

Will A Man Rob God?

- I've heard some say that if Jesus was here in the flesh today He would be considered a Socialist. Others would consider Him a Capitalist. Whether a little of both or none of either, Jesus is still to be considered righteous wherever He stands on any issue. Often when making the socialistic claim, those who do, say that Jesus was against wealth and those possessing it and promoted giving away everything to the poor, and they use such claims as a justifiable reason for government intervention via taxation, taking from those who prosper and giving to those who don't (*or won't*). Which is how they justify their self-righteous ideas while all along using such to win elections. "See what I've done for you?" Such removes any incentive to be responsible and once that happens to the majority, who then will be the providers? They even **act** religious and use scripture when necessary in making such remarks. But they do so in error. Note the following.

Mar 10:17 And when He (*Jesus*) was gone forth into the way, there came one running, and kneeled to Him (*thus expressing honor for Jesus*), and asked Him, Good (*Gk.18- upright, honorable*) Master (*Gk.1320- an instructor: -teacher*), what shall I do that I may inherit eternal life? (*He recognized Jesus as the Person to go to for the answer.*) 18 And Jesus said unto him, Why callest thou Me good? *there is none good but One, God. (Thus, by the greeting, the rich young ruler [Lk.18:18- Thayer: Officer presiding over a synagogue] could have been referring to Jesus as Deity. And not that Jesus was denying such, but would bring attention to the designation and use this acknowledgment to illustrate His authority in answering the question at hand.)* 19 Thou knowest the commandments, Do not commit adultery, Do not kill, Do not steal, Do not bear false witness, Defraud not, Honour thy father and mother. 20 And he answered and said unto Him, Master, all these have I observed from my youth. 21 Then Jesus **beholding him loved him** (*Jesus was so concerned for this young man*), and said unto him, One thing thou lackest: go thy way, sell whatsoever thou hast, and give to the poor (*notice, He didn't say give it **all** to the poor*), and thou shalt have treasure in heaven: and come, take up the cross, and follow Me. 22 And he was sad at that saying, and went away grieved: for he had great possessions. (*Emp. Added*)

- As a parent's heart is broken over the acts their children commit that separate them from God, so in this case was the heart of our Savior over this young ruler of the synagogue. As one of the passages a socialist will refer to, they miss the point of Jesus' comments to this wealthy young ruler. Jesus didn't dislike him because of his wealth. He appealed to his heart in making it a **voluntary** act on his own behalf knowing perfectly well where his focus, thus his heart, lied. Unlike the class warfare mentality that exists today, Jesus actually loved this man because he also saw something in him that was good. After all, he observed and obeyed all the commandments. If Jesus had the authority, and wanted to just take wealth from one group and redistribute it to another, where would that voluntary giving of self exist? He would be going against His own teaching on charity. How can a person be a justified giver when such is confiscated by authoritative decree? The church has a **better** way of redistributing wealth.

1Co 16:1 Now concerning the collection for the saints, as I have given order to the churches of Galatia, even so do ye. 2 Upon the first *day* of the week **let** (*don't force*) every one of you lay by him in store, **as God hath prospered him**, that there be no gatherings when I come. (*Emp. Added*)

- If God doesn't expect any more from us then we are able to give, especially when it comes to taking care of the needy among us, then why should government expect any more?

And since a lot of red tape always seems to exist in whatever a government promotes through decree, how can 100% of those funds collected via taxation ever reach those who are most needy? The church is better at caring for those who are less fortunate because we often understand where the actual needs exist opposed to those who take advantage of the system in order to get some sort of free ride through life. And not that this is a call to oppose government either. We might not always agree with or have confidence in our government but we are to be subordinate to it unless Christianity is outlawed and practicing it would be illegal. Ultimately, God is in control.

Rom 13:1 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**. (*Emp. Added*) (*Not the type of government, but the governing itself.*)

Joh 19:10 Then saith Pilate unto Him, Speakest Thou not unto me? knowest Thou not that I have *power to crucify Thee, and have *power to release Thee? 11 Jesus answered, Thou couldest have no power (**Gk.1849- authority*) *at all* against Me, except it were given thee from above: therefore he that delivered Me unto thee hath the greater sin.

- If Jesus Himself, God Incarnate, humbled to a government that nailed Him to a cross, how can we think anything less, such as taxation, can be such a burden (*and I'm not saying we need to be taxed any higher than what is necessary to govern*). But, whatever we have left over after taxes and or other obligations, whatever we give **should be proportionately higher** than those who can contribute more than they do but don't (*such as those in government that give other people's money away thinking they are so charitable in doing such*).

