***Job's Example

Colossians 1:25-29

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Our subject is "The Mystery of the Church," segment number 14 in Colossians 1:25-29.

**Dispensations**

We have learned that God's decree has ordained that all of human history, from Eden to eternity future, will progress by a series of distinctive epochs of time. These epochs are called "dispensations" in the Bible. Each dispensation has a divinely designed way of life by which mankind must relate itself to God. If you don't know the protocols of a particular dispensation, you don't know how to live in it.

**Stewards**

Each dispensation also has a steward who is God's agent in authority in that epoch. Each dispensation ends in human failure. People do not live up to the divine requirements. Therefore, they demonstrate once more that they lack the righteousness of God, and cannot obtain it by their efforts. So, that dispensation then comes to an end.

**The Same Salvation**

A dispensation, then, is a distinct, divine way of life for an era of time, in the outworking of God's plan for human history. The dispensations all share a plan of salvation that is identical, and that is justification by faith in Jesus Christ – salvation as a grace gift from God, by believing in Christ as your personal Savior.

**The Same Moral Code**

All dispensations, furthermore, have the same moral code, which expresses the righteousness of God, and which expresses the standard of those who will be living in heaven. Unless you understand the divine arrangement of the dispensation in which you were born, you cannot obey God. You cannot prosper in any spiritual way, or any material way, or any physical way. All of the relationships of life are out of sync if you do not understand how to live under your dispensation. And, certainly, that is true in the dispensation of the church.

The current dispensation of the church is the greatest of all the dispensations, because it is an era dominated by the grace of God, Who does it all for us, from salvation to super-grace maturity. That has not been true for people in the past, and it will not be true for them in the future. The reason this is true for us is because we have a particular, distinctive relationship to the Godhead. The Son of God indwells us. God the Holy Spirit indwells us. We are related to God the father irrevocably as part of His royal family. There are distinctives, which were never true before, and that gives us great authority and great power in the lives that are ours to live in this period of time.

There is a common mistake in church circles of trying to mix into the church way of life features from the previous dispensation of the Law. That is the most devastating thing that a person can do. And it is done all the time. Churches are forever bringing in things that belong to the Mosaic system, and trying to put it into the church age, and trying to live the way of life of the Jew, which is totally incompatible with the way of life of grace for the Christian. All it does is mess up the person's life, and the person's potential.

Christians who lack an understanding of their role as God's royal ambassadors, living in separation from the devils world institutions, will be trying to bring in a kingdom that is not the purpose of the church age. Christians are guided today by the full canon of Scripture. We've got a full Old Testament, and a full New Testament. We are, furthermore, empowered by the doctrines of Scripture to live up to what the Word of God teaches us as our way of life in the church age. It is the Spirit of God who indwells us that makes that possible.

**Blessings**

For each Christian age believer, furthermore, we have pointed out that God the Father has set aside in heaven a body of blessings for your exclusive enjoyment here on this earth. So, I point out to you that, when the apostle Paul points out to the Thessalonians that they will be judged relative to how they lived, and that some of them would be rewarded and some would suffer loss, that applies not only to eternity, but also right now. And when it says, "Loss," that very concept implies that there is something you could have had that you don't have. There is something that God is ready to give you, but you won't qualify for it. You don't qualify for it, because you don't live according to the principles of the dispensation of grace, with all that is connoted in that. And we will, in time, touch briefly upon those. But those are not unknown to you.

**Loss**

But if you are going to suffer loss, it is because God has said, "Here is what I want to do for you. The moment you believed in Me, I set this apart; it was put on reserve; and, it was put there for your enjoyment; and, I'm ready to fill your cup, which you can only build with doctrine until it's overflowing with blessings. That is the magnificence of the church age. The Jew never had that kind of blessing.

For that reason, the principle of the Old Testament was: "Be good, and I'll bless you. You have nothing coming until you deserve it." In the New Testament, God says, "Be good because I've already blessed you with all blessings in heavenly spheres, as an inheritance that I'm ready to deliver to you.

Every now and then, you'll read a great ad (as I did the other day), saying, "Millions of dollars unclaimed." This is talking about people with an inheritance who don't know that they have this coming to them: "Here it is. Contact us. We'll check and see if somebody has died, and left you all this money, such that you are an inheritor. Well, if they never meet the requirements, and don't make the contact, they might be someone who has an inheritance, but they'll never get it, and they'll never enjoy it. And that's a great principle to remember that what God wants to do is pour blessing upon us. But it will only come when you live by the guidelines; the principles; and, the mode of operation for the church-age believer.

