

The Gospel of Luke

Jesus Responds to the Scoffers

Luke 16:14-18

1. **Jesus Comprehends the Scoffing of the Pharisees** (v.14)

The Pharisees often concealed their disdain for Jesus in order to trap Him, but here their mocking contempt and condescension is shown to have been known by Jesus (cf. Luke 23:35). They responded in this way because Jesus had clearly articulated the danger of loving money (Luke 18:22-23; 1 Tim. 6:10).

2. **Jesus Condemns the Hypocrisy of the Pharisees** (v.15)

Hypocrisy was the chief way in which Jesus characterized the Pharisees (Luke 12:1, 56; 13:15; cf. Matt 23:13ff). Jesus is gracious in repeatedly bringing this to their attention because it is this sin needed to be dealt with in order for them to be saved (Luke 15:7; 18:9; cf. Ps. 119:71).

A. A Primary Desire to Look Good to Men

The Pharisees were well known for their public prayers (Matt. 6:5), their fasting (Matt. 6:16), and their giving of tithes (Matt. 6:2) which purchased for themselves the reputation for being exceedingly righteous (cf. Matt. 5:20). Their goal was to maintain righteousness in the eyes of men (cf. Luke 10:29).

B. God Knows and Sees the Heart

God has always been concerned with the heart of man (Ex. 20:17), because it is the sinful motivations of the heart which result in sinful actions (Luke 6:45; cf. Matt 12:34). While the believer constantly desires God to expose sinful heart motivations, it is the hypocrite's greatest fear that God does know his heart (Gen. 6:20; cf. Jer. 17:10).

C. God is Not Fooled by Righteousness that is Exclusively External

Empty ritualistic obedience and conformity has never been God's desire for His people (Hos. 6:6; Matt. 12:7). Continuation in this sort of hypocritical religion is loathsome to God (Isa. 1:11-17).

3. **Jesus Confirms the Persistence of the Word of God** (vs.16a, 17)

One of the Pharisees primary theological attacks upon Jesus that He did not keep the law (Mark 3:2; Luke 11:38; 14:1ff). Jesus affirms the perseverance and verbal inspiration of God's Word in both principle and in practice (Matt. 22:31-33; John 17:17; cf. Ps. 119:34-38; Prov. 30:5)

4. **Jesus Clarifies the Path to Please God** (v.16b)

The Old Testament promises of salvation looked forward to what God would do (Gen. 3:15; 12:3), and John the Baptist had pointed people to Jesus (Mark 1:7;

John 1:35-37; Acts 18:25). Anyone who truly believes what is written in the Old Testament will believe in Jesus (Luke 16:31; John 5:46; 8:56).

5. **Jesus Captures the Pharisees in their Hypocrisy** (v.18)

After clearly affirming His own belief about the abiding nature of God's Word, He very quickly shows just how the Pharisees were guilty of setting aside the Word of God in favor of their own traditions and sinful desires (Mark 7:6-13). The Pharisees had taken God's warning about the sinful complications of permissive divorce and used it as a justification for divorces of convenience (Deut 24:1-4). God hates divorce (Mal. 2:16; cf. Ez 10:9ff), and He has given sobering instructions for us to rightly think about marriage and divorce (Matt. 5:32; 19:1-12; 1 Cor 7:15).