

4 TYPES OF CHRISTIANS

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FOREWORD

Actually the writer has no plan to write this book about "*Four Types of Christians*" since this material was already discussed in a simple way in the writer's book entitled "***The Great Tribulation and The Seven Seals***".

However, early last August when the writer was making his final preparation to preach at one of the churches in Bandung, the writer's interest was diverted to change the prepared material for his message with "*The Parable of The Sower*". The next day he conveyed this message under the title "*Faith and Wealth*".

The writer was surprised when shaking hands with the congregation at the end of the service, quite a lot of people thanked him for the sermon he had delivered. Likewise, it occurred when the material was delivered in another church. Therefore the writer decided to write down this material as a book.

In this book the subject of the Christians' responsibility to pay tax is also discussed.

Mark 12:17a And Jesus answering said unto them, Render to Caesar the things that are Caesar's, and to God the things that are God's.

Paying tax has been the writer's struggle since the year 2000. And the word of God regarding this "*Four Types of Christians*" is actually one of God's ways to encourage the writer to pay tax honestly and properly.

Truly, our God is so good that He continually reminds and guides us so as to live Christlike.

1 John 2:6 He that saith he abideth in him ought himself also so to walk, even as he walked.

Finally, all the glory is to God who gives us all the wisdom and bestowes us His mercy.

2 Corinthians 4:7 But we have this treasure in earthen vessels, that the excellency of the power may be of God, and not of us.

Soli Deo Gloria,
The Writer

4 Types of Christians

Let us read Matthew 13:1-9 and 18-23,

13:1 The same day went Jesus out of the house, and sat by the sea side.

13:2 And great multitudes were gathered together unto him, so that he went into a ship, and sat; and the whole multitude stood on the shore.

13:3 And he spake many things unto them in parables, saying, Behold, a sower went forth to sow.

13:4 And when he sowed, some seeds fell by the way side, and the fowls came and devoured them up.

13:5 Some fell upon stony places, where they had not much earth: and forthwith they sprung up, because they had no deepness of earth.

13:6 And when the sun was up, they were scorched; and because they had no root, they withered away.

13:7 And some fell among thorns; and the thorns sprung up, and choked them.

13:8 But other fell unto good ground, and brought forth fruit, some an hundredfold, some sixtyfold, some thirtyfold.

13:9 Who hath ears to hear, let him hear!

13:18 Hear ye therefore the parable of the sower.

13:19 When any one heareth the word of the kingdom, and understandeth it not, then cometh the wicked one, and catcheth away that which was sown in his heart. This is he which received seed by the way side.

13:20 But he that received the seed into stony places, the same is he that heareth the word, and anon with joy receiveth it.

13:21 Yet hath he not root in himself, but dureth for a while: for when tribulation or persecution ariseth because of the word, by and by he is offended.

13:22 He also that received seed among the thorns is he that heareth the word; and the care of this world, and the deceitfulness of riches, choke the word, and he becometh unfruitful.

13:23 But he that received seed into the good ground is he that heareth the word, and understandeth it; which also beareth fruit, and bringeth forth, some an hundredfold, some sixty, some thirty.

The Parable of the Sower above explains about 4 types of Christians.

First Type Christians

First type Christians are described in Matthew 13:4 *And when he sowed, some seeds fell by the way side, and the fowls came and devoured them up.*

And the explanation is found in verse 19, *When any one heareth the word of the kingdom, and understandeth it not, then cometh the wicked one, and catcheth away that which was sown in his heart. This is he which received seed by the way side.*

This first type Christians are those who have been evangelized, but they do not really understand, they do not get

the meaning of the message shared. They don't understand the meaning of salvation in Christ. Thus, **they can not be considered as God's children**. They might feel as God's children, in their ID cards they are recognised as Christians, they might be valid members of a church, their parents might be Christians, even their father might be a pastor. Yet they actually did not understand about salvation. They did not really get the true meaning of being saved in Christ.