**Satan**

So, here's the battle plan of God. Before there were any human beings upon the face of the earth, the Godhead had created billions of angels. It put one angel in charge of all the others. His name was Lucifer, Son of the Morning. He was the most beautiful of all the angels, and he had the most magnificent intelligence of all of them. He has not lost either one of those creature features to this day. But as the angelic host gathered around God, before there were any human beings created, and before there was any world on earth created, there was this angelic host. In time, the Bible tells us that Satan decided to rebel against God. And we have reason to believe that a third of the angels joined him in that rebellion to revolt against the authority of God. And Satan wanted to make himself God in place of the Creator God.

**Mormonism**

His line of thinking undoubtedly was the same as that which is in Mormonism today. And that is that all people are potential gods, and they will evolve into godhood. And Satan just decided that God had a head start (that he had evolved to His stage), but that Satan could evolve now, and catch up with Him.

So, in Isaiah 14:13-14, we have this rebellion described for us: "But you said in your heart (speaking to Lucifer), 'I will ascend to heaven. I will raise my throne above the stars of God (that is, the angelic host). I will sit on the Mount of the Assembly in the recesses of the North (the holy of holies of Heaven – the royal court of heaven). I will ascend above the heights of the clouds. I will make myself like the most high.'" And with that was triggered an enormous rebellion in the pre-human world. Satan and his angels were standing against God. Satan and his angels then, apparently, tried for their rebellion. And a sentence of punishment was passed by the Godhead.

This is indicated in Ezekiel 28:16-19, speaking here now to the rebels in heaven: "By the abundance of your trade, you were internally filled with violence, and you sinned. Therefore, I have cast you as profane from the mountain of God. And I've destroyed you, you covering cherub, from the midst of the stones of fire." This is poetic language. Satan belonged to that particular class of angel called the cherub class. That's the highest class of angels, and this connotes, apparently, that they are the only ones that have wings. And Satan's position was to defend the holiness of God. That's what makes it so ironic. It is the cherub angels that are the class that stand around the throne of God as His honor guard.

Verse 17: "Your heart was lifted up because of your beauty. You corrupted your wisdom by reason of your splendor. I cast you to the ground. I put you before kings, that they may see you. By the multitude of your iniquities and the righteousness of your trade, you profaned your sanctuaries. Therefore, I have brought fire from the midst of you. It has consumed you, and I have turned you to ashes on the earth in the eyes of all who see. All who know you among the peoples are appalled at you. You have become terrified, and you will be no more." This, of course, will be fulfilled ultimately and completely in the Millennial Kingdom, when Satan is, in fact, bound up like a sorry little prisoner, and who is put under custody for a period of time.

So, what was the sentence? The Godhead ran a trial. They declared that Satan and these angels to have been guilty, and a sentence was passed upon them. Now, I remember that all of this is before there were any human beings in existence at all.

Matthew 25:41 says, "Then He (Jesus) will also say to those on his left, 'Apart from me, you accursed ones (to the unbelievers) into the eternal fire which has been prepared for the devil and his angels.'" Bingo! Here's the sentence. The court was held. Satan was convicted. He was declared guilty – the demon angels along with him. And God prepared a place called the lake of fire in which they would spend eternity as the sentence for their sin. The sentence for sin, of course, is always separation from God. That's what the word "death" means. So, the wages of sin is death. The wages of sin is separation from God. And when a Christian sins, he experiences spiritual separation from God. He experiences a form of death because he is out of touch with reality, and with God Himself.

**Satan's Guilt**

So, Satan and his angels were declared under the judgment of death, and they were to be separated forever from God. The execution of this divine sentence, however, was for some reason delayed. It was not immediately carried out. When we get to the Revelation 20:10, we finally see this sentence being carried out. Now, that is a very curious. Revelation 20:10: "And the devil who deceived them was thrown into the lake of fire and brimstone, where the beast and the false prophet are also. And they will be tormented day and night, forever and ever." In fact, the beast (the antichrist) and the false prophet, are thrown in the lake of fire before Satan himself is put in there – before Satan and his demons are incarcerated in that eternal separation from God.

