

# A Declaration of Those Things Which Are Most Surely Believed Among Us

## An Expositional Study of **The Gospel According to Luke** **Chapter 16- Luke 16:1-14**

### 270- You Cannot Serve God and Wealth- Part 2

---

March 15, 2015

#### **Luke 16:1-14**

**1** Now He was also saying to the disciples, "**There was a rich man who had a manager, and this *manager* was reported to him as squandering his possessions.**

**2** "And he called him and said to him, 'What is this I hear about you? Give an accounting of your management, for you can no longer be manager.'

**3** "The manager said to himself, 'What shall I do, since my master is taking the management away from me? I am not strong enough to dig; I am ashamed to beg.

**4** 'I know what I shall do, so that when I am removed from the management people will welcome me into their homes.'

**5** "And he summoned each one of his master's debtors, and he *began* saying to the first, 'How much do you owe my master?'

**6** "And he said, 'A hundred measures of oil.' And he said to him, 'Take your bill, and sit down quickly and write fifty.'

**7** "Then he said to another, 'And how much do you owe?' And he said, 'A hundred measures of wheat.' He said to him, 'Take your bill, and write eighty.'

**8** "And his master praised the unrighteous manager because he had acted shrewdly; for the sons of this age are more shrewd in relation to their own kind than the sons of light.

**9** "And I say to you, make friends for yourselves by means of the wealth of unrighteousness, so that when it fails, they will receive you into the eternal dwellings.

**10** "He who is faithful in a very little thing is faithful also in much; and he who is unrighteous in a very little thing is unrighteous also in much.

**11** "Therefore if you have not been faithful in the *use of* unrighteous wealth, who will entrust the true *riches* to you?

**12 "And if you have not been faithful in *the use of* that which is another's, who will give you that which is your own?"**

**13 "No servant can serve two masters; for either he will hate the one and love the other, or else he will be devoted to one and despise the other. You cannot serve God and wealth."**

**14 Now the Pharisees, who were lovers of money, were listening to all these things and were scoffing at Him.**

To the Glory of God

Now, back in 1552- Thomas Cranmer- the Archbishop of Canterbury re-wrote the Book of Common Prayer to reflect the great influence that the Protestant Reformation- especially that from Switzerland- had had on the English speaking world. In the previous version- which was written in 1549- as the Lord's Supper was administered to the people- the minister would say:

"Take, eat, this is the Body/Blood of the Lord Jesus Christ which was broken/shed for you"

But in 1552, Cranmer replaced that with,

"Take, eat/drink, in remembrance that Christ has died for you"

And he also removed the words "Mass" and "Eucharist" from the Book of Common Prayer as well. Now this may not seem to be a very earthshaking change to us who live in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century- but it really was- because it showed that the Biblical Truth that came out of the Reformation had radically impacted and changed the way in which the Church of England viewed not only Communion- but Salvation as well.

You see, in the Roman religious system- ever since the Council of Trent- Rome has taught that the way in which Salvation is *earned* and *developed* and *acquired* in the individual begins at infant baptism, and is made "real" or is "confirmed" through the change of behavior of the individual over his entire lifetime, and throughout the thousands of years he will spend being purified in Purgatory.

So Rome teaches that as we ingest the contents of the Bread and Cup- we are "being saved". As we participate in the Mass- we are

"being saved". As we attend to the Rite of Confession- we are "being saved". And as we do good deeds- we are "being saved". So they teach that Salvation is a "process" that begins with babies being baptized to remove Original Sin and extends all throughout our life and into the next because they teach something called "intrinsic righteousness"- which says that we must develop our own personal righteousness through our connection to the Sacraments and good deeds, to be the same as God's Own Personal Righteousness before we can enter into Heaven.

