

Value what God Values

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[0:00] If you take your Bibles and turn to the Gospel of Luke, chapter 16. If you're visiting with us, if you look in that chair in front of you or the chair that's next to you there, there's a black Bible.

Pull that black Bible out. Go towards the back and you can find page 61. Go to page 61. That's where you will find Luke chapter 16.

Huh, that's kind of funny. 16, 61. Kind of switch those numbers. That's pretty cool. Not page 16, chapter 61, but page 61, chapter 16. Or maybe I should say it the opposite if you're dyslexia.

Anyways. As you're turning there, Luke chapter 16, we're going to study the first 18 verses. Thank you to Travis, kind of overseeing everything while it's gone.

And Michael Matthews, Daniel, Ellen doing the PowerPoint. All the other men involved. It's great. Thank you for doing that. They help keep things, maintain things while I was gone.

[1:12] I appreciate that. Luke 16, 1 through 18. I'll read and then we'll do our study. Now, he was also saying to the disciples, there was a certain rich man who had a steward.

And the steward was reported to him as squandering his possessions. And he called him and said to him, what is this I hear about you? Give an account of his stewardship, for you can no longer be steward.

And the steward said to himself, what shall I do? Since my master has taken the stewardship away from me, I'm not strong enough to dig. I am ashamed to beg. I know what I shall do.

So that when I am removed from the stewardship, they will receive me into their homes. And he summoned each one of his master's debtors. And he began saying to the first, how much do you owe my master?

And he said, a hundred measures of oil. Bless you. And he said to him, take your bill and sit down quickly and write fifty or seven. Then he said to another, and how much do you owe?

[2:19] And he said, a hundred measures of wheat. He said to him, take your bill and write eighty. And his master praised the unrighteous steward. Because he had acted shrewdly.

For the sons of this age are more shrewd in relation to their own kind than the sons of light. And I say to you, make friends for yourselves by means of the mammon of unrighteousness, that when it fails, they may receive you into the eternal dwellings.

He was faithful in a very little thing. Is faithful also in much. And he was unrighteous in a very little thing is unrighteous also in much. If therefore you have not been faithful in the use of unrighteous mammon, who will entrust the true riches to you?

And if you've not been faithful in the use of that which is another's, who will give you that which is your own? No servant can serve two masters for either he will hate the one and love the other or else he will hold to one and despise the other.

You cannot serve God and mammon. Now, verse 14, the Pharisees were lovers of money were listening to all these things and they were scoffing at him. And he said to them, you are those who justify yourselves in the sight of men, but God knows your hearts.

[3:37] For that which is highly esteemed among men is detestable in the sight of God. The law and the prophets were proclaimed until John. Since then the gospel of the kingdom of the kingdom of God is preached and everyone is forcing his way into it.

But it is easier for heaven and earth to pass away than for one stroke of a letter of the law to fail. Everyone who divorces his wife and marries another commits adultery.

And he who marries one who is divorced from a husband commits adultery. Breaking Bad is an American crime drama television series.

The main character is Walter White, played by Bryan Cranston. A struggling high school chemistry teacher who is diagnosed with inoperable lung cancer at the beginning of the series.

He turns to a life of crime. Producing and selling meth. In order to secure his family's financial future before he dies. Teaming up with his former student, Jesse Pinkman, played by Aaron Paul.

[4:48] So throughout the series, Walter produces and sells meth to earn money in order to secure the financial future of his family. Why do I bring this up? Because there was an online article titled this way.

Seven shrewd and legal business tactics to steal from the TV series Breaking Bad. No joke. Seven shrewd and legal business tactics to steal from Breaking Bad.

This is if you want to have a good business, follow the steps that this writer gives you from the TV series Breaking Bad. Which, by the way, is one of the top TV series watched on TV.

Is that TV series Breaking Bad. Seven shrewd and legal business tactics. Number one. Creating a good product is art. And customers recognize a quality product.

If you make good meth, they'll like it. Pick your partners carefully and be sure to keep them informed about what you're doing. Number three. Build your company and personal brand. Number four.

[5:52] Know what motivates your employees. Number five. Find your saw. And your saw is the one who, this guy who knows this guy who knows this guy who knows this guy who knows this guy.

