

Disciples Are God's Economists

by Lane Adams

The sermon argues that obedience to God's law, as expressed in the Ten Commandments, is essential for individual and societal well-being, and that disobedience leads to negative consequences such as family breakdown, crime, and disease.

Duration: 53:32

Scripture: Exodus 20:1-17, Numbers 20:7-12, Deuteronomy 6:6-7, Deuteronomy 11:26-28, Deuteronomy 32:44, Deuteronomy 32:47, Matthew 6:33

Topics: "Economists"

Description

In this sermon, the speaker discusses the powerful leadership of Moses and the fear he instilled in the enemies of the Israelites. Despite being outnumbered, the Israelites were feared because of their unity and strength as a fighting unit. Moses, knowing he cannot enter the promised land, rehearses the law to the people and emphasizes the importance of passing it down to future generations. The speaker also highlights the consequences of lying and greed in society, emphasizing the need for moral absolutes and truth. The sermon concludes with a radical proposal that the audience may have never heard before.

Transcript

Turn with me, if you will, to Deuteronomy, the 32nd chapter. Deuteronomy is the restatement of the law of God. In effect, it is an extensive exposition of the Ten Commandments.

Deuteronomy is set in a context that would indicate to us that Moses, in his farewell address, knowing that he will be able to see the green and lush Jordan Valley and the land of Canaan, will yet not be able to enter it because of his disobedience out in the desert. When he struck a rock instead of speaking to it as God's command had been, and in his intemperate anger over the rebelliousness of the people, he struck the rock and God told him that for that disobedience publicly in front of the people, he would be allowed to see the land of Canaan, but not to go in it. This man had poured himself into these people.

Remember that the Bible says of Moses that he was the meekest man in all the earth. Meekness then is strength under control. It has nothing to do with weakness.

It certainly has nothing to do with a Casper milquetoast kind of an attitude that people run down and run over. He had to be something of a powerful man. He took a bunch of slaves who had no freedom, no liberty, no money, and he put them together as a fighting unit that was so feared that by the time they got

to the edge of Jordan, the knowledge of them had gone coursing throughout all the tribes and all the land and they were struck with great fear.

In spite of the fact that they all outnumbered the children of Israel, yet they were struck with great fear. The leader, Moses, knows that he cannot go into the promised land with them. So what does he do? He rehearses to them all the law and all the conditions of the law.

Only those of us who have spoken publicly, or those of us who have had teenagers as children, know what it is that we face, that he faced, at the 44th verse on in Deuteronomy 32. He has done his best. He has even given them a song to sing about all the miracles of the deliverances that God had given.

He had given them exposition of the law. He had set the law before them as a blessing or a curse. A blessing if you obey, a curse if you disobey.

And I believe that what he saw is what very frequently speakers see. He sees the congregation out there and there's a kind of a glaze over their eyes. And he knows that many of them have learned to sleep with their eyes open and he hasn't come anywhere close to making himself known to them.

And usually we end up, we preachers, like the one who wrote in the margin of his notes, this point is weak, yell like crazy. We raise the volume of our voices to shout like fury to try and get attention and wake up the sleepers. And I believe that that's what Moses faced when he looked at those people.

Sometimes when you see that glaze when you're trying to reason with a teenager or two, you know, the sheep comes down the veil from heaven and they are protected from any sensible response whatsoever. Probably one of the most notable things I ever heard. We had in San Diego a thing called tradio and people would call in, they'd swap different things.

And a woman called in and she told what items she said and she said, also, I still want to swap two teenagers for a month's supply of toilet paper. Well, I think that day Moses knew the same sort of desperation. He probably would have swapped the whole house of Israel for one month's supply of toilet tissue.

But here's what we find in verse 44. Moses came with Joshua, son of Nun, and spoke all the words of his song in the hearing of the people. When Moses finished reciting all these words to all Israel, he said to them, take to heart all the words I have solemnly declared to you this day, so that you may command your children to obey carefully all the words of this law.