But the Bible teaches that being Justified before God- which is having all of our sins forgiven and being eternally rescued from the Wrath of God that is against our sins is an "event", and not a "process". And that being Justified is mediated to us by Grace alone through Faith alone and not by us participating in the Sacraments. And the Bible goes on to teach about an "imputed righteousness"- where the Righteousness that allows unworthy sinners to enter into Heaven is *not* our own personal intrinsic righteousness. It doesn't belong to us; it is a *foreign* or an *external, alien* Righteousness that is the very Righteousness that Jesus Christ developed and earned during His sinless life of 33-1/2 years on the earth. And this spotless Righteousness of Jesus is "imputed" or "credited" to us by the agency of faith alone- and also not by participation in the Sacraments. And that is where the Latin phrase "Sola Fide" comes from, and it is the very heart and soul of the Biblical Gospel.

So one of the main distinctions between what the Bible teaches and what Rome teaches is that Rome says that we *earn* Salvation by what we do, while the Bible teaches that we are saved because of what God has graciously and mercifully done for us- precisely because we *cannot* do anything to earn Salvation or Favor with God.

And in that sense- the religion of Rome is no different than Judaism or Islam or Hinduism or Buddhism. But the Bible clearly and repeatedly teaches that lost and fallen sinners cannot earn Salvation by anything that they do for themselves, and, thus, Salvation is entirely by God's Grace alone, and it is entirely through the gift of Saving Faith alone, and it is mediated to unworthy sinners through the Person and the finished Work of Jesus Christ alone- and, therefore, Salvation is based solely on God's Sovereign Freedom to set His Love upon those whom He chooses and is not based on what we do for ourselves. And so

our boast is not on what things we have accomplished to earn Favor with God- but our boast is entirely in the Lord and what He alone has done on our behalf.

So Rome teaches that a change of outward behavior leads to Salvation while the Bible teaches that Salvation leads to a change in outward behavior. So Rome emphasizes the outward religious actions that people do while Biblical Christianity emphasizes a radical and supernatural and miraculous transformation of the human heart – which always and in every case- leads to a change of our outward behavior. And it is important to understand this as we seek to understand the verses before us that Brother Andy just read to us.

Rome teaches that the way to obey Jesus here in verse 13- and avoid serving Wealth is to remove all wealth and all material goods from ourselves and to take a vow of poverty, and in that state- we will then be able to love and serve God. But the Bible doesn't teach that.

The Bible teaches that in order to not serve Wealth- the love that we have for wealth must be replaced by an infinitely *greater* love for God and for Jesus Christ- birthed in a heart that has been confronted and dealt with and radically transformed by God the Holy Spirit, whereby our dead and lifeless souls have been raised from the dead by the miracle of God. The Bible teaches that our blind eyes- that could only see the glory of Man- are sovereignly taken from us supernaturally- and we are given eyes that can see the Glory of God in the Face of Jesus Christ. The Bible teaches that our deaf ears that could only hear the noise of this world are miraculously opened- and we can now hear the Voice of God. The Bible teaches that our hearts that were captured by the lights and the sounds and the empty promises of money and fame and wealth and human glory has come into contact with the One Who is Eternal and Absolute, and the result is that God takes His very Finger and writes His Law on our hearts and we are transformed so that we see the greatest expression of our Joy and Satisfaction in Heavenly things rather than earthly things.

And the Bible goes on to teach that the fact that we already have those kind of eyes and that we already have those kinds of ears and the fact that we already have that kind of heart- that this proves that God has already set His Favor upon us and that we are already saved, and since we are already saved- we seek to do God's Will and we seek to remain faithful, and we seek to be fruitful, and we seek to be busy in

the Work of the Lord, and so we have been set free to serve the living God and not serve Wealth.

So the Bible teaches that the confidence that wealth gives to *us* must be replaced by an infinitely *greater* confidence in the Power and Sufficiency of Jesus Christ, and that we have already been so radically transformed by being born again that we no longer have any confidence in our own flesh.

Rome teaches that idolatry is solved by removing the idol which would then earn Favor with God and the idolater will be saved, while Biblical Christianity teaches that the worship of a false god is overcome by the radical transformation of the fallen nature through being born again- which gives us an infinitely *greater* desire to worship the one true living God- which will always, and in all cases, allow us to see the idol as being irrelevant.

So as you read this Passage- and because we are most naturally Roman or pagan in our thinking- we might see the solution of the warning of Jesus here in verse 13 as a signal to us to see how much of this world's goods we can throw away- with the thought that by doing this- we will earn Favor and Status with God. And if you believe that way- you are Roman in your theology- even though you may sit in a Protestant Church.

