

## ***God is Displeased When We Are Not Willing to Use Our Wealth for His Ministry***

***“Charge them that are rich in this world, that they be not highminded, nor trust in uncertain riches, but in the living God, who giveth us richly all things to enjoy.” (1 Timothy 6:17 KJV)***

The Lord gave riches for the purpose of providing His people added joy and blessings into their lives and to let them use these resources appropriately to bless God, His work, and His people.

Riches and wealth from God should not cause us to trust or to put our hope on them. In such circumstances, when money becomes the source of trust, then it becomes an idol and that will be the abuse of wealth.

Christ says, ***“19 Lay not up for yourselves treasures upon earth, where moth and rust doth corrupt, and where thieves break through and steal: 20 But lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust doth corrupt, and where thieves do not break through nor steal: 21 For where your treasure is, there will your heart be also.” (Matthew 6:19-21 KJV)*** What He means here is that God gave us resources to employ into the Kingdom of God. If it is not used in this manner, then our material blessings will not be translated to Heavenly things, and they, corrupted by our worldliness, greed, and love of money, will finally lead to our destruction.

There are those who say that Christians should not acquire much money and resources. This will be applicable if the intention is to collect money and to chase after it. But if money comes to a man through his Godly lifestyle, then there is no harm to be rich and there is no harm to have plenty as long as he works with God to invest his resources into God’s Kingdom through Godly living, service, and ministry.

Cain was blessed by God, but he was not willing to give his firstfruit to God: ***“1 And Adam knew Eve his wife; and she conceived, and bare Cain, and said, I have gotten a man from the LORD. 2 And she again bare his brother Abel. And Abel was a keeper of sheep, but Cain was a tiller of the ground. 3 And in process of time it came to pass, that Cain brought of the fruit of the ground an offering unto the LORD. 4 And Abel, he also brought of the firstlings of his flock and of the fat thereof. And the LORD had respect unto Abel and to his offering: 5 But unto Cain and to his offering he had not respect. And Cain was very wroth, and his countenance fell. 6 And the LORD said unto Cain, Why art thou wroth? and why is thy countenance fallen? 7 If thou doest well, shalt thou not be accepted? and if thou doest not well, sin lieth at the door. And unto thee shall be his desire, and thou shalt rule over him.” (Genesis 4:1-7 KJV)***

Nabal was not willing to support David in his mission to serve God, even though David and his men watched over the flocks of Nabal and his men. ***“2 And there was a man in Maon, whose possessions were in Carmel; and the man was very great, and he had three thousand sheep, and a thousand goats: and he was shearing his sheep in Carmel. 3 Now the name of the man was Nabal; and the name of his wife Abigail: and she was a woman of good understanding, and of a beautiful countenance: but the man was churlish and evil in his doings; and he was***

***of the house of Caleb. 4 And David heard in the wilderness that Nabal did shear his sheep. 5 And David sent out ten young men, and David said unto the young men, Get you up to Carmel, and go to Nabal, and greet him in my name: 6 And thus shall ye say to him that liveth in prosperity, Peace be both to thee, and peace be to thine house, and peace be unto all that thou hast. 7 And now I have heard that thou hast shearers: now thy shepherds which were with us, we hurt them not, neither was there ought missing unto them, all the while they were in Carmel. 8 Ask thy young men, and they will shew thee. Wherefore let the young men find favour in thine eyes: for we come in a good day: give, I pray thee, whatsoever cometh to thine hand unto thy servants, and to thy son David. 9 And when David's young men came, they spake to Nabal according to all those words in the name of David, and ceased. 10 And Nabal answered David's servants, and said, Who is David? and who is the son of Jesse? there be many servants nowadays that break away every man from his master. 11 Shall I then take my bread, and my water, and my flesh that I have killed for my shearers, and give it unto men, whom I know not whence they be? 12 So David's young men turned their way, and went again, and came and told him all those sayings.” (1 Samuel 25:2-12 KJV)***