Who's going to get you connected to everyone else. He's the glue. Number six. Make sure your distribution channel and supply chain are set up properly. And number seven.

Seven. Remember, work-life balance. So there's seven steps for you. If you're starting your own business, Travis, there you go. I bet you didn't know that.

I'll give you the website afterwards. There you go. Thank you or no thank you. People are very serious about their businesses, aren't they? They are. And their TV shows.

Why don't we as Christians value eternal things like this? Why don't we as Christians put more effort into eternal, heavenly things like these people?

[6:55] People put their time and effort into the things of this world. Luke is calling out to his readers.

Jesus is calling out to his readers, to his outcasts. Come and follow me. Who am I? I am the Son of Man. I am the Lord. I am the servant of the Lord Most High.

I am the Messiah. And you will find forgiveness of your sins. And in our text this morning, we will see, come follow Jesus. Find forgiveness of your sins. Valuing what God values.

Valuing what God values. What does value mean? It means to esteem, to treasure, to cherish, to regard highly.

Valuing what God values. What does God value? We'll see. Jesus, in our text, he brought up two vital, personal topics for his disciples.

[8:10] First, money. One should handle their money or possessions with generosity and faithfulness, expressing care for others through the use of their resources. In short, be generous and faithful.

Matter of fact, when I was in Jerome on Friday, I was talking to a gentleman. I told him, and it's true, the two things that Jesus talks about the most.

First is hell. Second, money. Why? Because money is personal. Because he's dipping into your life. And people don't like that, do they?

You want somebody messing around with your money? You want somebody messing around with your bank account? You want somebody messing around with your retirement? Heck no. You don't want anybody messing around with your business.

You don't want anybody messing around with your business. Jesus does. When one becomes a part of God's kingdom, it has ethical and true lifestyle implications.

[9:13] And the first is how you use your personal resources. Our attitude towards our wealth, our possession, our resources should be give.

Generosity. A second topic. Even more personal than money is marriage. One who commits to God through Jesus is called to high moral standards.

Just because the kingdom is here, it doesn't mean morality and the law goes out the window. No. Jesus is going to emphasize how marriage is permanent.

It's a vow that you make. Jesus is the authority of the new era of the kingdom. How authoritative is he?

How authoritative is Jesus? He proclaims God's standards in his kingdom. In the most personal aspects of our lives.

[10:17] Money and marriage. Resources and relationships. Jesus was serious. I mean, think about it. What could be more personal than your money and your sex life?

There's nothing else more personal than that. And as far as marriage is concerned, Jesus is going to say from the text, Divorce is not an option.

Neither is remarriage. Period. You want to serve God. Be filled with generosity and faithfulness. Value what God values. You can go back to my messages in Mark's gospel when I spoke about divorce and remarriage.

Matthew, so to speak, exception clause. We won't take time to go into that. Also, John Piper has something written about that. Heth and Winhem wrote about that.

About how there's no grounds for divorce. If divorce happens and there's no grounds for remarriage, only death severs the marriage bond. Notice Jesus' authority. He's coming at you with guns blazing.

[11:24] And He spends most of our text here dealing with money. Which is where we're going to deal a lot of our time with this morning. As a reference to money. So, we're going to ask this question.

Honor God with your money and in your most intimate relationship. That's what we can have here as well. Honor God with your money and in your most intimate relationship. That is marriage. So, what are God's values in His kingdom?

And what does He value? There's three that we can take away from the text this morning. Number one. First, be generous and faithful with your money. Be generous with your money and be faithful. Or be good stewards. However way you want to write that. However way you want to say that. And it starts in verse 1 and 2 all the way to verse 12.

Notice He was saying to His disciples, There was a certain man, a rich man who had a steward. And the steward was reporting to him as squandering his possessions. Now, we have to stop here because we are about to embark upon a parable that's probably one of the most difficult parables to interpret from Jesus.

[12:34] It's this parable of the unrighteous steward. Now, He's not merely going to criticize the Pharisees because notice, He's speaking to His disciples. There's a shift in the audience, but not necessarily the occasion.

He's going to call them to use their money generously for others, not for self. Or here's a way to put it. So, be generous and faithful with your money.

See, how you use your money or resources displays your heart for the kingdom. Are you generous? How you use your money or your resources, it displays your heart for the kingdom.

