***The Riches of Jesus Christ

RV105-01***

We are studying Revelation 5:12: "Saying with a loud voice, 'Worthy is the Lamb that was slain to receive power and riches and wisdom and strength and honor and glory and blessing." This is segment five of the universal adoration of God. The valuation of the Lord Jesus Christ by mankind is varied. To the Jew, He is a human impostor who is claiming to be the Messiah. To the religious liberal gentile, He is a deluded man who suffered martyrdom. To the Muslim, He is one of the prophets of God preceding Muhammad, the chief prophet. To the Jehovah Witnesses, He is a man who received, at His baptism, the Spirit of God, and who, at His crucifixion, lost the Holy Spirit. To the Mormon, He is a man who became a God among many gods. To the Hindu, He is an avatar reincarnating Krishna. And to the average American, including some Christian Americans, He is merely a swear word.

However, in the scene which John describes in God the Father's heavenly throne room, Jesus Christ is exalted as the unique God-man; the Savior of sinful mankind; and, the focal point of universal praise. Here, Jesus Christ is worshiped, and He is worshiped throughout the universe: in heaven; on the earth; under the earth; and, in the sea. From every single tongue, there rings out the acknowledgment that Jesus Christ is Lord, and every knee bows to Him. This is precisely what Philippians 2:9-11 tell us will come to pass in time. Paul says, "Wherefore God also has highly exalted Him (the Lord Jesus), and has given Him a name which is above every name, that at the name of Jesus, every knee should bow, of things in heaven, and things in earth, and things under the earth, and that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord to the glory of God the Father." He is exalted. He is not denigrated as He is indeed among men.

**The Purpose of Life**

Not even human unbelievers, demon angels, nor Satan will fail to give the preeminence in time to Jesus Christ, the Lamb of God. In Revelation 5:12, which we have just read, John hears the angels chanting their praise of Jesus Christ in a loud voice. Jesus is declared worthy of praise because of His death on the cross as a sinless sacrifice for the sin of mankind to satisfy divine justice. The payment of Jesus Christ for our sins indicates the meaning and the purpose of human life.

When I was in Chicago recently, I caught a part of the Johnny Carson show. He was interviewing Shirley MacLaine. Shirley MacLaine was expounding on her search for the meaning of life through her studies of Eastern mysticism and her travels in India. Johnny Carson interrupted her and said, "But why does there have to be any meaning to life? Why can't it just be that we're here; we're passing through; and, that's the end?" Well, Mr. Carson reflects the purposelessness of the modern, sophisticated humanist who has made himself the measure of all things, and has made himself the center of life.

They say that there is no sovereign God above man to tell man what to do. And indeed, when man does that, you inevitably come up to the hopelessness that that humanism leads to – the idea that the existence of the moment is all that counts. The existential philosophy says that it doesn't matter what should do. Things in the past don't affect what you do now. What you do now isn't going to affect the future. And there are plenty of fools among us as Christians who learn the principles of the Word of God; who learn how God says we are to function; what we are to do; and, what we are not to do, who think that they can bypass it; they can violate it; they can undermine it; and, that the experience of the moment that they are indulging will not bear consequences down the line.

Mr. Carson stands in the hopelessness and the purposelessness of all existential humanists. However, but the Bible is very clear that we have a purpose in life as human beings. But that purpose is directly connected to the Lord Jesus Christ, and it is directly connected to what He has revealed of the mind of God as recorded in Scripture.

Part of the purpose of life is for every human being to come to repentance for his sins. In 2 Peter 3:9, we read, "But the Lord is not slack concerning His promise as some men count slackness this, but is longsuffering toward us, not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance." One of the purposes of every human being's life is to appreciate that God is giving him opportunity to come to repentance and to escape the lake of fire.

There is within the purpose of human life, the objective also of receiving the gift of eternal life. John 20:30 says, "And many other signs truly did Jesus in the presence of His disciples which are not written in this book. But these are written that you might believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that, believing, you might have life through His name. It is the purpose of God for human beings to secure eternal life.