The rich ruler’s meeting with Christ is another example of those who love to have money but are unwilling to please God with what they are blessed with. ***“18 And a certain ruler asked him, saying, Good Master, what shall I do to inherit eternal life? 19 And Jesus said unto him, Why callest thou me good? none is good, save one, that is, God. 20 Thou knowest the commandments, Do not commit adultery, Do not kill, Do not steal, Do not bear false witness, Honour thy father and thy mother. 21 And he said, All these have I kept from my youth up. 22 Now when Jesus heard these things, he said unto him, Yet lackest thou one thing: sell all that thou hast, and distribute unto the poor, and thou shalt have treasure in heaven: and come, follow me. 23 And when he heard this, he was very sorrowful: for he was very rich. 24 And when Jesus saw that he was very sorrowful, he said, How hardly shall they that have riches enter into the kingdom of God! 25 For it is easier for a camel to go through a needle's eye, than for a rich man to enter into the kingdom of God.” (Luke 18:18-25 KJV)*** This rich ruler had plenty, but he was not willing to go with the request of Christ to use his resources for God and to bless the needy.

Jesus always challenged the rich people to shift their focus from the world, turn away from their greed, and turn to God and towards utilizing their resources for God’s services.

Zacchaeus’ repentance is a good case to study of how he was delivered from the bondage of greed and extortion.

***“1 And Jesus entered and passed through Jericho. 2 And, behold, there was a man named Zacchaeus, which was the chief among the publicans, and he was rich. 3 And he sought to see Jesus who he was; and could not for the press, because he was little of stature. 4 And he ran before, and climbed up into a sycamore tree to see him: for he was to pass that way. 5 And when Jesus came to the place, he looked up, and saw him, and said unto him, Zacchaeus, make haste, and come down; for to day I must abide at thy house. 6 And he made haste, and came down, and received him joyfully. 7 And when they saw it, they all murmured, saying, That he was gone to be guest with a man that is a sinner. 8 And Zacchaeus stood, and said unto the Lord: Behold, Lord, the half of my goods I give to the poor; and if I have taken any thing from any man by false accusation, I restore him fourfold. 9 And Jesus said unto***

*him, This day is salvation come to this house, forsomuch as he also is a son of Abraham.10 For the Son of man is come to seek and to save that which was lost.” (Luke 19:1-10 KJV)*

Jericho was the first city that the Israelites had entered and captured from the Promised Land. It was the city that was cursed and supposed not to be built. But it happened that it was rebuilt and what we found here that Jesus entered this city and ultimately the cursed city received the blessings of Jesus. People got saved in this visit of Jesus to the city of Jericho. In particular Zacchaeus and his family got saved as a fruit of this visit of Jesus. **Therefore we need to endeavor to bring Jesus to every city so that His salvation will flow to other people.**

Zacchaeus was a rich man, the chief tax collector, **“2 And, behold, there was a man named Zacchaeus, which was the chief among the publicans, and he was rich.” (Luke 19:2 KJV)**

And from what we read from the story we come to understand that he was a cheater and extortionist using his job to make money out of greed and taking advantage of the people whom the law had put under his authority to exact tax from them.

Amazingly we found that Jesus called that sinner and entered his house. Truly the Lord came to seek and save those who are lost. **“10 For the Son of man is come to seek and to save that which was lost. (Luke 19:10 KJV)** Jesus may call any type of sinners, like prostitutes, thieves, murderers, sorcerers, etc. But not only that; Jesus called Zacchaeus and entered his house because Zacchaeus showed signs of repentance. Man looks to the external appearance but God looks to the heart. Zacchaeus expressed and desired to see and meet the Lord out of his internal repentance; out of his willingness to turn away from his life of wickedness, back to God and to follow the ways of Christ. We can observe the following points about his repentance and as the following:

**1. He Took the initiative to see Jesus:** He was short but he ran and climbed on a tree in order to avoid the crowd and to be able to see who Jesus was: **“3 And he sought to see Jesus who he was; and could not for the press, because he was little of stature.4 And he ran before, and climbed up into a sycamore tree to see him: for he was to pass that way.” (Luke 19:3-4 KJV)** Zacchaeus used the opportunity to repent and to come back to God. God gives people the opportunities to repent but if they are not willing to give up their sins then they will not use the opportunity to repent. See here that Zacchaeus was willing to repent. Even he was short, he ran and climbed a tree to meet the Lord. **Repentance is an opportunity from the Lord, use it, and not waste it, because it may not come to you again.**