Now, there's two figures in the story. Notice it's the wealthy man and the steward. The steward was responsible for the administration of the wealthy man's estate. He was squandering his master's stuff.

Wasting his possessions. And he, uh-oh, got caught. Verse 2. He called him and said to him, What is this I hear about you? Hello, you're fired. Oh, by the way, you're fired.

[13:50] What's this I hear? Give it accounts. So, either he kept a good record of his activity or the master heard this from others. Whatever's going on, there's a major monetary mismanagement.

Possibly wasting the master's goods. Give it accounts. You're done. Get your little box. Pack up your stuff. You're out of here. Verse 3.

The steward said to himself, What am I going to do? My master's taking the stewardship away from me. He needed a solution to be able to give himself the possibility of work from sympathetic people. What's he going to do? He needed to clean up the situation. Or he's going to have a hard, hard future. I'm too old to dig. I don't want to beg.

I know. He says, I know what I shall do so that when I am removed from the stewardship, they will receive me into their homes. He was hoping his plan would make it so that these would take him into their care or give him employment.

[14:53] He had to wrap things up real fast. So what does he do? Five through seven. Someone, one of his master's debtors, again saying, How much do you owe?

A hundred measures of oil. He said to him, Take your bill. Sit down quickly. Write 50. He said to another, How much do you owe? He said a hundred measures of wheat. He said to him, Take your

bill and write 80. Okay, what's going on here? What's happening?

First of all, Why did these people owe the master money? Okay. Well, maybe this master sold them food, or he lent them money in exchange for certain commodities.

That's possible. Or maybe he rented out land to these people. And he was paid back in produce. Wheat, olive oil.

Okay. Okay. But what is the steward altering? What's he changing for these people?

[15:52] There's three views on this. Three views. View number one. What the steward did, he lowered the price that these owed his master.

Period. Period. Guess what? You now owe this. Now, that doesn't make any sense, because then the master would say, Hey, good job. Hey, good job for losing my money.

I don't think so. That seems kind of weird. But that's the first view. He lowered the price. These owed his master. Period. A second view. He removed the interest from the debt.

So they owed this amount of money, and then there was, tacked on the interest. You know, what you're paying every month for your mortgage. You know, that nice little interest payment that makes you pay longer.

Thank you. Bank of America. So, you're paying that interest, right? Maybe that's what he cut out. And maybe the master wasn't following the law, because in the law, you're not supposed to charge interest.

[16:50] That's the second view. Now, a third view is, he cut out his commission. So, they owed the master this, and then he got this much commission, the steward.

So what he did is, he chopped off his commission. In other words, he sacrificed his own money. Now, it's not totally clear which view is, so to speak, the correct view.

The view I take personally is the third view. I think, it seems better from the context that Stuart sacrificed some now to reap huge benefits later.

But whatever view you take, what's the motive? To create appreciation for himself for what he did so that they would treat him with sympathy. That's the whole point, right?

That's what he's trying to do. So the point, the point of his action would lessen the bill of these debtors, putting himself in a good light so that when he released, fired, he would have a better chance of survival by the help of these debtors.

[17:58] Oh yeah, I remember when he did that for me. Hey, you know, you can come work for me. Or, hey, let me give you this, don't worry about it. That's what he's hoping for. But why was Stuart called unrighteous?

Well, either because of what he did in verses 5 through 7, which is possible, but I think the reason why he was called the unrighteous Stuart is because of what he did with his master in verses 1 and 2.

That's why he's called the unrighteous Stuart. Okay, let's talk about what these guys owed. So the first guy, 100 measures of oil.

That's close to 875 gallons. Roughly what about 150 olive trees would produce. That's all. It is equivalent to over three years of a salary in the first century. Yikes. So what did he do? Cut it in half and right with the debtor's hand, 50, so that the transaction looks original and legal.

[19:09] What about the second guy? 100 measures of wheat. What's that? That's between 2,500 to 3,000 denarii equal to 8 to 10 years salary in the first century.

Yikes. He reduced the bill by 20%. He cut out about 5 to 600 denarii. Now these are just two examples.

Now there probably was a number of other reductions he did with other debtors in the hope that they will return the favor to him. That's another reason why I tend to take the commission view. But the steward, he would reap significant long-term benefits from this action.