Luk 21:1 And He (*Jesus*) looked up, and saw the rich men casting their gifts into the treasury. 2 And He saw also a certain poor widow casting in thither two mites. 3 And He said, Of a truth I say unto you, that this poor widow hath cast in more than they all: 4 For all these have of their abundance cast in unto the offerings of God: but she of her penury (*Gk.5303- deficit; specifically **poverty**: -want*) hath cast in all the living that she had.

- Some misguided people have said in the past "Oh if only I could just win the lottery, I would be able to build a church" as though the church is a building. First, a gambler is one "that is greedy of gain" (*Pro 15:27*). And second, how much more sincere is it when we give **even when we don't have it to give**? God is able to use whatever amount collected, percentage-wise, among His saints and through wisdom granted to those who ask for it, is able to "*get the biggest bang for the buck*" when taking care of His Son's bride the church. And we aren't to seek out the wealthy in the community (*which we haven't*) thinking that they would be better able to support the work of the congregation with what they would contribute. Where would be the faith in that? Would their influence on decisions concerning the church take precedence over others that cannot afford to give as much, but have more wisdom and maturity? It would be considered partiality on our part when **all** lost people are candidates for conversion.

Gal 3:28 There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither bond nor free, there is neither male nor female: for ye are all one in Christ Jesus.

Jas 2:1 My brethren, have not the faith of our Lord Jesus Christ, *the Lord* of glory, with respect of persons. 2 For if there come unto your assembly a man with a gold ring, in goodly apparel, and there come in also a poor man in vile raiment; 3 And ye have respect

to him that weareth the gay (*Gk.2986- radiant; figuratively magnificent or sumptuous [in appearance] like the rich man of Lk 16*) clothing, and say unto him, Sit thou here in a good place; and say to the poor, Stand thou there, or sit here under my footstool: 4 Are ye not then partial in yourselves, and are become judges of evil thoughts? 5 Hearken, my beloved brethren, Hath not God chosen the poor of this world rich in faith, and heirs of the kingdom which He hath promised to them that love Him? 6 But ye have despised the poor. Do not rich men oppress you, and draw you before the judgment seats? 7 Do not they blaspheme that worthy name by the which ye are called? 8 If ye fulfil the royal law according to the scripture, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself, ye do well: 9 But if ye have respect to persons, ye commit sin, and are convinced of the law as transgressors.

- This isn't to say that **all** rich people are oppressive toward the faith. Notice Lydia.

Act 16:14 And a certain woman named Lydia, a **seller of purple***, of the city of Thyatira, which worshipped God, **heard us**: whose heart (*Gk.2588- mind*) the Lord opened, that she attended unto the things **which were spoken** of Paul. 15 And when she was baptized, and her household, she besought *us*, saying, If ye have **judged me to be faithful** to the Lord, come into my house, and abide *there*. And she constrained (*Gk.3849- compel*) *us*. (*Emp. Added*)

**"Purple was a most valuable color, obtained usually from shellfish. It was chiefly worn by princes and by the rich, and the traffic in it might be very profitable." Albert Barnes*

- Lydia obviously loved God more than her wealth. But what about the church caring for the poor? Well first...

1Ti 5:16 If any man or woman that believeth have widows, let them relieve them, and let not the church be charged; that it may relieve them that are widows indeed.

- This tells us that if a Christian has any family members that are struggling, financially or otherwise, and they have the means to take care of them without aid from the church coffers, then they are to do so. This way if any have family that are needy and they **don't** have the means to sustain them, then the church is obligated to pitch in. But not to the point where the congregation is taken advantage of. Remember...

Mat 10:16 Behold, I send you forth as sheep in the midst of wolves: be ye therefore **wise as serpents**, and **harmless as doves**. (*Emp. Added*)

- When the church is taken advantage of financially, it could be considered robbing God of the means by which His children can "teach all nations" (*Mat 28:19*). Notice how God dealt with the children of Israel when they failed in the Old Testament system of tithing.

Mal 3:8 Will a man rob God? Yet ye have robbed Me. But ye say, Wherein have we robbed Thee? In tithes and offerings. 9 Ye *are* cursed with a curse: for ye have robbed Me, *even* this whole nation. 10 Bring ye all the tithes into the storehouse, that there may be meat in Mine house, and prove Me now herewith, saith the LORD of hosts, if I will not open you the windows of heaven, and pour you out a blessing, that *there shall not be room enough to receive it*.

- It's not that God needs anything since everything already belongs to Him. Obviously we have never been under the O.T. system of tithing. And we all know our own financial

situations (*as does God*) along with the obligations of family and home and other necessary responsibilities. And when need arises above and beyond our budget, members here step in so that none goes without. Like the first century Christians that sold property without being forced to by a government to aid the poor among them.

Act 4:32 And the multitude of them that believed were of one heart and of one soul: neither said any *of them* that ought of the things which he possessed was his own; but they had all things common.