**2. He obeyed the Lord immediately:** **“5 And when Jesus came to the place, he looked up, and saw him, and said unto him, Zacchaeus, make haste, and come down; for to day I must abide at thy house.6 And he made haste, and came down, and received him joyfully.” (Luke 19:5-6 KJV)** Once the Lord spoke to him to come down, he obeyed immediately. When people hear God’s call, many don’t respond but try to postpone it because they are charmed by the trappings of the world. Zacchaeus’ repentance was clear and he purposed in his heart not to be double-minded when Jesus called him. Many people when God is calling they will answer the Lord, ‘Not this time,’ ‘I am busy,’ ‘May be next year,’ ‘Oh Lord, am a sinner,’ etc. Zacchaeus’ repentance was clear, definite, and he was not double minded when Jesus called him. **Obey the Lord immediately and accept and do what he is asking from you to do.**

**3. He joyfully received Christ:** **“6 And he made haste, and came down, and received him joyfully.” (Luke 19:6 KJV)** Christ when he wants to come into your life and enter your house and your family is a blessing to you and it will be for your own good. Many people they are afraid when God is calling them and they have sadness and fear because they feel they will have to forfeit the treasures and the pleasures of this world. But Zacchaeus showed his repentance when he received Christ joyfully and was glad to hear from Jesus, **“for to day I must abide at thy house.” Be joyful to receive Christ in your life. Be joyful to obey Christ, and be aware for Christ to abide in you and stay with you means that you need to surrender your own life and will in full to HIM.**

**4. He did not justify his sins and wrong doings:** The people murmured when they saw Jesus entering Zacchaeus house, **“7 And when they saw it, they all murmured, saying, That he was gone to be guest with a man that is a sinner.” (Luke 19:7 KJV)** Here Zacchaeus when heard that did not justify himself or speak wrong against the people who criticized the Lord. What the people spoke about Zacchaeus was correct, being a sinner, and he accepted that. He did not deny or justify his sins. Greed and extortion are sins and true repentance is to take the responsibility for our sins and not to retaliate when we are faced by them. Some people instead of repenting, they end up fighting with people who faced them with the truth. **Repentance is to accept all your sins and not to retaliate when you are faced with them.**

**5. Zacchaeus corrected his bad testimony:** Zacchaeus recognized that his sins has brought a bad thing upon the Lord’s testimony, therefore he immediately took the initiative to correct his own wrong doings. **“8 and if I have taken any thing from any man by false accusation, I restore him fourfold.” (Luke 19:8 KJV)** We should not be among those who do not repent when they hear others speaking about their sins. **Put in your mind that your sins are bad testimonies toward the Lord, therefore examine yourself now and be honest to repent and take the initiative to correct your bad testimony.**

**6. Zacchaeus willingly gave to God what is due to Him:** Christ in *Luke 18* met the rich young man and the following had happened, **“22 Now when Jesus heard these things, he said unto him, Yet lackest thou one thing: sell all that thou hast, and distribute unto the poor, and thou shalt have treasure in heaven: and come, follow me.23 And when he heard this, he was very sorrowful: for he was very rich.” (Luke 18:22-23 KJV)** It might reach the ears of Zacchaeus what Jesus spoke to that rich man and Zacchaeus was willing to give spontaneously to the poor. **“8 And Zacchaeus stood, and said unto the Lord: Behold, Lord, the half of my goods I give to the poor;” (Luke 19:8 KJV)** In the same way, we need to give to God what he is asking us to give to Him and what His Word declares.

**7. Zacchaeus’s offering was not a false one:** Many people offer food and prepare banquets to cover up the cheating and corruption that they are living in. That is not repentance. Sins are forgiven by the blood of Jesus and salvation is received only upon repentance. Salvation is free and we cannot use our money or any material things to receive our salvation. We should not use our money to make friends and get support from people who would agree with our wrongdoings. Zacchaeus’ giving was not to cover up his sin but to pay back to God and to do willingly what His Word declares. **We need to repent from our sins and that is the way to receive the salvation of God because we cannot give material things to pay for our salvation.**

**8. Zacchaeus willingly restored what he had cheated or stolen: “8 and if I have taken any thing from any man by false accusation, I restore him fourfold.” (Luke 19:8 KJV)** Zacchaeus was willing to bear the consequences of his sins and was willing to compensate those whom he cheated in accordance to the Word of God, **“1 If a man shall steal an ox, or a sheep, and kill it, or sell it; he shall restore five oxen for an ox, and four sheep for a sheep.” (Exodus 22:1 KJV)** Repentance from greed and cheating should be accompanied by restoration and paying back to people to whom is due. **We need to pay back and compensate the losses that we caused to the people due to our sins.**

