

The King's Return

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The differences between capitalism and socialism begin at their roots and their fundamental differences are found in their simplest definitions. Capitalism begins with the idea that your money, your property, your resources belong only to you. This is a reasonable idea because if I were to try to take these things from you, you would rightly begin looking for a weapon or a police officer to put me in my right place! Socialism, however, begins with the idea that your money, your property, your resources don't really belong to you – no matter how much time, effort and sacrifice you've put into honestly gaining these things – they really belong to society. Socialism, therefore sees capitalism's success and rather than seeking to emulate it by policies that promote entrepreneurship, thrift and diligent effort, makes it legal and "right" to make and use laws that take money away from those who have wealth. Socialism then purports to redistribute those assets to "the poor." This is the fundamental conflict between capitalism and socialism.

The problems crop up right away. In order for capitalism to be a healthy thing for all people, businessmen must be both honest and generous – factors that are far too often absent in modern business practices. When greed and grasping after personal wealth prevails (as far too often it does), then the tenets of socialism begin to seem more appealing to those who simply struggle in their financial slavery just to keep up with their bills and expenses. But for socialism to be a healthy thing for all people, politicians and lawmakers must be both honest and wise to the point of near omniscience – factors that seem all too non-existent much of the time. When graft and dishonesty are coupled with catering to special interest groups (who somehow have large amounts of money to invest in their cause), socialism becomes a quick route to oppression and manipulation of people who otherwise would simply live their lives in pursuit of life, liberty and fulfillment of what God made them to be. Socialism suffers from another inherent flaw in that it often seems to fail to recognize any difference between self-inflicted poverty (such as laziness or negligence or blind opportunism) and society-inflicted poverty (greedy landowners and business operators intent on squeezing every penny from everyone they can, thus creating an unhealthy economic climate.) Thus socialism creates dependency on the public moneys that simply cannot be maintained if too many people become dependent on those resources and don't contribute back into the system. Socialism is thus a very useful tool in the hands of people who want to control other people.

To date, the federal system of America has provided no long term solutions to these dilemmas. Nor is it likely to ever be able to do so. The issues involved are really issues of the heart. Laws cannot mandate honesty and the current economic, political and spiritual climate often doesn't even bring up the idea that dishonesty is simply wrong. Lying is just "an inconsistency" and selfish grasping of wealth (even as hundreds or thousands are robbed as a result) is just the accepted norm. Few and far between are the business owners and executive officers who practice a fair distribution of wealth between labor and management or between labor and ownership. The whole reason labor unions came into existence was because owners and managers refused to share their wealth with their employees and expected their employees (in some cases literally) to give their lives and their health in order to make "the company" wealthy while "the little people" continue on in their poverty and slavery. There are certainly exceptions to this generalization but that this was (and too often still is) the general condition is not negated by the exceptions.

Into this equation of hopelessness comes Jesus. In the parable of the minas, He said,

“A certain nobleman went into a far country to receive for himself a kingdom and to return. So he called ten of his servants, delivered to them ten minas (The mina was worth about three months’ salary.), and said to them, ‘Do business till I come.’” (Lk. 19:12-13)

Because of the greediness and grasping after wealth that has crept into the “church,” this parable has been taught as if Jesus were instructing His disciples about the handling of money and wealth. But the overall thrust of this parable is that of the true wealth that is deposited in those who believe – the life and Spirit of Christ and God implanted within each believer. (see Jas. 1:21, Rom. 8:11, 2 Cor. 4:7, etc.) The “business” He expects us to be doing until He returns is not that of gaining financial or temporal wealth but rather that of reproducing His life and Spirit in the lives of others. We do not do this by hoarding His life (as is seen in the third servant who hid his mina away in a cloth – Lk. 19:20) but by giving away what He has given us. This is the paradox of “doing business” with His kingdom resources. The more we give away (in accordance with His will and not just our own ideas of “philanthropy” or “charity” or “generosity”) the more we gain in and for His kingdom. The more we cling to things or to self, the more we quench the work of His Spirit in our lives. This is God’s “economy” and it far transcends (even as it includes) the handling of mere money.

