

MONEY REVEALS // Luke 16:14-18

Morning message from the series, The Gospel of Luke

When it comes to hermeneutics, the science of biblical interpretation, context is king. The immediate context for Luke 16:14-18 is Luke 16:13. Jesus states in that verse that it is impossible to love both God and money—not that it is challenging or difficult to love both, but that it is *impossible*. Thus, we see that vv. 14-18 is an illustration of the teaching in v. 13, and the Pharisees, who were “lovers of money,” become prime examples of why it is impossible. The word used for money here is the same word used for the silver coins that Judas earned in betraying Jesus—it connotes not the monetary value of the money, but its shininess, its appealing appearance. It is not wrong to use money, to make it, earn it, spend it, or save it. But if money becomes the chief object of our affection, we will mock what has true, eternal value.

1. Lovers of money mock God’s Son (v. 14)

In response to Jesus’ teaching, the Pharisees “ridiculed” him, a term translated from a Greek word that is used in only one other place in Luke (23:35) when they “scoffed” at Jesus on the cross. This word reveals that the Pharisees not only scorned Jesus’ teachings, they mocked him personally—and their love of money is at the root of it (cf. 1 Tim. 6:10). If someone loves money, they cannot listen to Jesus’ teachings on money because it challenges their misplaced affections, so they must reject him altogether. When you mock Jesus’ teachings, you are only steps away from mocking Jesus himself.

2. Lovers of money mock God’s approval (v. 15)

The Pharisees were totally concerned about external realities. They think that money will earn the applause of men because men look at the external. God, on the other hand, sees the heart. You might fool the world, but you will never fool God. The Pharisees mocked the means by which God approves men and women—the atoning work of Jesus Christ, his death, burial, and resurrection.

3. Lovers of money mock God’s commandments (v. 16-17)

The Pharisees knew the Torah, the Old Testament scriptures, but they refused to see that the fulfillment of that scripture was happening right in front of them. Since Jesus began his work, people had repented and become disciples, but the Pharisees didn’t care. They were primarily interested in their own legalism—they couldn’t keep the Law, so they invented rules that they could keep, which only makes a mockery of morality.

4. Lovers of money mock God’s blessing (v. 18)

Verse 18 points to a particular element of the Law that the Pharisees likely had the most trouble with keeping and so had twisted—God’s view on marriage. When someone loves money, if anything gets between them and their money, that thing, even a blessing like marriage, will lose. The message of this passage is not to avoid money. Instead, we should ask how can we avoid the love of money, and the answer is clear—love God. We must have a higher love than the love of money. As Thomas Chalmers said, we seek “the expulsive power of a new affection (i.e., loves).”

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. What are the signs that someone values money above all else? Have you seen this in others or has this been a part of your own story?
2. Whose approval do you seek? If God is not at the top of your list, how can you seek out “the expulsive power of a new affection”? Discuss how the greatest of loves (i.e., affections)—that which is for God, is able to drive out lesser loves that often plague our hearts.
3. The love of money doesn’t require an external fix, but an internal change of the heart that only God can provide. How does internal brokenness often manifest itself in external behaviors?