That's when I believe he looked up and saw the glaze. And you see almost a sense of gigantic frustration in the words that follow, but they scream at us down through the ages. And I believe the same words are begging you and me to pay attention because something of such earth-turning significance is before us as we have not even yet imagined.

Listen to what he says. These are not just idle words for you. They are your life.

Consider that. What had he done? He had just repeated to them the Ten Commandments and told that in ten Hebrew words you can put the sense of the commandments down. Ten words that God had given to him on Mount Sinai, by which the whole world was to be governed.

It was a revelation of the character of the monarch of heaven, announcing that the only way to live long in the land that they were going to cross Jordan to occupy was by being obedient to these words. They are not just idle words. They are your life.

Now, it's beyond just our moral lives. The thing I'm going to propose to you tonight is so radical that I'd be willing to bet you have never, ever heard it before in your whole lives. I hope you'll never forget it as long as you live.

I maintain that the Ten Commandments are the secret of healthy economic life, and I think I can prove it to you before we leave this place. Let me review them to you. Let me review them in the sense that the first four commandments establish divine authority.

In other words, rightfully constituted authority that God is king on, in heaven and on earth. That the surrogates for his power and for his law are the father and mother in the home, establishing the fact, and this incidentally is a very well-known psychological and sociological fact, that almost without exception children who never learn submission to rightful authority in the home are always rebels against it everywhere else in their lives. In the Q&A time today, George Sanchez said that in Europe, in a navigator's meeting, not totally unlike this one, when one of the speakers suggested that the secret of the Christian life was obedience, the whole conference rose up in rebellion against the idea they didn't like the word obedience.

And he went on to say, that is what is going to pass to us in just a matter of years, and folks, it's well on the way. And if you don't think so, in the Congress on the Bible, I forget who I'm quoting, but they pointed out that the President, as I remember, of Syracuse University, in a gathering of the most prestigious people in education in America, got up and had the temerity to say that the university system was going to miss it a country mile if it did not once again address itself to teaching morals along with educational procedure, and he was hooted off of the platform. The basis of faith is the word of God.

Without that, we are left to mere human opinion, and if that's the case, 51% of a vote can make Hitler the next man in power. But does that mean that it's right? Notice, if you will, the obsession of the media with taking polls of human opinion, as though, and I have no divine knowledge on this, as though if 59% of the American people think that Robert Bork should not be Supreme Court, that means he should not be in the Supreme Court. That 51% vote on anything makes it right.

And I want to tell you, any idiot who sits down and thinks for five minutes about that, knows that will not work. That will not work. The law that God gave on Mount Sinai is not only the only means to moral health, it is the only means of economic health, and let me tell you why.

I've mentioned that the first four commandments have to do with the establishment of authority, its transfer logically to the home, the whole business of respect for human life, you shall not kill, respect for human sexuality, you shall not commit sexual immorality, respect for the right of private ownership of property, you shall not steal, respect for the truth, you shall not lie, and respect for the other man's right to prosper in excess of yours, you shall not covet what belongs to your neighbor, either his wife, his manservant, maidservant, or anything that is your neighbor's. Now I want you to change gear in a way that you never have before. I want you to put your pencil to paper, and I want you to give me some conservative figures, and I'm going to help you with them.

I want to tell you that first of all you say, who are you to speak on economics? Well you know what the word means, it comes from two roots, e costa nomos, one means household and the other means law of how to run a household. And may I tell you this? Any housewife here is smarter than the brainiest jerk in Washington, because she knows you can't have too much month at the end of the money. Amen.

That you cannot spend more than you take in, you go bankrupt. But the dummies down there think you can. Then economics, don't complicate it, don't turn it into some super sophisticated science.

By the time we're finished here I think you'll see that it is a super simple science that has been made complex, because the economists of the day, the students of what is called the dismal science, simply refuse to face the most telling part of economic determinations. I have a quote here from a man who is the head of a think tank, Charles Wolfe. Why economists disagree, and he's talking about the lead on the right would be Milton Friedman, the lead on the left would be John Kenneth Galbraith.

