

Greed: Good or Bad? (part eight in a twelve part study)

Recently, I listened to an Evangelical panel discussion regarding the evils of socialism. Rightly so. The Word of God fully endorses the right to private property and private enterprise (Acts 5:4; James 4:13). During the course of the discussion, one of the panelists shared a glaring statistic: the current combined wealth of twenty six billionaires is equivalent to the wealth of three billion people in our world today. To his credit, and much to the surprise of the panelist, the moderator of this discussion asked the following question: “What can be done to rectify this disparity?” The panelist smiled and sheepishly answered, “We will have to wait for the return of the Lord, and He will sort all of this out.”

In answering this question in that way, the panelist was only half right. There is absolutely no doubt about Jesus Christ sorting everything out, including economic inequity, when He returns. It will begin with what is known as the Sheep and Goat Judgement, recorded for us in Matthew 25:31-46. It will continue throughout the Millennium as our Lord will rule and reign on this planet with a rod of iron (Revelation 2:27, 12:5, 19:15); representing a government not marked by ruthless cruelty and a lack of compassion, but one which will be expressed with an incorruptible justice, righteousness and peace for every citizen of His kingdom.

This is the long-term Biblical viewpoint which should give every Christian a sense of hope about the future, when all injustices will be resolved and every inequity rectified (James 5:1-8). But what about the short-term view? Is there one which is designed to provide solutions, albeit limited in their extent, for the here and now? Yes! It has been furnished by God Himself in the establishment of human government, for the express purpose stated in Romans 13:3-4 –

“For rulers are not a cause of fear for good behavior, but for evil. Do you want to have no fear of authority? Do what is good and you will have praise from the same; for it is a minister of God to you for good. But if you do what is evil, be afraid; for it does not bear the sword for nothing; for it is a minister of God, an avenger who brings wrath upon the one who practices evil.”

Is there any doubt as to what Paul is teaching here? Human government has been ordained and established by God for a two-fold positive purpose. When governing authority is functioning as God intends, it will promote that which is good and restrain that which is evil. The only doubt that remains for our current generation of Evangelical Christians is whether or not they view greed as evil. If greed is indeed evil, then it is the God-given responsibility of human government to place a restraint upon greed, whenever it rears its ugly and evil head within the economic system of any nation on earth. How? That will be our focus in the next segment.