But as we learn Christ- we see that the truth is just the opposite. Salvation must always come first and then comes the transformation of our behavior. And if you believe that- then you are Protestant in your theology- even if you are sitting in a Roman "church".

Now there is much confusion today about wealth and material goods and money. And much of that confusion is based upon ungodly and false doctrines coming from the Health, Wealth, and Prosperity groups that teach, in effect, that covetousness is actually a virtue rather than the sin that the Bible says that it is.

So first of all- we must understand that true genuine Worship of God consists of two parts:

1. The Inner Essence
2. The Outward Form

And the Inner Essence of true Worship is the miracle of transformation that God does in us that allows us to treasure God as

being infinitely more valuable than anything else. And the Outer Forms of worship are the various acts that we do that show how much we actually do treasure God based upon already being transformed.

Therefore, worship is much more than singing a few songs on Sunday Morning. Many in the modern Church call the song service on Sunday Morning "worship", or "the worship service"- which is just wrong. *Everything* we do from praying to reading Scripture to singing to going through the Catechism to partaking of the Lord's Supper to giving to the Missionaries to taking up the regular offering to preaching to fellowshiping after the service to the Bible Study on Sunday Evening and the Prayers on Wednesday Evening is all worship. But worship goes much further than that.

All of life is meant to be worship because God said in **1Corinthians 10:31**:

**Whether, then, you eat or drink or whatever you do, do all to the glory of God.**

... so the Bible says that we are to do whatever it is that we do- to show how valuable the Glory of God is to us. So now we see that true worship gets in the car with us and it goes home with us and it dictates to us how we should live every aspect of our lives- which is just another way of saying that Jesus Christ is Lord. And as we discovered last week- for us to see Jesus as "Lord" means that Jesus as the Right and the Authority to limit our behavior and to set boundaries on what we do and what we don't do. And the reason that this is true is because Jesus has already bought and paid for us, and He now owns us, and we are no longer slaves of sin but have become bond-slaves of the Lord Jesus Christ- unless we are reprobates.

You see, as we learned last week- we are already making decisions every day anyway. We are consciously choosing to be a part of this and not that. We are accepting this- but not that. We are engaged in trusting in this- and not that. We are setting our love and affections on this- and not that. And all of that together works toward the *fashioning* of our lives to be either a glory to God or a reproach to the Gospel.

So when we- who live in a fallen and broken world, who war against the wiles of the devil every day, and who struggle against the lusts of our flesh on an ongoing basis- when we come in contact with the

Owner and the Creator of the Universe through prayer and through Bible Study, and being reminded of what this is all about through the Lord's Supper, and through engaging is real and serious and meaningful fellowship with other covenant brothers and sisters- who are also engaged in the other three things- and as we all see the *benefit* of sacrificing whatever it is we need to in order to gather together to sit and hear the inspired, infallible, and inerrant Word of the living God broken down into small bits that we can eat and chew on and digest and take nourishment from- and when we do all of that on an ongoing consistent basis- then we find that the gravity of this world that holds us to the terrestrial gives way and we begin to rise and soar into the celestial, and we find that temptation- while not ceasing completely- loses its power over us, and we find that our flesh comes under subjection to the Spirit of God, and we find that our decisions are more godly, our choices are more Biblical, our way of life honors Jesus better, our witness to the unbelievers is more true, our hope becomes rock solid, our fears are abated, our words carry weight, our soul sings out, our feeble knees are converted, our heavy hands that hung down are raised, our eyes are lifted unto the hills from where our help comes from, conviction about sin is elevated, we watch and pray. we become wise concerning the devices of the enemy, our step is true, our walk has purpose, our path is straight and narrow, out of our belly flows rivers of living water, we hunger and thirst after Righteousness, our hope is secure, our mind is on heavenly things, the things of this earth have grown strangely dim, our communication is laced with Divine Truth, sin is reduced, transgressions go way down, a holy fire burns within that cannot be quenched, we love not our lives unto the death, and our collective testimony is that we are but strangers and pilgrims just passing through this life, and this world is not our home because we earnestly look and we joyfully seek after a city- whose Builder and Maker is God!

