

A serene landscape photograph of a calm lake reflecting a forest and mountains. The lake is in the foreground, with several large, smooth, greyish-brown rocks scattered along its edge and in the water. The water is very still, acting as a perfect mirror for the surrounding scenery. On the left side, a dense forest of tall, slender evergreen trees stands on a slight rise. In the background, a large, rugged mountain with a sharp peak rises against a clear, pale blue sky. The overall atmosphere is peaceful and majestic, with soft lighting suggesting either early morning or late afternoon.

PETRU LOGA

LIFE LIVED IN THE RIGHTEOUSNESS OF CHRIST

ALBA IULIA 2025

**Have you truly experienced the righteousness of God?
Is your life transformed by God, or merely influenced by
people?**

**Are you truly living a life of discipleship to Christ?
Discover the answer!**

**“The getting of treasures by a lying tongue is a vanity
tossed to and fro of them that seek death.” Proverbs 21:6**

**“As the partridge sitteth on eggs, and hatcheth them not; so he
that getteth riches, and not by right, shall leave them in the midst
of his days, and at his end shall be a fool.” Jeremiah 17:11**

**“Woe unto him that buildeth his house by unrighteousness, and his
chambers by wrong!” Jeremiah 22:13**

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**For the kingdom of God is not meat and drink; but
righteousness, and peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost.
Romans 14:17**

**In this the children of God are manifest, and
the children of the devil:
whosoever doeth not righteousness is not of
God, neither he that loveth not his brother.
1 John 3:10**

**The meek will he guide in
judgment: and the meek will he
teach his way. Psalm 25:9**

**Evil men understand not judgment: but they that seek
the LORD understand all things. Proverbs 28:55**

**Nevertheless we, according to his promise, look
for new heavens and a new earth, wherein
dwelleth righteousness. 2 Peter 3:13**

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Introduction

We live in a time when moral values are increasingly confused, and truth is often distorted, minimized, or called into question. Today, things once considered sin are presented as acceptable, normal, or even worthy of promotion.

More and more, the momentary pleasures of sin—such as seeking worldly entertainment or exposing oneself to environments that encourage the flesh—are adopted without discernment by those who call themselves Christians. These choices not only weaken the testimony, but bring reproach upon the Name of God, compromising the call to holiness and separation from the world.

The righteousness of God—a central theme of Scripture—no longer stirs interest, because it strikes directly at unjust practices and the sinful habits of many who claim to be born of God.

Like a pandemic, the desire for gain obtained through dishonest means has spread throughout Christendom, affecting consciences and weakening the witness of those who ought to walk in the light. Integrity is increasingly sacrificed for self-interest, and holiness is replaced by a relative morality—flexible and adapted to circumstances.

Sins such as anger, disobedience to authorities, or the consumption of worldly content are increasingly ignored, though Scripture warns that such things separate us from the Kingdom of God. Slander likewise is no longer regarded as a serious sin, but as an acceptable form of expression—tolerated today in the church that claims to be Christ's.

In these days of deep spiritual confusion, the church is steadily losing its identity, becoming ever more like the world. The values of the Kingdom are replaced with personal opinions, and the call to holiness is often silenced out of fear of losing acceptance and popularity. Instead of being a light that shines in the darkness, the church has become only a pale shadow of what it ought to be—a living testimony to the character of Christ.

A “Jesus” is preached who asks almost nothing, who does not rebuke, who does not require a life lived in His righteousness—a false, convenient Jesus who does not trouble the conscience. In such a setting, human righteousness—based on appearances, self-justifications, and shifting standards—is often confused with the righteousness of God, which is holy, just, and unchanging. Scripture warns in Proverbs 14:12 of this danger: **“There is a way which seemeth right unto a man, but the end thereof are the ways of death”**.

In this context, the booklet **“Life Lived in the Righteousness of Christ”** comes as a clear—prophetic—cry, calling us to return to the heavenly standard: to the righteousness that flows from the holy character of God. This work is **not** a theological treatise, but an urgent call to **authentic discipleship**, to a way of life that reflects the light of the Kingdom of Christ in every aspect of our lives.

It does not offer spiritual comfort, but provokes a deep searching of the

heart. It does not flatter the human nature, but confronts it with the reality of sin, with the need for genuine repentance, and with the price that must be paid by the one who chooses to live in the righteousness of God—a price that includes self-denial, material losses, suffering, rejection, and even persecution.

It is an invitation to a life lived in the light, in truth, in obedience to the commandments of Christ. It is a call to transparency, to the renunciation of dishonest gain, to **restitution** to the wronged party, and to a holy separation from every form of compromise.

Our desire is for it to be a spiritual guide that brings to light the profound discrepancy between the eternal values of the Kingdom of God and the values of the kingdom of darkness, which dominate the religious world. It does not merely inform, but **confronts the conscience**, calling the reader to choose between two incompatible realities.

The Kingdom of God is built upon the foundation of His righteousness, being a kingdom of absolute justice, in which purity and integrity define the character of those who belong to it. Scripture reveals that souls hungry and thirsty for this pure life press into it, longing earnestly to live according to its values. As it is written: **“The kingdom of heaven suffereth violence, and the violent take it by force...”** (Matthew 11:12).

In contrast, the kingdom of darkness promotes contrary values: slander, corruption, unjust gain, lying, immorality, disobedience to authorities, and many others. These are not merely social deviations, but sins which, according to Scripture, exclude people from inheriting the Kingdom of God: **“Be not deceived:... or thieves, nor covetous, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor extortioners, shall inherit the kingdom of God.”** (1 Corinthians 6:9–10)

The booklet calls every reader to a radical separation from sin, to genuine repentance, and to a life lived in the light of divine righteousness.

The Righteousness of God — The Essence of His Kingdom

The Kingdom of God is not a rule like any other. It is a kingdom of absolute justice, where every decree is right, every judgment is pure, and every action is in full harmony with the truth.

The Kingdom is ruled by God Himself. He is the King of righteousness—not only because He does what is right, but because He is righteousness itself. Righteousness is not a quality He adopts, but a reality that flows from His nature. He cannot be unjust, cannot be partial, cannot err. In Him there is no shadow of turning, and His throne is founded upon righteousness and truth: **“Justice and judgment are the habitation of thy throne: mercy and truth shall go before thy face.”**— Psalm 89:14

To acknowledge God as the King of righteousness is to accept the values of His Kingdom, **in which no injustice exists**. It is the call to live not by the fluctuating standards of the world, but by the eternal values of heaven.

The righteousness of God is not merely a moral virtue or a refined

religious conduct—it is the very expression of His character. It is the absolute standard of purity, justice, and truth that governs His Kingdom.

In a world where good and evil are increasingly relativized, His righteousness remains unchanging, holy, and eternal. It does not adjust to the times, it is not negotiated, and it is not diluted. It is a light that cannot be mingled with darkness, and the foundation upon which everything pleasing to God is built.

Righteousness is not an abstract ideal, but a living reality present in the Kingdom of God, where justice, truth, holiness, and pure love reign. It does not tolerate lying, injustice, greed, or guile, but excludes them entirely. In this righteousness there is no place for darkness, for: **“God is light, and in him is no darkness at all”** (1 John 1:5).

In the Kingdom of God there is neither lies, nor deceit, nor manipulation; neither greed, nor the love of money, nor the lust for power; neither pride, nor selfishness, nor self-exaltation; neither immorality, nor uncleanness, nor shameful thoughts; neither hatred, nor revenge, nor gossip, nor destructive speech; neither corruption, nor injustice, nor favoritism.

In contrast, the Kingdom of God is filled with truth and transparency, righteousness and justice, holiness and moral purity, integrity, sacrificial love and compassion, gentleness, humility and patience, joy, peace, and complete trust in God; heartfelt obedience to His will; genuine fellowship and unity among its citizens.

This is the righteousness to which we are called — not a superficial or outward form, but the absolute righteousness of God: a righteousness that does not change and does not compromise, measured by the standard of the Kingdom of God. “But seek ye first the kingdom of God, **and his righteousness**; and all these things shall be added unto you.” (Matthew 6:33)

The righteousness of God is not an abstract idea, but a living reality — one that shines brightly and draws the sincere soul that hungers for truth. It is perfect, pure, and peace-giving — a light that not only exposes the darkness, but also offers a path toward Christlikeness.

As it is written in Deuteronomy 32:4: “He is the Rock, his work is perfect: **for all his ways are judgment: a God of truth and without iniquity, just and right is he.**”

When Scripture declares that “in Him is no unrighteousness,” it firmly affirms that God does not act deceitfully, He hides no secret motives, He does not manipulate. In His relationship with man, God is completely transparent, sincere, and just. In Him there is no hidden agenda, no shadow of falsehood, not even the slightest deviation from truth.

He is righteous in the smallest matters. He does not speak half-truths. He is never partial. He does not grant favor unjustly. He is perfectly objective in all He does — fair, uninfluenced by appearances or self-interest. He does not deceive, He does not promise without fulfilling, He does not judge superficially. His righteousness is absolute — without flaw, without compromise, without exception.

This is the image of God: **the Rock**—stable, unchanging, trustworthy. He

is the supreme model of righteousness, and this righteousness of His is the goal of those who seek it sincerely. It is not a human righteousness—limited, relative, or grounded in one's own efforts—but **the righteousness of God Himself: holy, perfect, and unchanging.**

Life Lived in Righteousness — The Mark of Being Born of God

The Lord Jesus says: **“Blessed are they which do hunger and thirst after righteousness: for they shall be filled.”** (Matthew 5:6)

This hunger and thirst are not bodily, but spiritual. They describe a deep, burning desire for the righteousness of God—a life that is clean, just, without a trace of compromise. It is the desire of the one who feels the emptiness left by sin, who recognizes the need for purity, and who will not be satisfied with religious appearances or human justifications.

Imagine a man lost in the middle of a desert, **without water and without food.** In that state of exhaustion and desperation, he does not need explanations about hydration or theories about nutrition. His thirst is real, urgent, vital. He is not satisfied with words; he desperately seeks the water that can save his life.

So it is with the soul that hungers and thirsts for righteousness. It does not need abstract theological concepts or doctrinal definitions, but the righteousness in which God Himself lives—righteousness that can transform its life. The need is not theology, but daily living in the purity and light of God's righteousness. The soul that longs for His righteousness seeks not merely to understand, but to be pierced, cleansed, and led by it, so that its life reflects the holy character of the One who is righteousness itself.