In 2 Timothy 1:9, we read, "Who has saved us and called us with a holy calling, not according to our works, but according to His own purpose and grace, which was given us in Christ Jesus before the world began." We are being called to His purpose, which is in Christ Jesus to eternal life.

The purpose of human life also includes the objective of being victorious in the angelic conflict. In Romans 8:37, we read, "Nay, in all these things we are more than conquerors through Him that loved us." Every one of us is engaged in the angelic warfare every moment of our lives. Every day of our lives, we either come through victorious, and we have fulfilled God's purpose for us (which is to be victorious); or, at some point in the day, we became a spiritual casualty, and we were defeated.

It is also the purpose of God for believers to become the preserving salt of human society within Satan's mad, deluded world. In Matthew 5:13, the Lord says, "You are the salt of the earth. But if the salt has lost its savor, with what shall it be salted? It is thereafter good for nothing but to be cast out and to be trodden under the foot of men." Christians are to be the preserving salt, and indeed they are. When the time comes that a society moves beyond the point where it does not have a sufficient number of believers to preserve that society, then God brings it down to destruction.

It is also the purpose of God for believers to bring the divine viewpoint illumination of doctrine to mankind. Matthew 5:14-16 says, "You are the light of the world. A city that is set on a hill cannot be hidden; neither do men light a lamp and put it under a bushel, but on a lamp stand, and it gives light unto all that are in the house. Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works and glorify your Father who is in heaven. Our lives have a great deal of purpose.

Then, supreme among the purpose of life for the believer is that he should develop personal, experiential sanctification by building a spiritual maturity structure in his soul so that with that spiritual maturity, you are transformed into the image of God in which you are created, and you do not act like some barnyard animal. In John 17:17, we read, "Sanctify them through Your truth. Your word is truth." It is the purpose of God that we be sanctified, and that would be separated to the principles of godliness.

**Power**

We have seen that in heaven the angels proclaim Jesus Christ, first of all, to be worthy of power. The word "power" means "ability" or "capacity to perform something." The power of Jesus Christ is omnipotent in its extent. The Lord Jesus Christ, by His total obedience to the Father's plan of salvation, has demonstrated His right to exercise that kind of omnipotent power. We have found that this ability of Jesus Christ is available to the church-age believer. We're talking about the ability to be a winner, over being a loser. That ability is available to the church-age believer. The Lord Jesus Christ will not misuse His omnipotent ability for evil purposes. He can be trusted with it.

**Riches**

The second thing that the angels describe in praising the Lord Jesus Christ is riches. This is the Greek word "ploutos." The word "ploutos" simply means "wealth." It is used, for example, in Matthew 13:22: "He also that received seed among the thorns is he that hears the Word, and the care of this age, and the deceitfulness of 'ploutos' (the deceitfulness of wealth) choked the Word, and he became unfruitful. Here it is indicative that financial well-being in some people serves to squelch their spiritual development.

1 Timothy 6:17 uses this word. Paul says, "Charge them that are 'ploutos" (the plutocrats – the rich ones) in this age, that they be not high-minded nor trust in certain riches ('ploutos') but in the living God who gives us richly all things to enjoy." So, this word is telling us that Jesus Christ is worthy of having all the gold and silver and all the valued possessions in all the world. The Bible tells us that God the Father Himself has assumed the responsibility for making adequate material provision for every one of His children.

The Lord Jesus tried to explain this to the people on earth while He was here with us. Matthew 6:25, is one place where He was trying to lay out that when it comes to "ploutos" (when it comes to material possessions), God the Father has assumed this is a personal responsibility: "Therefore, I say unto you, be not anxious for your life; what you shall eat or what you shall drink; nor yet for your body, what you shall put on. Isn't the life more than food, and the body than raiment. Behold the fowls of the air, for they do not sow, neither do they reap, nor gather into barns, yet your heavenly Father feeds them. Are you not much better than they? Which of you, by being anxious, can add one cubit on to his stature? And why are you anxious for raiment. Consider the lilies of the field – how they grow. They do not toil, neither do they spin. Yet I say to you that even Solomon, in all his glory was not arrayed like one of these. Wherefore if God so clothed the grass of the field, which today is, and tomorrow is cast into the oven, shall He not much more clothe you. O you of little faith. Therefore, be not anxious saying, 'What shall we eat?' or 'What shall we drink?' or 'With what shall we be clothed?' For the Gentiles seek after all these things. For your heavenly Father knows that you have need of these things."