**Satan's Sentence**

So, for some reason, the sentence was not carried out after the trial was held in heaven. We may draw some conclusions. That's what these are – some assumptions that probably are very close to the truth. We may conclude, from subsequent conduct of Satan, that he objected to the sentence which was passed on him, and on his demons, on the basis that it wasn't fair. He said that's unjust. That isn't fair. You're not even going to give us a second chance. We are just being condemned. That's not fair. This accusation, in effect, slandered the integrity of God, and therefore, it impugned the character of God.

**The Creation of Man**

Therefore, what did God do? We suspect, with good reason, that what He did was convened an appeal trial. He did this by creating a new group of creatures called man. And he set him in a period of time progression by epochs and dispensations. The purpose of the creation of man, and the dispensation of progression was to demonstrate the perfect justice of God.

**God is Fair**

The Bible is very explicit (very pointed) on the issue relative to the holiness of God. There is never any doubt left about that, and never is there any doubt left that that is very important. God is fair. Justice is part of what He is. In Psalm 145:21, this supreme importance of the holiness of God is indicated: "My mouth will speak the praise of the Lord, and all flesh will bless His Holy name forever and ever."

**God's Holiness**

You may remember that the Holiness of God is made up of two factors: His absolute righteousness; and, His perfect justice: "My mouth will proclaim the holiness of God." Then Psalm 145:5: "On the glorious splendor of Your Majesty, and on Your wonderful works I will meditate." These are the marvels of the production of a Holy God.

In the Book of Zechariah, we have another statement relative to the Holiness of God. Zechariah 3:1-10: "Then he showed me Joshua, the high priest, standing before the Angel of the Lord, and Satan standing at His right hand to accuse Him." The Angel of the Lord is the preincarnate Christ: "And the Lord said to Satan, 'The Lord rebuke you, Satan. Indeed, the Lord who has chosen Jerusalem rebuke you. Is this not a brand plucked from the fire?' Now Joshua was clothed with filthy garments, and standing before the angel. And he spoke and said to those who were standing before him, saying, 'Remove the filthy garments from him.' Saying again, he said to him, 'See, I have taken your iniquity away from you and will clothe you with vestal the robes.'"

Joshua, the high priest, is standing before God, and in the presence of the preincarnate Christ, in order to minister. And he's covered with the filthiness of His sin. And a holy God cannot be approached in that way: "Then I said, 'Let them put a clean turban on his head.' So, they put a clean turban on his head, and clothed with garments, while the Angel of the Lord was standing by. And the Angel of the Lord (the preincarnate Christ) admonished Joshua, saying, 'Thus says the Lord of hosts: if you will walk in My ways, and if you will perform My service, then you will also govern My house, and also have charge of My courts, and I will grant you free access among these who are standing here.'" If you live up to the standard of righteousness, God's going to be fair to you. God will not tolerate your sin. He will not be unjust. He will deal with that. And when you act in righteousness, then He will deal with you according to that. He's fair in both ways.

Verse 8: "'Now listen, Joshua (the high priest), you and your friends who are sitting in front of you. Indeed, they are men who are assembled, for, behold. I'm going to bring in My Servant, the Branch – the symbol of Christ. For behold the stone that I have set before you, Joshua. On one stone are seven eyes. Behold, I will engrave an inscription on it,' declares the Lord of Hosts. 'And I will remove the iniquity of that land in one day. That day,' declares the Lord of Hosts, 'every one of you will invite his neighbor to sit under his vine and under his fig tree.'" This is a leap ahead to the glorious Millennial Kingdom, where holiness and righteousness will be the norm. And no sin (no evil) is going to be tolerated.

The same concept of the holiness of God is stressed in Romans 3:21-26 in the New Testament: "But now, apart from the Law, the righteousness of God has been manifested, being witnessed by the Law and the prophets: even the righteousness of God through faith in Jesus Christ. For all those who believe, there is no distinction. For all have sinned, and fall short of the glory of God, being justified as a gift by His grace, through the redemption which is in Christ Jesus, Whom God displayed publicly as a propitiation (satisfaction) in His blood, through faith, for the just demands of God for death. This was to demonstrate His righteousness, because in the forbearance of God, He passed over the sins previously committed." God said, "I could not forgive sin to Adam and to everybody, down to the day that Christ died. I told them I would forgive, and I forgave them on credit. But until the penalty for sin had been paid (death), it was all on credit." Now Paul says, "God's going to demonstrate that He is fair, and that He is just. This is critical to the understanding of the character of God.

