**Luke 16-17 – Warnings about Wealth, Discipleship, and the Coming Kingdom**

*16:1-9: Proper use of wealth*

Jesus praised the dishonest manager for his shrewdness in the ways of this world. Just has he used his position to gain a comfortable “retirement,” so we are to make use of our material wealth or possessions to make friends in the Kingdom of God instead of in this world. The “children of light” are not to let themselves be taken advantage of by the more clever “children of this world.”

*16:10-18: Faithfulness, wealth, and the Law*

Faithfulness with “unjust wealth” (which is a very small thing according to Jesus) is to be interpreted in the light of all of the things Jesus and John the Baptist has said about money to this point.

"Fear not, little flock, for it is your Father's good pleasure to give you the kingdom. Sell your possessions, and give to the needy. Provide yourselves with moneybags that do not grow old, with a treasure in the heavens that does not fail, where no thief approaches and no moth destroys. For where your treasure is, there will your heart be also. – Luke 12:32-34

“But when you give a feast, invite the poor, the crippled, the lame, the blind, and you will be blessed, because they cannot repay you. For you will be repaid at the resurrection of the just."  
– Luke 14:13-14

And the crowds asked him, "What then shall we do?" And he answered them, "Whoever has two tunics is to share with him who has none, and whoever has food is to do likewise."   
– John the Baptist, Luke 3:10-11

Divided loyalty to materialism and God is not possible. We must choose one or the other. Those who love money will try to justify themselves, as did the Pharisees, but God is not fooled. God does not necessarily agree with our values. The Law, which is the foundation of the Pharisees’ claim to greatness is permanent, but it is being supplemented (?) by the Kingdom of God, which everyone wants in. The implication is that not everyone gets in and that external obedience to the Law doesn’t cut it.

Luke inserts a random bit of legal interpretation on adultery in the context of divorce. Presumably he thought it was important and didn’t know where else to fit it in.

*16:19-31: The rich man and Lazarus*

The parable is an application of the beatitude: “Blessed are you who are poor, for yours is the kingdom of God” (Luke 6:20). In the age to come, those who have the benefits of this world will suffer, while those who did not will receive comfort in “Abraham’s bosom.” This is a parable, and does not teach specific details about heaven or hell. It makes two points:   
 1. Taking your comfort in this life is hazardous to your life in the next, and   
 2. Miracles (even resurrection from the dead) will not persuade people to repent.

*17:1-10 – stumbling blocks, forgiveness, faith, and worthiness (or not)*

This is a miscellany of instructions of Jesus on discipleship.

1. Don’t be a stumbling block, especially to the “little ones.” It is a terrible thing to do. This is a severe warning to anyone who would abuse a child.
2. Forgive as many times as necessary without attempting to discern the sincerity of the offender’s repentance.
3. You don’t need more faith. A tiny smidgen is enough.
4. Don’t expect to receive praise for being obedient. Even with obedient, we are just worthless slaves who have only done what we were told. You can’t be a Christian and get a big ego about being a good Christian. (But see Luke 12:37, where the master will reward his faithful servants by serving them. “Blessed are those servants whom the master finds awake when he comes. Truly, I say to you, he will dress himself for service and have them recline at table, and he will come and serve them.”)

*17:11-19: Jesus in Samaria on the way to Jerusalem*

10 lepers are healed; only the Samaritan “foreigner,” who returns to give glory to God was saved. This is a further sign of the extension of the Kingdom of God from Jerusalem to Judea, Samaria, and the whole world (Acts 1:7).

*17:20-37: The coming of the Kingdom and the Son of Man*

The Kingdom is not visible, but it is internal - within us, not an external thing that can be observed. (The word sometimes translated “among” should be “within.”) Jesus did not mean that it was within the Pharisees as a spiritual, subjective reality. He meant that the Kingdom is present already; it is not future; and it is available to those who will receive it. It is not imposed by external force like other kingdoms are.

No matter how much you want to see the arrival of “the days of the Son of Man,” don’t be fooled. When His days come, it will be days of judgment and destruction from which we are advised to flee. It will be as obvious as a lightning strike that lights up the whole sky. People will be minding their own business, going about normal life (eating, drinking, buying, selling, planting, building) when suddenly He will come. All will be participating in daily life, but He will “take” some – His disciples – and others will be left to face judgment. (The reference to vultures gathering around a corpse is a gruesome reminder of the terrors to come.) We are to be busy with daily life until He comes. But when He comes we must be ready.

But before He can receive His Kingdom, Jesus must suffer and be rejected (vs. 25). This is His example to us when we suffer and are rejected. We should not expect the world of this age to accept those who truly follow Jesus. "Blessed are you when people hate you and when they exclude you and revile you and spurn your name as evil, on account of the Son of Man! Rejoice in that day, and leap for joy, for behold, your reward is great in heaven; for so their fathers did to the prophets” (Luke 6:22-23).