

PC and Sarasota Campus Sermon Outline

Today we are going to be looking at two main verses from the Bible, Luke 16:16-17. *We are skipping the first several verses of Luke 16. Don't worry though, Pastor Rusty will come back and talk about those verses later.*

Please follow along as I read these two verses from Luke 16 and then we'll unpack this passage of Scripture together.

Luke 16:16-17

16 *"The Law and the Prophets were proclaimed until John. Since that time, the good news of the kingdom of God is being preached, and everyone is forcing their way into it. 17 It is easier for heaven and earth to disappear than for the least stroke of a pen to drop out of the Law.*

I hope by the end of our time together that you develop a hunger for the Old Testament.

Again, *Luke 16:16* says,
The Law and the Prophets were proclaimed until John.

There are lots of words here, so let me take time to explain every word.

Specifically, what are the Law and the Prophets and who is John?

Let's start by identifying the *Law*.

The Law is part of the Old Testament. The Bible is divided into two main parts, the Old Testament and the New Testament.

In the Bible there are 66 books: 37 Old Testament books and 29 New Testament books.

The Law in the Old Testament is the Law of Moses, which includes the first five books of the Bible.

These books are Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, and Deuteronomy and they were written by Moses.

Let's identify the *Prophets* next.

The Prophets are really most of the rest of the Old Testament Scriptures.

This includes the books of Jewish history.

There were also prophets who ministered for God and wrote during this time too. For example, we often read from Isaiah at both Christmas and Easter, because this Old Testament prophet prophesied about Christ's birth and his death.

The writings of the Psalms and Proverbs would be included here too.

So, to sum it up so far.

The Law and the Prophets are the Old Testament Scriptures.

Who is John?

John the Baptist is the forerunner of Christ.

He's Jesus's cousin who was born just six months earlier than Jesus.

He dressed like the prophets from way back.

John lived in the desert and ate locusts and wild honey.

He preached to the people: "Repent, for the kingdom of heaven has come near." And he baptized those who accepted his message. That's why he's famously known as John the Baptizer, or John the Baptist.

John the Baptist even baptized Jesus.

Now, at this point in Jesus's Ministry, things are really getting good. Jesus fulfilled Old Testament prophecies and things are so good and exciting that Jesus says,

Luke 16:16

Since that time, the good news of the kingdom of God is being preached, and everyone is forcing their way into it.

Since the Old Testament Scriptures were completed and now Jesus had come, there was good news. This good news is the gospel.

2 Corinthians 5:21 shares the gospel in one brief sentence. Here's what it says.

Next, let's read the next verse, Luke 16:17 together and unpack it as well.

Luke 16:17

17 *It is easier for heaven and earth to disappear than for the least stroke of a pen to drop out of the Law.*

I don't think I need to take time to explain what heaven and earth are. I know you got that. It's all of creation that we see and experience.

Jesus makes this analogy though.

It is easier for heaven and earth to disappear . . .

Than for something to drop out of the Law.

We know what heaven and earth are, but what is the least stroke of a pen which Jesus says won't drop out of the law? What is Jesus talking about here?

I think he's using a metaphor, an analogy, to teach something very important.

Even now, with the good news about Jesus Christ, the Old Testament Scriptures are still valuable.

It would be easier for heaven and earth to disappear . . . Think about that for a minute: All that's created to just drop out of existence . . .

It would be easier for earth to cease and drop out of existence than for just a little brush of the pen from the Old Testament to be considered worthless, null, or void.

The Old Testament Scriptures are firm, fixed, and dependable. Jesus is teaching us something about the permanence, staying power, and value of the Old Testament.

He's also teaching us something about the truth of Scripture.

God's word contains no error. In seminary we would say that the Bible is inerrant. It is without error. It is completely true.

We would also say that the Bible is infallible. That's actually a stronger term. Because the Bible is all from God it all has to be all true. Since God can't be wrong and he is ultimately the author responsible for writing all of the Bible, the Bible can't be wrong either. God can't be wrong and his Scriptures can't be wrong either.

Please see the resources below if you want to look more into an explanation and defense of the inerrancy of the Bible. Please also feel free to email questions you have about the Bible's inerrancy and infallibility to me: rylanallen@ndcchurch.com

- ***For a basic defense of the Bible's inerrancy check out [J. Warner Wallace's video here](#)***
- ***For another defense of the Bible's inerrancy, especially in light of differences in the ancient manuscripts, check out [this video from J. Warner Wallace](#)***
- ***For a foundational explanation of biblical inerrancy, check out [Robert Plummer's video here](#)***
- ***Also see Josh McDowell's [The New Evidence That Demands a Verdict here](#)***
- ***For a foundational, thorough, and academic discussion of the topic of biblical inerrancy, consider [Inerrancy by Norman Geisler here](#)***

I want to share three reasons why you should Love the Bible and Read the Bible today.