This desire is not superficial, but deep—a hunger born of the awareness of one's own need, and the recognition that nothing else can bring peace, meaning, and true life. The one who hungers for righteousness is not satisfied with religious appearances, but seeks with all his heart to obtain the righteousness of the Lord. This means he longs with all his being to be:

- A person of integrity—that is, whole, without moral fissures. For example, he refuses to cheat, to steal, or to lie, even when telling the truth costs him, because he wants to remain pure.
- Honest—he lives transparently, without hidden motives. He does not covet what belongs to others, and he does not conceal the truth to protect his image.
- Just—he makes decisions based on truth, not on emotions or personal interests. When he must choose between what is popular and what is right, he chooses what is right.
- Fair—he treats everyone by the same measure. He does not differentiate between people based on status, but sees each person's value through God's eyes.
- Impartial—he judges without favoritism. He is not swayed by social pressure or personal relationships when justice must be applied.

- Unwavering — standing firm in what is right, even when alone or when circumstances push toward compromise.

In contrast, the one who does not hunger for righteousness neither seeks it nor receives it. He sees the values of God as inconvenient or too strict, preferring a morality tailored to his own interests. In doing so, he resists the light that calls him to change.

The difference is clear: the one who hungers runs toward the light, drawn by the life that righteousness offers, while the one who resists rejects it — preferring the comfortable darkness of self-justification. One is open, ready to be filled; the other remains empty — not because God does not offer, but because he refuses to receive. It is the difference between a sincere desire for change and stubborn resistance to the truth. The hungry soul acknowledges its need and draws near; the self-satisfied heart closes itself off and turns away.

The Lord Jesus does not say, “Blessed are they who discuss righteousness” or “those who analyze it”, but “Blessed are they which do hunger and thirst after righteousness” — meaning those who long for it with all their being. And the promise is clear: “for they shall be filled.” God does not ignore a sincere hunger; He rewards it with life, peace, and His own presence.

Righteousness is not merely one virtue among many — it is the very foundation of life in the Kingdom of God. It is not optional, but defining. It is what marks us as citizens of heaven and what causes our light to shine in the darkness of the world. In this Kingdom, righteousness is not an abstract ideal, but a lived reality — a life in harmony with the holy character of God, the King of righteousness.

It is the source of peace, rest, and true joy. It is not a mere concept, but a living reality — the sign of being born of God and the ultimate goal of salvation. The one who lives in God’s righteousness tastes the fullness of the Kingdom, for his life aligns with the divine character. But the one who loves darkness — even if he speaks holy words — remains far from this reality.

The apostle John states plainly: “If ye know that he is righteous, ye know **that every one that doeth righteousness is born of him.**” (1 John 2:29) This verse offers a simple yet profound criterion: **living in righteousness is the evidence of being born of God.** It is not enough to claim to be a believer — the life must reflect the character of the One in whom you profess to believe. If God is righteous, then those born of Him will manifest His righteousness tangibly and consistently.

This reality is more than a moral choice — it is a testimony of spiritual identity. Those born of God **carry within them the “genetic code” of righteousness**, for they have been begotten of the Holy Spirit. Just as a child bears the traits of his parents, so the one born of God will reflect the nature of the heavenly Father. Righteousness springs from within, as a natural expression of a regenerated life.

As Scripture declares: “Therefore if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature: old things are passed away; **behold, all things are become new.**” (2 Corinthians 5:17) This “new creature” is not merely a spiritual label, but a visible reality in the life of the one who has been born again.

One of the “new things” God brings into the believer’s life is

righteousness — not human, relative, and changeable righteousness, but the righteousness of God, manifested through a transformed life lived in integrity. If this righteousness is absent or pushed aside from the center of the new life, it is a clear sign that the new birth has not truly taken place, and the person continues to live in old patterns without having been genuinely renewed by the Spirit of God.

Therefore, if righteousness is not one of the visible realities of our lives, it is a clear indication that the process of renewal has not truly occurred. The new birth produces a new life — and that life bears the imprint of God's righteousness.

Scripture leaves no room for doubt: "In this the children of God are manifest, and the children of the devil: **whosoever doeth not righteousness is not of God.**" (1 John 3:10) This verse underscores a profound spiritual truth: righteousness is not optional for the one born of God. The absence of a pure and upright life is not merely a weakness, **but a clear sign of a heart that does not belong to the Kingdom.**

To live in righteousness means to live in the presence of God, in harmony with His will, in the light of His truth. It is a life in which Christ lives in us, and we become ambassadors of the righteousness of His Kingdom — right here on earth.

Diluted Righteousness — Living Below Heaven's Standard

One of the most subtle spiritual dangers is the tendency of the religious person, given to sin, to construct a diluted standard of righteousness in order to preserve the illusion that he is on the path of salvation.

Instead of looking to the righteousness of God and conforming to that absolute standard, he redefines what it means to "be a believer," choosing a convenient version that does not require renunciation, real repentance, and deep change. This self-deception is fueled by a lack of knowledge of the Scriptures, wherein God's plan is revealed—namely, to bring man to the measure of the stature of Christ.

As Scripture says in Ephesians 4:13: "And he gave some, apostles; and some, prophets; and some, evangelists; and some, pastors and teachers; For the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ: Till we all come in the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, **unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ.**"

Most people base their hope of salvation exclusively on the mercy of God, without understanding that this mercy is not an excuse to remain unchanged, but an opportunity offered by God for transformation. The mindset—"God is merciful, therefore I will be saved regardless of my life"—ignores the fact that the mercy of God is always accompanied by a call to holiness.

This mentality contributes to the undervaluing of the heavenly standard, because the person **no longer feels the need to conform to the**

righteousness of Christ. Instead of seeing grace as support to rise to the stature of Christ, he uses it as a justification for spiritual stagnation. Thus, he no longer seeks a transformed life, but merely emotional consolation.

Scripture shows that the grace of God is not intended to keep us in a state of spiritual comfort, but to lead us to a life transformed through repentance.

As Scripture says in *Titus 2:11-12*: “For the grace of God that bringeth salvation hath appeared to all men, Teaching us that, denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly, in this present world.”

When misunderstood, grace becomes a pretext to avoid confronting sin, denying self, and going through the painful — yet necessary — process of sanctification.

In such cases, spiritual discernment is impaired, and a person ends up ignoring **the ultimate purpose of salvation — conformity to the image of Christ.** Instead of allowing himself to be shaped according to the divine pattern, he creates his own criteria for spiritual evaluation.

This approach produces a diluted version of righteousness, in which man reserves the right to decide which sins are serious and which can be tolerated. He chooses which areas of his life should change and which may remain untouched. It is a subtle form of self-justification, where sin is minimized and the conscience is soothed by comparison with the deeds of others, rather than by measuring against God’s standard.

Sins such as drunkenness, fornication, or smoking are easily recognized as serious and condemnable. Yet the diluted standard appears when other sins — more subtle or socially accepted — are ignored, minimized, or tolerated.

This mindset creates the illusion of a clean life, but in reality hides a false righteousness, built on human criteria rather than the standard of God. Thus, sin continues to work in secret, under the mask of a religious life.

God’s call is clear: “But seek ye first the kingdom of God, **and his righteousness.**” (Matthew 6:33) — this is not an invitation to selective morality, but to a high and holy life modeled after Christ. It is not about a few outward adjustments or religious gestures, but about a radical transformation according to God’s heavenly standard.

Authentic righteousness is not relative — it is the righteousness of God: absolute, holy, and unchanging. It does not adapt to man’s preferences; rather, it calls man to conform to the divine character.

Only by aspiring to this absolute righteousness can we be counted worthy to be “fellowcitizens with the saints, and of the household of God,” as it is written: “Now therefore ye are no more strangers and foreigners, but fellowcitizens with the saints, and of the household of God.” (Ephesians 2:19)

In the light of God’s righteousness, we must examine ourselves not only concerning obvious sins, but also those accepted by many who consider themselves born of God — yet remain sins in His eyes and make us unworthy to be fellowcitizens with the saints and members of His household.

Examples of ignored — diluted yet real — sins that are unacceptable in

the Kingdom of God include: evading taxes or legal debts; slander or evil speaking; uncontrolled anger; consuming worldly content (TV, internet); beaches and swimming pools — immodest exposure of the body; disobedience to authorities (such as illegal driving or breaking traffic laws); stealing by copying (cheating in school or other educational settings)...

In contrast to righteousness, a life lived in sin — even if masked by a religious identity — produces unrest, inner emptiness, and dissatisfaction. The man who declares himself a believer but continues to live in sin will not find the rest God has promised.

Sin is not limited to visible deeds; it also includes attitudes and choices that contradict the character of God. True righteousness requires a life that is pure not only in appearance, but in the depth of our motives and decisions. This is why we are called to look honestly and courageously at those aspects of life that are often overlooked.

One such aspect, often ignored, is gain obtained dishonestly — a sin widespread yet rarely confronted. Though often justified in various contexts or overlooked from habit, this kind of gain, when practiced by one who claims to be born of the righteous God, is a grave offense against the righteousness to which Christ calls us, and a defiance of the justice of God's Kingdom.

Moreover, a dishonest life brings reproach upon the Name of God, as Scripture says: **“For the name of God is blasphemed among the Gentiles through you.”** (Romans 2:24)

The appearance of this booklet is driven by the fact that the problem of dishonest gain has become alarming, spreading disturbingly among those who consider themselves born again. It is intended both as a warning cry and as a help for those who have been misled into thinking that dishonest gain is not a serious sin — when in reality, it is serious enough to hinder the new birth from the righteous God.

Unjust Gain in the Light of the Righteousness of God

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

This way of life does not spring from religious obligation, but from the deep desire of a heart that hungers and thirsts after righteousness—a heart that longs for purity, truth, and light, and is not satisfied with appearances, but seeks to authentically reflect the holiness of God.

Righteousness is reflected in every aspect of life, including the way we respect the rights of others. Therefore, any gain obtained unjustly—whatever its form—constitutes a grave violation of the order established by God. It is not only the direct taking of an object, but any form of seizing what does not belong to us: material goods, money, opportunities, or advantages obtained unjustly.