Verse 26: "For the demonstration, I say, of His righteousness at the present time, that He might be just, and at the same time, the justifier of the one who has faith in Jesus." Now, that is a magnificent declaration of the justice of God. How can God take a sinner into His heaven, and still say, "I'm fair," and still prove the devil wrong. It is because God has a way of covering the ground that needs to be covered, so that his justice is intact, and yet, people go to heaven. And what do those people do? Those who believe God is fair to them – He takes them to heaven. Those who will not believe in Christ – God is fair to them. He sends them into the lake of fire to join Satan. This is a magnificent connection that is so easily looked over, between the dispensations, and particularly, the church age.

So, what has happened is that, while God is running this appeals trial, which are the dispensations, Satan has been left free to roam the earth as its king, and as its God, and to challenge of justice of God with his world system. That is all the Satan lives for. That is all that he is doing. He is constantly challenging the justice of God, because he is on appeal now. And God has brought in mankind (another creature), made below the angels in the category of creatures that God made. And yet, God is taking this person (this creature – man), and treating him (demonstrating through him), through the series of the epochs of the dispensations, His absolute justice, and treating, in all of His treatment of mankind, in the worst of sinners.

Now, this attempt of Satan, constantly, to prove that God is unfair, was certainly and clearly demonstrated in Job 1:6-12: "Now there was a day when the sons of God (a phrase referring to angels) came by God's authority of direction." They were given an order to show up in heaven: "Now there was a day when all the demon angels (sons of God) came to present themselves before the Lord. Satan also came among them. And the Lord said to Satan, 'From where do you come?' Then Satan answered the Lord, and said, 'from roaming about on the earth, and walking about on it.'"

This creature of God, Lucifer, is under a sentence of eternal separation of God in the lake of fire. It's been passed, but Satan has demanded an appeals trial. So, the appeals trial is underway, and Satan is going about the earth free on bond until the trial is finished. The last dispensation comes to an end. He's going about the earth, trying to show that God is not fair. And you know that he tells people that all the time. Just mentioned the doctrine of election. And the first thing that comes out of the mouth of an unbeliever, or an untaught Christian, is: "That not fair, that some people are chosen for heaven, and some are left in their condition of sin.

"And the Lord said to Satan, 'Have you considered my servant, Job? For there is no one like him on earth: a blameless and upright man." He is not sinless, but blameless, because every time he sins, he makes the appropriate offering, which was their way of making confession for their sin. Therefore, he walks as an upright man, fearing God, and turning away from evil.' And Satan answered the Lord. 'Oh, sure. Does Joe fear God for nothing? Have you not made a hedge about him, and his house, and all that he has on every side? You have blessed the work of his hands, and his possessions have increased in the land.'"

Now, that was true, that God had prospered this man in response to his obedience. But what Joe had is nothing compared to what is stored in heaven for each one of you as the inheritance of God, if you can start functioning in the church age, compatible to the protocols of the dispensation of grace: living by the principles of doctrine; living in fellowship with God the Father; obedient to the guidance of the Holy Spirit; and, never saying "No" to what he tells you to do, when he raises an interest in your heart to do something in his service.

In verse 11, Satan says, "But put forth Your hand now, and touch all that he has. He'll surely curse You to Your I face." You have poured so much blessing on him, that he is protected from any troubles. He doesn't have to worry about. He doesn't have to worry about good health. He doesn't have to worry about good relationships. He takes care of his children. Every time they gather for a party, the boys and the girls of the family (the brothers and sisters) – he offers special offerings to God to cover in case they sin in the process of having a good time. Yeah, that's how it is for us too, only more so.

"Then the Lord said to Satan, 'Behold, all of he has is in your power, only do not put forth your hand on him.' So, Satan departed from the presence of the Lord." God said, "You can do anything, but don't touch him. And, of course, Satan took everything away from Job, including seven sons and three daughters. They were all killed while they're having a party. He took everything he had materially. And his wife said, "Curse God and die." That is why you don't let your wife guide you spiritually. One smidgen of one smidgen of leaven, in the parable of the woman kneading the meal – she's working the meal over, getting ready for the loaf; if she puts one little speck of leaven in it, the whole loaf is ruined. One little speck from your wife of telling you how to relate yourself to God, and you know better. If you have mental reservations about that (her telling you, "Don't do this," that's all it takes is for the loaf of your life and of your family – just like that.