1) The Old Testament provides examples of faith, both good and bad.

There are some great examples of faith in the Old Testament. The New Testament's favorite example of faith from the Old Testament is Abraham.

Romans 4:20-21

Yet he did not waver through unbelief regarding the promises of God, but was strengthened in his faith and gave glory to God, being fully persuaded that God had power to do what he had promised. This is why "it was credited to him as righteousness".

Here's what Paul said about the bad example of the Old Testament Israelites in 1 Corinthians 10:6.

1 Corinthians 10:6

Now these things occurred as examples to keep us from setting our hearts on evil things as they did.

Paul says look to the Old Testament and don't follow the ungodly example of some of the people.

So, the first reason to read and love the Old Testament is:

The Old Testament provides examples of faith, both good and bad.

And the second reason to read and love the Old Testament is:

2) The Old Testament guides us into what is right and wrong.

This past fall, we had an entire sermon series devoted to the Ten Commandments.

Now real quick, I don't have time to go into all the details about Old Testament food laws; but in the New Testament, Jesus did declare all foods clean now.

So, even though faithful Jews couldn't enjoy bacon in the Old Testament, we sure can today. Jesus said all food is clean.

Also, Jesus fulfilled Old Testament temple worship, including the system of animal sacrifices.

Jesus offered himself as the sacrifice for sin once and for all. Jesus paid for all sins for all people for all time when he died on the cross. The Bible says that no additional sacrifice for sins is left. Jesus took care of it all when he died on the cross for us.

Again, a second reason to love and read the Old Testament is: *the Old Testament guides us into what is right and wrong.*

Here's a third reason to love and read the Old Testament:

3) The Old Testament points us to Christ.

John 5:39

39 *You study the Scriptures diligently because you think that in them you have eternal life. These are the very Scriptures that testify about me.*

The Old Testament Scriptures are not just rules to follow they are words of eternal life because they point to Christ, the only true giver of life forever.

In the New Testament, in Acts, you read about the first person to put his faith in Christ from the nation of Ethiopia. He was an official who served the queen of Ethiopia. He was reading from Isaiah 53 about how God would send a Messiah who would have to suffer to save people.

The Ethiopian asked a Christian leader who Isaiah's prophecy was about.

That Christian leader, a follower of Jesus named Philip, explained that the prophecy was talking about Jesus.

And without the Old Testament we wouldn't fully know the good news about Jesus.

Philip used the Old Testament, and not the New Testament, to lead a man to Christ, probably the first Christian convert from the nation of Ethiopia.

By the way, parents, our kids are going to be learning about Philip and the Ethiopian today.

The third reason to love and read the Old Testament is:

The Old Testament points us to Christ.

Have you put your faith in Christ?

Would you respond to the gospel, the good news about Jesus, just like the Ethiopian government leader did? He put his faith in Christ as his Lord and Savior, and he was baptized that same day.

You can put your faith in Christ and be baptized today. We are praying that you will if you haven't already.

PC and Sarasota Campus Small Group Discussion Questions

1. The Endurance of God's Word

Question: Jesus suggests that the physical world is less permanent than the Old Testament Law. In a world where trends and values change so quickly, how does the "staying power" of Scripture provide you with a sense of stability?

Scripture: "It is easier for heaven and earth to disappear than for the least stroke of a pen to drop out of the Law." — **Luke 16:17 (NIV)**

2. Learning from the Past

Question: The Old Testament contains stories of great faith and great failure. When you read about the mistakes of the Israelites, how does it help you identify "evil things" or temptations that might be pulling at your own heart today?

Scripture: "Now these things occurred as examples to keep us from setting our hearts on evil things as they did." — **1 Corinthians 10:6 (NIV)**

3. Seeing Jesus in Every Chapter

Question: Philip used the Old Testament to lead the Ethiopian official to Christ. If you were talking to someone who didn't know Jesus, how might you use an Old Testament story or prophecy to explain who He is?

Scripture: "You study the Scriptures diligently because you think that in them you have eternal life. These are the very Scriptures that testify about me." — **John 5:39 (NIV)**

4. Understanding the "Good News"

Question: The passage mentions that since the time of John the Baptist, the "good news" is being preached and people are "forcing their way into it." What does that kind of spiritual urgency or hunger look like in your life right now?