So then notice verse 8, which it seems like the first part of verse 8 still goes with the parable because his master praised the unrighteous steward. Unrighteous because of what he did in verse 1 and 2.

The unrighteous steward because he acted shrewdly, wisely, with insight. He praised him. Why? Because this normal unrighteous guy acted to benefit himself in a shrewd, clever, insightful way.

[20:24] And then notice what Jesus says in the next part of verse 8. For, now, the parable stopped now. He says, for the sons of this age are more shrewd in relation to their own kind than the sons of light.

It's the ones of this world, this age, who give more foresight to the future. They're more clever in their dealings with people than God's own people.

The sons of light. Put it another way on the screen. God's people should be shrewd with their money by being generous, by giving to others.

Shouldn't we, as God's people who have a heavenly future, be as diligent in assessing the long-term effects of our actions like those who protect their own money?

Shouldn't we? those who don't know God, those who hate God, those who want nothing to do with God, they're more diligent with their stuff from this life, their money, their possessions, their resources, with their retirements, with their business, with this, with that.

[21 : 47] They're very diligent with that stuff. And it puts us to shame. That's what Jesus is saying. They apply themselves to gain protection and prosperity in this world from their money.

Should we not apply ourselves to honor and serve Christ in this way too? We don't see the importance of investing in spiritual things and in spiritual ways as people of this world invest their money in the things of this world.

They are more shrewd. They are more prudent. They are more clever. We lack vision.

Generosity. Foresight. Strength in our relationships with each other. If only we would give more attention to our eternal relationships.

If only we would give more attention to eternal things as we do with our businesses. As we do with our IRA accounts.

[23 : 06] As we do with our savings. That's what Jesus is saying. And he goes farther.

Verse 9. And I say to you make friends for yourselves by means of the mammon of unrighteousness that when it fails they may receive you into eternal dwellings. Be generous with mammon.

What is mammon? It's the Aramaic term for wealth. Simple. What's the Aramaic term for wealth? Mammon. Riches.

That's what it means. It's not meant to be hoarded for yourself. Or used selfishly. That's why Jesus says make friends for yourself.

You should use money to make friends. And you do this by being generous with it. Use it in such a way that one is received into eternal dwellings.

[24 : 09] But why does he call it the mammon of unrighteousness? Maybe because pursuing it shows selfishness. Maybe because it causes people to take advantage of others, extort them, and be unfaithful to God.

Wealth is dangerous, isn't it not, folks? Wealth is dangerous. It keeps one's focus upon the things of this life and off of God.

But who's they? That they may receive you into the eternal...

Who's they? What seems to be a literary or an indirect way of referring to God. So in other words, Jesus is saying that God may receive you into His eternal dwellings.

So in other words, God responds with people who love others with true action. They actually give their resources to others. A true disciple of Jesus knows about the heavenly reward and He responds positively.

[25 : 13] It's not the passage that He speaks about making purses for yourselves that are not about here, but about eternal purses.

The one who is generous with their money will be rewarded by God. That's what Jesus is saying.

And by the way, we're not necessarily talking about those who stand in the street corner with a sign and giving money to them.

I'm not necessarily talking about that. I read a study online about the people who stand out there with a sign. On average, they make about ten bucks an hour.

On average. We're not talking necessarily about these people. Because it begs the context, begs a relationship with the person you're giving the resources to. And it's not just on a whim.

you're making friends for yourselves, you're being generous, so that when it fails, when what fails? Money!

[26 : 19] Money can, does, and will run out. You know what it's like. You get paid, hey, all those bills come in, easy come, easy go, right, there it goes.

But, what way? That's what happens. Money runs out. So you better be prepared. When it does run out, it doesn't last.

So instead of relying on money, put it into beneficial use. Use your money in a way that it pleases God and serves Him by serving others.

God is watching over how we use what He's given to us. Shouldn't we invest in the lives of others by giving to them? Shouldn't we be sensitive to use our resources that God has given in ways that are pleasing to Him by giving to others?

Shouldn't we? Give your money generously to further the gospel.

[27 : 36] If we don't, then we are not making proper use of what God has given us. Use your possessions to gain eternal friends. Devote your belongings.