And Jesus becomes the sweetest Name we know. And being in His Presence and seeing Him High and Lifted up, and loving Him and Serving Him and obeying Him and following Him and pleasing Him is the only thing that matters, it is the only thing that allows our heart to beat, and it is where we find the fullness of our joy and the height of our contentment and the best expression of our dreams and ambitions.

And so we will fight any foe, resist any temptation, reject any

Teaching, embrace any suffering, endure any heartache that will allow us to be near to the Lamb of God- the Beautiful Rose of Sharon, the Bright and Morning Star, the Lilly of our Valley, the Darling of the Trinity, and the fairest of ten thousand to our soul!

And the result of all this is that we will become enamored with the brilliance of Christ's Glory. And we will become consumed with the Value and the Worth of our Master and Savior and King we will actually begin to live as though we really believe that Jesus is Lord- and so we will hear Jesus, and we will obey Jesus about where to live and what to eat and what to wear and who to befriend and where to work and who to marry and how to raise our children and how to walk in this world and what to love and what to hate; what to be a part of, what to run from, and whether we live or die.

But it isn't our fault. We can't help it. We are saved and that is how saved people act. And that is how saved people have *always* acted. But they can't take any credit for it- all of this is *not* the result of some internal drive or some humanly engineered exercise of the will; this is not the result of human prerogative or human choice. We don't rub the two sticks of human self-determination and will power together to produce this kind of fruit.

No, this is a sovereign, glorious miraculous, supernatural Work of the Almighty. This is what happens when the Spirit of the living God comes into contact with elected sinners. And it is called "Revival". Another term you could use is "Salvation" or "being Biblical"- it's all the same thing. You could call it "walking in the Spirit" or you could call it "bearing godly fruit". It is "normal Christianity"; it is how you define "serving God" or "pleasing the Lord". So all of life is to be worship.

And the by-product of this kind of life that runs counter-intuitive to the devices of mere men and desires of fallen flesh that Dr. Luke talks about in this Passage here in **Luke 16** is that God will so utterly change you that you will no longer love Money. And that means that financial decisions will be made based upon what honors and glorifies God and not always what benefits you personally.

And the imprint of God the Holy Spirit will be upon you to such an extent that you will no longer serve Wealth. And we will be delivered from loving this world and we will escape the lusts of the flesh and we will be delivered from the lusts of the eye and the boastful pride of life, and we will have both the desire and the power to refuse to place our



affections and desires on the things that are passing away, and we will not find the fullness of our joy on created things but in the Creator Himself.

And yet money and wealth and other things are a big part of this life- and so God intends them to be a big part of worship, too- since all of life is to be worship. So the *way* in which you worship with your money and your possessions is to *get* them and to *use* them and to *lose* them in such a way that shows how much you treasure God – and not the money or the possessions. And that's what this text is about. And so it is really a text about worship.

Now there is a place for corporate worship - what we do here together on Sunday morning. And the same definitions holds here as everywhere else: the essence of worship here is the *inner treasuring* of God as being infinitely valuable. And the *forms* of worship are the outward acts that express this inner treasuring of God (preaching and hearing the word of God, praying, singing, giving, sharing the Lord's Supper, and so on). One of those acts of corporate worship here at the Covenant of Peace Church is what we call "the offering" - a point near the middle of our corporate worship where we worship with our money, by putting it out of our hands and out of our bank accounts and out of our pockets, and into the Mission and the Ministry of Jesus Christ.