The justice of God tolerates no compromise. He not only forbids theft,

but also coveting what is not ours. To crave another's goods—whether material or social—is to contest the order and justice established by God. It is an offense against His holy character and evidence that the heart is not aligned with the righteousness of heaven.

To live in the righteousness of God means to be **honest, a person of integrity, just, fair, impartial, and unwavering**—even when no one sees, even when the situation would seem to allow a compromise. In the Kingdom of God, every choice matters, because it reflects who we are and to whom we belong.

In this light, **off-the-books work** is not merely a questionable economic practice, but lawlessness—a form of organized theft by which taxes are evaded and laws established for the common good are violated. Although widespread and often justified by personal need or lack of options, in God's eyes it remains iniquity.

By avoiding these contributions, society is deprived of the resources needed for education, healthcare, and social protection — especially for the elderly who have labored a lifetime. Fulfilling legal obligations is not merely a matter of social responsibility, but also an expression of love toward one's neighbor and of submission to the order established by God.

The apostle Paul speaks plainly: "Let every soul be subject unto the higher powers. For there is no power but of God: the powers that be are ordained of God. **Whosoever therefore resisteth the power, resisteth the ordinance of God.**" (Romans 13:1–2)

Therefore, working "off the books" or encouraging such practices means defying not only human law, but also God's divine order. The believer is called to live in the light, with integrity, even when others choose the path of compromise.

Scripture condemns without question the gain obtained through unjust means: **"Rejoice not, O Israel... for thou hast gone a whoring from thy God, thou hast loved a (prostitute's) reward upon every cornfloor."** (Hosea 9:1)

This rebuke to Israel highlights the seriousness of being attached to material gain obtained through compromise, at the expense of God's blessing. When a person loves dishonest profit, he turns away from the holiness God requires and from fellowship with Him, revealing the character of Balaam. Concerning Balaam, Scripture says he "loved the wages of unrighteousness" (2 Peter 2:15), showing that his thirst for gain blinded him and led him to choose iniquity — the path that ends in death. Those who love a dishonest reward follow the same way of destruction.

This truth is echoed in Jeremiah 2:33: "Why trimmest thou thy way to seek love? **therefore hast thou also taught the wicked ones thy ways.**" This verse shows that the one driven by greed — whether rich or poor — consciously shapes his behavior to sustain it, becoming ever more skilled in wrongdoing. **"For the love of money is the root of all evil:** which while some coveted after, they have erred from the faith." (1 Timothy 6:10)

Hiding income, evading taxes, engaging in corruption, or manipulating others are all forms of lying and theft. They cannot be blessed by God and

keep a person in a state of spiritual death, standing in direct contradiction to God's righteousness. Such practices do not merely break moral law — they contradict the holy character of God, who hates dishonest gain and calls His people to live in truth and justice.

Any form of gain obtained through deceit — whether tax evasion, corruption, or manipulation — is rebellion against the character of God. These are not mere administrative oversights or “adaptations to circumstance,” but sins that separate us from Him.

God cannot declare clean the one who hides his income and uses unjust means for personal gain. Scripture is categorical: **“Shall I count them pure with the wicked balances, and with the bag of deceitful weights?”** (Micah 6:11)

This rhetorical question expresses divine indignation toward the hypocrisy of those who claim to be righteous but, when required to declare their earnings, use “false measures” — a symbol of deceit and dishonest gain.

Tax theft may seem like financial gain, but in reality it brings no lasting benefit: **“Treasures of wickedness profit nothing:** but righteousness delivereth from death.” (Proverbs 10:2) Such treasures offer no protection, no peace, and no life. Only righteousness — living in truth and justice — delivers.

Hiding income to avoid paying taxes, or collusion between employer and employee to obtain undeserved financial benefits — all these are forms of a “false balance.” God not only rejects these, He calls them an abomination — something deeply offensive to His holy and righteous nature: **“A false balance is abomination to the LORD:** but a just weight is his delight.” (Proverbs 11:1)

God's character is defined by justice, holiness, and truth. He not only executes justice, but loves it — and hates robbery. Isaiah 61:8 declares with solemn clarity: **“For I the LORD love justice, I hate robbery and wrong...”**

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

Scripture warns without ambiguity in Ezekiel 18:10–13 that the one who robs will die: ***“...hath robbed, he shall not live: he hath done all these abominations; he shall surely die; his blood shall be upon him.”*** This sentence is not arbitrary, but just.

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

It was necessary for the sin to be exposed, confessed, and removed

before God would resume His work among them. God will not dwell where sin reigns. This episode is a solemn warning: without a radical dealing with sin, there can be no true fellowship with God. Though Achan hid the stolen goods from human eyes, they were not hidden from God's eyes. What was buried in his tent cried out to heaven.

The righteous God does not tolerate hidden sin. Achan was not merely a man who made a mistake — he became a symbol of iniquity stubbornly kept. The death sentence did not come only for the act, but for his refusal to bring it into the light. God demanded that the sin be brought out, judged, and removed so His presence could return to the people.

The wages of sin is death, as the apostle Paul says: **“For the wages of sin is death...”** (Romans 6:23)

Robbery, as a form of iniquity, is not merely a violation of human rights — it is an abomination in God's eyes. It draws divine judgment because it undermines justice, dignity, and the moral order established by the Creator.

Tax theft excludes the life of God, for righteousness cannot dwell together with robbery. The two are incompatible — just as light cannot coexist with darkness. The new life in God requires deep transformation, a separation from the works of darkness, and a sincere cleaving to justice.

Where extortion is practiced, there is no life from God, but death—for there lawlessness reigns, not righteousness. This divine hatred toward extortion and iniquity is not mere moral disapproval, but a spiritual condemnation. It shows that God cannot be associated with injustice, and that those who live in dishonesty separate themselves from His character. Unjust gain is not merely an ethical issue; it is a direct offense against the holiness of God.

Before people it may seem like success, but before God it is folly: a life built on injustice cannot be blessed—it is an unwise choice that ignores spiritual and moral consequences. For the one who does such things, it is a snare leading to death. Scripture warns: “As the partridge sitteth on eggs, and hatcheth them not; **so he that getteth riches, and not by right**, shall leave them in the midst of his days, **and at his end shall be a fool.**” (Jeremiah 17:11)

If someone, even under conditions of poverty, works without legal forms and evades taxes, he directly and explicitly violates the law of Christ. The Lord Jesus taught us to be ready to give to him that asketh, not to hide; not to resist the one who would take from us, but even to offer more than he demands. He says: “And unto him that smiteth thee on the one cheek offer also the other; and him that taketh away thy cloak forbid not to take thy coat also. **Give to every man that asketh of thee**; and of him that taketh away thy goods ask them not again.” (Luke 6:29–30)

This principle expresses an attitude of transparency and submission to what is right, not of evasion or concealment. To work under the table and refuse to contribute to the common good by nonpayment of taxes contradicts the spirit of the Gospel and the righteous character of Christ.

We can easily observe that these commands in Luke 6 were given in an extremely difficult historical context: the Jews lived under Roman

occupation, and Roman soldiers had legal authority to demand goods, taxes, or even forced labor from the local population.

The Lord Jesus did not tell His disciples to revolt, but taught them to respond with a submissive heart in accordance with His commands. This attitude of voluntary submission and surrendering of rights reflects the values of those who belong to the Kingdom of God.

In the same line of teaching, we find His command: “**Render therefore unto Caesar the things which are Caesar’s...**” (Matthew 22:21). The apostle Paul reinforces this principle, saying: “**Render therefore to all their dues:** tribute to whom tribute is due...” (Romans 13:7). This command is not an exception, but a logical continuation of the principle of not resisting him that takes by force, but of living in submission to our Master.

In its historical context, paying tribute expressed submission to an often unjust authority — yet one ordained by God. In contrast, today’s taxes no longer carry the character of tribute, but represent a responsible contribution to the common good, returning to us in the form of infrastructure, medical care, and other public services.

Working “off the books,” practiced as a way of life, is not merely an occasional mistake but a continual sin — a deliberate choice to live in dishonesty and disobedience to authorities. This reveals a heart that has not been searched by the Holy Spirit and has not understood the call to a life of integrity.

To claim to live daily with the righteous God as Father, while keeping this sin in your life, is a blatant lie. God does not make His dwelling where iniquity reigns. He is holy, and His presence cannot be invoked merely as a declaration — it must be confirmed by a pure life.

After being born of God, the Holy Spirit is given as a continual presence in the believer’s life. The Lord Jesus said: “...and, lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world.” (Matthew 28:20) This promise is valid for those who live in obedience and purity. The Holy Spirit does not remain indifferent to sin, but works actively for our cleansing and sanctification.

A practical example: a man who has been born again and commits a dishonest act — such as using a company vehicle for personal purposes, without the employer’s permission — will be convicted in his conscience.

Though the act may seem minor or justifiable, the Holy Spirit will make him aware that it is a form of injustice. This conviction is not mere human guilt, but the work of the Holy Spirit, who convinces the soul of sin. He does not merely convict, but also leads toward repentance and the correction of wrong — through acknowledgment of the act and fair compensation for the service misused. The Spirit does not accept compromise; He leads a person into the light, into truth, and into cleansing.

Therefore, refusing to pay taxes is not merely a legal violation, but a rejection of Christ’s commands in Luke 6:29 and Matthew 22:21. This rejection of the Word — **which is the seed of God** (Luke 8:11) from which the new life should begin — shows that the new birth from God, which takes place only if we receive Him gladly (John 1:12), has not occurred. Scripture shows us that the Holy Spirit is given to cause **this seed** to germinate in the

heart. Yet the Spirit's work is not automatic; it requires an open and obedient heart.

Where there is no obedience to Christ's commands — even in seemingly “small” matters such as paying taxes — it is a sign that the Spirit is not bringing forth the sprouting of a new life. Not because He lacks power, but because **the seed** finds hard, beaten ground where it cannot take root — a hardened heart that rejects it.

To better understand the seriousness of this sin — one ignored by most — we will address the subject at length.

In most nations, the relationship between citizen and state is based on a social contract founded on the principle of mutual responsibility and solidarity. This contract involves rights and obligations on both sides. The state has the responsibility to provide public services — such as education, healthcare, infrastructure, and social protection — while citizens have the obligation to contribute to their support in proportion to their income. This contribution is generally made through the payment of taxes, as established by law.