So, this first type Christians are actually not God's children. They have not yet become God's children.

Romans 10:9 explains about salvation, *That if thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt **believe** in thine heart that God hath raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved.*

To confess has the connotation of "**being conscious**" or "**in a conscious condition**". One has to be conscious when he or she makes a confession. That is why in the statements or letters of confession, it is always written underneath, *"I write this statement/acknowledgment/letter in a conscious condition, without any pressure and in a healthy condition."* Thus, when someone is considered unconscious, whatever he or she conveys can not be validated as a legal statement or legal acknowledgment.

Likewise, the word "**believe**" implies a connotation of "**understand**". We cannot believe something we do not understand.

The writer's grandson once asked, *"Grandpa, which one is bigger, the sun or the moon?"* *"The sun,"* the writer answered. *"But the moon looks bigger,"* he responded. The writer explained, *"The sun looks small because it is further away from us. Grandpa will give you an example."* The writer took a book and continued his explanation, *"Now, keep looking at this book."* Then the writer walked backwards, further backwards, and still further. Then he asked, *"As you keep watching, the book looks smaller and smaller, doesn't it? So is it with the sun and the moon. The sun looks smaller because it is further away from the earth or from us than the moon. If their distance from the earth is the same, the sun will look much bigger."* Finally the kid understood though may be not completely or not 100%. Yet he has already gotten the picture. One must first understand before he can believe.

Now, there is something important here, namely that we need to introspect ourselves: Have we ever consciously accepted Christ as our personal Lord and Savior, and with true understanding? Our parents might have dedicated us to the Lord when we were still babies or children, and we were baptized as teenagers. But let us recall from our memory whether at that time

we were fully conscious and understood. Because if we were not fully conscious or not really aware and did not fully understand, **we might not have become Christians yet, or might not have become God's children. Why so?** Because we have never received Christ as Lord and Savior consciously and with true understanding.

Second Type Christians

Then about the second type Christians, it is said in Matthew 13:5,6, *Some fell upon stony places, where they had not much earth: and forthwith they sprung up, because they had no deepness of earth. And when the sun was up, they were scorched; and because they had no root, they withered away.*

Luke 8:6 explains about this second type Christians, *And some fell upon a rock; and as soon as it was sprung up, it withered away, because it lacked moisture.*

In Matthew 13:20,21 the meaning of this second type Christians is also explained.

*13:20 But he that received the seed into stony places, the same is he that heareth the word, and **anon with joy receiveth it.***

*13:21 Yet hath he not root in himself, but dureth for a while: for when tribulation or persecution ariseth because of the word, **by and by he is offended.** (KJV)*

Or *“But since he has no root, he last only a short time. When trouble or persecution comes because of the word, **he quickly falls away.**”* (NIV)

So this second type Christians are those who accept Christ after being evangelized **and become children of God, but they do not keep their faith.** Their faith is never ‘watered’ (nourished). When they have just received Christ as Lord and Savior, they went diligently to church. Yet, by and by they will not go to the church anymore. Perhaps they liked to pray, but by and by they never pray anymore. They liked to read the Bible, but by and by they never read it anymore. Perhaps they used to serve, but by and by they never serve anymore. They do not maintain their faith. And about this second type Christians it is clearly stated that *“When trouble or persecution comes because of the word, **he quickly falls away.**”* (NIV)

Some of them who hear the word of God are sensitive to what is good, but they keep the word only in their minds, not in their hearts. They do not put God’s word into practice during their lives. Their Christian lives are merely following the religious rituals and they are not rooted in the word. As a result, when everything goes well they maintain in their faith, but when they face difficulties and persecutions, they give up their believe and leave to follow other beliefs.

Third Type Christians

Matthew 13:7 says, *And some fell among thorns; and the thorns sprung up, and choked them.*

13:22 He also that received seed among the thorns is he that heareth the word; and the care of this world, and the deceitfulness of riches, choke the word, and he becometh unfruitful.

