

That You May Know The Certainty

LESSON 17: JESUS'S JOURNEY TO JERUSALEM, PART 7 (LUKE 16:14-17:19)

Jesus answered the complaints of the Pharisees and scribes about Him welcoming and eating with sinners by teaching three parables (Luke 15:1-32). Following this, He taught His disciples about shrewdness and properly dealing with worldly wealth (Luke 16:1-13). Now, Jesus continues teaching in this same context.

JESUS RESPONDS TO THE PHARISEES (LUKE 16:14-18)

16:14-18. The Pharisees heard Jesus teach and scoffed at (ridiculed) Him since they were lovers of money (covetous). However, Jesus said that although they made themselves look good in the eyes of people, God knew their hearts and saw them as revolting (Matthew 23:1-36)! Next, Jesus taught how John the Baptist marked a transition away from the Mosaic Law. Although they still lived under the Law (Luke 7:28; Matthew 5:17-18; Colossians 2:14), John began preaching concerning the kingdom of God (Matthew 3:1-2) and preparing people for the Messiah (Matthew 3:3). Now, people were being urged to press into the kingdom (which they were being prepared to enter). Thus, not even the smallest part of the Law would fail; but all would be fulfilled (Matthew 5:17-18). Finally, Jesus taught that divorce and remarriage results in adultery (the exception of sexual immorality is given elsewhere, Matthew 5:31-32; 19:1-12). Everyone who is remarried after divorce for reasons other than this commits adultery.

THE RICH MAN AND LAZARUS (LUKE 16:19-31)

16:19-26. As Jesus taught about the failure of worldly wealth, He taught (either a true story or a parable) about a rich man and poor beggar (named Lazarus, which means "God has helped"). The rich man dressed in expensive and luxurious clothing and feasted lavishly (enjoying himself with food). In contrast, Lazarus was covered with sores, was full of misery, was laid at the rich man's gate (to his home), and desperately desired the food (crumbs) that fell from the rich man's table. Yet, the only comfort he received was from dogs coming by to lick his sores. Despite the differences in how they lived, they both died. The poor man was carried away by the angels to

Abraham's side (depicting the care given to God's righteous people; this appears to be the "Paradise" Jesus refers to in Luke 23:43; in Hades, Acts 2:27, 31). He had apparently lived in a way that pleased God and was comforted in this place after death. However, the rich man found himself in torment in Hades (the realm of the dead) after he died. He could see, hear, speak, think, and feel. Everything, though, was an agonizing experience in the flame, with no relief being given (not even a drop of water). However, he could see that Lazarus was being comforted. Then, there was a great chasm that separated the two sections of Hades so neither could cross over to the other. This passage helps to recognize what people experience after death and that worldly wealth (used selfishly) will not result in good things after death.

16:27-31. After pleading for his own comfort and receiving none, the rich man turned his attention to his five brothers who were still alive. He did not want them to come to the same torment in Hades. Evidently, his brothers were living the same kind of life he had lived that resulted in him coming to this place. He believed that if they saw Lazarus risen from the dead (likely in his now glorified state), they would repent. However, Abraham told the rich man that they had Moses and the prophets to listen to (which would keep them from that place). Then, Abraham said that the testimony of Scripture is even more powerful than seeing one who had risen from the dead, indicating the great power of God's word!

MORE TEACHING FOR JESUS'S DISCIPLES (LUKE 17:1-10)

17:1-4. Jesus now addresses His disciples and warns them about traps (offenses, temptations, stumbling blocks) that would be used to kill people spiritually (1 Peter 5:8-9; 2 Timothy 2:24-26). Particularly, Jesus pronounces a woe to the person who Satan would use to set these traps for others (e.g. the Pharisees). So, if any little one (likely a reference to anyone who heard and wanted to follow Jesus; perhaps particularly to one who is young in the faith) was influenced to stumble due to these traps, it would be better for a millstone (large stone used in grinding grain) to be hung around the neck of the offender and thrown into the sea than experience the punishment God would give him (i.e. in Hell)! Then, Jesus addressed how to respond if someone sins against you. You must (with love and gentleness, Galatians 6:1) rebuke the one for the sin by identifying the sin and warning of its wrong. If that one repents (turns from the sin), you must forgive such a one as God forgives you (Matthew 6:14-

15; Ephesians 4:32) – even if that happens seven times in the same day (Matthew 18:15-35)!

17:5-10. The apostles (having heard Jesus’s challenging teachings) asked Jesus to increase their faith (perhaps to do all that Jesus was teaching). Note that faith comes from and is increased through God’s word (Romans 10:17). Jesus indicates how even a small amount of faith can do powerful things in God’s service (using the concept of a mustard-seed-sized faith obeying you to uproot a mulberry tree with its extensive root system and throw it into the sea). Likewise, even a small amount of true faith will obey whatever God requires (James 2:14-26). Next, Jesus demonstrates faithfulness in the duties of service to God. He teaches a parable concerning a servant doing his duty (tending sheep, plowing, and waiting on the master before eating and drinking himself) and deserving no thanks because he simply did his duty. Similarly, doing what God commands of you does not make God indebted to you. Instead, you are still an undeserving servant (undeserving of salvation, Ephesians 2:8-9) who has simply done your duty!

JESUS HEALS TEN LEPERS (LUKE 17:11-19)

17:11-19. Jesus continues His travels from place to place (Luke 10:1; 13:22), ultimately heading toward Jerusalem (Luke 9:51). In one village, ten men with leprosy met Him. As contact with lepers was restricted for non-lepers (Leviticus 13:45-46; Numbers 5:2), they stood at a distance and pleaded for Jesus’s mercy. Perhaps they had heard of Jesus’s power to heal (Luke 5:12-15). Jesus told them to go and show themselves to the priests (who would judge if they were clean and could return to society, Leviticus 14:1-32). Upon obeying Jesus, they were cleansed along the way! When one of them (a Samaritan) saw he was healed, he returned and glorified God in a loud voice, falling facedown before Jesus, and thanking Him. Jesus recognized this Samaritan (viewed with contempt by Jews) was the only one of the ten who returned. Then, Jesus said this man should get up and go on his way because His faith had saved Him.

CONCLUSION

Jesus has taught the Pharisees and His disciples some important lessons. We have also seen Jesus work the miraculous healing of ten lepers. As the time for Jesus to arrive in Jerusalem was nearing, He continued to travel through various towns and villages.

DISCIPLESHIP QUESTIONS

What did Jesus teach the Pharisees?

What does the story of the rich man and Lazarus teach about what happens after death?

What does the story of the rich man and Lazarus teach about the value of worldly wealth?

What does the story of the rich man and Lazarus teach about the power of God’s word?

How did Jesus warn those who would cause offenses?

How did Jesus teach people to respond when someone sins against them?

What is the power of faith in obeying God?

What was commendable about one of the ten lepers Jesus healed?

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