Scripture: "The Law and the Prophets were proclaimed until John. Since that time, the good news of the kingdom of God is being preached, and everyone is forcing their way into it." — **Luke 16:16 (NIV)**

5. Trusting the Author

Question: If we believe the Bible is "inerrant" and "infallible" because God is the ultimate author, how does that change the way you respond to parts of the Bible that are difficult to understand or hard to accept?

Scripture: "It is easier for heaven and earth to disappear than for the least stroke of a pen to drop out of the Law." — **Luke 16:17 (NIV)**

6. Persuaded by the Promises

Question: Abraham is praised for not wavering in his faith despite the circumstances. What is a specific promise from God's Word that you are currently struggling to be "fully persuaded" by, and how can this group support you in that?

Scripture: "Yet he did not waver through unbelief regarding the promise of God, but was strengthened in his faith and gave glory to God, being fully persuaded that God had power to do what he had promised." — **Romans 4:20-21 (NIV)**

North Port Campus Sermon Outline

INTRODUCTION

Today we are looking at the importance in Preaching ALL of God's Word. Someone once said, Preach the Word, brother preach it. Preach it high, where men can teach it. Preach it low, where men can reach it, but in all things preach the Word.

I love preaching, because the Word of God is living and active. Both the Old and New Testament provide a roadmap on not only what it means to be a person of faith, but how to grow in your faith. I hope that by the end of today, you'll learn to love ALL of God's inspired word!

In our passage today, Luke captures one of these pivotal, life changing moments. And it highlights for us the importance of studying and preaching ALL of God's word.

16 *"The Law and the Prophets were proclaimed until John. Since that time, the good news of the kingdom of God is being preached, and everyone is forcing their way into it. 17 It is easier for heaven and earth to disappear than for the least stroke of a pen to drop out of the Law.*

I would argue that this passage, these two verses, are some of the most fascinating verses in the entire New Testament. The reason, is because they capture a pivotal "hinge moment" in biblical history—the transition from the Old Covenant (think of the Old Testament) to the New Covenant (the New Testament of the Bible). Because of Jesus, the world is now fundamentally changed, things will never be the same!

I. CONTEXT

And He was passing through from one city and village to another, teaching, and proceeding on His way to Jerusalem. And someone said to Him, "Lord, are there just a few who are being saved?"

To understand what is going on here, we need to understand the CONTEXT.

In the preceding verses, Jesus tells the story of a corrupt accountant, also known as the Shrewd Manager.

The connection to our passage is essentially a "mic drop" moment where Jesus exposes the gap between what the Pharisees preached and how they actually lived.

The Bridge Verse, is right before our passage, Luke tells us in verse 14:

"The Pharisees, who loved money, heard all this and were sneering at Jesus."

Jesus had just finished the Parable of the Shrewd Manager, where he concluded that **"You cannot serve both God and money."** The Pharisees scoffed at this because they believed their wealth was a sign of God's blessing for their strict Law-keeping.

Then, in the verses following our passage, Jesus closes the loop and chapter 16, with the story of **The Rich Man and Lazarus**.

Jesus seems to be saying, this is what happens when you have the Law but ignore the Kingdom.

In the story, of the Rich Man and Lazarus, the Rich Man lives his life, like the "Old Era" (The Law and Prophets) was just a suggestion. He keeps everything for himself. He doesn't care about Lazarus or the needs of others.

When the Rich Man dies, the Bible tells us that he is in torment, and he begs Abraham to send Lazarus back to warn his brothers. Abraham's response is the ultimate "I told you so" regarding the Law's importance.

*"If they do not listen to **Moses and the Prophets**, they will not be convinced even if someone rises from the dead." (Luke 16:31)*

The Rich Man's mistake wasn't that he didn't have enough information; it's that he treated the Law like a fad instead of a foundation.

The Warning: If we have the "Good News" (the Gospel) and we *still* live like the Rich Man—ignoring the needy and hoarding our possessions—we are making the same mistake the Pharisees did.

So, now, understanding the context, lets breakdown our passage and see what God wants us to learn today

II. CHANGE

16 *"The Law and the Prophets were proclaimed until John. Since that time, the good news of the kingdom of God is being preached, and everyone is forcing their way into it.*

What does this mean? It means CHANGE is coming! If you go back to Luke 9, you'll find the account of **The Transfiguration**. This is where Jesus takes Peter, James, and John up on a mountain to pray. While praying, the Bible tells us that Jesus starts glowing. Suddenly, **Moses** (representing the Law – first 5 books of the Old Testament) and **Elijah** (representing the Prophets – basically the rest of the Old Testament) appear next to Him.

