

Luke 16:14-31

Will You Be In Or Out?

Image Church // The Gospel of Luke: Inverted Kingdom Wk. 26

Community Group Commissioning

What an incredible story about a really special couple, *who happen to be my Community Group leaders!*

One of our core values here at Image Church is **Family** because the bible shows us on a very foundational level that this is what the church is, a family, *the church isn't an event that you attend, but a group of people that you're a part of that together make up the body of Christ- tangibly displaying Jesus to the world.*

Community Groups are a big deal here at Image Church- they're one of the primary ways we live out what it means to be the church...

Community Groups are the place where life on life relationships happen being faithful to the 59 one-another commands laid out in the NT, it's the place where discipleship happens, it's where love care and service happen- CG's are also the way that we engage missionally around the city...

All of our groups are location based for the purpose of being able to faithfully live these things out within the communities where people are located...

As I have with me here all of our CG leaders- and if you're a Co-leaders would you stand for just a second... I want to celebrate these leaders and all that they do to lead the way in mission and discipleship! *Can we put out hands together for them!*

This is not an easy job- and so we are so grateful for the sacrifice and service of our leaders!

This weekend is a special weekend where we honor them and we celebrate them- and it's also a weekend where we get to celebrate the multiplication of these groups...

We have 2 new groups that are launching this week... *Can you guys step forward-* The Battery group and the Wynford chase group! Can we celebrate them!

We want to be a church that multiplies ourselves by making disciples and planting churches and that starts in and through our community Groups...

Multiplication is imperative to the mission Jesus has given His church- we want to see more groups planted all over the city and the overflow of that being church planted around the world!

So, here's what we're going to do, I'm going to pray for these leaders and coleaders and commission these new groups...

Then after the service we're having a big **GroupLink event**, this is for new people, and folks that haven't connected to a group yet, and it's also for those of you that have moved so that you can get connected to a group that's closest to you!

We have a big map showing where all of these groups are, and we'll have all of these leaders at tables with their location so that you can meet them and get plugged into one of these groups that's the closest to you!

Make sure you go and check it out right after our gathering this morning!

Extend your hands... Let's pray over these leaders!

Intro/Setup [start sermon timer]

Alright Image Fam, I hope everyone is doing well...

If you have your bibles go ahead and grab them and turn to **Luke 16**...

We're continuing our Journey through the Inverted Kingdom Series where we're walking through the gospel of Luke together...

And let me go ahead and tell you that **Luke 16** is the most difficult chapter in the gospel of Luke... *Today's going to be a dozy so I hope you had your coffee this morning...*

There's a lot to what we're going to be walking through- a lot of intricacies that could make up an entire sermon series...

My goal this morning is to walk through it all being faithful to the text, but also keeping the *metanarrative* of Luke's Gospel in view... So, I am not going to be deep diving into certain things that the text covers...

I'm not doing this to **undermine or minimize the intricacies of the text**- I'm doing this to be faithful to the purpose of our journey through The Gospel of Luke, where we've been looking at the life and ministry of Jesus, and talking about the implications that it has on our lives...

- *Like my dad used to say: I don't want you to miss the beauty of the forest for the trees...*

Ok let's jump in... Remember, Jesus is on His way to Jerusalem...

And there's been 3 groups of people that Jesus has interacted with on this journey: Religious elite, sinners, disciples...

- *sinners- those who actively and publicly live as though there's not God...*
- *Note: The difference between the religious and the sinners is- the religious used God as a means to build themselves up... sinners- lived as though there was no God...*

Chapter 15- Jesus has all 3 groups of people around Him... Makes and appeal to both the religious elite and the *sinners* through The parable of the lost sheep, lost coin and lost son...

The beginning of **Chapter 16** Jesus turns to His disciples and begins to instruct them...

Turns out the religious elite we're listening in on what Jesus had to say to His disciples- because after Jesus **points to generosity** and **presses against being after worldly wealth and idolizing money**, we get a reaction from the Pharisees- here in verse 14- *let's pick up there...*

Luke 16:14-31

14 The Pharisees, who were lovers of money, were listening to all these things and scoffing at him.

Real quick- this frames out our context for where we're going to be this morning as we finish chapter 16... Jesus is about to respond in light of the religious elite that are scoffing at Him...

Verse 15 And he told them, "You are the ones who justify yourselves in the sight of others, but God knows your hearts. For what is highly admired by people is revolting in God's sight."

Such an important rebuke from Jesus here... This is a definition of what religion looks like... Self-justification for the sake of external appearance and the approval and affirmation of others...

What we see here is that **God cares about the heart more than the activity**... And that what looks good to people on the outside is revolting to God because He knows what's going on in your heart...

Jesus is always after the heart... And He didn't come to show us how to **conform** to a set of rules, He came so that we would be **transformed by a new heart that only He could give us**... Where we're not motivated by people, but where we're motivated by the love of God...

Here's what you need to understand, **Religion fuels pride-gospel-centered living breaks down pride**...