Citizens who earn income — from salaries, self-employment, rent, investments, or other sources — are required to contribute to the state budget. Income tax applies to earnings from any source, and in some countries the rate may be around 10%.

The purpose is not merely the collection of funds, but the fair redistribution of resources — taking more from those who earn much and giving more to those who earn little, so that no one is left without help. Thus, education is free for all children and hospitalization is accessible to everyone (in many or most countries), and roads, parks, and street lighting are equally available to both poor and rich.

From the perspective of the social contract, hiding income is a form of deceiving one's partner — in this case, the state, which acts as the instrument of organization and protection of society. In this sense, the benefits received from the state (education, healthcare, infrastructure, etc.) are paid for from the contributions of honest citizens, and to profit from them without contributing is a form of indirect theft.

A practical illustration: To understand the sin of hiding income, imagine that for years we ignored our obligation to the state, concealing earnings and avoiding paying the tax due. Meanwhile, the state — unaware of the deception — constantly provided public services: our children attended school for free, received free medical care, and were given allowances and scholarships. We enjoyed paved roads, sewage systems, gas, and electricity.

All these services were sustained from funds collected from citizens — including the tax that others paid honestly — while we chose not to contribute.

Taking Romania as an example:

If I have three children in school, and the standard annual cost for a child's education—according to the official allocation from the public budget—is about 10,000 lei (or around \$2,300), then the state covers

approximately **30,000 lei per year** just for their education. This amount covers teachers' salaries, school maintenance expenses, utilities, and other basic educational services, and is funded entirely from public funds.

To this is added free medical care provided to the children. Besides education and health, they also receive monthly child allowances—290 lei for each—which means approximately 10,400 lei per year for the three children.

If I have a monthly income of 5,000 lei, the income tax is about 6,000 lei per year. Thus, even if I paid my taxes honestly, the state would still offer me benefits over 38,400 lei beyond my contribution. It is an abomination for me to hide my income in order not to pay those 6,000 lei, while the state—which I consider “pagan”—offers me 44,400 lei paid from the contributions of those honest people who pay VAT, taxes, and duties.

A lesson from the lives of Abraham and Judas. Imagine the biblical scene in which Abraham, the patriarch of faith, loses his wife, Sarah. The inhabitants of the land offer him a burial place—a cave—free of charge, as a sign of respect. But Abraham refuses to receive it without payment. Why? Because he did not want to take advantage, not even when something was offered to him for free. He wanted to remain clean and to live righteously, both before God and before people.

Now imagine the opposite: someone receives help from the state—subsidies, funds, allowances, social support, free medical services—which he accepts as if they were rightfully his, and on top of this chooses to deceive the one who does him so much good. He hides his income, works under the table, or exploits the system without contributing. It is as if someone offered to help him with money to build a house, and he, instead of giving thanks, stole money from his benefactor's wallet.

Abraham did not want anything for free, even when he could have taken advantage. In receiving help from the state — which comes from the contributions of all — we are called to choose the same path: honesty. Let us not steal from the common storehouse, from the bread of others, from the effort of those who have contributed honestly, but let us also be among those who give joyfully. Only then can we truly receive child allowances, free medical care — not as profiteers, but as honest citizens who first give, and then receive what is rightfully theirs.

This image becomes all the more troubling when I compare it with my own choices: I have benefited from what I did not deserve, and I have even stolen and deceived the one who gave to me, hiding the truth. The reason? **I loved a dishonest gain**, as Scripture says in Hosea 9:1. I have applied for subsidies, grants, social aid, firewood, heating assistance — and I took them with both hands wide open, as if they were mine by right, without asking myself whether I was truly entitled to them. But when the time came to give what I owed, my hands seemed sewn into my pockets.

I hid, declared smaller incomes, avoided responsibility. My heart was trained in greed, as Scripture says: **“They have a heart trained in greed”** (2 Peter 2:14). Not only did I take advantage, I also hid the truth, driven by

selfish desires and an insatiable hunger for gain.

Abraham, on the other hand, hungering for righteousness, lived in the integrity given by God, choosing not to covet anything belonging to his neighbor — not even a thread — keeping himself pure before the Righteous One. Although he did not have the commandment written explicitly on tablets — **“You shall not covet anything that belongs to your neighbor”** (Exodus 20:17) — as we have today, it was engraved in his heart by God.

When the king of Sodom offered him the riches as spoils of war, he refused categorically, saying: “I will take nothing that belongs to you, **not even a thread** or a strap of a sandal” (Genesis 14:23). He did not want to profit from the work of others, motivated by the justice of God. For him, being righteous as God is righteous mattered more than any material gain.

He chose the light of righteousness, guided by faith and justice. I was driven by selfish desires; he was guided by a clean conscience before God. Faced with the same temptation, he chose to remain pure; I chose to stain myself.

The deeds of my faith do not resemble those of Abraham — the father of the faithful — but rather those of Judas, who stole from the common purse, about whom it is written: **“He was a thief; as keeper of the money bag, he used to help himself to what was put into it”** (John 12:6). Judas, driven by love of money, chose wrongdoing. He stole from their small storehouse — a purse from which the disciples’ expenses as they traveled with the Lord Jesus were covered. He took what was not his, hiding under the mask of service.

Between the two lies a moral and spiritual distance as great as heaven and earth. Abraham’s integrity was the fruit of faith, while Judas’s greed was the expression of a heart alienated from God. One builds, the other destroys.

Therefore, if I want to be an heir of the Kingdom of God, I must have the faith of Abraham — not the greed of Judas. As it is written: **“...heirs are those who have the faith of Abraham”** (Romans 4:16). The inheritance of the Kingdom is not for those who merely bear a religious name, but for those who live the faith of Abraham — a faith that manifests itself in righteousness.

Failure to pay taxes is an abomination before God. It is an act that reflects the character of Judas — motivated by greed and followed by a false spiritual security. My likeness to Judas, and not to Abraham, shows that I am not hungering for righteousness. This is a grave warning: my deeds betray a false faith, devoid of the fruits of obedience and integrity.

Scripture warns us about how God views this attitude, even when it is masked by social or economic arguments. In Isaiah 57:17, God says: **“Because of his sinful greed, I was angry and punished him; I hid myself in anger, yet he kept on in his willful ways.”** This greed is not merely a moral problem — it is rebellion against order and justice.

When someone refuses to contribute, even the small amount owed in proportion to modest income, they steal from the common storehouse. They benefit from services paid for by others, without giving anything in return. It is a hidden form of injustice, in which one exploits collective solidarity without participating in it. Even a small contribution has value, because it

expresses responsibility, honesty, and respect for the common good.

If Judas's greed is clearly seen in stealing from a small storehouse, our act is no less serious simply because the storehouse from which we take is bigger. **The fact that "it is not noticed" what I take does not change the nature of the act.** Greed is the same, and theft remains theft, regardless of size. God does not judge by the size of the storehouse, but by the integrity of the heart.

Such a person is a deceiver and a thief, like Judas, who stole from his brothers. Therefore, they do not deserve to enjoy the benefits of the system, but deserve condemnation, because they have chosen to deceive and take advantage, rather than contribute.

That is why states have laws that punish tax evasion — not only because it breaks the social contract, but because it violates the moral ethics that form the foundation of a just society. Tax evasion is not merely an economic crime; it is a form of injustice against the community, a betrayal of the solidarity that sustains the common good.

In Romania, for example, undeclared work is legally defined as both tax evasion and fraud, because it involves receiving or offering money secretly without fulfilling legal obligations to the state. It is regulated by:

- **Law no. 241/2005** on preventing and combating tax evasion, Article 9, which states: hiding income, failing to record it in legal documents... are crimes punishable by imprisonment from 2 to 8 years.
- **Labor Code — Law no. 53/2003**, Article 260, paragraph (1), letter e), which states: employing someone without a written individual work contract prior to starting work is a crime punishable by imprisonment from 1 to 2 years or a criminal fine.

The Advantages of Unlawful Gain — Sweet at the Beginning, Bitter at the End

One of the apparent advantages of the sin of dishonest gain is the illusion of financial efficiency: the possibility of accomplishing more with less money—money that, often, is not sufficient. Yet this "advantage" comes with a moral and legal price. To obtain such gains, we are often compelled to collaborate with people who evade paying taxes and do not issue fiscal documents. In this way, we not only break the law, but become accomplices to tax evasion and partners in robbing the public good—like Judas, who stole from the common purse.

By accepting such practices, we support a culture of darkness, where lying, theft, and lack of responsibility are promoted. We join those who choose to live dishonestly, and our actions place us not only outside the law, but also in Judas's greed.

Scripture describes this illusion of dishonest gain very clearly: **"Stolen waters are sweet, and bread eaten in secret is pleasant. But he knoweth not that the dead are there; and that her guests are in the depths of hell."** (Proverbs 9:17-18)

This passage shows that the sin of greed may seem attractive and

advantageous at first—“sweet” and “pleasant”—but in reality it leads to spiritual death and ruin. Gain obtained through iniquity is not blessed, but cursed. What appears to be a convenient solution is a snare that destroys the soul.

It is the sin of Judas—the love of money blinded him, leading ultimately to the betrayal of the Lord Jesus and to a tragic death. The end of Judas is a solemn warning: dishonest gain not only ruins the conscience, but can lead to eternal loss.

Building your house “off the books” — a witness against you

A telling example is the construction of a house. Let us suppose that the total cost is \$80,000. Approximately half of this amount (\$40,000) is labor, paid under the table, without taxes and without fiscal documents.

If this labor were declared and taxed, the following taxes would need to be paid:

- VAT (21%): \$8,400
- Social contributions & income taxes (approx. 45%): \$18,000
- Total taxes: \$26,400

Therefore, if the work were done honestly, the real cost of construction would rise from \$80,000 to \$106,400, a 33% increase. This example shows how much is “saved” by avoiding taxes—and how great the moral compromise is.

By accepting these practices, we become accomplices to tax evasion and join those who steal from what belongs to the community. In God’s eyes, this is a form of theft and unlawful gain.

Scripture warns with terrifying seriousness about those who pursue dishonest gain to build their house and protect their family: **“Woe unto him that buildeth his house by unrighteousness, and his chambers by wrong”** (Jeremiah 22:13).

