

“Are You A Real Follower of Christ?” Luke 16:14-18

In these five verses you have Jesus confronting the Pharisees with their own ideas of what a follower of Christ really is and what one needs to do to be a true follower of Christ.

1. **Vs. 15 – Jesus saw the hearts of the Pharisees** – We should never forget that we cannot hide what we are and who we are from God. He sees and knows everything. It is only a fool that thinks they can fool God. God will know. He knew that after a long lesson on money that the Pharisees were making fun of Him because they had money and He did not. They were saying to themselves, “Who is he to tell us about money when he has none?” God ALWAYS looks at the heart. ALWAYS. He sees the true motivation and intent of one’s speech and actions. Sometimes we can fool each other and ourselves, but God always knows. So when He was questioning the motivation of these Pharisees, He knew the truth.
2. **Vs. 14-15 – He knew the real problem.** They were lovers of money and justifying their actions to the people but God looked right into their hearts and saw who they really were. It was a case of the Pharisees saying one thing to the people and doing something else for themselves. They were living by a different standard they were demanding of others.
3. **Vs. 15 – He took their value system and turned it around on them.** God’s value system and our natural value system are opposite. From the fall of man to now, God and we think differently about almost everything. What are some of the things we think alike about? We like the part where God says He will give us whatever we ask. We like the part where God says He will never leave us or forsake us. We like the part where God says He will get even with our enemies. We like the part where God says He will provide all of our needs. All of that stuff, we like. But what about the part where God says “take up your cross daily and follow me?” or “unless you hate your mother and father you cannot love me.” Or “if your brother slaps you on your face, turn the other cheek.” We don’t like those so much and neither did the Pharisees. God tells them that the things they think are great is really junk. What really matters is being a true follower of Jesus Christ.
4. **Vs. 16 – Jesus again declares why He came and what His message is.** He is telling them that up to this point in time the only thing they had to use as a guide in life was the Law of Moses (10 commandments) and the writings of the prophets. But now, He has brought the message of Good News and the Kingdom of God and He is reminding them that people are crowding to follow Him and understand what the Good News is. The Pharisees really did not like Jesus because He took away some of their authority. That

authority was not really theirs to start with and when Jesus said “Follow Me”, the Pharisees went nuts. They did not want any Jew to think they could approach God the Father or sacrifice or feel they had a personal relationship with God apart from the Pharisee. So Jesus was showing them a better way, only the Pharisees did not want it. They wanted control of the people and thereby have control of their money. Remember Jesus told them first that they were lovers of money.

5. **Vs. 17 – He declares the truth and lasting nature of the scriptures.** Here Jesus is beginning to tear down every defense the Pharisees had for their behavior. He is telling them that no matter what happens to the earth, or anything else in their lives, the scriptures (bible) will stand forever and not one little stroke of the pen would change. It is why we believe that the Bible is the permanent, immutable, unchanging, everlasting, Word of God. This has nothing to do with the different translations that have come along, but everything to do with the “interpretations” that spring up from time to time. God has written the last book of the Bible. Sorry. I don’t know why. Frankly, I don’t really care. I just know that He has finished all He has to say to us and it is enough. Next week we will see just how much credibility God puts on His written word.
6. **Vs. 18 – Jesus knows just how to test what we say.** Here He is putting the Pharisees to the test of what He has just said. The subject of divorce was a very sacred one for the Pharisees. They had their own idea of what the scriptures said in the past and what the circumstances were that surrounded reasons for divorce. Don’t forget, Jesus was looking into the hearts of these guys and knew what they were thinking. I can imagine that they were sitting there saying to themselves, “yeah, he may be right on the money thing, but we control the divorce. You see, people had to come to the church leaders to ask permission to get a divorce e decree. **Look at Matt 19:9.** The questions itself is revealing. They are asking Jesus if a man could divorce his wife for ANY reason. You see, back then the church was divided, not by doctrine, but by what reasons you could divorce your wife. Some believed that you could divorce your wife just because you felt she didn’t please you. Others believed it required some great sin. So Jesus put it to rest here in Matthew. But in the Luke passage, He is reminding the Pharisees that they are still not following God’s plan for marriage and divorce and He is challenging them to get in line.