth to disappear
than for the least stroke of a pen to drop out of the Law."*

Lesson in the certainty of Scripture.

Pharisees reinterpret it to fit their own prejudices and desires.

That doesn't change what God has said.

HIS WORD is truth and they can't change it!

The Law and John have announced the plan. Can they destroy it?

NOT A CHANCE! –Heaven and earth will pass away first!

It's easier for all of creation to be dissolved than for God's Word not to be fulfilled.

Not even a serif—the tails on the letters.

None of it—**NOT THE SMALLEST, MOST INSIGNIFICANT PART** will fail.

It's going to happen the way He said it would, whether we like it or not—So **WE** had better get in tune with **HIS** plan!

Their risk 16:18 *"Anyone who divorces his wife and marries another woman commits adultery, and the man who marries a divorced woman commits adultery."*

They're playing around with spiritual adultery.

To leave your first mate and marry another is adultery.

They've been bound to God by marriage vows.

To leave Him is adultery!

They've left their love for God and His law.

They've gone after another "lover" and now they try to destroy the message of the kingdom that has come from God.

In the end their efforts will end up useless and His Word will condemn them for spiritual adultery, just like it condemns those guilty of physical adultery.

SUMMARY: YOU'RE PLAYING GAMES WITH GOD!

IF YOU DON'T REPENT, YOU'LL LOSE EVERYTHING!

WARNING ILLUSTRATED 16:19-31

The story (parable) of Lazarus and the rich man demonstrates their destiny, unless they repent

19 *"There was a rich man who was dressed in purple and fine linen and lived in luxury every day. 20 At his gate was laid a beggar named Lazarus, covered with sores 21 and longing to eat what fell from the rich man's table. Even the dogs came and licked his sores.*

22 *"The time came when the beggar died and the angels carried him to Abraham's side. The rich man also died and was buried. 23 In hell, where he was in torment, he looked up and saw Abraham far away, with Lazarus by his side. 24 So he called to him, 'Father Abraham, have pity on me and send Lazarus to dip the tip of his finger in water and cool my tongue, because I am in agony in this fire.'*

25 *"But Abraham replied, 'Son, remember that in your lifetime you received your good things, while Lazarus received bad things, but now he is comforted here and you are in agony. 26 And besides all this, between us and you a great chasm has been fixed, so that those who want to go from here to you cannot, nor can anyone cross over from there to us.'*

27 *"He answered, 'Then I beg you, father, send Lazarus to my father's house, 28 for I have five brothers. Let him warn them, so that they will not also come to this place of torment.'*

29 *"Abraham replied, 'They have Moses and the Prophets; let them listen to them.'*

30 *"No, father Abraham,' he said, 'but if someone from the dead goes to them, they will repent.'*

31 *"He said to him, 'If they do not listen to Moses and the Prophets, they will not be convinced even if someone rises from the dead.'"*

Clear point: truth taught concerning the destiny of the rich!

--NOT an eschatological doctrine of the state of the dead.

Since those who are hoarding their goods for personal gain (i.e., the Pharisees) are not interested in *hearing* what God has said, they will be excluded from the blessings of the kingdom and will suffer eternal torment.

The Pharisees, like the rich man, have hedged all their bets, trusting that now is all there is.

They're living for today, on the assumption that there is no tomorrow.

[Like the statue of Columbus:]

In Valladolid, Spain, where Christopher Columbus died, stands a monument to the discoverer. It contains a statue of a lion destroying one of the Latin words in Spain's motto. Before Columbus made his voyages, the Spaniards thought they had reached the outer limits of earth. The motto was "Ne Plus Ultra," "No More Beyond." The word being torn away by the lion is "Ne" or "no," make it read "Plus Ultra." Columbus had proven that there was "more beyond."

C.S. Lewis tells about a gravestone: "Here lies an atheist--all dressed up and no place to go." He quietly replies: "I bet he wishes that were so!"

THREE MAJOR LESSONS FROM THIS ILLUSTRATION:

- 1. Lesson from Lazarus 16:20-21** *At his gate was laid a beggar named Lazarus, covered with sores 21 and longing to eat what fell from the rich man's table. Even the dogs came and licked his sores.*

Notice the reversal of role.