Devote your house. Devote your car. Devote your stuff. Give it away. Give it away. One writer says this, one day our most precious things will fit in a hospital drawer.

It will. I've seen it happen dozens of times. The person was this and this and that and this and that. And then what's left? There's a couple bags right there of what's left over of that.

He goes farther. Verse 10. He was faithful in little things, faithful also in much. He was unrighteous in very little things, unrighteous also in much. If therefore you've been faithful, not been faithful in the use of unrighteous in ammin, who will entrust the true riches to you?

And if you've not been faithful in the use of that which is in others, who will give you that which is your own? Jesus is saying, don't just be generous with your money, be faithful with it.

[28 : 57] And the stewardship of God has called you. You are who you are, whether it's in little things or big things. You are who you are. Your activities matter because they reveal the nature of your character.

What's important to you? If you're selfish in little things, you're selfish in big things. If you are generous and giving in little things, you will be generous in giving in big things.

There's no way around it. money. If a person is a poor steward of money, that's the little thing. Then they will not be entrusted to spiritual riches.

That's the bigger thing. That's the more valuable. That's the vital thing. Do you get what Jesus is saying? He's basically saying money is, ah, ah, exactly, ah.

what's money? It's just a little thing. If you can't be generous and faithful in just a little thing like money, how will you be faithful in the big things like spiritual things?

[30 : 07] That's why he gives the two examples in 11 and 12. If you cannot handle money, who will let you manage greater riches? There are greater things than money in this world. Oh, did he just say that?

Yes, there are greater things than money in this world. If you're faithful in the small thing like money, then it will show you're ready to handle more important things, the eternal things, the true riches, the true things which are the future service in God's kingdom.

God gives these true riches as a future reward for those who show faithful service. But if you cannot care for someone else's stuff, who would give you that which is your own?

If you can't care for things when there's no risk, why give things that bear true risk and importance? Someone else's things, I'm not taking care of someone else's things.

Wrong. You are. You own nothing. God owns everything that you have, even your very life. You own nothing.

[31 : 17] You own nothing. God has given it to you and you are a steward of his and if you can't care for that, what makes you think he's going to give you something that's just your own?

If you can't care for things that are of no risk. In other words, what do I mean by that? the resources, the money of this world, that's not true risk.

Spiritual things are a true risk. Now, if you are an investor here this morning, you're probably about to pull your hair out. I can't believe you said that. Are you crazy? The stock market, that's not real risk.

if you can't care for what God has given you in this life, how can you expect anything from Him in the life to come?

How? If you can't exercise proper care over something entrusted to you, you will not be given true wealth of your own in the life to come. We are unfit to use heavenly true riches if we are bad stewards.

[32 : 33] Not shrewd, unwise, stupid. This life is a God given stewardship.

And you're responsible for it. So am I. In short, one writer puts it like this, quote, be faithful now so that one may be given greater responsibility in the life to come.

Or just put it in just one, two, three, four, four words, be faithful to give. Give. What does God value? You generously give your money, your resources. You're just giving. That's what God values. what's the second thing?

Number two, serve God, not money or self. That's verse 13. That's it. Just verse 13. No servant can serve two masters. Either you hate the one, love the other, hold to one, despise the other.

[33:39] You cannot serve God in money. Look, it all comes down to this. Money cannot be your ultimate priority. What will be your priority? what's most important to you?

What's most important to you? That's what you do. That's what you spend your time on. You spend your money on. You devote yourself to what's most important to you.

What is it? Who is it? You can't serve God and money at the same time. You will love one and hate the other. If you pursue money, God will be slighted.

If we pursue God, our pursuit of money will be slighted. You can't do both. It all comes down to this. Money cannot be your ultimate focus. And if money is not your ultimate focus, what are you going to do with it? You're going to give. You're going to be generous and just give.

[34:46] So, one way you know you choose God over money, you're generous with your money. That's how it goes along with the context.

We serve God by putting our resources to use toward others, not self. There is a definite relationship between money and service. Do you serve others with your money?

Do you give? This is for free. my father-in-law would sell shares in his company.

He sold shares in his company and he supported us as a family through seminary. That's giving.

He could have taken those shares and the shares that were going up they were doing well as a company. And he was a director in this company making disk drives. That's what he invested in us.