**Logistical Grace**

This is what (putting it into modern military language) we call logistical grace. Logistics has to do with the provisions by which one accomplishes an objective or a mission. What this passage is telling us is that there are certain material needs for you and me to have to achieve the objectives that God has for us: as a church; and, as individual believers in our lives. Our Father takes it upon Himself to see to it that you have logistical provisions to do the job that he calls you to do. You will never have less than is needed to execute your calling. Anything you have beyond logistical grace in material things is super grace blessing. It is our Lord Jesus Christ Himself who not only is worthy of possessing material wealth, but who indeed, by creation, rightfully is the possessor of all material wealth – who gave it all up so that we could become rich instead.

2 Corinthians 8:9 tells us that: "For you know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ; that though He was rich, yet for your sake, He became poor that He, through His poverty, might be rich. The Lord is worthy of "ploutos" (material well-being).

**Problems of Material Well-Being**

For us to say that he is worthy of it is important if we understand some of the problems associated with material well-being. Here is one of the problems as enunciated to the Jewish people in the Old Testament with material wealth. This is a splendid statement in Deuteronomy, 6:10-12, where Moses, in his final word to the people of Israel, says, "And it shall be when the Lord your God shall have brought you into the land which he swore unto your fathers: to Abraham; to Isaac; and, to Jacob, to give you great and goodly cities, which you did not build; and houses full of good things which you did not fill; and wells which did not dig; vineyards and olive trees, which you did not plan. When you shall have eaten and be full, then beware, lest you forget the Lord who brought you forth out of the land of Egypt from the house of bondage. You shall fear the Lord by God and serve Him, and shall swear by His name."

The problem very clearly is that, once we have entered the realm of material well-being, we forget the God who is the source of that provision. Deuteronomy 8:10: "When you have eaten and are full, then you shall bless the Lord by God for the good land which He has given you. Beware that you don't forget the Lord your God, in keeping His Commandments and His ordinances and His statutes, which I command you this day." You see the stress that Moses is making. He's saying, "You're going to come into the place where life is not so hard. You're not going to have to scrape and skimp and try to make it. You're going to have it, and you're going to have it in abundance. But do you know what's going to happen? When you can go out and buy what you want to buy; when you can add an element of comfort in your home; and, when you can add an element of artistic satisfaction; of decoration; or, of beauty, when you can just go into all the little extras, then the one thing that will be under great threat in your life will be the Word of God. You're going to start getting disinterested in the Bible.

If the United States goes to war (which it may well indeed do) one of the things that I'll tell you (since most of you have never lived through a war), that you will notice (practically the next Sunday) is that we will be putting up extra chairs the following week. Thereafter, the attendance will rise. And all the people who said, "I get a stomach full of the Word of God in the morning, and I don't want to have to come get another batch of it at night," are going to be there because suddenly they're going to be faced with the realities of life and death. It was very amusing to see how all the folks who were not too interested in attending church became terribly interested after the Pearl Harbor Sunday. They all found their way back very quickly.

That's what Moses is telling Israel: "You people, don't be fools. You're going to have things you can spend on your homes; you can be buying things; you can be going places; you can be taking vacations; and, you can be indulging all kinds of interests and hobbies, and that's what I'm going to do for you. I am going to give you riches. But don't you dare turn your back upon learning doctrine; upon being present when it is taught by the spiritual leaders; and, to be positive in your response. Don't you ever come to the point where you are so arrogant that you don't need it – that you think you can handle it on your own.

