Unjust Gain in the Light of God's Righteousness – Part 1

In the Kingdom of God, **justice** is not an optional detail but a fundamental requirement. It is not decorative but essential: a visible expression of a transformed heart and a renewed life that lives in harmony with God's character.

This way of living does not come from religious obligation, but from the deep longing of a heart that hungers and thirsts after **righteousness**. Such a heart yearns for purity, truth and light. It is not content with appearances, but seeks to reflect God's holiness genuinely.

Righteousness shows itself in every area of life, including the way we respect the rights of others. That is why any **unjust gain**, whatever its form, is a serious violation of the order God has ordained.

It is not only a matter of directly taking an object. It is any form of seizing what does not belong to us: material things, money, opportunities or advantages gained unjustly. God's justice tolerates no compromise of any kind. He not only forbids stealing, but also coveting what is not ours. To covet what belongs to another, whether material goods or social standing, is to challenge the order and justice God has established. It is an offence against His holy character and proof that the heart is not aligned with the righteousness of heaven.

To live in God's righteousness means being honest, upright, just, fair, impartial and unwavering, even when no one is watching, even when the circumstances would allow a compromise. In the Kingdom of God every choice matters, because it reveals who we are and to whom we belong.

In this light, **working off the books** is not merely a questionable economic practice but iniquity. It is a form of organised theft that avoids paying taxes and breaks laws established for the common good. Although it is widespread and often justified by personal need or a lack of options, in God's eyes it remains wickedness.

When these contributions are avoided, society is deprived of the resources it needs for education, healthcare and social protection, especially for the elderly who have worked their whole lives. Meeting our legal obligations is not only a matter of social responsibility. It is also an expression of love for our neighbour and of submission to the order God has ordained. The apostle Paul states it plainly: "Let every soul be subject unto the higher powers. For there is no power but of God: the powers that be are ordained of God. Whosoever therefore resisteth the power, resisteth the ordinance of God." (**Romans 13:1-2**) So to work off the books, or to encourage such practices, is to defy not only human law but also divine order. The believer is called to live in the light, with integrity, even when others choose the path of compromise.

Scripture condemns gain obtained by unjust means without the slightest ambiguity: "Rejoice not, O Israel… thou hast loved a reward upon every cornfloor." (Hosea 9:1) This rebuke to the

people of Israel shows how serious it is to cling to material gain won through compromise at the expense of God's blessing. When a person loves dishonest profit, he drifts away from the holiness God requires and from fellowship with Him, and he displays the character of Balaam. Scripture says that Balaam "loved the wages of unrighteousness" (2 Peter 2:15), showing that his thirst for gain blinded him and drove him to choose the wickedness that leads to death. Those who love dishonest wages walk the same road of death.

This truth is confirmed in Jeremiah 2:33, where God says: "Why trimmest thou thy way to seek love? therefore hast thou also taught the wicked ones thy ways." This verse shows that a person drawn by greed, whether poor or rich, deliberately shapes his behaviour to feed it and grows ever more skilled in wickedness. "For the love of money is the root of all evil: which while some coveted after, they have erred from the faith." (1 Timothy 6:10)

Hiding income, dodging taxes, corruption and manipulation are all forms of lying and stealing. They cannot be blessed, and they keep a person in a state of spiritual death, because they stand in direct opposition to God's righteousness. Such practices do more than break the moral law. They contradict the holy character of God, who hates dishonest gain and requires a life lived in truth and justice.

Every kind of gain obtained through deceit, whether tax evasion, corruption or manipulation, is rebellion against God's character. These are not mere administrative slip-ups or "adapting to circumstances". They are sins that separate us from God. God cannot count as pure the one who hides his income and uses unjust means for personal gain. Scripture is categorical: "Shall I count them pure with the wicked balances, and with the bag of deceitful weights?" (Micah 6:11)

This rhetorical question expresses God's indignation at the hypocrisy of those who claim to be righteous, yet use "deceitful weights" when it comes time to declare their income. Those weights are a symbol of deceit and dishonest gain. Stealing from the tax system may look like a financial gain, but in reality it brings no lasting benefit. "Treasures of wickedness profit nothing: but righteousness delivereth from death." (Proverbs 10:2) Such treasures give no protection, bring no peace and give no life. Only righteousness, that is, living in truth and justice, delivers.

Hiding income to avoid paying taxes, and employers and employees colluding to gain financial benefits they are not entitled to, are all forms of a "false balance". God does more than reject them. He calls them an abomination, something deeply offensive to His holy and righteous nature. "A false balance is abomination to the LORD: but a just weight is his delight." (Proverbs 11:1)

God's character is defined by justice, holiness and truth. He does not only do justice; He loves justice and hates robbery. Isaiah 61:8 expresses this contrast with solemn clarity: "For I the LORD love judgment, I hate robbery for burnt offering…"

This hatred is not an emotional reaction but an expression of His holy nature. God cannot be indifferent to evil, because evil is a direct offence against His character. Robbery, whether of goods, rights or dignity, is a form of active injustice, a violation of the moral order God has

established.

Scripture warns without ambiguity in Ezekiel 18:10-13 that the one who robs shall die: "If he beget a son that is a robber… shall he then live? he shall not live: he hath done all these abominations; he shall surely die; his blood shall be upon him."

A striking example in Scripture is the sin of **Achan**, who hid stolen goods in his tent: a garment, silver and gold. Although the people of Israel had just experienced a great victory at Jericho, God withdrew from their midst because of this sin. "Israel hath sinned, and they have also transgressed my covenant which I commanded them: for they have even taken of the accursed thing, and have also stolen, and dissembled also, and they have put it even among their own stuff." (Joshua 7:11)

The sin had to be uncovered, confessed and removed before God would resume His work among them. God cannot dwell where sin reigns. This episode is a solemn warning: without dealing radically with sin, there can be no real fellowship with God. Achan hid the stolen goods from the eyes of men, but they were not hidden from the eyes of God. What was buried in his tent cried out to heaven.

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