

**Home : Sermons : October 8, 2006****A Voice from Hades – Luke 16:14-31**

**Introduction** – The Pharisees do not like what Jesus is saying and they deride Him; and they will again when He is hanging on the cross (Luke 23:35, fulfilling Psalm 22:7). When the Pharisees deride Him openly, Jesus rebukes them openly and directly. Responding to their mockery, Jesus reveals that their rejection of Him is playing right into God's hands, just as had been prophesied. The wicked will never succeed in mocking God (Gal 6:7).

**The Inescapable Pressure of the Kingdom Coming** (vv14-18) – The Pharisees try to make themselves look righteous before God, but they are in fact abominable, lovers of money, and hypocrites. God hates externalism; a religion of outward words and actions done to justify oneself before men when the heart is far from God (Matt 15:1-9, 1 Sam 16:7).

**They Thought the Law and Moses Were with Them** (vv16-17) – The Pharisees thought they had the Law and Moses on their side, and Jesus derails this notion. The kingdom has come and “*everyone is pressing into it*,” or possibly, “*everyone is being pressed into it*” for the nature of the kingdom is that it is going everywhere, affecting everything. The Law and the Prophets find their fulfillment in this coming Kingdom, this new heaven and earth (Isaiah 40:8, 65:17-25). Jesus did not come to annul the law, but to fulfill it (Matt 5:17-20); it is the Pharisees who are actually twisting the law.

**A Contemporary Example (Then and Today – v18)** – The casual divorce laws practiced in Jesus' day were based on some Pharisees' interpretation of scripture (Deut 24:1-4), or so they said. Jesus is countering here that their application of the law revealed their hearts which were abominable in the sight of God.

**The Inescapable Judgment from Rejecting the Kingdom and its King** (vv19-31) – This parable which Jesus spoke at this particular dinner is recorded by Luke after Jesus had raised another Lazarus from the dead; and of course after Jesus had risen from the dead, which proves the point Jesus makes at the end of the parable. The parable obviously is to warn the Pharisees and anyone else who mocks Jesus and His kingdom, the kind of people who justify themselves before men.

**Relationship of Doctrine to Life** – The rich man is a man of self-indulgence, luxury, hedonism, and self-justification. Ultimately, he is a man who believes he will not have to answer to Jesus (whom the Pharisees just mocked). There is a horrible doctrine which teaches that God is irrelevant for most of 'real' life. Believers and unbelievers, they say, both get good jobs, study and teach at universities, have kids, take vacations, retire and get by just fine – sprinkle whatever religion you would like over the top. This doctrine, taught in our public temples (Darwinism, Socialism, secular-humanism, neutral-relativism) is dangerous to the soul and straight from the pit of hell.

**Eschatological Reversal** – Luke has been touching on this reversal (Luke 1:53, 6:20, 24f, 12:16-21) over and over again. The rich and privileged must hear this warning (and we are rich and privileged): It is hard for a rich man to enter the kingdom of heaven (James 5:1-5, 1 Tim 6:17-19).

**The Futility of Excuse Making** – The rich man still calls out to Abraham as “Father,” even though Abraham is not his father. He still looks down on Lazarus, summoning him to cool his tongue. He still blames God for not making the teachings of Moses and the Prophets clear enough. He claims that if God were to do some miracles, even send someone from the dead, certainly the people would listen. Notice carefully: even in Hades, there is no repentance. There remains the self-justifying excuse making because the sinful nature is not removed. Then however, there will only be torment.

**The Unalterable Eternal Destination of Man** – Look at what happens in this parable. There is no second chance once death has come (Heb 9:27). The description here and throughout the teachings of Jesus speak of an eternal judgment of torment for all those who die without Christ. If hell is not a literal lake of fire, the images used by Christ teach us that it will be greater, not less than, the picture.

**The Sufficiency of the Word of God** – This chapter ends on a very sober note. A holy fear of God, of His holiness,

and of eternal judgment was not very fashionable then, nor is it today. Upon what must we rest? Upon Christ, His Word, His promises, His righteousness, and His Spirit (1 John 5:1-5). Christ preached a new kingdom, a new heaven and earth were being created – a new age. If Christ crucified does not persuade you, nothing will. *“And the kingdom of God has been preached and everyone is pressing into it.”*

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