





Here's the irony. The Pharisees, who are so keen to impose minor matters of the law on others, are on the other hand quite happy to overlook certain issues when it suits them. They think that with the stroke of a pen they can write a Certificate of Divorce to dissolve a marriage, and yet they quibble about healing a woman on the Sabbath. At first glance verses 16 to 18 are hard to fit into the flow of what's happening, but it's interesting that a similar group of ideas occurs in Matthew 5, where one of the biggest complaints Jesus has against the Pharisees is the way they so easily dispose of their unwanted wives...

**"It has been said, 'Anyone who divorces his wife must give her a certificate of divorce.'** But I tell you that anyone who divorces his wife, except for marital unfaithfulness, causes her to become an adulteress, and anyone who marries the divorced woman commits adultery. (Matt 5:31-32)

- i) **Read verses 16 to 18** with that issue in mind. What do the Pharisees need to realize?
- j) What has everyone else been doing since the time of John the Baptist?
- k) What should the Pharisees do?

Remember the "closing door" back in Luke 13? Since the time of John the Baptist, everyone else has been squeezing in – but the Pharisees are still standing outside. They're loading people up with laws that they don't even carry themselves, majoring on the minors (like Sabbath observance) while too readily excusing weighty things like divorce as they casually pass discarded wives around with their official looking 'certificates.' They're missing the point completely! Their priorities are all wrong!

- l) Make a quick summary of the priorities of the Pharisees from the passage. Compare this with your own priorities.

### **Another Parable about Priorities – The Rich Man and Lazarus**

- m) **Read the parable from 16:19-31**. Find the verse that you think best summarises the reversal that takes place in the story.
- n) What warning does the rich man ask to be sent to his family, and why won't it help?

- o) How does verse 31 sum up the problem of the Pharisees, who are so 'devoted' to the law of Moses?
  
- p) Are you offended by what Jesus says about 'serving God and money', or the comments he makes about divorce? This is Jesus at his most confronting! Is the reason you find these things hard that your priorities are a) being comfortable and b) being 'happy'?
  
- q) How should we be using our worldly wealth?

**Pray together**, that we would be wholehearted in the way we serve God rather than money, and that we would be people who 'seek first the Kingdom.'

# Study 6

**Luke 16:19-19:10**

*Coming Soon!*