A house built through injustice will not be a refuge, but a monument to wrongdoing. Nothing is hidden before God — neither well-crafted schemes, nor untaxed labor, nor materials bought without receipts, nor beams set in place with thoughts of dishonest gain. Divine justice penetrates into the most hidden details of life. Even the wood, the stone, the beam — all become witnesses to injustice. Wrongdoing cannot be covered with plaster, hidden inside walls, or buried under a roof. It will cry out. It will testify. It will condemn on the day of judgment.

Scripture speaks plainly on this: “Woe to him who builds his house by unjust gain, setting his nest on high to escape the clutches of ruin! You have plotted the ruin of many peoples, shaming your own house and forfeiting your life. **The stones of the wall will cry out, and the beams of the woodwork will echo it**” (Habakkuk 2:9–11).

James 5:4 says the same — the wages withheld from workers cry out against those who have cheated them, and the cries of the laborers reach the ears of the Lord Almighty. In the same way, money gained by concealing income is not silent. It cries out! It is a living testimony of sin — evidence that rises up against the one who obtained it unjustly.

It is a dangerous illusion — a fatal deception — to think that safety can be built on crooked foundations. The person who builds their future on wrongdoing is only preparing their own collapse. What may seem like a well-built house, a “high nest” safe from danger, is in reality a fortress of shame and proof of guilt.

The same situation appears in many other areas: painting a house, repairing heating, electrical or plumbing systems, renting out an apartment, fixing a car, agricultural work (plowing, sowing, harvesting), buying and cutting firewood, drilling a well, and so on. These are often carried out “off the books” to avoid paying VAT or other taxes. They may be done without paperwork if we love the wages of wrongdoing.

For example, if someone buys firewood worth 3,000 lei without a receipt, they avoid paying 21% VAT — that’s 630 lei (or around \$145), a considerable sum for those with low incomes. Yet this apparent “gain” is an injustice condemned by God.

Scripture warns us about the kind of people we become when we join with thieves to share unjust gain: “But to the wicked God says: ‘What right have you to recite my laws or take my covenant on your lips? You hate my instruction and cast my words behind you. **When you see a thief, you join with him**’” (Psalm 50:16–18).

This partnership is not just a social or legal mistake — it is a spiritual choice that leads to death. “**The partner of a thief hates his own life**” (Proverbs 29:24).

These verses leave no room for interpretation: when, for the sake of some advantage, we agree to work with those who evade taxes, we become accomplices to theft and align ourselves with those who despise law and truth. This is not merely an economic decision, but a spiritual stance — a choice between light and darkness.

To live in the light means to reject every form of dishonesty, even when it is hard and means we can no longer do what we had planned. True faith is seen in daily choices — including how we relate to money, taxes, and work.

To claim that God is with you while living in dishonesty is to deny His holiness. God cannot be manipulated by words or appearances. He searches the heart and knows the deeds. True fellowship with Him requires a clean life, a purified conscience, and a walk in the light. Only then does the promise “I will be with you” become a blessed reality — and not a dangerous illusion.

Restitution — A Step Toward Authentic Repentance

Before entering the Kingdom of God, authentic repentance entails more than regret and the confession of sin—it also involves repairing injustice. If you have stolen, deceived, or taken advantage of others, a sincere return to God begins with restoring what does not belong to you. God cannot declare righteous someone who keeps what he obtained through injustice and enjoys the fruits of lawlessness. He does not overlook unsettled injustice.

Although the Lord Jesus paid the penalty for the sin of theft, this does not

cancel the personal responsibility to repair the wrong done. Restitution remains a moral and spiritual obligation. True repentance does not stop at words, but proves itself through concrete acts of righting wrongs. Scripture warns: **“Woe to him that coveteth an evil covetousness to his house”** (Habakkuk 2:9).

This attempt to build security on injustice is an illusion, and God condemns it unequivocally.

To better understand the obligation of restitution as an act of justice, we can look at a concrete example—one that human courts treat with extreme seriousness and fairness. A citizen caught in tax evasion is not only criminally convicted; he is obliged to return the entire amount stolen, together with the penalties and interest due for the period in which the state was deprived of those funds.

Justice is not satisfied with a mere conviction—it requires the repairing of the damage. If restitution were not mandatory, many would be tempted to steal large sums, accept a prison sentence of a few years, and then live comfortably on what they had stolen. This would be a flagrant injustice toward those who are honest, choosing to live rightly without exploiting others.

Restitution is a precondition for the new life to begin. New birth is not only an inner change, but a transformation seen in deeds.

As Scripture says: **“If he returns what he took as security for a loan, gives back what he has stolen**, follows the decrees that give life, and does no evil, **he will surely live; he will not die**. None of the sins he has committed will be remembered against him. He has done what is just and right; he will surely live” (Ezekiel 33:15–16).

Here we see clearly that the new life — a symbol of being born again — is conditioned by making restitution to the one who was wronged. It is not enough to claim that you have changed; you must prove this change through restitution, even when direct compensation is no longer possible. In the Kingdom of God, justice is not optional — it is an essential expression of righteousness.

If someone has stolen, defrauded, or taken advantage of others, they cannot regard those things as rightfully theirs. No one has the right to keep what was obtained through injustice — whether money, goods, or positions. Divine justice is not satisfied with merely acknowledging the wrong; it demands that the wrong be made right.

To make this clear, let us take two practical examples:

Suppose that from the age of 50 until reaching retirement, I avoided paying income tax by working “off the books.” During all that time, I paid pension contributions directly, as if I had no income, solely to qualify for a pension in old age. In those years, my children and I benefited from child allowances, free schooling, medical care, and other public services — all funded by the contributions of those who paid their taxes honestly.

Now, a few days ago, I reached retirement age, and yesterday I returned to God. The state does not know that I lied to and defrauded it until just 3–4 days ago. Yet I, now calling myself a believer, think I can receive the pension without repaying the taxes owed on the income I concealed — simply because the institution is unaware of my actions. If the state knew the

truth, it would restore justice by taking measures to recover the loss.

The same principle of justice applies in another case: for several years, I collected a disability pension obtained through fraud. Upon reaching retirement age, I begin receiving the standard pension.

The state — the institution I have deceived — continues to pay me monthly with respect, correctness, and punctuality. It is a sobering picture: I, who stole for years, receive money every month from the one I defrauded, and they continue to treat me honorably, unaware they are the victim of injustice.

So the question is: can I live with this lie while claiming to be born of the Righteous God?

The answer of Scripture is categorical: **no**. True repentance does not mean only regret — it means repairing the injustice. To keep what you obtained through deceit, even after becoming religious, is to continue living in sin. The fact that the victim does not know does not cancel your guilt. God sees what is hidden and demands justice, not excuses. It is a moral abomination to receive such money with peace of mind without repairing the damage. It is as if I were sitting at the table with the one I stole from, **and he offers me his bread**, not knowing I took it in secret.

To keep receiving the pension without confessing and without repaying means living a lie — enjoying the fruits of fraud while the victim remains in ignorance and goodwill.

Scripture says in Proverbs 28:13: **“Whoever conceals their sins does not prosper**, but the one who confesses and renounces them finds mercy.” To hide a sin is to keep it alive. God does not offer mercy to the one who secretly regrets, but to the one who honestly confesses and abandons the sin.

In both cases — whether I worked “off the books” to avoid paying taxes or obtained a disability pension through fraud — true repentance involves not only admitting the wrongdoing but also restoring what was taken. If I have stolen what was not mine, I must give back everything I stole. Only then can I live in truth and righteousness before God.

Scripture says in Psalm 37:21: **“The wicked borrow and do not repay.”** Though the verse speaks of borrowing, the principle applies even more strongly to theft, which is far more serious. Borrowing involves an agreement, a trust granted — even if later betrayed. Theft, on the other hand, is a hidden act without consent — a direct violation of another’s rights. **If Scripture calls “wicked”** the one who does not repay a loan, how much more is the person who steals intentionally and refuses to return what was taken condemned.

Injustice consists not only in taking what is not yours but also in refusing to return it. To keep what is not rightfully yours, even after becoming a believer, places you in the category Scripture calls “wicked.” God judges not only the initial act but also the attitude toward making it right. Refusal to return what you have stolen is not the end of sin — it is its active continuation.

These two verses together form a clear picture: repentance without restitution is an illusion, and hidden sin continues to separate from Christ.

His Kingdom is built on truth, justice, and purity — not on religious justifications or convenient forgetting of the past. Whether it involves money, goods, or positions — such as materials taken from the workplace, firewood obtained dishonestly, illicit pensions, taxes evaded, or a diploma earned by cheating — whatever was obtained unjustly cannot be considered legitimate. To keep such things in your life is to live in ongoing offense against the holiness of God.

God asks sharply: “Shall I acquit someone **with dishonest scales, with a bag of false weights?**” (Micah 6:10). This rhetorical question reveals a serious reality: in the house of the wicked there are things obtained through deceit, and God does not overlook them.

Tax theft, for example, means keeping in your house money that is not yours — dishonest treasures — used as if they were legitimate gain. It is a form of squeezing the state “in the dark,” in secret. But God sees and will call for an account. He asks: “**Can I tolerate these things in your house?**” — and the implicit answer, as in the case of Achan, is a categorical “No.”

Even if all seems well hidden — false contracts, off-the-books payments, undeclared income, disability pensions obtained by lying — the things obtained in this way become witnesses of injustice. The house, the car, the bank account — all “cry out” against the one who acquired them through deceit, like the beam in Habakkuk 2:11.

Thus, not only withheld wages, as written in James 5:4 — “**Look! The wages you failed to pay the workers... are crying out against you**” — but any gain obtained through deceit has a voice before God. Injustice cannot be hidden; it rises as testimony against the one who committed it, calling divine judgment upon the act.

True repentance involves not only confessing sin but also removing any injustice kept alive in your life. Micah 6:10 is a solemn warning: we cannot have fellowship with God and at the same time keep treasures obtained through wrongdoing in our homes. Genuine repentance means abandoning them, returning them, living in the light, and aligning ourselves with God’s righteousness.