**9. Zacchaeus was mindful that he and his family to be saved: “9 And Jesus said unto him, This day is salvation come to this house, forsomuch as he also is a son of Abraham.” (Luke 19:9 KJV)** Zacchaeus recognized that his greed and love of money will bring his family to destruction. **“27 He that is greedy of gain troubleth his own house; but he that hateth gifts shall live.” (Proverbs 15:27 KJV)** He knew that he needed to repent so that curse will not fall on his children. In his repentance he got the opportunity to teach his children through the good example of living honestly and in contentment, away from greed, extortion and the love of money. Parents who repent are the best teachers for their children. They are the children of Abraham in faith and deeds to raise up their children in a Godly way as God said about Abraham. **“18 Seeing that Abraham shall surely become a great and mighty nation, and all the nations of the earth shall be blessed in him?19 For I know him, that he will command his children and his household after him, and they shall keep the way of the LORD, to do justice and judgment; that the LORD may bring upon Abraham that which he hath spoken of him.” (Genesis 18:18-19 KJV)**

**My dear and beloved:** The meaning of Zacchaeus is ‘pure’. God wants us to be truly pure. Our names may have good meanings, but our lives’ testimony should also look good and be pleasant to God. Integrity and commitment is expected from us in what we are entrusted to do. Material things that God gave to us are to be used for God’s work and for the propagation of His Kingdom. Therefore commit yourself to the calling of God and to the spiritual principles that you learned in this message as you repent and agree to pray.

**My Prayer:** Father God I come before you in the name of Jesus, who died on the cross for my sins and rose from the dead to give me eternal life. Lord thank you for all the material blessings that I had received from you. Lord I thank you for your word that showed me clearly your ways of life that you need me to follow.

*Repent and renounce all your sins. Renounce your bad stewardship and wasting your resources in wrong directions and your mismanagement to your finances and spending on unnecessary things. Repent of your worldliness and your love for material things. Repent of your love of money, greed, cheating, stealing, extorting, taking advantage, rubbing God and non willingness to give to the ministries of God. Repent of your non willingness to suffer for Christ and go along His will and the plan that He had for you. Repent of your non willingness to serve God and do the good works that God had prepared for you to do. Lord I repent and renounce the following sins \_\_\_\_\_ .*

*Lord I am willing to pay back and compensate what I caused of damages to the following people \_\_\_\_\_. Lord I commit my life to give what is due for you and for the poor and needy, and to the ministry that you are directing me to do. Lord I commit myself to*

*use the resources you gave me to do the works of yours and invest in your ministries and to build up your church.*

*Lord come and abide in my life, in my house and my family. I commit my life to live for you and to serve you according to your Word. Lord I commit myself to reproduce more fruit of the Holy Spirit that people will see Jesus in my life.*

*Lord, thank you for my Brothers and Sisters who repented of their sins and willing to amend their ways and perfect themselves to be useful fruitful and effective servants of yours. Lord fill them with the Holy Spirit and use their lives and testimonies to evangelize and to bring others to you. Lord use their lives and their resources for your purpose and glory and to build up your church. Lord continue to guide them into the whole will of yours in their lives. Lord protect them and provide all their needs so they will continue to serve you.*

*Lord bless us as a church and help us as we continue to teach and proclaim your Word and your will. Lord we thank you for all the resources that you had given to the church, Lord we pray that we will use them for your glory and build up your church and to aid the ministries of yours. Lord we thank you for all the workers who committed their lives to serve you with us. Lord we pray that you will enable us to train them and use them according to your plan and purpose. Lord refill us with the Holy Spirit and give us the Spiritual gifts that we need in our lives to go on and evangelize, and make new disciples and train new workers to go and plant more Bible studies and congregations for the church. Lord we pray for more people to be water Baptized and receive the Holy Spirit Baptism. Lord fulfill the vision of the church, ‘Multiplication in peace with implementing the Whole will of God.’ Lord prepare us for your coming that when you come we are ready to go with you. Lord bless us, enlarge our territory, let your hand be with us and free us from harm so that we will not feel pain. May the grace of the Lord Jesus and the love of God and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with us all in Jesus name, Amen.*

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