The Connection is powerful. They aren't there to compete with Jesus; they are there to "hand off the baton." When the vision ends, Moses and Elijah vanish, and the disciples see **"only Jesus."** It is a perfect illustration of the transition from the era of the Law/Prophets to the era of the King.

I want you to notice here, that Jesus defines a clear shift in spiritual eras. There is no ambiguity.

16 *"The Law and the Prophets were proclaimed until John..."*

The 1st Era, is that of the Law and Prophets: This refers to the Old Testament period, which lasted until the coming of John the Baptist. John is the for-runner of the Messiah. John is also seen as the final prophet of that era.

... Since that time, the good news of the kingdom of God is being preached...

The 2nd Era is that of the Kingdom: With Jesus' arrival, the "Good News" (or the Gospel) takes center stage. Later, the Apostle Paul would summarize things this way: You are no longer under the Law, but now, you are under grace.

What is the result?

...and everyone is forcing their way into it.

"Forcing their way into it": This is a tricky Greek phrase. It can mean that people are pursuing the Kingdom with intensity or it can imply that the Kingdom is being hindered by violent opposition.

To be honest, both make some sense...

But, given the context of the Pharisees' scoffing earlier in the chapter, I believe it likely refers to the urgency and determination required to break away from legalism and to embrace grace.

III. CONSISTENCY

17 It is easier for heaven and earth to disappear than for the least stroke of a pen to drop out of the Law.

God's word is of eternal importance. There is CONSISTENCY in who God is and what God says!

Jesus says, the physical universe is less stable than the eternal truths contained in the Law. In Jesus view, the Gospel doesn't abolish the Law; it fulfills the purpose the Law was always pointing toward.

In Matthew 5 we have Jesus teaching from the Sermon on the Mount. This is the "Director's Cut" version of what we find here in Luke 16. Jesus goes into even more detail about the Law's importance.

Matthew 5:17 "Do not think that I have come to abolish the Law or the Prophets; I have not come to abolish them but to fulfill them."

I love this Connection! While Luke mentions the "stroke of a pen," Matthew mentions the "iota" (the smallest Greek letter) and "dot" (the tiny horn on a Hebrew letter). If you learned this in the Old King James version: you may remember it as the Jot and Tittle.

It reinforces that Jesus isn't a rebel breaking the Law; He's the Architect finishing the building.

I don't know about you, but to me, this all feels very technical. It is fascinating, but technical. So, I have to ask myself, why does this matter? In fact, that's the question that wrote down in my notes as I was studying this passage. It matters, because it creates a tension that is central to our faith. What is the tension? It is the tension between Consistency vs. Change

Because of Jesus. The way we relate to God has **changed!** It's not about spiritual rituals. It's not about temple worship. Sacrificing animals. It's not about the way that we dress or the foods that we eat. It's about the "Good News" of the Kingdom.

While things have changed, there is also **Consistency**: The moral foundation of God's expectations hasn't shifted an inch. Scripture tells us that our God is the same yesterday, today, and forever.

Many scholars see this as Jesus' way of telling the Pharisees, "You claim to love the Law, but you're missing the Kingdom it was designed to lead you to."

You're missing the point! Today, I don't want you to miss the point.

So, can I challenge you in a few areas...

APPLICATION

1. Balance Grace with Truth

17 It is easier for heaven and earth to disappear than for the least stroke of a pen to drop out of the Law.

Verse 17 is a safeguard against "**Easy Believism**." While the "Good News" is being preached (Grace), the "Law" doesn't fail (Truth).

John tells us that when Jesus came, He was full of Grace and Truth! Which is more important? This is not an either/or, this is a both/and!

Grace is not a license to ignore God's moral standards. The Gospel doesn't lower the bar of the Law; it provides the power to actually live it out. You are now free to worship and serve and you can do it from the heart rather than just out of habit!

So, can I challenge you. Look at the moral compromises you've made lately. Don't dismiss it as I'm "covered by grace" in a way that makes you indifferent; treat it with the weight Jesus gives it in verse 17.

2. Check for Selective Obedience

The Pharisees loved the parts of the Law that made them look good but ignored the parts about greed.

17 It is easier for heaven and earth to disappear than for the least stroke of a pen to drop out of the Law.

Jesus reminds them that the *least* stroke of a pen matters.

We cannot pick and choose which parts of God's word to follow based on our personal or political preferences.

Listen, it's time to audit your "blind spots." Is there a command in Scripture (perhaps regarding money, anger, or speech) that you've been treating as "optional" or outdated?