So, the wife says, "Just curse God and die." He says, "Oh, you foolish woman! Should we thank God when things are good, and not bless Him when things are not good?" And Job is not going to take that leaven. He hunkered down what he didn't understand, and he waited for the Lord to deal with him.

"And in all of this," the Bible says a magnificent thing about this man: "He did not sin." When your wife begs you to do something wrong, or to stop doing something that's right, that's hard business.

Job 2:1-6: "Again, there was a day, another convocation in heaven, when the sons of God came to present themselves before the Lord. And Satan also came among them to present himself before the Lord." Now, remember what he's trying to do. He is trying to prove that God is unfair, and that God is not just. This is an appeals trial. He's got to prove it in some way: "And the Lord said to Satan, 'Where have you come from?' Satan answer the Lord, and said, 'From roaming about on the earth, and walking about on it' (trying to prove that you're not fair). And the Lord said to Satan, 'Have you considered My servant job? For there's no one like him on the earth – the blameless and upright man, fearing God, and turning away from evil. And he still holds fast his integrity. Although you incited Me against him, to ruin him without cause, he still has his integrity.'"

Dear God, how much we hope that that could be said of all of us – that I still have my integrity! The world is a filthy, and dirty, and low-dog place, and if you're involved in it, your integrity is gone. You're separate as Job was separate from the society of his day, which was enormously evil, and enormously wicked.

Verse 4: "And Satan answered the Lord and said, 'Skin for skin. Yes, all that a man has he will give for his life. However, put forth Your hand now, and touch his bone and his flesh, and he'll curse You to Your face.'" Satan says, "You want to be fair, God? Well, let's make it a level playing field." That's one of the words to cover up doing something wrong: give us a level playing field. God had told him, "You can't touch Job physically." Satan says, "OK, let me touch him physically, and I'll show you that he'll curse you. Let's see what You'll do with him then, O God of justice."

"So, the Lord said to Satan, 'Behold, he is in your power, only you can't kill him. You will spare his life.'" And then it went downhill fast. The whole book is a horrible description of the boils that broke out; the running sores; and, the whole thing that happened to him. His friends came up and tried to comfort him, and saying, "Tell us, what did you do wrong? God wouldn't treat you like this if you were just an upright man," and so on.

We get to the last chapter of Job, who has really gotten down in the mouth, and he has wondered about God himself. But God is fair. He is treating this man the way he deserves to be treated by the grace of God because of His integrity. Job 42:1-6: "Then Job answered the Lord and said, 'I know that You can do all things, and that no purpose of Yours can be thwarted. Who is this that hides counsel without knowledge? Therefore, I have declared that which I did not understand.'" Joe said, "I shot off my mouth because I didn't understand. I was accusing You (just what the devil wanted me to accuse you of) that this isn't fair. I was foolish – things too wonderful for me, which I did not know: how magnificently just you are. Here now and I will speak. I will ask You, and do as you instruct me. I have heard of You by the hearing of the ear, but now my eye sees You. Therefore, I retract, and I repent in dust and ashes."

Job says, "Yes, I've heard doctrine, God. But now with my eyes I've seen you in action. And You are so magnificent, and You are so fair," and the devil is grinding his teeth. The trial is really going against him. Satan thought that with Job he could make his point. Instead, his situation is now worse than ever before, and to condemnation.

**Christ's Temptations in the Wilderness**

This may also be compared to Matthew 4:1-11 – the occasion when Jesus was in the wilderness, and tempted by Satan. On each occasion, again, Satan was offering the humanity of Christ something that (it would seem) should be a fair thing to do. Satan says, "You're hungry. God shouldn't leave you starving. You have a right to food. Make some for yourself out of the stones." Jesus quoted Scripture to him, "No, no, no. Man will not live by bread alone, but by every Word that proceeds from the mouth of God. Yeah, I'm hungry, but I live by doctrine, and I will not violate that."

Then Satan says, "Come on up here. If you worship me, I will give you all the kingdoms of the world laid out here, and all over the world. Do You see them? You'll be the ruler of the world. That's what you want to be, isn't it? It's not fair for God to make you suffer on the cross. I'll give it to you without the suffering: a crown without a cross." And Jesus said, "It is written," quoting Scripture again: "You shall worship the Lord your God, and serve Him only."