The third type Christians are people who **accept Christ as their Lord and Savior and their faith has grown**, yet there are thorns. Thorns or thornbush also grow and we know that thorns grow faster than riceplants or wheat. **Finally the thornbush will press and choke the other plants so they will die and do not have the chance to produce any fruit.**

John 15:2 says, *Every branch in me that beareth not fruit he taketh away: and every branch that beareth fruit, he purgeth it, that it may bring forth more fruit.*

Thornbush and Other Like Prickly Shrubs

We will discuss about these thornbush and prickly shrubs. Matthew 13:7, *And some fell among thorns; and the thorns sprung up, and choked them.*

13:22 He also that received seed among the thorns is he that heareth the word; and the care of this world, and the deceitfulness of riches, choke the word, and he becometh unfruitful.

What do the thorns in these verses mean? Thorns or thornbush here represent worldly worries and deceptions of wealth. According to Mark 4:19, *And the cares of this world, and the deceitfulness of riches, and the lusts of other things entering in, choke the word and it becometh unfruitful.*

In Mark, it is mentioned more clearly that thornbush illustrates the **cares of this world** and **the deception of wealth** and **the desires for other worldly things** or **the desires of the flesh**. We will discuss them one by one.

1. The Cares of This World

The cares of this world are the worries in our lives. We worry and are very much concerned about our future, our advanced or old age, the fate of our children and grandchildren, we even worry what to eat today and tomorrow.

However the Bible explains that during the 40 years the Israelites wandered in the wilderness, God had kept them and provided for their needs. Also Elijah was taken care of, and everyday the Lord told the crows to bring bread and meat for him. Likewise in the case of the 5 loaves and the 2 fish, the Lord could use those to feed five thousands people.

Now some would say, *“Of course, Sir. But that was in the past. Today, it is different.”*

But the Lord promises to provide for us. Matthew 6:31 says, *Therefore take no thought, saying, What shall we eat? or, What shall we drink? or, Wherewithal shall we be clothed?*

6:32 (For after all these things do the Gentiles seek) for your heavenly Father knoweth that ye have need of all these things.

1 Peter 5:7 emphasizes this, *Casting all your care upon him, for he careth for you.*

Some might say, *“Sir, I also believe those verses, but honestly my faith is weak, and I am not sure whether the Lord would, or would not provide for me.”* And some others might say, *“I believe that God would provide for His children. But I have so many sins, Sir, so I am not sure whether the Lord will provide for me.”*

What does it mean?

There are many reasons for people not to believe in the Lord. Instead, they believe more in their fellowmen and in their wealth. *“Here Sir, our wealth and family can assure or guarantee the maintenance of my present life even until my advanced age.”*

2. The Deceitfulness of Riches

We know that these days we live in a world where people live glamorously or extravagantly. Watching the TV we will hear whose mansion is the most grandiose, who owns a private airplane, has luxurious cars, and so on. And in the news we hear of B or C who has just bought a new luxurious ship. Some actresses or actors or celebrities spend their holidays in Paris, stay in some expensive luxurious international hotels of tens thousands US dollars for one night. They dine in costly famous restaurants where delicious food is served, prepared by well-known chefs. The daily accessories they wear are among others: Hermes Birkin Croco Himalaya's bags of a hundred thousands US dollars, Richard Mille's watch special edition of a million dollars. And some more details are told about their shopping tours and fantastic expenses for items of famous brands.

Not only celebrities, everyday we too see our friends via WhatsApp. Perhaps they are spending their holidays somewhere, or some of them are enjoying special delicacies in wellknown restaurants, clad in beautiful dresses. Wow, our relative changes his car, and our friend buys a new gadget. Hence everyday we see and are entertained by such news and may think how happy are their lives!