Deuteronomy 8:12: "Lest when you have eaten and are full, and have built goodly houses and dwelt therein; and when your herds and your flocks multiply; when your silver and gold are multiplied; and, all that you have is multiplied, then your heart will be lifted up, and you will forget the Lord your God who brought you fourth out of the land of Egypt from the house of bondage; who led you through that great and terrible wilderness, wherein were fiery serpents, and scorpions, and droughts, there was no water; and, who brought you forth water out of the rock of flint; who fed you in the wilderness with manna which your fathers didn't know, that He might humble you, and that he might test you to do you good at the latter end. And you say in your heart, 'My power and the might of my hand have gotten me this wealth.' But you shall remember the Lord your God, for it is He who gives the power to get wealth, that He may establish His covenant which He swore unto your fathers as it is this day." It is He that gives you power to get wealth.

You Americans have been graced by being born in the richest nation on the face of the earth, and in a nation of free enterprise provision, because it is still based ultimately on the biblical principles of enjoying the fruits of your labors, and enjoying of having the motivation to pursue those riches and those fruits.

I had a call from my number three son from Rome, Italy the other day, and he was describing the communist countries that he has been traveling in, and the oddity of being awakened at all hours of the night on the train by men with machine guns and red stars on their uniforms, asking for their passports. I asked him, "What did it look like, just visually, in a communist country? Did a difference between that and the rest of Western Europe?" And he said, "Very definitely – it was bleak. There were communist countries everywhere you looked. It was very, very bleak." Some of those people indeed, under that kind of poverty, don't know what it is to have riches. But you Americans do, and you Christians (more than anyone else), because you are in a super provision of God's divine care.

So, the problem we're facing is that we may descend (degenerate) to Revelation 3:17, which describes that Laodicean church: "Because you say, 'I am rich, and increased with goods, and in need of nothing;' and you don't know that you are wretched, and miserable, and poor, and blind, and naked." The debasement of the Laodicean Christians was that they were sophisticated: they lived in nice houses; they had nice furniture; they had beautiful chariots; they had servants; and, they had the good food. It was a sophisticated, gracious lifestyle. They said, "We don't have need of anything." And God said, "You're nothing but a bunch of crumbs, and I vomit you out of My mouth. You don't know how pathetic you are," because they had turned their back upon the Word of God. When they did that, they turned their back upon the God who had made it all possible.

For this reason, God gives believers wealth, as per the capacity to handle those riches in a godly manner. In the Old Testament, it was made clear to the people of God that what they had was controlled by God. 1 Samuel 2:7 puts it this way: "The Lord makes poor and rich. He brings low, and He lifts up." It is God who decides your riches. You may get it, but it will be a delusion. Satan may help you to get it, but you're going to lose it. God does not let those possess who cannot handle it. What is required is a maturity in handling the details of life – these material possessions.

This is enunciated for us in 1 Timothy 6:4 – the handling of riches in a godly manner: "He is proud, knowing nothing, but doting about questions and disputes of words, of which come envy; strife; railings; evil suspicions; and, perverse disputants of men of corrupt minds, and destitute of the truth, supposing that gain is godliness. From such withdraw yourself." Somebody may say, "I'm getting pretty well off. Things are looking up for me. I'm making money because God knows He can trust me with the money. I am his kind of person." The Bible says, "Anytime you hear that, get away from that dude right away" – thinking that his gain is a sign of his godliness. I've heard it said just that way. If I wasn't a godly person, God wouldn't be trusting me with all these possessions:

"But godliness with contentment is great gain. For we brought nothing into this world, and it is certain that we can carry nothing out. And having food and raiment, let us be therewith content. But they that will be rich, fall into temptation and a snare, and into many foolish and hurtful lusts, which drown men in destruction and perdition. For the love of money is the root of all evil, which while some have coveted after, they have erred from the faith, and have pierced themselves through as many sorrows. But you, O man of God, flee these things; and follow after righteousness, godliness, faith, love, patience, and meekness. Fight the good fight of faith, lay hold on eternal life, whereunto you were also called, and have professed a good profession before many witnesses. I command you in the sight of God, who makes all things alive, and before Christ Jesus, who before Pontius Pilate witnessed a good confession; that you keep this commandment without spot, unrebukable, until the appearing of our Lord Jesus Christ; which in His times He shall show who is the blessed and only potentate, the King of Kings and the Lord of Lords, who only have immortality dwelling in the light which no man can approach unto; whom no man has seen, or can see: to whom be honor and power everlasting. Amen. Charge them that are rich in this age, that they be not high-minded nor trust in uncertain riches, but in the living God who gives us richly all things to enjoy; that they do good, that they be rich in good works, ready to distribute, willing to share."