What was stolen cannot be kept under the pretext of grace. Grace does not cover hidden sin — it exposes it to cleanse it. Only the one who rejects such illicit gains and refuses to accept them into their life will dwell in God’s presence, as Scripture affirms: “The one who walks righteously and speaks what is right, **who rejects gain from extortion...** he will dwell on the heights” (Isaiah 33:15).

The command for restitution — “They must make full restitution” (Numbers 5:6). In the Kingdom of God there is no tolerance for dishonest gain. Forgiveness does not come without restitution, and if direct compensation is no longer possible, the stolen thing must be given to the Lord. Divine justice does not allow keeping what was obtained through deceit, regardless of circumstances.

The Bible is categorical: restitution is mandatory, even if indirect. It is an essential condition of forgiveness and salvation. Whoever has wronged another must repair the harm done. If the harmed person can no longer be compensated — as in the case of stolen taxes — Scripture gives a clear solution: restitution must be brought before the Lord.

It is written: “Say to the Israelites: Any man or woman who wrongs another in any way and so is unfaithful to the Lord is guilty and must confess the sin they have committed. **They must make full restitution for the wrong they have done**, add a fifth of the value to it, **and give it all to the person they have wronged. But if that person has no close relative to whom restitution can be made for the wrong, the restitution belongs to the Lord** and must be given to the priest, along with the ram of atonement with which atonement is made for the guilty person” (Numbers 5:6).

These verses make it clear: there is no excuse for keeping what was taken unjustly. Even when direct restitution is no longer possible, God requires that compensation be made by offering the item or its value to Him. In this way, the principle of justice is upheld, and repentance becomes complete.

Restitution is essential evidence of repentance and new birth. If you can no longer restore directly to the wronged person, you must give to the Lord — because justice and holiness cannot be ignored. God does not accept incomplete repentance. He demands repair, sincerity, and responsibility.

There is no blessing over what is stained by injustice. The righteousness of God’s Kingdom does not tolerate compromise. Treasure gained through lies — including through undeclared work or tax evasion — is a fleeting vanity: it does not remain, it does not build, and it leads to death.

True blessing comes only when we live in truth, justice, and purity, aligned with the standard of God’s Kingdom. Scripture is very clear: **“A fortune made by a lying tongue is a fleeting vapor and a deadly snare”** (Proverbs 21:6). This verse highlights a profound truth: any gain obtained through deceit lacks real value and keeps a person in spiritual death.

The “lying tongue” symbolizes all forms of manipulation, falsification, cheating, and deception — whether in speech, in documents, or in conduct.

In some cases, there is nothing left to return, because the goods obtained unjustly have been consumed. Yet Scripture does not ignore this reality; it offers a fair solution: “Anyone who steals must certainly make restitution, **but if they have nothing, they must be sold to pay for their theft**” (Exodus 22:3).

This command expresses a divine principle: authentic repentance does not exclude repairing the harm done. New birth cannot occur where a person refuses to part with shameful deeds and to make things right — for this is an offense against the holiness of Christ. Repentance is not only sorrow, but also the fulfillment of justice.

Just as the state, when recovering damages and there is nothing to seize, applies a percentage to the offender’s wages to allow him to live, so the one who has stolen ought, from the heart, to desire an equitable path of

restitution, even if he no longer has the means to pay it back at once.

The one who hungers for righteousness will not look for excuses to avoid repairing injustice, but will gladly receive any solution offered by the wronged party—whether work, compensation in installments, or another form of restitution—as an opportunity to fulfill the righteousness of God.

His sincere desire to live in the light will lead him to accept, with humility and gratitude, any avenue by which he can repair the harm done, knowing that righteousness is measured not by words alone, but by deeds that bring restoration.

This can be pursued with counsel and guidance from the body of Christ—the Church—which has been given for the growth of the saints and for the fulfillment of righteousness.

God requires that, along with the turning of the heart, there be the restoration of what was broken, for nothing unjust can exist in His Kingdom.

We see this in David: although he was forgiven for his sin, he still bore the consequences. When the prophet Nathan spoke to him about the man who seized his neighbor's lamb, David pronounced the verdict:

“And he shall restore the lamb fourfold, because he did this thing, and because he had no pity.” (2 Samuel 12:6)

This judgment, spoken by his own conscience, came back upon him, showing that forgiveness does not cancel the need for justice. God cannot dwell with sin. His presence is a place of holiness, truth, and righteousness. To remain in sin—without repentance and without restitution—is to choose separation from God.

Zacchaeus and the law of restitution: repentance that leads to life. Authentic repentance is manifested in concrete deeds, and one of these is restitution. True change of heart does not stop at words or intentions, but is seen in actions that repair the injustice done.

When Zacchaeus met the Lord Jesus, he immediately understood this principle. He said: “Look, Lord! Here and now I give half of my possessions to the poor, **and if I have cheated anybody out of anything, I will pay back four times the amount**” (Luke 19:8).

This decision was not imposed on him by the Lord Jesus — it flowed from a heart that, when confronted, responded with repentance. Zacchaeus did not seek excuses; he chose to make right what he had done wrong. This is what true repentance looks like: it admits guilt, corrects the wrong, and brings light where there was darkness.

He fulfilled the verse in Ezekiel 33:15 — “If the wicked man returns what he took as security, **gives back what he has stolen**, follows the decrees that give life, and does no evil, he will surely live; he will not die.” This verse highlights an essential principle of God's righteousness: authentic repentance is not merely an inner change, but involves concrete acts of justice. God does not give life to the one who only regrets sin, but to the one who repairs the harm done. Restitution is a condition for forgiveness and for life.

Like Zacchaeus, who realized he could not keep what he had unjustly obtained and repaid fourfold what he had taken, so too must the wrongdoer return what was taken if he wants to live. This is the proof of real repentance and of a life aligned with the standard of God's Kingdom. After Zacchaeus

made his decision, the Lord Jesus confirmed: “Today salvation has come to this house.”

This is the evidence of a transformed heart. Restitution is not merely a legal obligation — it is an expression of justice, a sincere desire to repair wrongs done. God hates robbery because it is a direct attack against justice, against one’s neighbor, and against divine order. Whoever robs and does not restore cannot dwell in God’s presence, because they refuse to align themselves with His holy character.

Authentic repentance is not just regret or tears — it is restitution, repair, and transformation. Only a heart that loves justice and hates wickedness can be a dwelling place for the Holy Spirit.

God on the Lips, Judas in the Heart: The Deceit of Conscience

The sin of dishonest gain, often justified by human excuses, has today spread like a pandemic among those who claim to be with God. It is found in homes, in churches, in ministries, and in consciences that have been trained to tolerate wickedness under the mask of grace. People deceive themselves, thinking they can keep what they have stolen, hidden, or unjustly taken — and still enjoy God’s blessing.

Many religious people today live in the sin of Judas, yet claim that God is with them. They deceive themselves by confusing religious activity with divine presence. But God cannot be manipulated by rituals, songs, or spiritual appearances. He searches the heart and demands truth.

When someone steals — whether through tax evasion or other means — and then considers themselves right before God, Scripture directly rebukes this self-deception. In Jeremiah 7:9–10 we read: “**Will you steal...** and then come and stand before me in this house, which bears my Name, and say, ‘**We are safe**’— safe to do all these detestable things?”

This deception is so severe today that many believe they can enjoy manifestations of the Holy Spirit — such as speaking in tongues, prophecy, or other spiritual gifts — while still living in sin. But the Holy Spirit is not present where life is double-faced. He does not dwell where sin is tolerated, hidden, or justified.

To claim to have spiritual gifts while living in wickedness is an offense to God’s righteousness and a deception of one’s own conscience. The same deception is lived not only by those who obviously sin — such as thieves — but also by those who accept them in their midst without rebuke or separation.

Scripture shows us clearly in the case of Achan that the whole assembly was affected by the hidden sin of one man. God said: “Israel has sinned; they have violated my covenant... **they have stolen**, they have lied, **they have put it with their own possessions**” (Joshua 7:11). Although Achan was the one who sinned, God considered the whole people guilty. God was not with Israel until the sin was exposed and removed.

Thus, it is not only the sinner who is separated from God, but also the community that tolerates sin in its midst. To live in sin or to silently allow it

is to be separated from the presence of God. You cannot deceive yourself into thinking God dwells in you while you keep what He hates.

Scripture warns plainly: “Many will say to me on that day, ‘Lord, Lord, did we not prophesy in your name and in your name drive out demons and in your name perform many miracles?’ Then I will tell them plainly, ‘**I never knew you. Away from me, you workers of lawlessness**’” (Matthew 7:22–23).

The words “**I never knew you**” make it unmistakable that the Holy Spirit was never present in the lives of those who lived in lawlessness. Therefore, the gifts they displayed were not authentic but counterfeit — from another source, foreign to God.

Where sin is kept, the gifts are not the work of the Holy Spirit, but a dangerous spiritual deception — an imitation produced by fallen angels who masquerade as angels of light. Scripture warns: “And no wonder, for Satan himself masquerades as an angel of light” (2 Corinthians 11:14).

This reality must be taken with the utmost seriousness: not every religious manifestation is evidence of God’s presence. The true work of the Holy Spirit is done in holiness, purity, and truth. God does not validate an unclean life, and the Holy Spirit does not dwell in a temple of wickedness.

That is why the Lord’s word through Jeremiah remains relevant: if your life does not reflect His righteousness, it is not enough to say, “*The temple of the Lord, the temple of the Lord!*” God says: “**Reform your ways and your actions**, and I will let you live in this place” (Jeremiah 7:3).

Scripture warns clearly: “**Do not be deceived: God cannot be mocked**. A man reaps what he sows” (Galatians 6:7). True worship is not measured by physical presence in a holy place, but by purity of heart and obedience to God’s commands. Only those who live in justice and truth are indwelt by the Holy Spirit and recognized as His own.

The True Jesus — Despised and Ignored

The Lord Jesus hated wickedness and lived without sin. He made no compromise with injustice. He not only preached the truth — He lived it in every detail: without concealment, without deceit, without compromise.

He was light in the midst of darkness, pure in a corrupt world, just in a crooked society. It is no surprise that His teaching on non-resistance and paying taxes stirred hatred toward Him. He was despised precisely because He exposed sin and called for a righteousness that went beyond appearances — reaching the heart and deeds of a person.