- Ask yourself: “Are all the possessions that I have obtained over the years, things that I feel I’ve earned that, I just can’t allow others to even use because maybe they might not take care of them as I would? Would I sell any of my possessions if the need arose? Like my house for instance? Is it too good to allow someone who is legitimately down on their luck to sleep here? Is my car too good to take someone who isn’t very clean to worship?” Do you consider these statements to be too harsh? Remember, Jesus did promise...

*Luk 18:29 ... There is no man that hath left house, or parents, or brethren, or wife, or children, for the kingdom of God's sake, 30 Who shall not receive manifold more in **this present time**, and in the world to come life everlasting. (Emp. Added)*

- And this is not an example of Socialism. Socialism today, according to a government ruled by it, is when mediocrity becomes common among its citizenry. It’s where there’s no incentive to excel or work harder than the next person, because no matter how hard you push yourself, you never have any more than the guy next to you. Even if he just does only what’s necessary, and if he can get away with it, less.

Act 4:33 And with great power gave the apostles witness of the resurrection of the Lord Jesus: and great grace was upon them all. 34 Neither was there any among them that lacked: for as many as were possessors of lands or houses sold them, and brought the prices of the things that were sold, 35 And laid *them* down at the apostles' feet: and distribution was made unto every man according as he had need.

- This was not a government grab from one group to take most of it and redistribute what’s left to the slothful. Such would never be tolerated according to the word of God.

2Th 3:10 ...if any would not work, neither should he eat.

- A member of another small congregation of another state made a comment concerning our collection. And noting the attendance and percentage given, he stated we are doing extremely well. We are very blessed as the small flock that we are to afford the rent, the utilities and the technology we do, along with being able to afford aiding others that are spreading the Gospel in other parts of the nation and the world. Why? Because God **has** opened “the windows of Heaven, and poured out a blessing” (*Mal 3:10*). We have been blessed beyond measure and will continue to be as long as we remain faithful to His word. But other than financially, are we robbing God?

Jas 1:27 Pure religion and undefiled before God and the Father is this, To visit (*Gk.1980- go to see, relieve*) the fatherless and widows in their affliction, *and* to keep himself unspotted from the world.

- And now to step on some toes. Mine included. But what is about to be said should be taken in love. If it's taken any other way, then you really don't know me that well. The one thing we can rob God of is our time. Did this congregation begin as a group wanting to grow the church? Or, was it formed by those of us who needed a church family to worship with? Or both? An older brother has recently stated that a congregation that doesn't have a greater percentage of young families won't survive. God has given us all 24 hours in a day and expects us to spend every moment wisely. "Oh but the preacher has the time to do all that stuff". Yeah, but he also has a life just like you do and has other obligations as well. Someone may say "but I have a job where a lot of time has to be spent if I want to keep it in order to meet all my financial obligations". True. But Who did your occupation come from in the first place if in fact you actually believe you've been blessed by Him? And do you really need all those "toys" parked in your driveway? Obviously this isn't pointing the finger at anyone specifically. Do you really need to live such an expensive lifestyle with all the trappings that the average person only dreams of? Where's your focus?

Mat 6:19 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. (*Emp. Added*)

- How much time in a week do we spend reading the Bible, or do we spend watching television instead, or in entertainment? What about in visiting, teaching a home Bible study or other things **besides** work? And work should never be an excuse for putting aside practicing "pure religion". The Great Commission was not given only to the apostles as was Jesus concern before His Father in the garden prior to His crucifixion.

Joh 17:20 Neither pray I for these alone, but for **them also** which shall believe on Me **through their word**; (*Emp. Added*)

- It is so hard for me to understand, for the most part, how difficult it is for **any** Christian, having been bought with the precious blood of Christ, to say they are too busy, don't know enough, are too intimidated, (*and the excuses go on and on*) to be able to sit down with a poor lost soul to help them understand the importance of having their sins cleansed before they stand before a just and loving but righteous God Who will **judge** them unless they were taught by some **hard working, self-denying, faithful** Christian to obey His word. **How long do we need** before we consider ourselves prepared enough for such a task? Better yet, how much time have **you** taken to prepare by studying and "rightly dividing the word of truth" (*2 Tim 2:15*).

Heb 5:12 For when for the time ye ought to be teachers, ye have need that one teach you again which *be* the first principles of the oracles of God; and are become such as have need of milk, and not of strong meat.

