

Luke 16:14

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

And the Pharisees also, who were covetous, heard all these things: and they derided him.

Analysis

And the Pharisees also, who were covetous, heard all these things: and they derided him. Luke records the Pharisees' hostile response to Jesus' teaching on money. The description 'who were covetous' (φιλάργυροι ὑπάρχοντες, philargyroi hyparchontes, 'being lovers of money') exposes their core motivation. The Greek philargyros (φιλάργυρος) combines philos ('lover') and argyros ('silver')—they loved money. Paul lists this vice among disqualifications for church leadership (1 Timothy 3:3) and marks of apostasy in the last days (2 Timothy 3:2).

Their response was to deride Jesus—exemyktērizon (ἐξεμυκτήριζον), 'they were sneering at' or 'mocking' Him. The imperfect tense suggests repeated, habitual mockery. Jesus' teaching on serving God rather than mammon exposed their hypocrisy—they professed religious devotion while serving money. Their derision reveals defensive pride—when truth confronts beloved sin, the natural response is not repentance but attack.

This verse introduces the section culminating in the parable of the rich man and Lazarus (vv. 19-31), which directly addresses the Pharisees' covetousness. Jesus will demonstrate that their earthly prosperity doesn't indicate divine favor and that their love of money imperils their souls. The Pharisees' mockery proves Jesus' point: they couldn't serve both God and money, and their response showed which master they'd chosen.

Historical Context

Pharisees were generally middle to upper-middle class, often merchants or skilled tradesmen. Their wealth enabled leisure for extensive Torah study and scrupulous religious observance. However, many had twisted Old Testament prosperity theology—they viewed wealth as proof of God's blessing for righteousness. This created spiritual pride and justified their riches while condemning the poor as sinners suffering divine judgment.

Jesus consistently confronted this distorted theology. He pronounced woes on the rich (Luke 6:24), warned that wealth makes entering God's kingdom nearly impossible (Luke 18:24-25), and taught that the love of money is idolatry (Luke 16:13). The Pharisees' covetousness and mockery demonstrate the blinding power of wealth—they couldn't perceive truth that threatened their treasure. Their derision also fulfills prophecy about the Suffering Servant: 'He is despised and rejected of men' (Isaiah 53:3).

Related Passages

Hebrews 11:1 — Definition of faith

Romans 1:17 — The righteous shall live by faith

1 John 4:8 — God is love

John 15:13 — Greatest form of love

Study Questions

1. How does covetousness (love of money) specifically blind people to spiritual truth and make them hostile to God's word?
2. Why do you think Jesus' teaching on money provoked mockery rather than conviction or repentance from the Pharisees?
3. In what ways might modern Christians resemble the covetous Pharisees who professed godliness while serving money?

Interlinear Text

ἤκουον	δὲ	ταῦτα	πάντα	καὶ	οἱ	Φαρισαῖοι
heard	And	these things	all	also	G3588	the Pharisees
G191	G1161	G5023	G3956	G2532		G5330
φιλάργυροι	ὑπάρχοντες	καὶ	ἐξεμυκτήριζον	αὐτόν		
covetous	who were	also	they derided	him		
G5366	G5225	G2532	G1592	G846		

Additional Cross-References

Luke 23:35 (Parallel theme): And the people stood beholding. And the rulers also with them derided him, saying, He saved others; let him save himself, if he be Christ, the chosen of God.

Luke 20:47 (Parallel theme): Which devour widows' houses, and for a shew make long prayers: the same shall receive greater damnation.

Isaiah 56:11 (Parallel theme): Yea, they are greedy dogs which can never have enough, and they are shepherds that cannot understand: they all look to their own way, every one for his gain, from his quarter.

Jeremiah 8:10 (Parallel theme): Therefore will I give their wives unto others, and their fields to them that shall inherit them: for every one from the least even unto the greatest is given to covetousness, from the prophet even unto the priest every one dealeth falsely.

Jeremiah 6:13 (Parallel theme): For from the least of them even unto the greatest of them every one is given to covetousness; and from the prophet even unto the priest every one dealeth falsely.

Luke 12:15 (Parallel theme): And he said unto them, Take heed, and beware of covetousness: for a man's life consisteth not in the abundance of the things which he possesseth.