Faith starts with our feet! We put our faith into action!

3. Transition from "Rules" to "Relationship"

16 "The Law and the Prophets were proclaimed until John..."

Jesus notes that the era of the Law and Prophets was "until John." We are now in the era of the Kingdom.

What's the point: In the Old Covenant, the Law was an external list. In the Kingdom, the Law is written on the heart. Your motivation for doing good should shift from fear of punishment to love for the King.

Here's what that means. The next time you do something "religious" (praying, giving, serving), ask yourself: "Am I doing this to check a box (Law), or because I want to be closer to the King (Kingdom)?"

4. Evaluate Your "Spiritual Urgency"

16 *"The Law and the Prophets were proclaimed until John. Since that time, the good news of the kingdom of God is being preached, and everyone is forcing their way into it.*

The phrase "everyone is forcing their way into it" suggests that entering the Kingdom isn't a passive hobby; it requires a certain level of desperation and effort.

So what about you? Are you "sneering" from the sidelines like the Pharisees, or are you "pressing in" with the urgency of someone who knows they need a Savior?

CONCLUSION

Do you need a Savior?

So many times in my life, I've tried to convince myself that I am a "mistaker". I want to believe that I simply made a mistake. However, in my heart, I know, I'm not a "mistaker". The reason I know this, is because a mistake implies ignorance. However, not only did I know what I was doing was wrong, but then I decided to do it anyways! I am not a "mistaker", no, I am a sinner. And if I am a sinner, I need a Savior.

Truth – all have sinned Grace – But the gift of God, the Grace of God, is eternal life through Christ Jesus our Lord!

If you have never accepted Jesus as the Lord of your life, what is holding you back? He desires a relationship with you! This is not about try harder, do better. It's not about check the right boxes, get your life cleaned up first. No, Jesus says, Follow Me! He loves you! He desires a relationship with you!

North Port Campus Small Group Discussion Questions

1. Navigating the Hinge Moments

Question: The sermon describes the transition from the Old Covenant to the New Covenant as a "hinge moment" where everything changed because of Jesus. When you look at your own faith journey, what

was a "hinge moment" where your understanding of God shifted from just following rules to truly embracing the Gospel?

Scripture: "The Law and the Prophets were proclaimed until John. Since that time, the good news of the kingdom of God is being preached, and everyone is forcing their way into it." — **Luke 16:16 (NIV)**

2. Guarding Against Selective Obedience

Question: The Pharisees were criticized for loving parts of the Law that made them look good while ignoring their own greed. How can we identify "blind spots" in our own lives—areas where we might be picking and choosing which parts of God's Word to follow based on what is comfortable or popular?

Scripture: "It is easier for heaven and earth to disappear than for the least stroke of a pen to drop out of the Law." — **Luke 16:17 (NIV)**

3. Balancing Grace and Truth

Question: Jesus is described as being "full of grace and truth". In our current culture, we often lean too far toward one or the other. Why is it dangerous to have "grace" without "truth," and how does the permanence of God's Word help keep us from falling into "easy believism"?

Scripture: "It is easier for heaven and earth to disappear than for the least stroke of a pen to drop out of the Law." — **Luke 16:17 (NIV)**

4. Evaluating Spiritual Urgency

Question: The phrase "everyone is forcing their way into it" suggests that entering the Kingdom requires determination and urgency rather than being a passive hobby. What does it look like practically in your daily life to "press in" to the Kingdom of God with that kind of intensity?

Scripture: "The Law and the Prophets were proclaimed until John. Since that time, the good news of the kingdom of God is being preached, and everyone is forcing their way into it." — **Luke 16:16 (NIV)**

5. Motivation: Checklist vs. Relationship

Question: Under the New Covenant, the Law is written on our hearts rather than just being an external list of rules. Think about your recent "religious" activities (praying, serving, or giving). How can you tell if you are doing them to "check a box" or because you genuinely want to be closer to the King?

Scripture: "The Law and the Prophets were proclaimed until John. Since that time, the good news of the kingdom of God is being preached, and everyone is forcing their way into it." — **Luke 16:16 (NIV)**

6. Foundation vs. Fad

Question: The Rich Man in Jesus' story treated the Law like a "fad" instead of a "foundation," leading to a life of hoarding rather than helping. If someone looked at your bank account or your calendar, would they see someone building their life on the foundation of God's Word or someone following the fads of the world?

Scripture: "He said to him, 'If they do not listen to Moses and the Prophets, they will not be convinced even if someone rises from the dead.'" — **Luke 16:31 (NIV)**