- How can there be any excuse, after hearing the plan of salvation week after week at the end of each and every Sunday morning lesson, to say "I really don't know enough to teach someone how to be saved"? "Oh, but I thought that my lifestyle and the way I am in public and the way others see me will cause someone to ask 'why do you seem so happy all the time'" (*if I fact you really are happy*)? Well that's definitely a good thing, but is it enough? "Well that's the preacher's job. It's what we pay him to do". By that

statement, are you planning on riding into Heaven on his coattails? How many among us are in home Bible studies each week, offer our homes so that someone else can come to teach a neighbor or family member, or even facilitate a Bible study other than here on Sunday or Wednesday evenings? And those classes are **not** as well attended as they should be. There is nothing we have, that we have worked so hard for, that we will be able to bribe the Judge on Judgment Day to weasel our way into His Heaven.

1Ti 6:6 But godliness with contentment is great gain. 7 For we brought nothing into *this* world, *and it is* certain we can carry nothing out. 8 And having food and raiment let us be therewith content. 9 But they that will be rich (*or that will put anything ahead of God*) fall into temptation and a snare, and *into* many foolish and hurtful lusts, which drown men in destruction and perdition. 10 For the love of money is the root of all evil: which while some coveted after, they have erred from the faith, and pierced themselves through with many sorrows. 11 But thou, O man of God, **flee** these things; and follow after righteousness, godliness, faith, love, patience, meekness. (*Emp. Added*)

- Every one of us has to honestly, with conviction, ask our own selves personally, “am I giving enough of my time to study, to visit, to teach, to encourage others that are doing the work”? Sometimes we can discourage the work of others by **careless** remarks and statements made in front of others instead of going and telling “him his fault between thee and him **alone**” (*Mat 18:15*). (*Emp. Added*) Sometimes we can discourage teachers just by not being here for class or not being faithful to the worship assembly for that matter. Is it possible that I might lack in doing anything that would rob God?

Mat 6:24 No man can serve two masters: for either he will hate the one, and love the other; or else he will hold to the one, and despise the other. Ye cannot serve God and mammon. 25 Therefore I say unto you, Take no thought for your life, what ye shall eat, or what ye shall drink; nor yet for your body, what ye shall put on. Is not the life more than meat, and the body than raiment?

- Jesus isn’t saying here that we should just stop working for a living. He’s saying our living shouldn’t be our main focus. It should only be the means by which we support our own personal work in His kingdom.

Mat 6:26 Behold the fowls of the air: for they sow not, neither do they reap, nor gather into barns; yet your heavenly Father feeds them. Are ye not much better than they? 27 Which of you by taking thought can add one cubit unto his stature? 28 And why take ye thought for raiment? Consider the lilies of the field, how they grow; they toil not, neither do they spin: 29 And yet I say unto you, That even Solomon in all his glory was not arrayed like one of these. 30 Wherefore, if God so clothe the grass of the field, which today is, and tomorrow is cast into the oven, *shall He* not much more *clothe* you, O ye of little faith? 31 Therefore take no thought, saying, What shall we eat? or, What shall we drink? or, Wherewithal shall we be clothed? 32 (For after all these things do the Gentiles seek:) for your heavenly Father knoweth that ye have need of all these things. 33 But seek ye first the kingdom of God, and His righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you. 34 Take therefore no thought for the morrow: for the morrow shall take thought for the things of itself. Sufficient unto the day is the evil thereof.

- We have enough to stress about today that we can’t add to that stress by worrying about what tomorrow will bring. Not that we should never make plans either. We should always plan as if Jesus is coming tomorrow, or even sooner, but live righteously as

though He delays His coming for a thousand years. But what **if** He came today? Will **you** be ready? Will **you** be able to say you've done **all** that you could do to aid some poor souls to find what you found; the Gospel plan of salvation? God was not stingy with the blood of His Son. Why should we be?

#1. Haven't you heard?

#2. Don't you believe?

Rom 10:14 How then shall they call on Him **in Whom they have not believed?** and how shall they believe in Him **of Whom they have not heard?** and how shall they hear without a preacher? (*Emp. Added*)

#3. Haven't you repented?

Luk 15:7 I say unto you, that likewise joy shall be in heaven over one sinner that repenteth, more than over ninety and nine just persons, which need no repentance.

#4. Haven't you confessed Jesus as the Christ?

Mat 10:32 Whosoever therefore shall confess Me before men, him will I confess also before My Father Who is in Heaven. 33 But whosoever shall deny Me before men, him will I also deny before My Father which is in Heaven.

#5. Haven't your sins been washed away?

Mar 16:16 He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned.

#6. If you've done all these things, haven't you remained faithful?

Joh 15:10 If ye **keep** My commandments, ye shall **abide** in My love; **even as** I have kept My Father's commandments, and abide in His love. (*Emp. Added*)

#7. Aren't you growing?

Eph 4:15 But speaking the truth in love, may grow up into Him in all things, Who is the Head, even Christ:

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