

The Change Of Covenant

by Gary Carpenter

In order to understand the ministry of Jesus Christ as revealed in the four gospels, we must remember what He said He was doing:

Luke 16:16 The law and the prophets were until John: since that time the kingdom of God is preached, and every man presseth into it.

From the time that Jesus was baptized by John until His glorification, His ministry on earth was in a unique time period between the two covenants of Law and Grace. Jesus is teaching, preaching and demonstrating to the people the Kingdom of God, and how it is to be different from the dispensation of Law.

In the old covenant, the people were not born again. They did not have the life of God in their spirit. For the common man to hear God, he normally had to go to the Prophet, the Priest, or hear the Law read by the Scribes. Being dead in spirit, he could not hear God directly for himself on a daily basis.

Under the old covenant, the people prospered by keeping the “formulas” of the Law. If they disobeyed the “formulas” (commandments), they were cursed. If they obeyed the “formulas,” they were blessed. Such was the case with the rich, young ruler as told in Matthew’s gospel:

Matthew 19:16-24 And, behold, one came and said unto him, Good Master, what good thing shall I do, that I may have eternal life? (17) And he said unto him, Why callest thou me good? *there is none good but one, that is, God:* but if thou wilt enter into life, keep the commandments. (18) He saith unto him, Which? Jesus said, Thou shalt do no murder, Thou shalt not commit adultery, Thou shalt not steal, Thou shalt not bear false witness, (19) Honour thy father and *thy* mother: and, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself. (20) The young man saith unto him, All these things have I kept from my youth up: what lack I yet? (21) Jesus said unto him, If thou wilt be perfect, go *and* sell that thou hast, and give to the poor, and thou shalt have treasure in heaven: and come *and* follow me. (22) But when the young man heard that saying, he went away sorrowful: for he had great possessions. (23) Then said Jesus unto his disciples, Verily I say unto you, That a rich man shall hardly enter into the kingdom of heaven. (24) And again I say unto you, It is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle, than for a rich man to enter into the kingdom of God.

This young man had become wealthy by "formula," not by relationship. That is, he had "kept all these things from his youth" and God, true to His covenant with Israel, had blessed the man materially. Under the formula of the Law, the man's mindset was that "ten percent of my income is the Lord's, and ninety percent of it is mine to do with as I will." Under the Law, that was accurate.

Jesus is now introducing the Kingdom of God, a new dispensation. He is informing this wealthy, young ruler that the formulas of the Law are now going to be replaced with a "living" relationship with God on an individual, person by person basis.

Look at this scene. For the first time in his life, this young man is hearing the voice of the Lord ... directly for himself! He is not hearing the voice of the temple scribes as they read from the Law, nor the priests, nor the prophets of the day. No, he is now hearing the voice of the Lord for himself! Not only that, but he is able to communicate back with the Lord also. Two-way communication between man and the Lord of heaven and earth. This is how it is to be in the Kingdom, this new dispensation of grace. Every born-again man, being alive in spirit, will now be able to hear the Lord directly by the assistance of the Holy Spirit.

In the Kingdom of God, man is no longer to function by formula. Now man is to function by relationship. The Lord speaks. You hear Him for yourself. As with the rich, young ruler, you can speak to the Lord and ask questions to make sure you understand the instructions. Once you understand, however, the only question remaining is ... will you or will you not obey Him? This is a radical change of covenant indeed!

Jesus is instructing the young man that no longer is the formula to be, "ninety percent belongs to man and ten percent belongs to the Lord." No, in the Kingdom, "you are bought with a price, and you are not your own." Your LIFE belongs to the Lord, including ALL of your material possessions if He asks for it.

This was too much for the young man to accept. Even though he was hearing directly the word of the Lord to him personally, he could not bring himself to obey Jesus **if it meant no personal profit for him**. This was to be expected at this point because even though Jesus was teaching and preaching the Kingdom of God, the new birth would not be available to this man (or any other man) until after the glorification of Jesus. This rich, young ruler still had the fallen Adamic nature in him (spiritual death), as did all who lived prior to the new birth experience. It was

for that very reason that God gave Israel the Law in the first place, to govern them by penalty in the flesh since they could not serve God out of a new nature.

At this point I will quote once more what the Lord said to me in June of 1997 when He first introduced the concept to me concerning Sharecropper vs. Sonship faith. He said,

“Sowing and Reaping is Sharecropper Faith. It is a valid level of faith to operate in and most people will never graduate from it. It has sustained My Church to this hour, but will never cause the massive transfer of wealth that shall be required to fuel the combines of revival that will occur in these last days. What I desire is Sonship Faith, where you know that you actually own the very fields you are working in. You are not a sharecropper in the kingdom of God. You are a son. All that is mine is thine.”