So this particular act of worship in the corporate worship service is one small part of the larger pattern of worship with our money that we do every day in the way we earn and spend and save and give our money. Today's text, **Luke 16:1-14** has to do with the big pattern of how we worship with our money, and so by implication it relates to what we do with our money in corporate worship as well. So let's look at some of the main points in this text, and let it apply to our lives in general, and to our corporate giving in particular. Look again at the first part of verse 14:

### **Luke 16:14a**

**Now the Pharisees, who were lovers of money...**

Now here is an example of what *not* to "be" and what *not* to "do". Dr. Luke tells us here that the Pharisees were lovers of money. And the fact that the good doctor says this immediately after Jesus warned us in verse 13 by saying,

### **Luke 16:13**

**No servant can serve two masters; for either he will hate the one and love the other, or else he will be devoted to one and despise the other. You cannot serve God and wealth.**

.. shows us that verse 14 is a moral *condemnation* of these people. And it also shows us that part of what it means to “be” a Pharisee is that you love money. Now all those who love money are not Pharisees- because most all of the lost pagan world loves money- but all Pharisees love money. So this means that being a Pharisee has to do with the condition of your heart rather than simply belonging to some religious group. But look at what Dr. Luke says that these Pharisees- who loved money- were doing:

### **Luke 16:14b**

**... were listening to all these things ...**

Now the “**these things**” is not just what Jesus said here in verse 13- but these religious hypocrites were listening to what Jesus had been talking about all the way back to **Chapter 14**. They were the group that Dr. Luke was talking about in **Luke 15:2** when he said,

**Both the Pharisees and the scribes *began* to grumble, saying, "This man receives sinners and eats with them."**

So these people heard; they listened. So it isn't that they didn't hear or that they didn't know- but that they didn't like what they heard from Jesus. So what was the result of all their listening? The result of all their listening was that they despised Jesus because He healed on the Sabbath in Chapter 14, and they grumbled because He forgave sinners in Chapter 15, and now here in Chapter 16- after listening to everything Jesus taught in 2-1/2 Chapters- Dr. Luke tells us in the last part of verse 14 that they:

### **Luke 16:14**

**... were scoffing at Him.**

Now the word that was translated here into English as “scoffing” comes from the Greek word that means: *to turn up the nose; to sneer*

*and deride.* So these men were turning up their noses at Jesus; they were sneering at Him and deriding or mocking or scoffing at the Incarnate God.

So this shows us that the kind of heart that loves money is the same kind of heart that will sneer and scoff at what Jesus says. So Luke is making a connection here between the two. Loving money is an outward sign of an inward problem. But that inward problem manifests itself- not just in the way it looks at money and wealth and possessions- but also in the way it treats the Words and Teachings of Jesus.

But it also shows us a very important concept about God. Many times, people will criticize the preacher- whether that is in a Church or out on the street, and they will say that the preacher didn't say things correctly. They will say he was either too hard or too soft, or that he didn't give enough emotion or that he was too emotional. And they may be right. It is very possible that even after studying very hard and praying hard and trying hard to put the pieces together properly that we simply do not articulate God's Word as well as we could and as well as we should, and so people misunderstand us and they get offended and they put words in our mouth and they try to trap us. Because preachers are sinful human beings saved by Grace- sometimes we *don't* always say things properly, and so we always have the need to grow and to change and do better. And so we should take criticism as a blessing- even if it isn't meant to be a blessing- and we should pray and seek God about it, and we should see if there is merit in it that God can use to change us.

But Jesus was perfect. And when He spoke- it was *not* too hard or too soft- it wasn't too emotional or too dry- what Jesus said was just right. Jesus was the best Preacher Who ever lived. He was the only perfect Preacher Who ever lived. Jesus spoke absolute Truth and He spoke it perfectly. He understood the deepest mysteries of God and He could articulate them in just a few words. So Jesus preached perfect Sermons- perfectly.

And yet Jesus was the single most hated Man who ever lived. He was maligned and persecuted all the time. People misunderstood Him all the time, and they twisted His Words and they tried to trap Him so they could accuse Him. Here Dr. Luke says that they scoffed at Him. And the point I am making is that if people treated the perfect Jesus

like this- you can only assume that we will get the same- because we are certainly *not* perfect.