Men with equal credentials and equal standing in the community who contradict each other right out of hand. And in this rather impertinent piece, Charles Wolfe writes, economists share a degree of ignorance whose extent they are understandably loathe to admit. And I concur in that.

For all of the sophistication of it, don't make it more complicated than the law of how to run a household. Because if you do, you will miss the most important thing in the world. If we had Milton Friedman here, and if we had John Kenneth Galbraith here, about the only thing they would be liable to agree on would be this.

They would both agree that economics is a science that is morally neutral. And they would both be dead wrong. And it is the refusal of economists to factor in morality on the part of the people, or immorality on the part of the people, that continually makes all of their guesses end up wrong.

Let me prove my point. I want you to put pen to paper and give me conservative estimates of how much it costs the United States of America every year, because it violates the Ten Commandments. If indeed authority is the first thing established, then we have to ask ourselves, how much does it cost the United States of America every year because humankind will not be submissive to rightful authority? May I suggest to you that I've got some help for you here.

The national defense budget, which is in place because men will not be submissive to rightful authority in international affairs, so therefore we have to have elaborate defenses to protect ourselves from the avaricious greed of one nation to take what belongs to another, will not be submissive to authority in the world or national integrity, and that you can start off putting down \$320 billion, that's 320.3 if you'd like, for the fiscal year 86-87. I think that the President has put in an increase for next year, although I'm not too certain. They're still haggling over the budget.

Now, I have put down here the data for law enforcement agencies starting with the Maryland state police budget, and I want to tell you, Maryland is a little state. I mean, Rhode Island could almost stomp Maryland. It's tiny, it's very little.

Not only that, it ain't very big. But it has a state police budget of \$165,388,580. I figure even if you took that as an average, which would probably be a low state budget average for the state police, then you could multiply that times 50 and you get \$8,250,000,000 so you can put that down to begin.

But because it doesn't figure into the defense budget, I don't know what to throw in for the Treasury agents, nor do I know what to put in for the CIA, because nobody seems to know precisely what the total of that budget is, nor do I know what to add in for the Secret Service, because that doesn't go into the defense budget. So you'll just have to round off some sort of a figure. It's sort of like Olev Dirksen said, you know, a billion here, a billion there, it tends to mount up over time.

Now that's what the cost is annually, my friends, because people will not be submissive to rightful authority. When Maryland State Police times 50, that adds up to \$8,250,000,000. Then the Baltimore County Police Department is \$49,350,000,000 and the City Police Department is \$125,469,967,000.

The latter two I guess you would need to multiply in some way against all the counties in the United States, give or take a few that would be a lot more and some a lot less, and then you have to throw in all the big city police budgets. And oh yes, throw in, if you will, all the endless proliferation of private security agencies, and the last estimate I saw of that was that all the private security agencies of all the states would be somewhere in the neighborhood of \$25,000,000,000. In other words, in spite of the fact that we have all of this protection against lawlessness, yet we do not have enough out of the public trough, we've got to go out and hire billions more in private security agencies.

Everybody who wrote an airline here to get here paid for the private security that's there now, the airlines pay for it, but not really, they just stuck that onto the ticket, so your plane won't be hijacked or blown up in flight, we hope, we hope, we hope. In a sense, you know, even my little Howard County Police Department budget was \$10,193,240,000. So what does it cost? Because men will not be submissive to rightful authority.

I don't know what figure you've got, but it's gone up over \$400,000,000,000,000, hasn't it? Probably, somewhere in that neighborhood. Well, it's kind of mounting up. Now we're talking about what does it cost in America each year because the family breaks up, because the role of father and mother is not honored.

And folks, I have been involved in one of the most awful financial betrayals, I'm joined with a thousand other people, perpetrated on all of us who are servants of Christ, most of us, some 900 of us in California, totaling some \$12,000,000 defrauded. And I want to tell you something, I, for the first time in my life, have discovered how much a lawyer costs. In the little over a year and six months that I've been involved, my legal fees are \$25,000.

