



CROSS OF GRACE CHURCH

SPRING 2021 BIBLE READING PLAN - WEEK 12

SCRIPTURE PASSAGE: Luke 16

Start by reading Luke 16 - The Parables of a Dishonest Manager and Lazarus & the Rich Man, The Law & the Kingdom, and Divorce, Remarriage & Adultery

In Luke 16, Jesus continues His teaching; confronting the Pharisees and instructing His disciples. He teaches two parables concerning the faithful, righteous use of money, gives insight into the Law and His Kingdom, and makes a short but powerful statement about divorce, remarriage, and adultery.

Verses 1-13: The Dishonest Manager

In this unusual parable, Jesus teaches that the faithful, wise use of our money here on earth for the Kingdom's sake will reap rewards in heaven. This teaching does not pertain to salvation by works, but refers to rewards in heaven given to the Christian who is saved by grace alone.

Verses 14-17: The Pharisees' Ridicule and Jesus' Response

Instead of responding to Jesus' teaching, sadly the Pharisees start to ridicule Him. In the previous chapter, they grumbled at Jesus receiving tax collectors and sinners (15:2). Now their scorn has moved to ridicule.

In verse 16, Jesus makes an interesting statement about everyone forcing their way into His kingdom. This is similar to Matthew 11:12 where He says '*the kingdom has suffered violence and the violent take it by force*'. These passages may refer either to the spiritual zeal of believers or to the physical persecution and spiritual warfare that surrounds the preaching of the gospel.

Verse 18: Divorce, Remarriage, and Adultery

In Jesus' time, Jewish men could easily divorce their wives for very small causes. Jesus is emphasizing the high importance of marriage for life and that the law only allowed divorce because of hard hearts. See Mark 10:1-9.

Verses 19-31: The Rich Man and Lazarus

This sobering parable teaches that once a man dies he is taken to his eternal place of existence, either heaven or hell. The object lesson again pertains to the use of money, either selfish accumulation of riches or unselfishly helping the poor and needy.

This parable teaches there is no means of repentance available to the person who has not been saved while alive on earth. Neither can someone come back from the dead and warn those alive of what is to come or what must be done here on earth to secure salvation. We who are alive on earth have all that is needed to instruct us in God's word.

Questions for Reflection and Discussion:

1. What can we learn about the nature of the unrepentant heart and the nature of sin by observing the Pharisees' slide from grumbling to ridicule in chapters 15 and 16? Is there an area of sin in your life that you are not dealing with? What are the consequences of not addressing and repenting of sin?
2. Are you in control of your money or is money controlling you and your heart? In this chapter, Jesus teaches that we are to be faithful and wise stewards of all the Lord has blessed us with so that we can be unselfish channels of His abundant blessings to others.
3. Ask the Lord to renew your zeal for His Kingdom. Romans 12:11 says, '*Do not be slothful in zeal, be fervent in spirit, serve the Lord*'. Trying to follow Jesus without zeal and fervency leads to legalism and drudgery.

Meditate on **Romans 12:9-13** - *Let love be genuine. Abhor what is evil; hold fast to what is good. 10 Love one another with brotherly affection. Outdo one another in showing honor. 11 Do not be slothful in zeal, be fervent in spirit, serve the Lord. 12 Rejoice in hope, be patient in tribulation, be constant in prayer. 13 Contribute to the needs of the saints and seek to show hospitality.*

4. The parable of the rich man and Lazarus teaches that there are no second chances for repentance once we die. As you reflect on this sobering truth, ask the Holy Spirit to show you how you can be a more effective witness to the lost in your circle of family, friends, and acquaintances.