Now turn with me to look at **2Corinthians 4:3**. Because sometimes people reject the Truth- not because we did or said anything wrong. Sometimes people reject the Truth because they are lost and their fallen, unsaved nature rebels against the Truth, and sometimes people grumble and scoff at what we teach- simply because they are lost and the things of the Spirit of God are foolishness to them. Paul said this in **2Corinthians 4:3&4**:

**3 And even if our gospel is veiled, it is veiled to those who are perishing,  
4 in whose case the god of this world has blinded the minds of the unbelieving so that they might not see the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ, who is the image of God.**

... so being blinded by the god of this world to the point where a person cannot see the light of the Gospel of the Glory of Jesus Christ is *not* the result of being offended- it is a fruit of being lost and unsaved. Saved people can see- it is lost people who are blinded. And even though they may hear the Gospel preached- to a lost person- it is veiled and hidden to them- precisely because they are not already born again. Now look at what else Paul said in **2Corinthians 4:6**

**For God, who said, "Light shall shine out of darkness," is the One who has shone in our hearts to give the Light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Christ.**

So Salvation is all about God performing a miracle in us- the very same way that God performed a miracle in creating Light out of darkness. And the result of this miracle is not that people will automatically become sinlessly perfect, but that they will "see". Their blind eyes will be open and God will sovereign shine into their hearts:

**... the Light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Christ.**

... and because they see- they will begin to follow and obey, and they will change and they will radically alter the way they live their lives. And the more they see, the more they get into the Source of Divine

Truth- the Holy Bible- the more they will change. And the less they get into the Holy Bible- the more of the world and the more sin will continue to plague them.

The point here is simple. Saved people “see” while lost people do not see. Saved people understand Truth and lost people do not. Saved people *follow* Jesus- not perfectly- but *honestly*- while lost people do not. Saved people *obey* Jesus – not without fault- while lost people do not. And saved people *enjoy* Jesus and they *treasure* Jesus and they find their *contentment* in Jesus while lost people grumble and complain about the straight and narrow path and they rebel against the Commands of the Lord and they scoff at Jesus and they love money.

So by that- we know that the Pharisees were lost. And part of the character of their lostness was that they loved money. So loving money is not what made them to be lost- what made them lost was because they could not see, their hearts were veiled, and they were blinded by the god of this world. So loving money is not what made them lost but being lost is what made them love money- precisely because they did *not* love God. So loving money or loving anything that this world has to offer or serving wealth is present in the lives of people because the love of the Father isn’t. And that is why John taught this from **1John 2:15**:

**Do not love the world nor the things in the world. If anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him.**

So love for this present evil fallen world system that is opposed to God exists only because the Love of the Father does *not* exist. Now notice here that this is not a love “for” the Father- like the love that we have for God- but John talks here about the Love “of” the Father- meaning the Love that God has placed on us before the foundation of the world to save us and which is the source of our own love for God.

So the *absence* of the Love of the Father- the *absence* of God sovereignly intervening into the lives of sinful people and interrupting their plans and violating their will and imposing Himself on them to forgive them and save them and change them so that they love God- the *absence* of this kind of love that comes from God to undeserving sinners- *that* is what creates a love for the world and the things in the world.

In other words- the normal and natural state of fallen man is that he will love the world and he will love money and he will serve wealth. Nobody has to teach a lost person to do that- he will automatically do that by virtue of being fallen. And, if that is true- which it is- then the fix is not for us to divest ourselves of all that we own and go to some mountain and live in a monastery and get away from people and society and live as a hermit. No, the monks are all wrong about this and the Amish are wrong- and the mystics and the monasticism is wrong- they have *not* found the secret of not loving money and of not serving wealth.

Remember what Jesus said in **Luke 16:13**:

**No servant can serve two masters; for either he will hate the one and love the other, or else he will be devoted to one and despise the other...**

So God created the human vessel with the ability to only love one thing at a time. He said we "cannot" serve two masters- which has to do with our ability and power. So we do not have the *ability* to set our affections on two things at the same time. We do not have the *power* to find joy and satisfaction in two different things at the same time. We cannot love the system of this fallen world and love God, too. And in spite of what the preachers say on the Hay, Wood, and Stubble Television Network- we do not have the *capacity* to enjoy money and wealth and this fallen world, and enjoy God at the same time. Jesus said so.

And so as people who have already been redeemed- we have to choose. We have to make a conscious choice and an ongoing choice to set our affections on God, and to withhold our affections from the world and from money and from wealth. So we have to love on purpose. And we are able to do that when the love of the Father is in us.

