

The DAILY JESUS NEWS #212

Jesus' Ministry in Perea

The Pharisees Respond to Jesus' Parable of the Shrewd Manager (#212)

LK 16.14-18

14 The Pharisees, who loved money, heard all this and were mocking Jesus. 15 He said to them,

"You are the ones who are presenting yourselves as 'the righteous' in the eyes of others, but God knows your hearts. What people value highly is detestable in God's sight.

16 "The Law and the Prophets were proclaimed until John. Since that time, the good news of the kingdom of God is being preached, and everyone is forcing their way into it. 17 It is easier for heaven and earth to disappear than for the smallest stroke of a pen to drop out of the Law.

18 "Anyone who divorces his wife and marries another woman commits adultery, and the man who marries a divorced woman commits adultery.

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NOTE: We use superscript identification of the source gospel in "blended texts" as follows: Matthew = ^{MT}, Mark = ^M, Luke = ^L, John = ^J, Acts = ^A. This "superscript ID" is inserted at the beginning of the quoted text, identifying that Bible book until a different superscript appears. In addition, *red italics identify the words of Jesus*. Old Testament quotations are CAPITALIZED.

	CONTEXT DIGEST
Location	Somewhere in Perea
Timeline	January or February (Months 36 & 37)
Jesus' Life Context	Stage VII: Jesus' Ministry in Perea
	A. Jesus' Ministers Throughout Perea
Title	11. The Pharisees Respond to Jesus' Parable of the Shrewd Manager

COMMENT:

Today's reading reminds us that Jesus taught his disciples publicly, in the sight and hearing of other people, including the Pharisees--his avowed enemies. This was true during his days on the road traveling through the towns and villages of Galilee, Judea, and now Perea- and it was his practice when ministering in the Temple in Jerusalem as well.

This would become an issue in Jesus' trial in a couple of months. He had nothing to hide from anybody, and feared nobody. Jesus could do this because he always spoke the truth, in love.

The Pharisees were making fun of Jesus for his parable of the Shrewd Manager, and teaching on faithfulness that followed it. They loved money, and thought they were serving God by doing so. Jesus told them the truth. Their love of money was detestable in God's sight.

Because God's ways and human thinking are so different, most things that people value highly, such as wealth, are detestable in God's eyes. Conversely, the things that God values highly are disdained by sinful people. Jesus pointed out two specific examples of the chasm separating God's thoughts and the Pharisees.

The first area was the gospel itself. The Torah and the Prophets were proclaimed until John the Immerser announced the coming of the Kingdom. Jesus proclaimed the good news of the reign of God in himself, and

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invited sinful people to repent and enter into a right relationship with God through faith in him. The new covenant did not contradict the Law and Prophets; it fulfilled them.

This "good news of the kingdom" was exceedingly precious to God, but was treated as garbage by the Pharisees, who mocked and ridiculed Jesus for proclaiming it. A deep chasm separated God and man regarding the value of the good news.

Secondly, Jesus contrasted the thinking of God about divorce, and the approach of the Pharisees. They believed that there was nothing inherently wrong with divorce on any grounds, as long as the legal paperwork was handled properly. It was all about following the letter of the divorce law properly. Divorce was a perfectly good thing in their eyes.

Jesus said that God considered divorce to be an adulterous action. It was detestable to him. Jesus' brief word about it here was so shocking to the Pharisees that they would soon come back to him for a much fuller confrontation on the subject.

Jesus' point that sinful human thinking and God's thoughts are in consistent, mutually exclusive conflict is sobering. So many things that we take for granted as being normal and acceptable behavior or attitudes are actually detestable to the God we love and serve. This is because God is holy--a being of perfect love, and infinite goodness--and we are self-centered and limited in our capacities.

This teaching of Jesus underscores our need to constantly adjust everything we think and do to him, for he alone is the visible image of the invisible nature of God.

APPLICATION:

We all begin our relationship with Jesus in a state of being totally different from him in everything. The more we get to know him, the more we discover what is of true value and infinite worth in him, which we ought to esteem most highly. At the same time, we should constantly uncover what is actually detestable in his sight within us, too. It can be no other way, for God's thoughts and ways are totally different from our own.

The journey of adjusting everything to Jesus is a continual process of finding new treasure in him, and what is detestable in us. As we adjust to him, our filth is removed, and the riches of who HE is lives in us in ever greater measure.

Discipleship is therefore the process of throwing out garbage in order to gain gold. It is grace constantly replacing grace.

What "detestable" attitude, habit, or way of thinking is Jesus calling you to throw away in order to follow him right now?

What kind of gold is he offering you in exchange for getting rid of that garbage?

How and when will you get that done?