[35:45] He gave that to us. He supported us for three and a half years in that. To this day I appreciate that.

Life is stewardship from God so be prudent and use your money generously by giving toward others. God reward you in the life to come. What you do with little things is what you will do with big things and it shows you are truly serving God.

We must make the choice. Serve God or money. If you choose to serve God through Jesus then you will be generous to give.

A true disciple will look ahead and be shrewd with how he gives to others. You are ready to give.

What is the motivation? What is the reason why we give?

Jesus doesn't talk about this. What is the motivation why we give though? Because God gave himself. The Father gave his son for sinners. Right?

[36:53] I mean we should be sentenced to hell. We deserve nothing from God. He owes us nothing. We should be sentenced to hell because we are sinners. We have broken his law.

We violated his commands. And yet he sent he gave his only son. Right? He lived and he died and he rose.

He did that for all those who turn away from their sin and put all their trust, all their hope, all their everything in Jesus. If you're here this morning and you're not a Christian, you must make the choice.

Either you will serve God by trusting in Jesus alone for your salvation or you will reject him. Come to the Savior. Turn from your sin and place your trust in Jesus.

Repent. He's given to you. Christian, we believe God is sovereign, don't we?

[37:58] Except in my money. God, you're sovereign in everything but in my money. You're sovereign in everything but in my bank account. Do you want to possess the future riches God has for you?

Then use money wisely, generously, and faithfully. How do you spend your money? I don't like talking about money.

I really don't. As a matter of fact, things can change in the future, but I don't ever want to do a series on giving. Ever. I don't ever want to do that.

I know pastors do that and I just think that's rude. I just don't ever want to do that. But as it comes up in the text, I need to deal with it. And I have to give you practical applications to this. So I ask you, how much do you give to this church?

5%? 10%? 15%? 20%? Now it's not necessarily about percentage, but your priorities. Being gracious and generous with your money, with your possessions, with your time.

[39:04] Members, I'm talking to you. Should you give more? Part of our church covenant that we read at least once a quarter, it says this, by contributing cheerfully and regularly to the spread of the gospel to all people groups, the expenses of this church and the ministry as a whole.

That's a major way that we give. Not merely this church, but here and beyond that. Our use of our money and our spiritual walk go hand in hand.

They're bound together. If you're weak spiritually, it's probably because you hoard your money. If you're spiritually strong, it will show in how you give.

You're going to give, you're not going to care if it's going to be back to you, you're going to give, and that shows there's some spiritual maturity in your life. One writer puts it like this, quote, our giving must be matched by the sharing of all we have for the well-being and refreshment of God's people and the proclamation of the gospel, end quote.

Shouldn't our community see this about us? God as members of God more than our stuff, than our money? That we are generously giving to each other and caring for each other?

[40:30] That our God truly satisfies us? Not our money, not our possessions, not our belongings. God satisfies us. Hallelujah, He has found me, whom my soul so long has craved.

Jesus satisfies my longings, so I'm just going to give because He's given to me. Shouldn't our community see that about us? Or do they see us doing this?

Hoarding our money. Giving generously. Serving God, not money, or self. Here's number three.

Last one. Have integrity, or honor your commitments made to God and others. This is where we embark upon the marriage part, because intertwines.

The Pharisees in verse 14 were lovers of money, and they scoffed at Jesus. The word means they turned their noses up to Him. They rejected His teaching. So how does this fit in with the previous section?

[41:35] Because Jesus taught them stewardship. But the Pharisees scoffed Him because they loved money. But notice what Jesus says in verse 15. He said to them, you are those who justify yourselves inside of men, but God knows your hearts.

He condemned their pride. He knew their heart. They really did not abide by the law, else they would have embraced the teaching by Jesus from their heart.

See, have integrity, honor, commitments made to God. God calls all people to become a part of his kingdom, and he starts with the heart. The first, he scoffed at Jesus.

They thought they really understood the law. Oh, we know the law. That's right. They didn't understand the law. That the law promised the kingdom to come, and that his person is accountable to God, how they respond to him, how they treat others.

The fact that the kingdom has come, though, it doesn't mean there's a change to moral standards before God and people. The new era calls for righteous living. The promise has arrived to be faithful.