Today, things are no different. Authentic righteousness that condemns theft, lies, and injustice continues to provoke rejection and even hatred. Many reject the real Jesus and embrace “another Jesus” — an imaginary one who allows them to evade taxes, lie, and live unjustly without rebuke. But this “Jesus” is not the Savior of Scripture — he is a comfortable illusion that cannot save.

Today, many declare themselves born of God, yet live in contradiction to that claim. Some steal or approve of tax theft, support injustice and

compromise, and still consider themselves part of His people. But an unjust life does not prove new birth. Disregard for Christ's commands reveals a heart untouched by divine righteousness.

Scripture is clear: it is not religious acts, but living in righteousness, that confirms belonging to God — “This is how we know who the children of God are and who the children of the devil are: **Anyone who does not live in righteousness is not of God**” (1 John 3:10).

True new birth is preceded by a genuine hunger and thirst for righteousness — a deep desire that shows itself in actions: in honesty, in truth, in renouncing sin, and in obedience to His commands. Any form of faith that does not produce a life lived in God's righteousness is a great deception.

It is a painful reality: many say they love Him, but when it comes to obedience and living His commands, they choose darkness. They choose comfort, religion, and appearance — but not the Word.

The Lord Jesus is despised because of His Word, which does not accept compromise. The Lord says you cannot love Him and at the same time despise His commands: “**Anyone who does not love me will not obey my teaching**” (John 14:24).

This is not merely a matter of morality — it is clear spiritual evidence of the state of the heart. Disregarding His commands — including those related to honesty, justice, paying taxes, self-denial, and submission to authority — is not just a behavior problem; it is proof that the heart does not love the Lord.

In truth, many despise the real Jesus — not out of ignorance, but from conscious resistance. They hate Him because He commands them to live in purity, to give up unjust gain, to submit, and to stop justifying themselves.

Even if they say they love Him, sing to Him, pray, and preach, the reality is they hate Him — exactly as Scripture says: “For everyone who does wicked things hates the light and does not come to the light, lest his works should be exposed” (John 3:20).

They despise Him because He touches their “pocket,” because His presence threatens to reduce their gain and exposes the greed of Judas hidden in their hearts. They disregard Him through their actions, living as if He has no right over their lives.

The righteousness demanded by Christ — valued at the price of His death. This human hatred of the light was also used by Satan as the final weapon to bring the Lord Jesus to death. He knows that people love darkness rather than light (John 3:19), that they hate the light because it exposes their evil deeds, and that truth awakens resistance in the hearts of those living in sin.

We see this clearly in Matthew 22:15–22, which describes Satan's well-crafted plan. He inspired the religious leaders to pose a seemingly legitimate question, with the aim of stirring the crowd's hatred not only against His teaching, but against Christ Himself.

Though the question appears to come from men, the initiative was not purely human. Behind this trap-question was Satan, the author of the scheme to discredit and eliminate Christ.

The question about paying the tax to Caesar was a double-edged challenge. The Jewish people detested the Roman regime not only for political reasons but also because of the heavy tax burden imposed by the occupying power — a burden comparable to the compulsory quotas imposed by the Soviet regime in Romania after World War II.

Satan exploited this tension, knowing that a simple approval of paying the tax could ignite the crowd's hatred. Knowing His teaching on non-resistance to the one who takes what is yours — "If anyone wants to sue you and take your shirt, let him have your coat as well" (Matthew 5:40) — Satan sought to trap Him in a way that would justify His condemnation.

Knowing that His answer could not contradict His own teaching, Satan, through this question, succeeded in provoking the hatred of the Jewish people. When the Lord Jesus said to give to Caesar what belongs to Caesar, He was perceived as a traitor to the Jewish cause. This stirred the crowd's anger because His command struck directly at their desire to avoid paying the tax — at their pride, ambitions, and expectations — but above all, at their pockets, touching their income and financial comfort.

Satan achieved his goal: the crowd's hatred and, through a lie, a seemingly legitimate political accusation meant to justify condemning the Lord Jesus. The lie told by the religious leaders was that the Lord had said not to pay the tax to Caesar, portraying Him as an instigator against Roman authority. Even though He had clearly said, "Give to Caesar what is Caesar's," this distortion of His words was used to accuse Him of rebellion and to pressure Pilate into condemning Him.

And today, the situation has not changed. The hatred the people showed then for Christ's teaching is still present. Whoever despises this teaching and refuses to give to Caesar what belongs to Caesar, in reality, hates Christ — because His message strikes precisely at what they love: dishonest gain. The teaching of the Lord Jesus is radical because it unmask those who love the wages of wickedness. It calls for a life lived in justice and submission to authorities — not in hiding income. It is a call to respect civil order, even when authorities are imperfect.

Even when something unjust is demanded of us, the Lord Jesus teaches: "Do not resist the one who is evil" (Matthew 5:39) — an invitation to lay down your right to self-defense and to live a life where righteousness and peace matter more than claiming your own rights. This teaching does not offer an easy path, but a narrow one that passes through self-denial and the cross.

Today, many love another Jesus — not the true Jesus. They love Him for the healings He performs, for the heaven He offers, for the multiplied loaves, and for solving their problems. They accept Him as long as He does not disturb their dishonest gain.

But they reject Him when He calls for integrity, obedience, renunciation, and submission. The crowd's reaction in His day is the same today: from admiration to hatred. Many listened to Him with amazement but were deeply disappointed when they realized that:

- The Lord Jesus would not lead a political revolution against Rome.

- He called for submission to an unjust regime.
- **He “betrayed” them by telling them to pay the tribute to Caesar.**

In the eyes of the crowd, such a Messiah was a great disappointment. That is why their hatred grew, culminating in the cry: “*Crucify Him!*”. Isaiah describes this reaction exactly: “He was despised and rejected by men, a man of sorrows and acquainted with grief; and as one from whom men hide their faces he was despised, and we esteemed him not” (Isaiah 53:3). This hatred for the authentic Jesus is not merely a historical reality — it is a constant trait of the human heart.

The Lord Jesus was despised not because He failed to meet human expectations, but because of His holiness, His pure heart, and His exposing of sin, calling people to a life of submission — even in the face of injustice. He Himself says in John 7:7: “The world cannot hate you; **but me it hateth, because I testify of it, that the works thereof are evil.**” The truth Christ spoke disturbed them because His light revealed the darkness in their hearts.

The same disdain persists today. Many admire the Lord Jesus for His sacrifice for our sin, but despise His commands — especially when they affect their material interests.

It is easier to love a “Jesus” who asks little than to follow the crucified Christ who asks for everything. When truth touches personal gain, many prefer to close their ears and turn away.

The true Jesus, as revealed in Scripture, is not merely a symbol of unconditional love, but the Lord and Master who calls to repentance, submission, the cross, and a holy life. He did not seek popularity but spoke truth, even at the cost of hatred and the cross. Scripture is clear: “Light has come into the world, but people loved darkness more than light because their deeds were evil” (John 3:19).

In contrast, the false Jesus promoted in many religious organizations is a comfortable projection: a Jesus who does not condemn sin, does not demand holiness, does not speak of judgment, but only of salvation through grace, acceptance, and blessing. This false image is loved because:

- It does not require real repentance, only emotional affiliation.
- It does not confront sin, but ignores or redefines it.
- It does not speak of the cross, only of grace.
- It does not call to submission, but to spiritual independence.

Yet choosing to keep what does not belong to us is a direct offense to God’s holiness. The Lord Jesus does not accept partial repentance; He demands complete separation from wickedness and a full turning from the deeds of darkness.

A true encounter with Christ produces radical change — as in the case of Zacchaeus, who sought no excuses but chose to make right what he had done wrong. This is what authentic repentance looks like: it admits guilt, corrects the wrong, and brings light where there was darkness.

The Lord Jesus is hated because He calls us to live in all that is right. He is not manipulated by religious appearances, but penetrates deep into the heart and demands truth. And truth demands self-denial, renunciation, and restitution. He does not come to comfort us in sin, but to free us from it. He

calls us to return what we have stolen and hidden.

For many, letting go of what they have unjustly obtained over a lifetime seems almost impossible — too heavy a burden. The false Jesus is loved because He does not trouble the conscience or demand restitution of stolen goods. He does not insist on repairing sin. That is why many justify keeping what was obtained unjustly by misinterpreting grace — thinking that God “overlooks times of ignorance” (Acts 17:30).

But this verse does not support keeping stolen goods; it proclaims God’s universal call to repentance: “God overlooked times of ignorance, but now He commands all people everywhere to repent.” Grace does not cancel justice; it fulfills it through repentance and restoration.

This restoration is not an act of heroism or a personal merit to be praised, but proof of sincere repentance. It is repentance from shameful deeds — acts that are a direct offense to God’s holiness. It is not something to boast about, but something to do in humility, with tears, and with recognition of the seriousness of sin.

He calls us to abandon the sin of Achan — the stolen things stubbornly kept under the excuse that “it’s too hard to return them.” But that very difficulty is the test of authentic repentance. Refusal to give up what is not ours shows that the heart has not truly turned from wickedness. God seeks not excuses, but complete obedience.

True repentance does not seek excuses; it seeks light. It does not negotiate with sin; it condemns and removes it. It is not a boast for the courage to return stolen goods, but a painful admission that we have lived in darkness — in hidden sin, in wickedness. It is an admission that, for example, in Romania—and wherever such a culture has prevailed—we have lived in a culture of theft from the state inherited from communism: people stole from the collective and from factories—potatoes, apples, grapes, even nails. True repentance means leaving behind forever the shameful deeds that offend God.

When the Church Closes Its Eyes to Dishonest Gain

If you have lived for years in this sin — justifying under-the-table work or tax evasion — and the church you belong to has not only failed to rebuke you, but has tolerated or even turned a blind eye to this practice, it is a serious sign that it too is in a state of spiritual erring and death.

Such a church does not reflect the righteousness that characterizes the Kingdom of God, but has lowered the standard of holiness to human conventions. The Church was not given to validate sin, but to shape righteous character aligned with God’s truth. Its purpose is to bring people to the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ, the Righteous One — not to offer comfort in wickedness.

The true Church does not lower the standard, but raises it — calling every soul to transformation, purity, and responsibility. It is not content with religious appearances; it seeks perfection in Christ, who is the supreme model of righteousness. Scripture says that God’s servants have the duty to

watch over the souls entrusted to them (Hebrews 13:17), and this watchfulness includes refusing to tolerate sin.