I've paid out more than I've been able to get back of my own investment money. When a home breaks up, what does it cost? What does it cost in dollars and cents? Could anybody figure that out? I don't know that they could. But if half of all the marriages in America are ending in divorce, then we have one gigantic legal bill because people will not keep the law of God and honor the role of father and mother.

Then you have the separate maintenance of two households, you have child support, if indeed the husbands will dare to pay it, and most of them miserable, cowardly, no good, nothings, don't even do that. What do you suppose it costs in America just for the counseling that comes with the shattered lives of the children, the wife, the husband? And what are you going to do with the fact that children of a divorced family are more prone to divorce than children of non-divorced families? It's sort of like a progressive spin in an airplane. Each time you spin, it's easier to spin the next time.

You can finally end in a flat spin and you're dead. Well, what does it cost in America? I don't know, just throw some figure down there, whatever you think is conservative and fair, because a home in America is

breaking up. What do you suppose it costs in America every year because people kill? We lose all the productivity of the person who is murdered, we have the devastation of the family that sometimes goes on public welfare, or becomes the ward of other members of the family, we have the emotional devastation, we have all of the investigative procedures, part of which we've already accounted for, but then we didn't talk about the court costs, did we? That's another whole different budget for trying to find and prosecute and bring to justice those who have committed murder.

And the truth of the matter is, we only apprehend and convict a small handful of those who do that. I don't know, just make up a number, whatever you think is fair, of what it costs in America through the lost income of the person murdered, the incarceration of the person caught, it varies between \$25,000 and \$30,000 a year, when you factor in the cost of building all the new prisons that all those states have to build right now. It begins to get rather gruesome.

I don't know what figure you want to put down, but put it down. Just take a flying guess at what it must cost each year in America because people kill. Then add into that what do you suppose it costs because people will not be sexually true to one another in monogamous marriage.

Put in all the costs of the abortions, put in all the costs of the sexually transmitted diseases, commonly called STD. I have a man in public health in my church and he says \$2 billion per year is the minimum from gonorrhea and syphilis and the sexually transmitted diseases. Of age, 75% are homosexuals, 17% are drug users.

We now know thanks to bisexuals it is out into the heterosexual world. Moreover, right now they are estimating that there is an epidemic in the prison system of Washington, D.C. We also have an estimate of the same case in Rikers Island that at least 50% of all the prisoners are infected with the AIDS virus. But they are afraid to test them for fear they will find out that it is true.

But in Washington the two test cases that they ran both showed 50% of all those incarcerated already had the AIDS virus. And the truth of the matter is very frequently a sentence of two years into one of our state prisons will end up being a death sentence because the chances of that man being raped are very high and that is the way he will get his death sentence through AIDS. My health officer guesses that very shortly we will be paying out \$14 billion in health care just for AIDS patients and that is based on the possibilities of trying to nurse 100,000 at one time.

The truth of the matter is there are those who fear that the whole health system in America may break down and go bankrupt just as we try and handle this epidemic, the first epidemic in history ever protected by law. Because the homosexual and lesbian and far left lobby pandering to these votes and one of our national parties has adopted this group in mass for the sake of their vote. The truth is never before has an epidemic greater than the black plague been protected by law and anonymity guaranteed out of testing.

The truth of the matter is recently in a White House briefing on AIDS I had the temerity to confront one of the lesser officers in the whole, he was from the FDA, nice man, and I said to him, sir, as you have been talking today I get real mixed signals both from you and from Dr. Koop. On the one hand you tell us that the magnitude of the ignorance of AIDS is staggers the imagination, on the other hand you are quite certain that it can only be communicated and caught in a variety of ways. And then he started backpedaling and telling me all the different ways that he had qualified his statement and somebody behind me said he has been trying to qualify it all the time.

And I said then sir, I think you need to admit every time you say so far as you know this is the only way that AIDS can be communicated. The truth of the matter is that behind the scenes those of us who tend to jump on every Koop and blast him because of some of the things that he is doing, behind the scenes you find a man that I believe is terrified over the true facts of this epidemic. And the word of God so clearly says, thou shalt not commit sexual immorality, which includes men lying with men and women lying with women.