Gospel-centered living isn't about building yourself up, it's about holding Jesus up... And, in order to hold Jesus up it means that you humble yourself in the same way that Jesus humbled Himself for you!

Here's a good check point- how bad do you want other people to know about the good activity that you do? When you do something good, or radical- does it bring you the most pleasure to share it with others? How much time and effort do you spend on how you look for other people?

So, the Pharisees justify themselves before other people, they want to fuel their pride- but God sees the reality of their hearts...

Jesus continues in verse 16: "The Law and the Prophets were until John; since then, the good news of the kingdom of God has been proclaimed, and everyone is urgently invited to enter it. **17 But it is easier for heaven and earth to pass away than for one stroke of a letter in the law to drop out.** We're going to have to do some work here...

Jesus is showing them here that they missed the Law and they missed what it pointed to...

The role of the law was not to fuel pride, but to point to a promise, and to act as a guide for living in light of who God is personally, and publicly in how they were to treat others...

- They missed on both fronts...

Part of the evidence of their miss, is that they don't recognize that a new era is at hand at the coming of Jesus, He is the deliverer that all of the law and Prophets pointed to...

Let me flesh this out...

God creates the world and He's in a perfect relationship with His creation- Adam and Eve choose to **rebel** against God and **sin** enters into the world...

Adam and Eve kicked out of the garden- their relationship with God was severed, they could no longer be in the presence of God and have communion with Him because of their sin in light of His perfection and Holiness of God...

And so, God's perfect creation begins to unravel as a result of the pollution of sin that has now entered the world...

But in the midst of the severing of this relationship God makes a promise in Gen 3:15 that He will send a deliverer that would come and restore that which was broken...

Then God would establish the **law** to:

- Reveal sin, make clear that there was reparation for sin, and show the divide between a sinful humanity and a perfect and holy God.

The law highlighted the reality of a desperate need for a deliverer that could deal with sin and the impacts and effects of sin once-and-for-all...

Here's the thing, **the point of the law was not so that people could work their way to God or achieve the approval of God...**

The point of the law was to show how much of a need there was for God to intervene personally in their standing before God, and publicly so that they would know how live and treat others rightly...

Later, God would send a prophet named **Isaiah** who would remind the people of God's promised deliverer, and as he was encouraging them in the reality of the coming of that deliverer one day he would say in **Isaiah 40:3:**

There will be a voice of one crying out: Prepare the way of the Lord in the wilderness; make a straight highway for our God in the desert.

Luke 3 shows us that **John the Baptist** was that guy, he was the fulfilment of that prophecy announcing the dawning of a new era **where the deliver has come!** And this marks the start of Jesus' public ministry...

So, what you need to see is that **the law and the Prophets all culminated in the coming of Jesus** who was announced by John the Baptist...

And Jesus came preaching about the Kingdom of God urging and inviting people to enter... And you have to understand the magnitude of this...

This is a Kingdom that by default we're all separated from because of our sin and rebellion that ingrained in us as a result of Adam and Eve... *Sinful people produce sinful people...*

But the dawn of a new era has come- because God has come down to do what we could never do for ourselves...

Jesus came to deal with our sin and eliminate our separation from God giving us access to God's Kingdom where all things have been made new and where we can once again be in a perfect relationship with God...

And Jesus would do this by living perfect in our place, and then He would take on our punishment in our death- allowing justice for our sin to be served... And then he would raise from the dead and offer us new life through His finished work...

One where we get His perfection and His takes on our punishment- putting us in a right standing with God... And Jesus makes a point in **verse 17** when He talks about the law to show that His arrival doesn't mean that *the law has not failed because it's goal and purpose was Jesus and the Kingdom which does not fail... The law is fulfilled and transformed in Jesus.*¹

So, if the Pharisees truly loved and understood the law, then they would have to love, receive and follow Jesus – the who the law points to and culminates in... ***Incredible picture of the authority of Jesus here, and that the standard doesn't decrease upon His arrival...***

And then Jesus gives an everyday life example of His authority and His standard here next in **verse 18**... **"Everyone who divorces his wife and marries another woman commits adultery, and everyone who marries a woman divorced from her husband commits adultery."**

Now, I really need you to listen to me here- *I don't want you wondering off into leftfield...*

What Jesus is doing here is taking an everyday life example- using something that it seems that the Pharisee's minimized...

But more than that, what Jesus is showing is that moral authority comes through Him and His teaching- that He is the chief ethicist... He is the one who determines how we are to live...

*And as such- this is the standard for marriage... ***One man, one woman, one lifetime***... Where God resides in a 3-way covenant with the man and woman (Matt. 19:6; Mark 10:9) ... That's a big deal, God's involved with this covenant between the husband and wife...

What we have to understand, *especially in a culture that minimizes the marriage covenant*, is that God has a very high view and standard for marriage, because marriage is a picture His relationship with us (Eph. 5:22-30) ...

- Outside of the cross marriage is the next most tangible picture of the gospel that God has given us...

So, what Jesus says here, this is the ***baseline foundation for the standard of marriage***... *I need you to hear that...* The marriage covenant is a big deal and not be taken lightly...