So the solution to the sin of loving money and serving wealth is to have the Love of the Father in us. In other words- the solution is *not* to try to get away from the world- which isn't even possible- because the change of location and the change of surroundings doesn't do anything to change our wicked hearts. Our problem is *internal*, and our problem is the absence of the Love of the Father being in us.

We need a changed heart that loves God more than it loves the world- not simply reduce the amount we have in our bank account. Now *why* is that true? Look what John said:

## **1John 2:16**

**For (because) all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh and the lust of the eyes and the boastful pride of life, is not from the Father, but is from the world.**

John says that there are three things that dominate this fallen world system that are not "of" the Father, meaning they do not come *from* the Father and are not a part of the Father- they have no connection to the Father and which are not a part of what the Father has for us:

- ✓ **The lust of the flesh**
- ✓ **The lust of the eyes**
- ✓ **The boastful pride of life**

Now throughout the Bible- you can substitute the word "desire" for "lust". And you can also substitute the word "for" for the word "of". So a "lust" *of* the flesh would also be a "desire" *for* the flesh. So this would not only be a lust that is inherent in our fallen flesh- but it would also be a lust for more of the flesh that is fallen. So fallen flesh lusts for more fallen flesh.

But you can also substitute the word "love" for "lust" here as well. So a "lust" *of* the flesh would be a "love" of the flesh. And this is a very different thing altogether. And so we need to ask ourselves a question:

**Can anything that you *truly* love- be bad? Can anything that you *deeply* love- be wrong? Can anything that you *sincerely* love- be sinful?**

Another way of asking this question is:

### **How can love ever be wrong?**

Isn't love good? Isn't love one of the qualities of God Himself? I mean, the Bible says that God Himself is Love, and so the very fact that we, as followers of Jesus Christ, love something- doesn't that automatically indicate that there is something *lovely* about it? If something were "wrong" or "bad" or "sinful"- wouldn't we, as believers,

simply *not* love it? In other words- is it possible for saved people to actually love something that God hates, and to love something that God has counseled us and warned us *not* to love?

Curiously, both the Apostles John and Paul, and even Jesus Himself, says, "Yes!" Because of how radical The Fall really was and because of the depth to which we humans have actually fallen- and because of our own natural propensity to sin- it is very possible for truly born again people to actually love something, to delight in something, to take pleasure in something, and to enjoy something that is inherently evil, and to love what is wrong and to desire to do- what God says *not* to do.

Even saved people struggle with this. The pull of the world and the craftiness of satan combined with the fact that our fallen flesh is not redeemed- serve to conspire against our saved souls to trap us into making bad decisions and making sinful choices, and they conspire together to help us fashion our lives based on a love and a desire that has been diverted *away from* God, and that has been set on the world and set on money and set on wealth and possessions and set on the fear of losing all these things, and the end result is that we will withhold our affections from God and set them on things that are passing away.

But the three evils, the world, the flesh, and the devil, are faced and they are fought and they are overcome with the three blessings of Prayer and Bible Study and Fellowship. And these three heavenly gifts are able to overcome the three earthly plagues, and as truly born from above people- we will attain new courage and strength to be able to set our loves and our affections and desires on God, and to withhold them from the things of this world.

And so we see then that all human loves are *not* created equally, and all human desires are *not* good or God honoring; and so what Jesus and John and Paul are faithful to warn us about- is a particular *kind* of love that is very, very bad.

So based on this- we see that it is very possible for us- as fallen human beings- to genuinely and truly love something that is wrong, that is sinful, that dishonors God- and yet we truly love it- we enjoy it; it brings pleasure and delight and satisfaction to us. And these Teachings are in the Bible to serve as a warning that when we see the propensity that is lurking in our flesh and in the devil, for us to withhold our love from God, and to set it on things that are passing



away- that this is a warning to us that our hearts have already drifted away and we are getting weak and the pull of flesh and of the world is getting stronger.

But because the love of the Father is in us- as saved people- we can escape the lure of money and material goods by running to Jesus and crying out to Him to forgive us and rescue us, and to set our feet back on the path that will cause us to love God and not things.