I don't know, what would you like to put down there? What does abortion cost every year? What do all of these things cost? Listen to this horrible, the total cost of STD, that is sexually transmitted disease, is \$2 billion annually. The cost of gonorrhea alone exceeds \$1.1 billion, a per capita cost of \$5 each year to treat this infection. \$2 million cases of gonorrhea, mostly all of these are in adolescence.

\$2.5 million new cases every year. \$2.5 million cases of non-gonococcal urethritis. \$2 million cases of mucopurulent cervicitis.

\$90,000 cases of syphilis. \$200,000 to \$500,000 cases of genital herpes. \$200,000 cases of hepatitis B. \$3 million cases of chlamydia.

\$1 million cases of human papillomavirus. \$3 million cases of trichomoniasis. \$2.5 million teenagers are affected with STD, that is new ones, annually, every year.

What do you think this costs from violating the commandment of God? What do you think it costs in America because people steal and will not acknowledge the right of the private ownership of property? Do you realize the economic ramifications of that commandment? The whole of capitalist enterprise is based on that commandment, but God forgive you if you try and isolate that from the rest of the commandments. This is a package deal and it only works as a package. Godless capitalism can be as wicked and exploitative as godless communism, and don't ever kid yourself that it can't be.

Godless anything is destructive. But what do you suppose it costs just in increased insurance because of stealing? Again, what do you suppose it costs in the court cases? What do you suppose it costs because we never retrieve so much of what has been taken from us? Have you ever been burglarized? I have. Do you feel like your property has been raped? Do you ever come home and find the drawers in your wife's bureau pulled out and all of her intimate other things strewn all over the place? You can't get the locks changed quick enough.

And the first thing you want to do is sell that house and get out of there and move somewhere else. What do you suppose it costs in America? Listen, do you want to know how sick America is? J.C. Penney put out a store like Kmart, as I remember, called the Treasury Store. Do you know why they closed? Employees thought.

Ran them out of business. In other words, these people stole their own jobs. Sears Roebuck, years before anybody else ever did it, after a certain period of time, usually I think it's down to three years now, but it used to be five years, they started giving bonuses in Sears Roebuck stock to their employees.

Do you want to know something? They suffer more from employee theft than they do from shoplifting in the Sears stores. That means the dummies are stealing from themselves. The profitability of the stock that they get as bonus is corrupted by the theft that they perpetrate on their own employer.

And in effect, because they're stockholders, they're their own employer. And now we have the Ivan Boskys. Do you want to know something? The magnitude of the man's crime and theft was so excessive that they could not level the penalties on him.

Do you want to know why? Had they started unloading all the stock he had in order to make him pay the penalties, he would have unbalanced the market. And to protect the innocent stockholders in the same companies, they had to literally let him off with a tap on the wrist. Because so vast were his holdings because of the theft, that they had to let it all down easily, lest they rock the boat.

What a specter we have. High executives in GE being hauled off in handcuffs. High executives in some of the biggest stock brokerage houses in America being hauled away in handcuffs.

You know the greater tragedy? George Gallup says that the department of church-related businessmen in the business sector is almost indiscernible from the department of anybody else. In other words, their conduct is no better. And I mentioned the magnitude of the fraud that I have suffered, which will probably take away from me 80% of everything I had for retirement, destroy my inheritance in the main.

That man is a Missouri-centered Lutheran minister and he still is allowed to teach a Sunday school class in a church in California. The Department of Corporations has moved against him, but his own church hasn't. What do you think it costs in billions every year because people will not obey the commandment of God? What do you suppose it costs in America because people lie? And every contract broken.

We are a litigious society and there are some who speculate that you can just forget habeas corpus, the right of a quick trial. One of my problems was waiting a whole year for the hope to bring a man to justice and not even knowing then after a year whether I would be heard. Endless delays.