**Capacity to Use Wealth**

And that's the principle. When you have riches that have come from God because you have the capacity to use them, you will demonstrate that capacity by the fact that you are using those riches to advance the cause of the Lord Jesus Christ. You will be using your riches to produce divine good – storing treasures for yourself in heaven.

The problem is that we believers have to learn to view the securing of money as our avocation – our side business. We have to view our Christian service as our vocation. Once you get hold of it, you'll be on your way. Once you understand that you are going to work to earn money as your side business in order to execute your main business of investing your spiritual gifts, then you'll be able to handle material wealth.

In Matthew 6:19, the Lord Jesus put it this way: "Do not lay up for yourselves treasures upon earth, where moth and rust corrupts, and where thieves break through and steal. But lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven where neither moth nor rust corrupts, and where thieves do not break through nor steal. For where your treasure is, there with your heart be also."

Then Matthew 6:24 says, "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. You cannot serve God and money."

In Proverbs 23:4-5, this same principles is put it this way as an expression of God's wisdom: "Do not labor to be rich. Ceased from your own wisdom. Will you set your eyes upon that which is not? For riches certainly make themselves wings. They fly away like an eagle toward heaven." There probably isn't any of us here who haven't discovered this bit of wisdom about riches. We put it in a modern term – that our pockets have holes in them. In the Old Testament times, they said that money, grows wings and flies away. The real wealth then is what we saw in heaven. That's what stays with us forever.

Proverbs 13:7, therefore, says, "There is he that makes himself rich, yet has nothing. There is he that makes himself poor, yet has great riches." There are people who make themselves rich on earth, and poor in heaven. There are people who make themselves poor on earth, because they're doing things with their money, and they find themselves in time very rich indeed in heaven.

Another bit of wisdom is in Proverbs 15:6, which says, "In the house of the righteous is much treasure, but in the revenues of the wicked is trouble.

Luke 12:15 says, "And he said unto them, 'Take heed, and beware of covetousness. For a man's life does not consist in the abundance of the things which he possesses."

Then 1 Corinthians 3:14: "If any man's work abides which we has built upon it, he shall receive a reward." So, real treasure (real wealth) is to be found in what we store in heaven.

**Ill-Gotten Gain**

Then there's another point concerning ill-gotten gain. Ill-gotten wealth will prove to be a curse. There's always the temptation that we try to circumvent integrity in securing wealth. In Proverbs 10:2, there is this wisdom: "Treasures of wickedness profit nothing, but righteousness delivers from death." You'll have it by your evil means, but it will also be dissipated – if not on earth, then in terms of heaven.

Proverbs 28:20 says, "A faithful man shall abound with blessing, but he that makes haste to be rich shall not be innocent. To have respect of persons is not good, for for a piece of bread, that man will transgress. He that hastens it to be rich has an evil eye, and does not consider that poverty shall come upon him."

Then the book of James speaks so forcefully to people who have great material possessions. James 5:1: "Come now, you rich men. Weep and howl for your miseries that will come upon you. Your riches are corrupted; your garments are moth-eaten; your gold and silver are rusted; and, the rest of them shall be a witness against you, and shall eat your flesh as it were fire. You have heaped treasures together for the last day. Behold, the hire of the labors who have reaped down your fields, which is kept back by you step of fraud, cries; and the cries of them who have reaped are entered into the years of the Lord of sabaoth. You have lived in pleasure on the earth, and have been wanton; you have nourished your hearts as in a day of slaughter."

So, this is the result of ill-gotten gains. We have the temptation to get something by deceit and by not being fair with what other people should be receiving for their services and their dealings with you; or, not paying your bills to those from whom you have purchased things or whose services you have received. These things may make you appear a little richer, but God says that it's going to turn to bitterness is in your mouth.