This was one of those instances where His voice was so clear it seemed to me that it was audible. That is, I really don't know if others would have also heard those words had they been present with me at the time. Of course, I grabbed my micro-cassette recorder and spoke what He said word for word. I understood His words, but I had never heard anything like them before. It took many more months of worship, prayer and meditation before the vision came where He gave me the analogy of my grandfather's farm. Only then did I understand what He was saying. [See Sharecropper vs. Sonship Faith in the “From Formula To Relationship” section of the Web Site].

As my understanding of these things increases over time both by precept and practical experience, I am beginning to comprehend why He said, “most people will never graduate” from the old “Sowing & Reaping” formulas. There are two primary reasons. Most people will never pay the price to:

- 1. Develop their ability to hear the voice of the Lord by the Holy Spirit.**
- 2. Mortify greed and self-serving to the point they become a "first-class" steward of kingdom finances.**

In the rich, young ruler's case, because he was alive during the time of Jesus' earthly ministry, problem number one was solved for him. He “was” hearing directly the “present hour” speaking of the Lord, giving him precise instructions regarding what to do. Still having the old Adamic nature with him, he could not bring himself to obey those instructions if they did not profit him personally. The old nature is greedy and self-serving to the core.

It is important to take notice that Jesus does not give this same instruction to everybody. For example, Jesus did not give these same instructions to Zacchaeus in Luke chapter nineteen. Yet, in chapter eighteen Jesus did give those instructions to the rich, young ruler. What is the lesson to be learned? Our Lord Jesus Christ is alive and well. He does not have one “formula” to be followed by everybody, as was the case with the Law. We have a living Lord who speaks from heaven. All who are born again have the ability to hear those words by communion and fellowship with the Holy Spirit.

Another example of this truth is when Jesus told Peter he would be a martyr for the gospel’s sake (John 21:18-19). The natural response was for Peter to turn and look at John, saying “What shall this man do?”, wondering if John would also be required to be a martyr. Jesus’ answer demonstrates for all time that in the dispensation of grace, each man is to follow Jesus based on a personal relationship with Him and not by some common formula.

John 21:22 Jesus saith unto him, If I will that he tarry till I come, what is that to thee? follow thou me.

In the most simple terms, the truly anointed Steward Of Kingdom Finances is the Lord’s “hand” in the earth. Just as your physical hand is supposed to receive instructions from your mind, so the Steward is to receive his instructions from the mind of Christ. I am talking about him hearing the “present hour” mind of Christ as He sits on the right hand of the Father in heaven.

We would think there was something terribly wrong with us if our own physical hand took it upon itself to open up our wallets and begin handing out sums of money to various people and organizations when it had not received those instructions from our mind. Said another way, we would think it absolutely bizarre if our physical hand gave money by some “formula” completely independent from the instructions of our mind. We would think, “What is wrong with my hand? What is it doing? I didn’t tell it to do that! I can’t trust my hand with money any longer if it is going to act independently of my mind. I have no choice ... I will just have to make sure there is not much money available in my wallet for the hand to steward.”

To some this example may seem overly simplistic ... but it is entirely accurate! None of us would trust wealth to a hand that operated independently from our minds. One of the primary reasons why there are not more anointed Stewards Of

Kingdom Finances in the body of Christ is our dogged refusal to abandon all formulas and function by relationship with our HEAD, Jesus Christ.

I mentioned earlier that most people are never going to pay the “price” to develop the two essential requirements to become Stewards Of Kingdom Finances. **What is that price? In a word ... TIME!**

As with all good relationships, time spent in fellowship is required to develop a good one. To develop the ability to hear accurately the mind of Jesus Christ by the Holy Spirit, time is going to be required in worship, meditation of the Word, and prayer. This will mean giving up many activities, not because they are necessarily evil or wicked, but simply because they consume too much time ... precious time that could otherwise be used developing an ear that is sensitive to the voice of the Lord.

Secondly, prayer and fasting are the two primary weapons given to us for the mortification, the putting to death, of greed and self-serving within us.

Romans 8:12-14 Therefore, brethren, we are debtors, not to the flesh, to live after the flesh. (13) For if ye live after the flesh, ye shall die: but if ye through the Spirit do mortify the deeds of the body, ye shall live. (14) For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God.

This is the goal of the Steward of Kingdom Finances ... to be led by the Spirit of God rather than by formulas of carnal commandment. In order to develop that ability, we must no longer remain “children,” but grow up to become sons who are now ready to participate in the “family business!”

Step one is to yield to the righteousness within the new nature we received at our new birth. This process mortifies the deeds of the body. Then we yield to the leadership that comes from the head of the church, the Lord Jesus Christ, through the Holy Spirit within us. Now the Head is in control of the hand, and the Steward of Kingdom Finances can be trusted with wealth for the kingdom of God.

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