[42:49] See, those who want to be part of the kingdom, they must renounce any divided loyalties, be willing to have their idolatries revealed, and have the standard of obedience raised even higher.

You want to be a part of God's kingdom? This is what it means. God starts there.

And who is the one who reveals this kingdom? But Jesus himself. The authority of this kingdom, it's always authority. He enlightens people the way to find God. The promises contained in the law have been fulfilled by his coming.

And now there's an urgent call for people to come. And how authoritative is Jesus' word about the kingdom? He proclaims God's standard for people in the most personal aspect of their lives, money and marriage.

This is what following Jesus involves. This is what it means. But the power to achieve transformation of the heart is not found in the law, but entry into the kingdom through Jesus.

[44:01] He must be the focus, and He is. The message of God's kingdom must be preached with urgency because its fulfillment has come with the coming of Jesus, but the law has a lasting role.

We will see that in a moment. There's a call to righteous living in the way we spend our money and the way we deal with our marriage. In short, one is called to maintain integrity and their promises to God and others.

Be faithful with money, and in your marriage. We started reading verse 15. The first we were scoffing in verse 14, 15. Jesus says you are those who justify yourselves in the sight of men.

See, they justify themselves before people. But see, what God thinks counts more than people. God knows your heart for that which is highly esteemed among men is detestable in the sight of God.

What people see, oh, wow, look at the Pharisee, oh, he's so holy, he's doing this and that. God truly hates it. The word actually means stinks.

[45 : 11] It's detestable. You know, like when you open the fridge, you're like, oh, my goodness, there's something in here that's, oh, oh, my, oh, there's something in here that's bad. You ever had that happen? Oh, my. And you just close that fridge and say, oh, sweetie, can you take care of this, honey?

No, sure, let's go, oh, my goodness, what in the world? Right? It stinks, it's detestable. That's what God sees. He searches the heart and he hates pride and the exaltation of self.

And that's what they were doing. They outwardly justify themselves before people, but God is concerned with the state of the heart.

He saw right through them. What people esteem and hold high, God truly hates. And then Jesus says this in verse 16, the law of the prophets until John, since in the gospel of the kingdom is preached, the gospel of the kingdom of God is preached and everyone is forcing his way into it. What is he talking about here? This law which the Pharisees pride of themselves and knowing and following, there's two parts to it, two parts in God's plan, promise and fulfillment.

[46 : 18] And why mention John the Baptist? Because John the Baptist had one foot in each era. He was part of the old, the promise, but also pointing to the new.

Actually, he kind of did this. Kind of putting his foot down there. He was pointing to Jesus. He was the fulfillment of the law. He was the end of the promise part.

With Jesus coming, there's a new era now. This distant promise is now. It's here. It's arrived. The kingdom of God is here. Now there's new realities, new authority, and it all rests, it's all based, it's all focused upon Jesus.

God, the Father's eternal Son, it's all about Him, it's all revolving around Jesus. Life does not revolve around you, it revolves around Jesus. But what does this part mean when he says in verse 16, everyone is forcing his way into it?

What does that mean? Maybe a better translation would be this. All are urged insistently to come in. That fits better with the context.

[47 : 28] All are urged, they're urgently urged to come in. Jesus was warning his disciples and his opponents. Why? He was calling them to respond to him.

The risk is great. Listen to me, he says. God calls all to share in the good news of his kingdom which is wrapped up in his son.

Don't scoff at him. Embrace him. Respond positively to him. Don't mock him. The kingdom calls for us to submit both of these very personal aspects of our lives, items to God, money and marriage, and those who scoff at the kingdom, they are those who scoff at what is most precious to them, money and marriage.

And then is verse 17. The kingdom has come, the time of the law and the prophets has passed because the promises have been fulfilled. Does the law cease in its function?

It is easier for heaven and earth to pass away than for one stroke of a letter of the law to fail. No way. smallest little stroke, maybe it's the yod in the Hebrew language.

[48 : 46] It looks like this, like a little niche. That will not pass away. All of it will be fulfilled in Christ. Creations were likely to pass away than God's law.

Money fails, not God's law. The smallest part of it will not pass away because why? The law, it points to Jesus.