You see, we live in a very "type A" culture. Many today live a very fast-pace life. It seems as though life is speeding up and getting faster and faster. Many see no alternative but to just get on that treadmill of life and begin to run- harder and longer. And they completely give themselves with abandon to their jobs and careers. We are told that we are to "find our passion" and then "live into it"; we are told to "find our purpose" and then "give ourselves to that purpose". *That* is what the lost, pagan world calls us to do.

But in this passage- God's Word calls us to something much different than that. It calls you and me as believers to not love the world. Another way that the Apostle Paul taught in **1Timothy 6:10** was that we are to not love money, or as Jesus put it in **Luke 16:13**- we are not to serve wealth.

So we are not to set our affections on things that are passing away. And the point that I am trying to get over to you today is that this has more to do with the condition of our hearts than it does with the size of our holdings.

So what John is talking about here is *not* that we all need to remove ourselves from this world in order to earn the right to have the Love of the Father in us- but that there are various "lusts" or "desires" or "loves" that swirl all around us that compete with the Love of the Father.

And so the solution is not to simply sell all that we own and become poor as Rome and others teach- because that doesn't have the power to change our wicked hearts. Some of the most covetous and prideful and worldly minded people on earth are poor people- who say they begrudge those who are wealthy- but who would love to trade places with the wealthy in a heartbeat. So poverty in and of itself does not create humility, and the lack of this world's goods does not- by itself- have the power to overcome the fallen human condition to lust for more of this world's goods. The disdain that the poor have for the wealthy is

simply jealousy that *they* don't have more of this world's goods themselves.

There is no formula in the Bible for giving away worldly possessions in order to earn God's Favor. Some would say, "*But Brother Blair- Jesus told the rich young ruler in Luke 18 to give all that he had and he would have eternal life.*" Yes, He did. And if that was the only Passage in the Bible- those who teach that giving away earthly goods creates Salvation would be right. But we also see in **Luke 19** that God dealt differently with the sinful wealthy tax collector and as he was being convicted by the Holy Spirit- Zaccheus said he would give *half* of what he had to the poor. And then in **The Acts 4**- we see that Barnabas was dealt with by the Lord and he sold a single tract of land and gave it, while the publican of **Luke 18** paid tithes off everything he had – including the seeds that he planted- and he passed over.

Monks who sold everything they owned and spent their entire lives in prayer and fasting found out over time that they were being prideful about their great humility, and those who bought into the monasticism of the early Church found out that because of all their hard work and labor- that their monasteries all became very valuable in terms of worldly wealth.

No, I tell you that the solution to loving the world and loving money and loving things that are passing away- the solution to serving wealth is to have an infinitely greater love for God and the things of God- it is to purposefully and consciously withhold our love for earthly things, and to purposefully and consciously set our affections and desires on heavenly things. It is to understand that an *inferior* and *fallen* love must be replaced by a *superior* and *risen* love. It is that God must sovereignly and continually unveil our eyes through His Word and Spirit so we may see the Glory of God in the Face of Jesus Christ, and then we will treasure Christ more than we treasure money, and we will serve God and we will not serve wealth.

Amen. Let's pray.

© 2008- 2015 by The Covenant of Peace Church. All rights reserved. Printed in the United States of America

The Covenant of Peace Church 13600 John Clark Road Gulfport, Mississippi 39503 228.832.7729 [www.covenantofpeace.net](http://www.covenantofpeace.net)

Scripture quotations, except those noted otherwise, are from *The New American Standard Bible* © 1996 by The Lockmann Foundation. Used by permission.

This is a single transcript in a larger series of teachings taken from a verse by verse study of **The Gospel According to Luke**. You are free to reproduce it and distribute it as the Lord leads you- without cost or reimbursement to us with the stipulation that you may not add anything or take anything away from this transcript without the express written permission of The Covenant of Peace Church and that this complete copyright statement be at the end of all copies.

The Grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with your spirit. Amen. Be watchful and quicken your pace. Soli Deo Gloria. For the Glory of God alone.