One of the things about material wealth that is very important is that it does not enable a person to escape divine judgment. Throughout the world, there is the illusion that somehow with material wealth, one can escape divine judgment. You wonder why the people of the Mafia and the Godfather type can do the terrible bestial things that they do, and yet they are religious people who attend church. Well, they do it because they believe that having money enables them to secure with God the forgiveness of what they have done. Proverbs 11:4 says, however, "Riches do not profit in the day of wrath: but righteousness delivers from death." Riches will not help you when it comes to your standing before God.

Revelation 6:15-17: "The kings of the earth, and the great men, and the rich men, and the chief captains, and the mighty men, and every slave, and every free man hid themselves in the dens and in the rocks of the mountains, and said to the mountains and rocks, "Fall on us and hide us from the face of Him that sits upon the throne and from the wrath of God. For the great day of His wrath is come, and who shall be able to stand against him?" And that includes the rich men. They could not stand against God when it came to the time of judgment, because all they had to fall back on was their wealth.

Mark 8:36: "For what shall it profit a man if he shall gain the whole world and lose his own soul? Or what shall a man give in exchange for his soul?" You can't buy your way out with Masses. It's not possible to make your way into eternal life by something that you provide through your material gain. On the other hand, there's nothing so beautiful; nothing so attractive; and, nothing so delightful to the mind of God as a believer entrusted with great material things who handles it with dignity and with great honor to the God who gave it to him. That's the objective. It is not our objective in life to be poor. That isn't the way it works. That is the very opposite of divine objective. Because you are a child of God; because you are in Christ; and, because you are in the family of God, His objective is prosperity for you in every realm, including material things.

The point of exalting the Lord Jesus Christ and praising him as One who is qualified to have great riches is to declare that here was a Human Being (a Man such as ourselves) who was able to be entrusted with all of the material wealth of the universe without abusing it for a moment. This is God's ideal. God's ideal is to make Christians well-off, and to give them logistical grace at least. You've got that promise. Then by your efforts, and by your application of your gifts, and by your faithfulness to your labors (and to live in a government that permits you to benefit and to enjoy the fruits of your labors), God wants you to prosper beyond that basic logistical provision. It is God's purpose for you to have grace beyond that.

So, we have to be careful to walk around and say, "Oh, I'm just as poor as a church mouse." I've sat in many services where preachers said, "I don't have too much." Then they would carry on about how poverty struck they were, and they'd reach in and open their wallet, and they'd show it to the people and say, "You see. I don't have anything." And all of the people would say, "Oh, praise the Lord. Amen." And I'd say, "How can you be? He took all of the money out before the service began." I often wish I knew when one of those dudes was going to do that. I'd like to slip up on his wallet and fill it in with a $20 bill on the side with of a bunch of play money, so when he opened it up, it all fell out there – just to show what it really was like.

But there are people who believe that. There are people who are carrying on, showing that that's how poor they are, and thinking that that's an honor to God. No, it isn't. What honors in the age of grace is that you are in a position of spiritual capacity such that God says, "I can give you money, and I can give you a little more. And I can add to what you're doing. And I can see what you're doing with it. And you're not abusing things, and you're not destroying yourself. You're not taking wealth and using it in a wrong way."

If you acquired in the wrong way; if you do it by stealing, which the Bible forbids; if you do it by deceiving others; and, if you do it by not paying your bills, then the consequences will be very serious. You will suffer for that. You will suffer here, and you will suffer in eternity. However, legitimately gained wealth, that God is ready to provide you with as a spiritually mature believer who can handle it, that is the name of the game. The believer in the Lord Jesus Christ, as a matter of fact, has full access to all the wealth of the Lord Jesus Christ. The angels praise Him because He can be trusted with it all, and we are associated with Him. His possession of the wealth of the world is at His disposal to share with us. Philippians 4:19 (a terrific verse) says, "But my God shall supply all your needs according to His 'ploutos' (according to His riches) in glory by Christ Jesus." He will supply all of your needs, and even beyond (in the super grace life), because He possesses that wealth. The Lord Jesus Christ never misused His access to spiritual riches. He can be trusted with it. We are entrusted with a part of that wealth (and He does entrust it to us), and thereby we become his stewards.