¹ Bock, D. L. (1996). *Luke: 9:51–24:53* (Vol. 2, p. 1355).

But something to note is that Jesus' baseline principal here **does not address every possible scenario regarding divorce.**² Keep in mind His point is His authority and His standard at large...

And we *don't want to minimize that standard*, but we do want to understand it in light of the full counsel of scripture... Luke only gives us a snapshot here...

And what we know is that Scripture **does** speak to this in other places presenting some exceptions for divorce in extreme cases...³

All of which should involve the care of the local church and their elders...

That's all I am going to say on that because we have to keep moving...

But don't miss Jesus' point: The law has culminated in Jesus, He has ultimate authority and He's the one who sets the standard for how we live as the King of the Kingdom

Now Jesus is going to shift gears a little, but the context is still the same, He's still addressing the scoffing of the religious who, are rejecting Jesus & His authority, who justify themselves, love money...

All-in-all, these are people who seek to find their identity in worldly things...

What we need to see is that we are way more like them than we realize... Our hearts are either there or want to go there to- so we have to listen here to Jesus strong warning!

Jesus starts this parable with the exact same words as the parable of the dishonest manager at the start of **Luke 16**... He's doubling down here...

what Jesus is doing here... He gives them a parable as a way to drive home a very imminent reality...

Verse 19 "There was a rich man who would dress in purple and fine linen, feasting lavishly every day. **20** But a poor man named Lazarus, covered with sores, was lying at his gate. **21** He longed to be filled with what fell from the rich man's table, but instead the dogs would come and lick his sores. **22** One day the poor man died and was carried away by the angels to Abraham's side. The rich man also died and was buried. **23** And being in torment in Hades, he looked up and saw Abraham a long way off, with Lazarus at his side. **24** 'Father Abraham!' he called out, 'Have mercy on me and send Lazarus to dip the tip of his finger in water and cool my tongue, because I am in agony in this flame!' **25** " 'Son,' Abraham said, 'remember that during your life you received your good things, just as Lazarus received bad things, but now he is comforted here, while you are in agony. **26** Besides all this, a great chasm has been fixed between us and you, so that those who want to pass over from here to you cannot; neither can those from there cross over to us.'

Rich man with no name- why? He chose to make a name for himself in this life- His identity was in his status and his stuff- the irony the very thing he gave his life to perusing gave nothing back to him...

So, you have a rich man with no name and you have a man that used to sit outside the house of the rich man and beg for food named Lazarus...

The rich man had no eyes to see and no compassion- revealing of where his heart is...

Both die, and Lazarus is carried up to Abraham's side and the rich man goes to Hades (Hell)...

² Bock, D. L. (1996). *Luke: 9:51-24:53* (Vol. 2, p. 1357).

³ Infidelity- though there's still very strong appeal for reconciliation, and this is highly debated... Matt. 5:39,19:9... If you're married to a non-believer and they choose to leave... 1 Cor. 7:15 Physical abuse... 1 Cor. 7, and the cultural continuation of OT marriage standards given by God.

We often duck the concept of Hell because it feels judgmental to present it- but the reality it's opposite, it's because of the reality of Hell that grace is so amazing...

Some people think Hell is figurative- that's not what the bible shows us...

C.S. Lewis: *In the long run, the answer to those that object the doctrine of hell is itself a question – what are you asking God to do? To wipe out past sins and at all costs give them a fresh start? He did, on Calvary. To forgive them? But they don't ask for forgiveness. To leave them alone? That's what hell is. There are only two kinds of people in the end – those who say to God "thy will be done" and those to whom God says in the end 'thy will be done.' All that are in hell choose it. Without that self-choice it wouldn't be hell.*

Something important to see is that we bring hell on ourselves by choosing our way over God's way...

*Hell is the absence of God's presence where you're given over and over again to your sinful desires with the hurt and pain of no fulfilment over and over again (Romans 1)...

St. Augustine said that when we look into our souls, we can see smoke from the fires of hell burning in us.⁴

Like a fire our desires burn within us... The thing about fire is that it consumes everything and never is satisfied... The same is true for us and this will be true for all of eternity like it was for this rich man... This rich man allowed the fire of his desires to drive his life and he gained it all only to lose it for all, for all of eternity...

Appeal here...

27 " 'Father,' he said, 'then I beg you to send him to my father's house—**28** because I have five brothers—to warn them, so that they won't also come to this place of torment.'

29 "But Abraham said, 'They have Moses and the prophets; they should listen to them.'

Keep in view what we covered earlier about **who** the law that came through Moses and the prophets pointed to...

30 " 'No, father Abraham,' he said. 'But if someone from the dead goes to them, they will repent.'

31 "But he told him, 'If they don't listen to Moses and the prophets, they will not be persuaded if someone rises from the dead.' "

Repent Key word here... means a change of mind and heart that abandons your former ways and embraces a new way of life in light of who God is and what He's done.

There is an embracing and a walking in...

Salvation and the impacts on salvation on everyday life...

Conclusion [VAMP]

⁴ Via JD Greear