There have been societies in history we are told that came to a grinding halt of gridlock of litigation and folks, we can't even appoint judges fast enough to keep up with the court cases. Why? Because people lie. And when there is no such thing as moral absolutes and no demand for truth and situational ethics, I want to tell you, it's only just begun.

What do you suppose it costs in America because people lie? What do you suppose it costs in America because none of us are ever satisfied with what we have? And greed chews up our insides. We always want so much more than we need. I've done this exercise in front of a lot of businessmen.

One time in La Jolla, California, when I said if some of you have a computer, pull it out and put down some conservative figures and a guy reached in his inside pocket and he pulled down a computer that long. He plopped it down on the desk and as I asked, what does it cost for violating the law of God? I said to him at the end, I said, sir, you've got your computer? He said, yeah. I said, okay.

Do you feel you put down conservative figures? He said, yes, I do. And I said, in what is the total? He said, I can't have a total. I said, why not? He said, because my computer doesn't go to a trillion.

I said, well, take a flying guess as to what you think it is without taking the time to add up the numbers. He said, my guess is somewhere around one trillion, two hundred billion dollars. Yet Milton Friedman and John Kenneth Galbraith would tell you that economics is a morally neutral science.

I know of no one in the economic field that factors in human behavior in reference to the future. But the truth is, criminal activity alone will bankrupt America. Dream with me.

What if God breathed on us as he has in days gone by? America rots quickly, but America has a history of great awakenings and great revivals. One in 1857 started with one man in a Reformed church on Fulton Street with a room that the consistory had given him against their better judgment for a weekday prayer meeting, and he prayed that God would send him one man. Within a year, it is estimated that over a million people were converted to Christ out of the prayer meetings that came from what started with one man and two, and had to move finally into the sanctuary, spread over into other churches.

It was all lay run. And the truth was that ships coming through the Verrazano Strait, the narrows there where the big bridge is, had occasions where people on board, remember 1857 these were sailing vessels, with no knowledge of what had been going on in New York, strong men would fall to their knees on the deck of the ship and cry out for forgiveness of their sins, and they didn't even know what was happening in New York. In 1957 I was back in New York with Billy Graham, and I know you will find it hard to believe, but I can remember standing at Times Square station, the same thing happened in London when we were there, and hearing the express Underground go by, and the people were singing, blessed assurance Jesus is mine, they were coming home from the crusade.

We didn't even scratch the surface. We had evangelism, but we never had revival. But if we could somehow see America, recover its godly origins, rediscover the fact that its whole legal system is built on a greater law, the law of God.

If its people could become obedient to the commandments of God, it means that within a brief few years we could climb right out of the insurmountable debt that we now enjoy. Do you realize that Time Magazine of recent weeks pointed out that the United States of America for the first time in its history has become a mega debtor nation, like Brazil and Mexico. Are you aware of the fact that the Japanese have a savings rate a little in excess of a billion dollars a day? And if you are wondering why the stock market has taken off and gone where it has gone, it is because not knowing where to put that money, and having run their stock market up to the point where the price earnings ratio there runs sometimes around 200 to 1. They come to look at our stock market and what we would have shunned a little while back, a 20 to 1 price earnings ratio, looks like the greatest buy in history.

Its foreign capital that has pumped up the stock market, it can just as easily be removed. You want to know something? Their investments here are so heavy that very frequently nations like Japan and West Germany enter the currency market to prop up the dollar by buying it because it is to their investments best interest to keep the dollar higher instead of lower. Folks, what is that saying? Its saying we don't even control our own economic destiny anymore.

But if they decide to pull the rug out from under us, they can. Its not likely because in going down we would probably bring everybody else down. Because if we are a mega debtor nation, which we certainly are, and we go down, we can't pay them.

I remember a little barber shop where I used to get a haircut when I was a kid. I paid a quarter for my haircut. It looked like it, too.