That is why we naturally wish to be rich. For if we were rich we could enjoy such conspicuous entertainments. Are we allowed to be rich? Sure. Why not? Abraham was rich and David too. Yet we should be careful not to become like the third type Christians who own at least these characteristics:

Money Is The Standard

1 Timothy 6:10 records that, *For the love of money is the root of all evil: which while some coveted after, they have erred from the faith, and pierced themselves through with many sorrows.*

Or *“For the love of money is a root of all kinds of evil. Some people, eager for money, have wandered from the faith and pierced themselves with many griefs.”* (NIV)

The verse is always there as a reminder but many people still think that money is the most important subject. For money is assumed as an insurance of one's future and their happiness in this world. That is why this third type Christians usually measure everything with money. Their standard is money. When they are introduced to a new person who is good and religious, who speaks gently and politely, they might not welcome him readily because they think, *“This person is good, but is he or she beneficial and would bring in money? Is he or she materially advantageous?* If not, they would not be interested to have any relationship with him or her. On the other hand, when they are introduced to another person who is a real brute, lascivious,

drunkard, addicted to drugs, and so on, they welcome him with open arms because such individual can bring in material advantages. The standard is whoever can bring in money, not whoever can bring in virtue or moral excellence to them.

Even in the Family, Money Is the Standard

Our youngest child has a good character. When we are sick, he/she would come over and take us to the hospital. But if we need money, he/she can not give much since economically his/her financial resources are not so good. And oftentimes we deem such a child defective or a failure. Unlike the other son, though his character is not so attentive, never visits us even when we are sick, yet sends us a good sum of money we consider him a devoted child.

There are also good husbands, faithful, and love their wives but they are not respected by their wives because they can not earn much money. The writer even witnessed a wife who dared to disgrace her husband openly because she earned more. Did she know that she was obliged to submit to her husband and to obey him? She knew, but she answered, *"I will obey my husband, if he earns more than I do. But as it is now, most of the family expenses are on my responsibility. So, why should I obey*

him? If he wants me to obey him, he must be able to earn more than I do. Then sure enough I shall obey him.”

Now, what does this mean?

The standard in the family is no more the Bible, but the content of the purse: Money.

The Way to Get Money

It is apparent in the way they get money. They who belong to this third type Christians love money: when they seek for money they do not mind the means or the way to get it: fair or foul. Their principle is *“by hook or by crook since money is odorless.”* Any means is permissible: to bribe, to cheat, to exploit, to manipulate because the most important thing to them is to obtain money!

Does Not Want to Help Their Relatives

Christians of this type also rarely help their kinfolk or relatives. They usually will reflect carefully whether helping their relatives would be beneficial. When it would be beneficial, they probably will help them; if not, they will not help them.

1 Timothy 5:8 says, *But if any provide not for his own, and specially for those of his own house, he hath denied the faith, and is worse than an infidel.*

3. Do Not Want to Carry the Cross

The Lord Jesus clearly said in Matthew 16:24 *Then said Jesus unto his disciples, If any man will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow me.*

At the moment we decide to follow Jesus Christ, He wants us to deny ourselves and learn to live a holy life.

Some people often say, *“It is not that I refuse to live a holy life, but at present I cannot since I am still in this business. If I do not go with them to the night club and do not play with the girls there, those people will reject me and I will not get any orders. In my business, if I do not cheat nor manipulate, the price I offered would not be satisfactory. In short, please not now, Sir. May be later.*

However, in this matter it is not a concern of incapability, rather they enjoy a sinful life.

Luke 14:27 And whosoever doth not bear his cross, and come after me, cannot be my disciple.

The Danger of Becoming Christians of the Third Type: Changing One's Belief for Wealth

Matthew 6:24 clearly explains, *No man can serve two masters: for either he will hate the one, and love the other; or else he will hold to the one, and despise the other. Ye cannot serve God and Mammon.*

When we tend to love Mammon, at that very moment we have pushed away the Lord. We can never love both. We can choose but one. When we love the Lord more, we certainly do not love Mammon. On the other hand, when we love Mammon more, we certainly do not love the Lord. The choice should be only one.

