Dishonest Gain in the Light of God's Righteousness – Part 2

God, who is righteous, does not tolerate hidden sin. Achan was not merely a man who did wrong; he was a symbol of iniquity stubbornly held on to. The sentence of death came not only for the deed itself, but for the refusal to bring it into the light. God required that sin to be brought out, judged and removed, so that His presence might return to the people. Death is the wages of sin, just as the apostle Paul says: **"For the wages of sin is death."** (Romans 6:23) **Extortion**, as a form of iniquity, is not merely a violation of human rights; it is an abomination in the sight of God. It brings down divine judgment, because it undermines the justice, dignity and order established by the Creator. **Stealing through unpaid taxes** shuts out the life that comes from God, because righteousness cannot dwell side by side with extortion. The two are incompatible, just as light cannot coexist with darkness. The new life from God calls for a deep transformation, a separation from the works of darkness and a sincere cleaving to what is right. Wherever extortion is practised, there is no life from God, but death, because iniquity reigns there, not righteousness.

This divine hatred of extortion and iniquity is not mere moral disapproval; it is a spiritual condemnation. It shows that God cannot be associated with injustice, and that those who live dishonestly separate themselves from His character. Gain obtained dishonestly is not just a question of ethics; it is a direct offence against the holiness of God.

In the eyes of men it may look like success, but in the eyes of God it is folly: a life built on injustice cannot be blessed. It is an unwise choice that ignores the spiritual and moral consequences. For the one who does these things, it is a snare that leads to death. Scripture warns: "As the partridge sitteth on eggs, and hatcheth them not; so he that getteth riches, and not by right, shall leave them in the midst of his days, and at his end shall be a fool." (Jeremiah 17:11)

If someone, even in poverty, works off the books and avoids paying taxes, he is directly and explicitly breaking the law of Christ. The Lord Jesus taught us to be ready to give to the one who asks of us, not to hide what we have; not to resist the one who would take us to court to take what is ours, but to offer him even more than he asks. He says in **Luke 6:29–30**: "Him that taketh away thy cloke forbid not to take thy coat also. Give to every man that asketh of thee; and of him that taketh away thy goods ask them not again."

This principle expresses an attitude of openness and submission to what is right, not of evasion or concealment. Working cash-in-hand and refusing to contribute to the common good by not paying taxes contradicts the spirit of the Gospel and the righteous character of Christ.

We can easily see that these commands in Luke 6 were given in an extremely difficult historical setting: the Jews were living under Roman occupation, and Roman soldiers had the legal

authority to demand goods, taxes or even forced labour from the local population. The Lord Jesus did not tell His disciples to rebel; He taught them to respond with a submissive heart, in keeping with His commands. This attitude of willing submission and of giving up one's rights reflects the values of those who belong to the Kingdom of God.

Along the same line of thought, we find His command: **"Render therefore unto Cæsar the things which are Cæsar's..."** (Matthew 22:21). The apostle Paul reinforces this principle when he says: "Render therefore to all their dues: tribute to whom tribute is due..." (Romans 13:7). This command is not an exception; it is the logical continuation of the principle of not resisting the one who takes by force, but of living in submission to our Teacher.

In that historical setting, paying tribute meant submitting to an authority that was often unjust, yet ordained by God. By contrast, today's taxes no longer have the character of tribute; they are a responsible contribution to the common good, coming back to us in the form of infrastructure, healthcare and other public services.

Working off the books as a way of life is not an occasional mistake but an ongoing sin: a deliberate choice to live dishonestly and in disobedience to the authorities. It reflects a heart that has not been visited by the Holy Spirit and has not understood the call to a life of integrity.

To claim that you live every day with the righteous God as your Father while keeping this sin in your life is a blatant lie. God does not make His home where iniquity reigns. He is holy, and His presence cannot be claimed by mere declaration; it must be confirmed by a clean life.

After we are born of God, the **Holy Spirit** is given as an abiding presence in the believer's life. The Lord Jesus said: "And, lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world." (Matthew 28:20) This promise holds for those who live in obedience and purity. The Holy Spirit is not indifferent to sin; He works actively to cleanse and sanctify us.

A practical example: a man who has been born again commits a dishonest act, such as carelessly using the company car for personal purposes without his employer's consent. He will be convicted in his conscience. Although the act may seem minor or justifiable, the Holy Spirit convinces him that it is a form of wrongdoing. This conviction is not mere human guilt; it is the work of the Holy Spirit, who convicts the soul of sin. He not only rebukes but also urges toward repentance and making things right, by owning up to the deed and paying fairly for what was used. The Spirit does not accept compromise; He leads a man toward the light, toward the truth and toward cleansing.

Therefore, refusing to pay taxes is not merely a legal offence; it is a way of rejecting the commands of Christ from Luke 6:29 to Matthew 22:21. This rejection of the Word, which is the seed of God (Luke 8:11) from which new life ought to spring, shows that the new birth from God, which happens only if we receive Him with joy, has not taken place. (John 1:12) Scripture shows us that the Holy Spirit is given to make this seed germinate in the human heart. But the work of the Spirit does not happen automatically; it requires an open and obedient heart.

Where there is no obedience to the commands of Christ, including in seemingly "small" matters such as paying taxes, it is a sign that the Spirit is not at work bringing a new life to sprout. Not because He lacks the power, but because the seed has fallen on trodden-down ground where it cannot sprout: a hardened heart that rejects it.

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