When the church no longer rebukes sin but tolerates it, she betrays her divine mandate and becomes complicit in the wandering of souls. When a community of believers silently accepts obvious sins such as financial fraud or tax deception, it becomes a participant in them. Silence is not neutrality — it is tacit approval.

Such a church, lacking the courage to speak the truth, failing to rebuke sin and call to repentance, is a lifeless church. Even if religious activities continue — songs are sung, sermons are preached — if the Holy Spirit is not working holiness and transformation, that church is dead. And those who are part of such a congregation are dead members — physically present, but separated from the life that comes from Christ.

This condition is similar to that of Israel in Joshua chapter 7, when God withdrew His presence from their midst because of Achan's hidden sin. Though they were called to conquer the promised land, they were defeated by a weak enemy, and God said: "Neither will I be with you any more, except ye destroy the accursed from among you" (Joshua 7:12).

This was not merely discipline — it was a clear withdrawal of the divine presence. God was no longer there — He no longer fought for them, no longer blessed their work — until the sin was exposed, confessed, and removed. This verse emphasizes that God's presence cannot coexist with tolerated or hidden sin. He not only withdraws, but warns that He will not be with His people until the sin is completely removed.

The true Church of Christ is alive, pure, and watches with holy discernment over sin, no matter how accepted it may be in society. She does not conform to the world, but to the Word. If the church you belong to does not do this — if it tolerates sin and does not live in the light — do not delay the decision. God calls you today to come out, to separate yourself, to choose purity and align yourself with His standard of righteousness. Listen to His voice and step onto the path of holiness — He promises He will receive you.

Scripture is clear on this point. The Apostle Paul writes in 2 Corinthians 6:17–18: "Wherefore come out from among them, and be ye separate, saith the Lord, and touch not the unclean thing; and I will receive you, And will be a Father unto you, and ye shall be my sons and daughters, saith the Lord Almighty."

This call is not to isolation, but to holy separation. It is not an invitation to judgment, but to purity and loyalty to God. When a community refuses to repent and persists in tolerating sin, the one who hungers for righteousness is called to separate — not out of pride, but out of obedience.

Scripture warns us not to unite with those who live in such sins: "But unto the wicked God saith, What hast thou to do to declare my statutes, or *that* thou shouldest take my covenant in thy mouth? Seeing thou hatest instruction, and castest my words behind thee. When thou sawest a thief, then thou consentedst with him" (Psalm 50:16–18). Remaining in such a context — without testimony and without struggle — means becoming part of a body without life, without God's presence.

Separating from injustice is sometimes painful, but it is the only path to true fellowship with God. He promises to receive those who choose holiness, even at the cost of breaking from what is familiar. The true Church is made up of those who choose to live in the light, even when darkness is the majority.

A Call to Discipleship — The Path to Christlikeness

In response to Christ's call to live in righteousness, the one who allows himself to be examined by the Holy Spirit will develop a deep desire for change. This desire is not superficial, but manifests as a hunger and thirst for righteousness — the sign of an awakened heart longing for a pure life pleasing to God.

This sincere thirst opens the way to the new birth — the moment when a person is restored in relationship with God and receives a new identity: disciple of the Lord Jesus Christ. But discipleship is not merely an initial stage; it is a continuous journey of spiritual formation, in which the believer is called to grow “till we all come in the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ” (Ephesians 4:13).

This transformation is not just a change in behavior, but a radical separation from everything that separates us from God — including the fruit of Judas's and Achan's sin: the hidden things stubbornly kept by many under the burden of restitution.

As His disciples, we are called to live as He lived — with no hidden treasures, no compromises, no gain obtained unjustly. To live in the light means to be transparent, just, and pure before people and before God. The Kingdom of God is not built on hiding, but on truth, justice, and holiness.

This transformed life is expressed through real discipleship, in which the Kingdom of God becomes your supreme priority, and His righteousness your model for life, as Scripture teaches: “Seek first His kingdom and His righteousness...” (Matthew 6:33).

It is a life lived as Christ lived — in truth, with integrity, and in submission to God's righteous demands — a call to abandon all compromise and to walk daily on the narrow path of justice (Matthew 7:14).

Living the values of God's Kingdom is not easy, but it is full of meaning and beauty. It is a difficult road, but a blessed one.

A personal exhortation

God calls you to enroll in His school of discipleship. Do not postpone this step. Respond to His call with faith and determination. Pray to the Lord to give you a living church — one that does not tolerate sin — a place where you will be spiritually fed, corrected, and encouraged to grow in righteousness, as Scripture commands: “Flee also youthful lusts: but follow righteousness, faith, charity, peace, with them that call on the Lord out of a pure heart.” (2 Timothy 2:22).

Only there will you be able to grow “unto a perfect man, to the measure

of the stature of the fullness of Christ” (Ephesians 4:13).

If there is no living church near you and you need support or guidance, we are available to help — you can contact us to receive the assistance you need to begin a truly new life in Christ.

Other materials for spiritual awakening:

The Purpose of Life

The New Birth

The Church – The Body of Christ

Transformed into the Image of Christ

Are You Truly Born Again? Biblical Questionnaire

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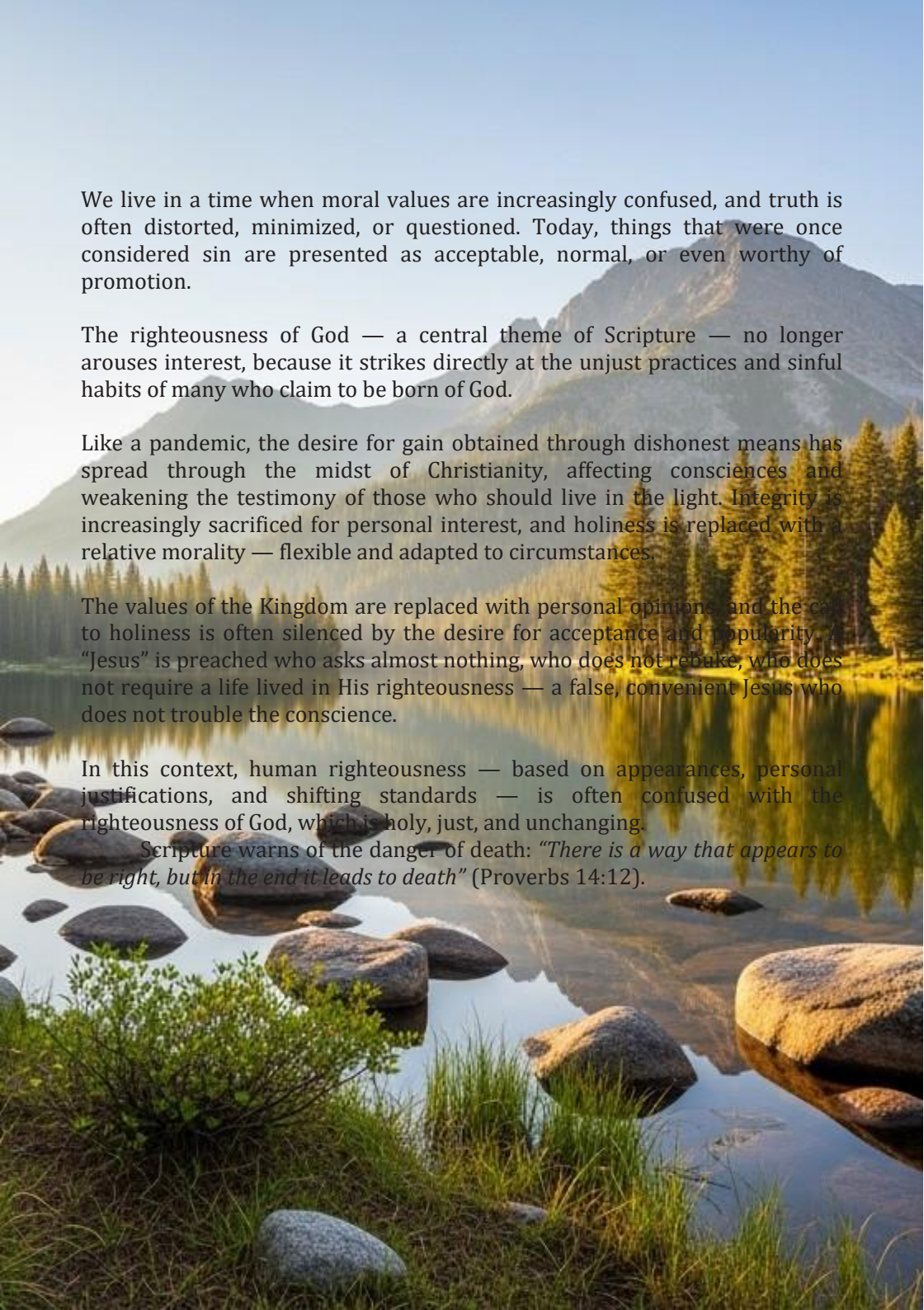
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A scenic landscape featuring a river with large, smooth rocks in the foreground. The water reflects the surrounding greenery and the distant mountains. The sky is clear and blue, and the overall atmosphere is peaceful and natural.

We live in a time when moral values are increasingly confused, and truth is often distorted, minimized, or questioned. Today, things that were once considered sin are presented as acceptable, normal, or even worthy of promotion.

The righteousness of God — a central theme of Scripture — no longer arouses interest, because it strikes directly at the unjust practices and sinful habits of many who claim to be born of God.

Like a pandemic, the desire for gain obtained through dishonest means has spread through the midst of Christianity, affecting consciences and weakening the testimony of those who should live in the light. Integrity is increasingly sacrificed for personal interest, and holiness is replaced with a relative morality — flexible and adapted to circumstances.

The values of the Kingdom are replaced with personal opinions, and the call to holiness is often silenced by the desire for acceptance and popularity. A “Jesus” is preached who asks almost nothing, who does not rebuke, who does not require a life lived in His righteousness — a false, convenient Jesus who does not trouble the conscience.

In this context, human righteousness — based on appearances, personal justifications, and shifting standards — is often confused with the righteousness of God, which is holy, just, and unchanging.

Scripture warns of the danger of death: *“There is a way that appears to be right, but in the end it leads to death”* (Proverbs 14:12).