So, Satan hits Him once more, and says, "I'll take You up to the highest pinnacle here, and You may throw yourself down, and God will protect You. And the angels will catch you." Well now, the Bible does say that. And Jesus quotes back to Satan, "You will not tempt the Lord your God. You will not put him to a trial test. You know what you should do, and you will do that. You will not question the justice of God."

So, the creation of man, and the dispensation of human history, were created by God to demonstrate His absolute righteousness and His perfect justice – His Holiness. And while Satan is arrogantly attempting to prove himself superior to God, in his judgments, he only displays deceit; disloyalty; evil; and, hatred. He's a total loser. And if there's anything about the devil, he's not fair. The appeals trial of the dispensations proved magnificently the fairness of God in rewarding good, and in punishing evil. God's integrity is shown in dealing with human sin by satisfying His own justice through Jesus Christ, and paying the penalty of death for all mankind. And thus, the integrity of God's character is intact. Then he saves by grace those who obey the gospel. And he sends to the lake of fire, in total fairness, those who will not believe it.

The church dispensation is the one that is especially being used by God to settle the satanic challenge (the angelic conflict), as the grace of God repeatedly gives irrefutable evidence of the justice of God.

Ephesians 3:10: "In order that the manifold wisdom of God might now be made known through the church, to the rulers and authorities in the heavenly places." These rulers and authorities are demonic creatures: "This is in accordance with the eternal purpose which He carried out in Jesus Christ our Lord." What was that eternal purpose? That we would have access to God through faith? If you do that, God says, "I'll be fair, and you will come to heaven. If you don't do that, I'll be fair, and you will not come to heaven.

Compare that with Ephesians 6:12: "For our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers; against the powers; against the world forces of the darkness; and, against the spiritual forces of wickedness in heavenly places. These are all military categories of demonic ranks. That's what we fight. And if you do not live by the protocols of the church age, you are going to be up against the demonic host, and you will be so blinded, and you'll be struggling along like any nincompoop in the world system.

**Lead; Follow; or, Get out of the Way**

It is important to know the distinctions, and what the rules of etiquette are, for living as one of the royal family of God in the devil's world. The dispensations are God's closing argument to the appeals trial of Satan and his demons. The sentence is going to be carried out. In the meantime, we're in part of this battle to demonstrate the justice of God. The battle plan may be summarized for each of us in this way: As a believer of the dispensation of the church: lead out; follow; or, get out of the way. Lead; follow; or, get out of the way. Let us not fail to take charge of what is our divine calling in our mission: lead out. Don't let your wife; don't let your friends; don't let the world; and, don't let your husband talk you out of it. Lead out, as per the principles of Scripture. How do we do that?

**Follow**

First of all, you need to support God's leaders, if that's your calling: to follow. Let us not be negative to God's plan, and lead others astray, because of our negative outlook. If you do, God will jerk you. He'll put you on hold. He may not take your life, but you'll be a useless creature, muddling around in the world, thinking you may be doing something significant. Do not be negative to the plan of God, because that's exactly what the devil wants you to do, to prove that God is not fair.

**Peace**

How can you be negative? Well, by refusing to serve in the ministries of the local church? Why do you think that Jesus kept saying repeatedly to His disciples: peace? The apostle Paul kept saying, "Grace and peace." That means a calm life. If you live a frantic, fractured life on the edge, you don't have peace. And if you don't have peace, you're not in the will of God. And Satan is having the victory that he is looking for. And when I say "peace," that doesn't mean to say that you are not going to have trials and tribulations, but they will be with an inner happiness that takes it all in stride. But your life will be under control, and you will have time to produce divine good service through the local church ministries, and the mission that God has brought to you. You will not be sitting around someplace, whining about some problem you have in life, but your eyes will get on the Lord.

**Don't be Negative**

How can we not be negative? To be negative is failure to be a faithful steward of God's money, with very generous offerings. To be negative is to be sacrifice of substance. If you want to start your road down to reversionism, with full blinders on, stop putting stuff in the offering box. That's all you need. I'll guarantee that you'll be downhill as fast as anything. And the devil is just itching, because he's rubbing his hands, trying to keep you away from God's blessings, because he wants he wants to show that God is going to be unfair, and make things good for you, but he won't. If you break down on that point, God will treat you with fairness. He will be gracious to you. He will tell you that a man reaps what he sows. If you sow in that offering box, by heaven, you will reap financial rewards here, and eternally. If you start stripping back, and say, "God has brought some burden on me. Yeah, I used to get this much to God, but now He has brought this problem on me. I have to pay this off. That's it. I'm stripping him down. I'll show Him. He takes away from me. I'm going to strip what I give to Him."