The King’s return on His wealth (His life and Spirit invested in us) is realized when we operate in spiritual maturity and truly love one another (Jn. 13:35), when we hold the interests of others as equal or perhaps even more important than our own interests (Phlp. 2:4) and when we are willing to lay down our lives (at His direction) for others. (1 Jn. 3:16) It is precisely because the “church” – that counterfeit and prostitute that usurps the place and role of the body and bride of Christ – has failed miserably at producing spiritually mature people capable of doing these things that the world is in the putrid condition that is in. It is not the world’s fault that the people who claim to follow Christ (who number in the hundreds of millions around the world) do not produce any of the results that salt and light are supposed to produce. (Mt. 5:13-14) It is simply the truth that most of the people who claim to belong to Christ do not serve Him as their absolute King, they do not have His Spirit dwelling within them and they simply are not His. (Rom. 8:9) This is the time of lawlessness – men doing only what is right in their own eyes because they have no king – that occurs just before the King returns. (Jdgs. 21:25, Mt. 24:12) Again, there are certainly exceptions to this generalization but, again, that this is the reality of the general condition is not negated by the existence of some exceptions. “Churches” especially seem able to shift blame from themselves, not seeing their own abominable wretchedness (Rev. 3:17), but certainly quite able to see (and gossip about) the abominable wretchedness of that other “church” down the street.

The problems and dilemmas of world economics will not be solved by mere men – no lawmaker or businessman is capable of cleaning out these Aegean stables. Only Christ, through His mercy, grace and forgiveness, is capable of cleaning out the hearts of men so that a healthy economic climate can be maintained. So long as men refuse to repent and turn to Him, greed and grasping after wealth will plague whatever economic system is put into place. This is especially true of any economic system that is run by men and women whose lawlessness places them directly under the power and control of the devil and the demonic.

John wrote,

“Then I saw heaven opened, and behold, a white horse. And He who sat on him was called Faithful and True, and in righteousness He judges and makes war. His eyes were like a flame of fire, and on His head were many crowns. He had a name written that no one knew except Himself. He was clothed with a robe dipped in blood, and His name is called The Word of God. And the armies in heaven, clothed in fine linen, white and clean, followed Him on white horses. Now out of His mouth goes a sharp sword, that with it He should strike the nations. And He Himself will rule them with a rod of iron. He Himself treads the winepress of the fierceness and wrath of Almighty God. And He has on His robe and on His thigh a name written: KING OF KINGS AND LORD OF LORDS.”
(Rev. 19:11-16)

This is the *only* viable solution for the problems that plague mankind. Yet it is the one that is beyond our reach and our capability to produce. We can only pray, “Even so, come, Lord Jesus” (Rev. 22:20) and then wait and patiently endure until He does so. (Mt. 24:13) This is not a comfortable position to be in as the world rises up in its anguish and hatred of Christ and all of His followers – yet it is the truth. It is not flattering to our vaunted technologically “advanced” way of thinking to know that we are entirely unable to solve our problems – yet it is the stark reality that faces our human existence. God saw long ago that there was no one who could produce salvation or redemption for humankind except He Himself. (Isa. 63:5, Acts 4:12) For this reason He sent a Savior to take our place and He knew that this was the only remedy that mankind would need. To refuse to repent of our sinfulness, selfishness and lawlessness, or to take any other course in life other than the will of God, is to tell God that He was mistaken about how deep our problems go and that He is mistaken about how radical and effective His solution is. It is literally a spit in the face of God to think that one can be good enough to get to heaven by any other means than the shed blood of Christ Jesus. God offers only one solution to mankind’s ills and woes – the King Christ Jesus – and His solution is radically enough. It is only when He returns that the world will see this. It is the wise man who bows down now – no matter what the cost – and surrenders to this King who will surely one day return. Bringing about an increase, a return on the King’s investment, is the only way to experience a truly better life while still in this world and it is the only way to receive the eternal life that He gives to those who hear His voice and follow Him. (Jn. 10:27-28)

Let he who has ears hear.

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