1 Corinthians 4:2 says, "Moreover, it is required in stewards that a man be found faithful. If God is going to give you great material possessions, you better be careful, buddy, that you're faithful with that material possession; that what you have access to is treated in faithfulness; and, that what you are doing is not being a steward who is concentrating on temporal things, but a steward who is taking care of his temporal needs, and not skimping necessarily to take care of those, but who is being more than careful in providing for his eternal needs, in terms of what he does with the money that God has given him. You are his steward.

It is good, every time you receive a paycheck, to envision yourself as a teller in God's heavenly bank, in which God is depositing money His money to your account. And as His banker, you are responsible for taking care of His money in a legitimate way: to making it prosper; and, to use it in the way that the God who deposited that money with you wants to use it. How would you like it if your local bank chose to use your money in ways that they thought was fitting – they chose to distribute your money in a way that they thought was fair and proper and right? You know how you get all hot and bothered when you find a service charge on your monthly bank statements for something that you don't think they have a right to be pulling money out of your account and applying to that purpose. You go there, and sound off, and let them know about it. How do you think our heavenly Father feels when He walks up to your window, and He deposits that payment of your earnings for that week, and then finds that you're checking the stuff out without consulting Him – without paying any attention to how much He wants you to use in this way and this way and this way, and how much he wants you to invest for eternity. It is expected. It is required of a steward to be faithful to the one who has made the deposit.

We may add Luke 16:10, enunciating this principle of stewardship: "He that is faithful in that which is least is faithful also in much." You got that? Faithful handling of your paycheck when you have little is the sure road to getting an increase in the paycheck. Faithful handling when you have little in the way of riches is the sure way for God to say, "Now I'm going to step you up with more possessions. You have demonstrated that when you had little you can handle it."

How many times have I heard the pathetic statement made by Christians: "I don't make very much. And I really do want to support the Lord's work. Just as soon as I get on my feet and can get ahead, I'm going to help finance the Lord's work. Baloney. There's a God in heaven who knows better; and, those of us who know the Word of God – we know better. If you're not faithful with the little bit that you have to share with God's work and to finance the Lord's work, you're not going to be faithful if He does give you more, and He won't. You're not killing anybody but yourself.

I know what those people are saying. They're saying, "I have to give myself a face-saving reason for the fact that I walk into the local church congregation, and other people are carrying the load financially, and I don't have a part in it. I justify that I can excuse myself." I don't care if you're a teenager or who you are, if you earn money, it is incumbent upon a child of God to be a faithful steward with that money. And part of it goes to God.

"He that is faithful and that which is least is faithful also in much. He that is unjust in the least is unjust also in much. If, therefore, you have not been faithful in the unrighteous money, who will commit to your trust the true riches? And if you have not been faithful in that which is another man's who shall give you that which is your own?" That is well put. If, you're not faithful in small sums of money, and if you're not faithful with how you handle money, who in the world do you think is going to come along and say, "I want to entrust my soul to you? I want to entrust my spiritual well-being to you. I want to seek your guidance and care spiritually. I want you to tell me what the Word of God has to say." Who cares what you have to say when we know you are dishonest with your money, and when we know you are unfaithful as a steward to God in comparison with what He has entrusted you with.

It is a great thing indeed to be associated with the Lord Jesus Christ, whom all of the angelic posts to say, "Here is a man, a 100% human being, who is completely, absolutely, totally responsible and totally trustworthy, with all the riches of the universe. He won't misuse one penny of it." Because we are associated with Him, it is within our capacity to walk with Him, and through the Word of God and the leading of the Spirit of God, to learn biblical principles of financing and biblical principles of economy, and be just as faithful as the Son of God is. When we demonstrate that kind of capacity, you can expect good times to increase for you.

Dr. John E. Danish, 1982

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