That's not the way. Instead, you say, "I have this burden. I'm going to give Him a little more because I need a little more money." You may help the devil out, by slandering God's appointed leaders who stand in your way. It's amazing what people will say about teachers in the academy; youth club leaders; or, the officers of the church, when they are frustrating them, and standing in their way. We always have mavericks who come in and out, who want to have their own way. And what they're basically asking us to do is to put the inmates in charge of the asylum. We're having to say, "No, you can't do that. No, that's not the policy. We have a reason for what we're doing. This is the procedure, and that's how it is."

So, what do they do? They say, "Do you know what this lowdown guy did?" And pretty soon, they're slandering the leaders of God. You're championing your ambitions above the plan of God. God says, "This is what I want you to do in life." And you say, "Oh, lord, that's not much of a mission. What kind of a particular thing is that? Nobody even knows I'm around. I want something with a little more glamor if I'm going to serve You."

You resent lines of local church authority, and seek to circumvent them. If you can't have your way, you shove off, and you go to some other church. Once you leave your right church, you've left it all behind. And do you know what the devil does then? He'll give you money up to your eyeballs. He will prosper you, and you'll say, "See how good God has made it for me?" If you don't know doctrine, and you don't know the principles by which the church operates, and how God's justice is what's under challenge here, you'll fall for it every time. By failing to be consistent in your service responsibilities, and to be present; punctual; prepared; performing, service-to-service, or by becoming discouraged in the battle because of the demand and the failures of others, so that you can't realize your ideals? No, you don't do that. The battle is the Lord's, but it is a battle. And you'll take your hits. Battles are fought, and they're won under less than ideal conditions.

So, we join the battle as a leader, or as a follower. If you don't want to do that, you get out of the way of all the positive believers who are out there, ready to work, and ready to do the job. What a great potential each of us have for a great life, if we meet the devil with that principle: follow (lead out; follow; or, get out of the way. And if your eyes are on the Lord, you will fulfill what the Scripture says: "Where your treasure is, there is where your heart is." And how many believers we are surrounded with, so wonderfully in this congregation, who are sacrificial to the end of their hair roots? They know what's going on around here. They know what is needed. And they step in with eagerness to be able to meet the need, and to be able to fulfill what needs to be taken care of. And for Whom are they doing it? For the Lord. And they're demonstrating, as Job did – that God is fair. They do not hold it against Him.

You should hear some of the bitter things that I hear from people about how God has mistreated them. That's exactly what the devil is trying to say. But every dispensation ends up in a great victory to the glory of God. He shows Himself to be the God of total justice.

We have a great potential to live lives which are enriched now. And all that stack of treasure in heaven, instead of being a loss, can be right there at your doorstep. This is something you already know you have coming.

I've been watching for the truck that arrives with the Reader's Digest Clearinghouse million-dollar check. They have told me that I'm very close now. I spent $4,000 on postage so far, in sending things out, and gallons of rubber cement, pasting things on in the property of appropriate places. And I heard the other day that they were saying, "Here's how we do it. We send a car around, and we watch your house. We see how you come in and out, and where you're coming and going. Then we get you, when we know you're in the house, and the cameras are rolling, and we open the door, and we say, "It's your check!" And what will you do? You will receive it with great joy. But I'm not sure I'm going to get it.

However, God said, "This is what I have for you," at the point of your salvation. If you operate on the principles of the grace age, I'm going to keep giving it to you day-by-day, day-in and day-out. Somebody is going to need money. Some area of the work is going to need money. You'll have it. Just keep watching your bank account. It'll get right down to zero nothing, practically, but you're going to have it, because I'm going to make you the agent of the justice of God. Do you think that He's going to forget that in heaven? Do you think that He's going to strip you down? You can rise to that principle of the battle: lead out; follow; or, at least get out of the way.

Dear God, our Father, we want to thank You for the magnificence of the Word of God. And we thank You for Your justice and Your fairness upon us all. We pray that we will rise to the challenge.

Dr. John E. Danish, 1995

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