He's the fulfillment of the law and he transforms us. The law screams at you, it's not me, the law says, it's not me, it's Jesus.

The law does this. It keeps doing this, why? Because the law will condemn you. The goal of the law is Jesus.

It points to Jesus and his work on the cross. Its authority is expressed through him, says one writer. If so, if the Pharisees, if they're going to keep the law, guess what?

[49 : 46] They must embrace Jesus. Oh my goodness, we're not going to do that. Well, that's a problem there, fella. They must respond positively to Jesus and adhere to his teaching because he presents the message of God's rule.

He's the one that's the focus. This is really a statement about Jesus' authority. And notice, he spoke with authority about money.

This is how you use your money. This is how you deal with your possessions. This is how you deal with your resources. This is how you deal with your wallet. The most personal aspect of people's lives, they don't like it when the message has to do with money.

Oh, talk about this, talk about that. Don't even talk about my money. Don't touch that area. What Jesus just did. And he touches something else. Marriage. What's another example of his authoritative teaching?

What's one aspect where the Pharisees minimized God's law? Not just money, but marriage.

Everyone who divorces his wife and marries another commits adultery.

[50:52] And he marries one who is divorced from a husband commits adultery. I mean, so you think, why in the world does he say this out of the blue? Did you think that? I thought that when I read that. I'm like, what does this have to do with money?

Well, it has a lot to do with it because it's personal. Jesus gets really personal. Not just about money, but marriage. Another aspect of everyday life where righteousness still brings in a high standard of ethics.

What's the essence of righteousness? Integrity. To violate a promise made to God is the essence of sin. To live in the kingdom, you must keep your commitments to God and others.

What is the most personal commitment people make to each other? This marriage. See, it's not just keeping some external code, like the Pharisees did.

It's deep. It's personal. It starts from the heart and deals with the topic of money sex. Understand, the rabbis, they had two different schools.

[52:06] This is what they were taught. The first rabbinic school, which is the Hillel's, they taught about divorce, and they say you can divorce somebody for any reason. Oh, you burnt my food, get out of here.

I don't like that dress on you, get out of here. That's literally, I mean, if the wife burned the food, he can divorce her. That's what they taught. That's Hillel. Now, the other rabbinic school was Shammai.

They said the only grounds for divorce was immorality. Jesus, there's none. As a matter of fact, not just divorce, but also remarriage, covering both possibilities, one who divorces and one who remarries someone who has been divorced.

Ouch. Jesus' teaching has moral authority. He is the ethicist for the kingdom of God. God. As far as Jesus was concerned, marriage is permanent because it's a vow, a three-way covenant between God, the husband, and the wife.

If you take the vow of marriage, you will keep it if you are a kingdom follower, or at least you should. See, Jesus' authority went way beyond Moses' exception, Deuteronomy 18.

[53:21] See, the Pharisees, Moses gave us an exception, it's just okay. The reason why Moses did that in Deuteronomy 18 is because of the hardness of the heart. Because people are evil, and they do it anyways.

No. In God's kingdom, righteousness hates divorce. There's no other way. Marriage is lifelong. And see what that does?

When you start talking about money, and when you start talking about marriage, people go, right? Because now you're getting personal, aren't you? Now you're dealing with my life, you better knock it off.

You better back off, man, right? Right? Jesus gets personal. He gets really personal. If you want to be a follower of Jesus, you must value what God values.

What does he value? you give you generously with your money. You serve God, not money or self. And third, you honor your commitments made to God and others.

[54:30] You have integrity. I'm going to ask you to take some time to think and ponder what we've seen in God's Word. Just a moment. I want to end on this note.

The end of this year, Bob and Mary Lou Scarbell, they're going to celebrate 50 years?

I think it's 60 years? 60 years. They've been married for 60 years. Wow. Some people have been alive.

My in-laws, they're going to celebrate 50 years in February. They've been married for 50 years. See, when we become followers, we value what God values.

We value what God values. In these most personal aspects of your life, money, marriage. Take a few moments. Let's have some silence.

[55 : 32] Think and ponder what we've seen in God's Word in these 18 verses of Luke 16. Take a few moments and then we'll have our time of giving, sing our last two songs, and then I'll do our closing prayer.

Think and ponder what we've seen in God's Word. Amen.