While the rich man is living it up in luxury,

Lazarus lays at his gate each day, suffering from sores.

Lazarus just wants to enjoy a few crumbs, the leftovers, that might fall from the rich man's table.

Instead, the scroungy mutts gather around him and lick his sores, swarming like flies, or like ants at a picnic.

Even the dogs are leeching off Lazarus, licking at his sores!!!

That's the idea you get from reading the original here.

Sounds pretty gross doesn't it? That's what Lazarus' life is like!

BUT THEN, they die. And the roles reverse!

Lazarus is comforted and the rich man suffers.

Abraham responds 16:25 "Son, remember that in your lifetime you received your good things, while Lazarus received bad things, but now he is comforted here and you are in agony."

REMEMBER, you received your good things during life, when Lazarus received the bad; NOW it's his turn.

Besides, there's now no more crossing over. 16:26 *And besides all this, between us and you a great chasm has been fixed, so that those who want to go from here to you cannot, nor can anyone cross over from there to us.'*

Lazarus' name is also significant:

Lazaros < (heb) l'zr < el'zr = Eleazar --"He who God helps"

The least respected and most helpless receives God's help.

- 2. Lesson from the Rich Man 16:22-26** *"The time came when the beggar died and the angels carried him to Abraham's side. The rich man also died and was buried. 23 In hell, where he was in torment, he looked up and saw Abraham far away, with Lazarus by his side. 24 So he called to him, 'Father Abraham, have pity on me and send Lazarus to dip the tip of his finger in water and cool my tongue, because I am in agony in this fire.'*

25 "But Abraham replied, 'Son, remember that in your lifetime you received your good things, while Lazarus received bad things, but now he is comforted here and you are in agony. 26 And besides all this, between us and you a great chasm has been fixed, so that those who want to go from here to you cannot, nor can anyone cross over from there to us.'

Due to the attempt to hoard goods for personal gain,
with no real interest in hearing what God has said,
they, like the rich man,
will be excluded from blessings of the kingdom
and suffer pain after death.

3. Lesson about Listening 16:27-31 "He answered, 'Then I beg you, father, send Lazarus to my father's house, 28 for I have five brothers. Let him warn them, so that they will not also come to this place of torment.'

29 "Abraham replied, 'They have Moses and the Prophets; let them listen to them.'

30 "No, father Abraham,' he said, 'but if someone from the dead goes to them, they will repent.'

31 "He said to him, 'If they do not listen to Moses and the Prophets, they will not be convinced even if someone rises from the dead.'"

Focus on Lazarus and the RICH man could lead us to believe that this is about rich and poor. And, in part, it is.

But if you walk away with only that impression you'll be mistaken.

You'd miss the main point!

The real issue here isn't wealth.

Notice the punch line of the story. *How does it end?* **16:31**

He has the illusion--SO DO WE!--that if the presentation is convincing--
just bring in a few miracles--and people will believe God.

NO WAY! Jesus says

**IF PEOPLE WANT TO KNOW THE TRUTH,
THEY WILL LISTEN TO GOD'S WORD.**

If people don't want to know the truth, no amount of evidence will move them--even someone raised from the dead!

IMPLICATIONS FOR GOD'S PEOPLE TODAY?

Swindoll summarizes: **"Those who ignore the Word of God in life will not be ignored by the God of the Word in eternity."**

GOD'S PEOPLE LISTEN TO GOD'S WORD! --At least they better!

The Pharisees didn't.

They're active and respected, but they aren't listening.

They let love for money stand in the way of hearing God's Word.

Profit is more important to them than destiny.

16:13 "No servant can serve two masters. Either he will hate the one and love the other, or he will be devoted to the one and despise the other. You cannot serve both God and Money."

Their fate will be like the rich man's.

Their goal is more money and lots of friends.

They compromise with the world and commit spiritual adultery!

They will be destroyed.

Lazarus, on the other hand, is helpless.

So He leans on God.

People don't respect him--even the dogs don't respect him!

But he's "THE ONE GOD HELPS!"

Gallup poll: 70% of American adults believe it's important when choosing right and wrong to follow what God or the Bible says.

Yet, out of that group, 63% accept: "There are few moral absolutes; what is right or wrong usually varies from situation to situation."