But this barber had a number of signs on his wall, and one of them that I remember said, You pay me so I can pay him so he can pay them so they can pay you so you can pay me. All you need to do is interrupt that cycle and you've got a disaster on your hands. And don't look for any big long lines outside of a bank like it was in the 30's.

No, all you've got to do now is press a computer button. And great transfers of money go out of this country into others, into different banks and different places and different holdings. And you wake up one day and it's all going to be over.

You see, my friends, what I'm trying to show you is this. The only savior of mankind from moral bankruptcy is the Lord Jesus Christ. And the only savior of mankind from economic bankruptcy is the same Lord Jesus Christ.

Who, living in the heart of the believer, enables him to live according to the law of God. And I want to warn you soberly. It wasn't me that said it, it was Jesus said it.

That many on the last day would come to him and say, Lord, Lord. And I'll say to them, I never knew you, you workers of iniquity. Why say you unto me, Lord, Lord, and do not the things that I tell you? If you love me, keep my commandments.

Not to earn your salvation, but to express it. Out of gratitude for salvation already delivered and enabled by the spark, as Stuart Briscoe said, of the Holy Spirit. To take the fuel of the commandments of God and put them into obedience.

And it is the only way of economic survival. The only way. And you may be sitting there and you well should be saying, well, Lane, just tell me something.

If you're so smart about economics, what should a person do with his money to protect himself? One thing I want to tell you. If you're not a tither, I'd start it tonight. I'd figure out exactly how much money you had and I'd cut 10% right off the top.

And I'd start splattering it around wherever Christ had a great need where he was honored as the only Savior and the word of God honored as an inerrant inspired revelation of the character and will of God. You say, oh, come on now, you're back to that Old Testament routine. Isn't that legalistic? Hey, wait a minute.

You must never have read Matthew 23, 23. It says, Lord Jesus speaking, you tithe, mint, anise, and cumin, he said to the Pharisees and the scribes. That's like saying you tithe salt, pepper, and sugar, but you omit the weightier things of the law, justice, and mercy.

Now listen to what he said. These things ought you to have done, but not to have left the other things undone. I believe the only financial security I can have or you can have is that money that I put completely in the hands of God.

I haven't even started being a steward until I've tithed. And whatever you do, don't say, oh, or don't give your money unless you're a believer. You're looking at a man who had Jesus Christ monkeying with his wallet before he was a believer.

Because my wife conned me into tithing, and I agreed to do it to teach her a lesson. With that dumb dentist we heard outside of Louisville, Kentucky in a Methodist church on Laman Sunday. Sucker had never been to seminary.

He didn't know about Jericho sermons. That's where you march around the subject ten times and yell like crazy. That character just drove right through the walls into the heart of it and said, if you're not giving a

tenth of your money to God, you've got your hand in God's pocket and you're robbing him.

And he said, God guarantees you out of Malachi 3 that if you give one-tenth to him, he'll make the nine-tenths go farther than the ten-tenths did when you kept it all for yourself. So to teach her another lesson, I said, all right, we'll tithe tomorrow. She said, no, tonight.

I want to tell you folks, I was a nightclub singer. I was waiting to start an appearance at the Brown Hotel in Louisville, Kentucky. But nothing would do.

I got out my wallet and put down every penny I had, and that was all I had. She got out her pocketbook and put down all the pennies, and she was like a little girl, saying, all right, there's ten percent. I said, now what are we going to do with it? She thought for a moment, she said, well, we'll go down to the post office tomorrow, we'll send half of it to your mother's church and half of it to my mother's church.

So the Methodists got half and the Baptists got half. And I did it to teach her a lesson. That was 1949, one of these years she's going to learn.

Never forget going down to that post office. I thought she'd forget about it the next day. Went down to the post office with her and got those stinking money orders.

That's when the post office used to still do that. And we mailed them off, and as I dropped them in the slot, she turned to me, and I had to turn my face away from her. I didn't want to see the smile on my face.

I couldn't stop it. It was one of those things where if you did, it took a couple of hours. And I turned back to her and said, you're going to be sorry when you go hungry.

She said, feels good, doesn't it? Just like that dentist said. That dentist caused me more pain than if you pulled all my teeth without anesthesia. The day we ran out of money and I was to teach her, I got one of those greenies from the government.

Never found out how it got forwarded to me in Louisville, Kentucky. I don't know who knew I was there. Also, I ran into my agent.

I didn't want to see him because I was out of work, and I didn't want him to know that. And he said, gee, I wish I had known you were in town. There's a free room for you here at the Brown Hotel.

Come on, move in. I said, that's a coincidence? He said, oh, by the way, you've got a 30% discount on all your food in the coffee shop. Just sign the check.

You can pay it later. Obviously another coincidence. The only security I know, the only place my money is secure is when I give it away.

But tithing is only the beginning. If you want to really give, you've got to take off from there and give until it feels good. I want to tell you, I've never been able to outgive God.

He is no man's debtor. What else do you do? I would go for the most conservative investments I could find. I'd play it close to the vest.

I would pray, and I would evangelize. And I would evangelize, and I will pray. Because the only thing that can avert the disaster is if we once again turn back in obedience to the Lord God of heaven and earth.

And there's no economic whiz-bang on the horizon anywhere that is going to be able to sort this thing out. Because none of them factor in the moral crisis in America. They don't even believe in moral absolutes.

So why should they? I don't own anything. Neither do you. It was here before I got here.

It's going to be here after I'm gone. I can't take it with me. But I sure can send it on ahead.

But tithing without obedience is not going to get it. What we're talking about is a heart that's obedient. I will not identify him, but he offered this information to me.

He said, it's a humiliating experience, but it is one I would like to tell you. A young minister in our group came to me this afternoon. He said, in order to have a greater contact with those outside the church, I joined a civic club.

And at a recent meeting, a man got up out of the clear blue and said, one of the major purposes of the Kiwanis Club is spiritual in nature. It's in our bylaws. And I propose to you, Mr. President, that anyone here who cannot repeat the Ten Commandments be fined one dollar.

Well, everybody laughed and reached in their pockets and started peeling their dollars. And then they realized they had two ministers in their midst, both of whom had to, with great mortification, pull out their wallets and put down their dollars. He vowed that day he would go home, which he did, write out the Ten Commandments and have them memorized by the next Kiwanis meeting.

You say, oh, that's the exception. Can you repeat them? Have you taught them to your children? Have you taught them to your people? Have you told them what Moses said? These are not just idle words I have spoken unto you. They are your life.

And what we must say to the world, to our culture, is you cannot make it either morally or economically, sociologically, or emotionally in violation to this final, absolute, and authoritative law. And you can't keep this law without our Savior. And I think that the only thing that we've got to say to arrest the attention of a godless world is to begin with them on the reasonableness of the importance of the moral absolutes of God.

Do you know of any believer who could refute what I just shared with you on the cost of the violation of the commandments of God every year in America? Do you know of any way to refute it? I've never had a soul challenge me on it. And I've offered it in front of some very unfriendly audiences. The answer is it's irrefutable.

Because it makes sense. This is the way things are. I mean, you might want to deny the law of gravity and go to the top of the trade towers in New York and do a little flying.

And you will manage until you hit the ground. You can run your head right up against natural law and it will not bend and you cannot violate the law of God without it breaking your head wide open. And yet what do we do to even teach this to our people, our families in its full ramifications? Now I end with this.

I told you the motivation for keeping that law was never to earn your salvation but to express gratitude for the salvation already given. Just like the Israelis. Saved out of Egypt and God gave them the law of the motivation I'm the Lord your God who saved you out of the land of bondage.

Because of that obey me. Here's how I want you to obey me. But the reason was it was the only way to maintain political liberty.

Lord God of heaven and earth they aren't just idle words are they? They intersect with every aspect of human experience. They control our economic destiny. And to think Lord you modeled them in perfection in Jesus.

Oh make us like him. Obedient to your will so that we are really part of America's economic recovery rather than its certain disaster. In Jesus name.

Amen.

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