Further, Luke 12:15 admonishes us, *And he said unto them, "Take heed, and beware of covetness: for a man's life consisteth not in the abundance of the things which he possesseth.*

Do not be deceived; do not think that if we have much money we will be kept safe. No, not at all.

The greatest danger concerning the third type Christians is they do not do or do not put in practice the word of God. This makes their lives unfruitful, whilst the Lord Jesus clearly said that, *Every branch in me that beareth not fruit he taketh away: and every branch that beareth fruit, he purgeth it, that it may bring forth more fruit.* (John 15:2)

Why should the 'unfruitful' be cut off? Well, it is because they actually do not sincerely believe in the Lord!

The Fourth Type Christians

Matthew 13:8 But other fell into good ground, and brought forth fruit, some an hundredfold, some sixtyfold, some thirtyfold.

*13:23 But he that received seed into the good ground is he that heareth the word, and **understandeth** it; **which also beareth fruit**, and bringeth forth, some an hundredfold, some sixty, some thirty.*

Luke 8:15 explains, *But that on the good ground are they, which is an honest and good heart, having heard the word, **keep it, and bring forth fruit with patience.***

Or “*But the seed on good soil stands for **those with a noble and good heart, who hear the word, retain it, and by persevering produce a crop.***” (NIV)

Hence Christians of this fourth type are Christians who **not only listen** to God’s word but also **understand**, and keep it in their hearts, also **fervently practice** it in their lives so that it bears fruit.

It is very interesting that in Matthew 13:23, the word “understandeth” precedes “beareth fruit”, *...he that heareth the word, and **understandeth** it; **which also beareth fruit***, implies that we can bear fruit only if we understand. Hence, **understanding** the word of God is one of the keys to be able to become a Christian of the fourth type who are fruitful.

Christians Who Understand the Word of God

As Christians, we often presume that we “understand the word of God” because we have been God’s children for quite a long time. However, the length of time we have been Christians does not guarantee that we would surely understand the word of God. We often see people in the congregation doze off, busy with their gadgets or mobiles, chatting, no concentration and their minds are wandering far away while the sermon is being delivered. And even some activists in the church leave the auditorium when the sermons are being conveyed. Also many Christians never finish reading through the whole Bible, from the Book of Genesis to the Book of Revelation, even once! And some members of the Church Council and elders have finished reading it through but a few times. Indeed, there is no guarantee that they who have read through the Bible many times would definitely have more understanding. Yet one of the means to gain better understanding of the word of God is to read the Bible other than listening to sermons.

*Back to Matthew 13:23, But he that received seed into the good ground is he that heareth the word, and **understandeth** it; which also **beareth fruit**, and bringeth forth, some an hundredfold, some sixty, some thirty.*

Thus, we can bear fruit only if we have understood!

The Fourth Type Christians and Their Wealth

What are the characteristics of these fourth type Christians in managing their wealth?

In Luke 19:8 we read, *And Zacchaeus stood, and said unto the Lord; "Behold, Lord, the half of my goods I give to the poor, and if I have taken any thing from any man by false accusation, I restore him fourfold."*

There are 3 things Zaccheus did after he repented.

First, when he met the Lord Jesus, he said, *"Lord, the half of my goods I give to the poor"*.

Why was Zaccheus willing to give half of his wealth to the poor? Because he had found something more valuable than his wealth. When he received the Lord Jesus as his Lord and Saviour, Zaccheus realized that he had found a treasure more valuable than even the whole world.

For what is a man profited, if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul? Or what shall a man give in exchange for his soul?
(Matthew 16:26)

Hence, all the wealth he owned was no more the most important for him. That is why he was ready to give half of his wealth to the poor after getting such a great treasure as salvation. So, his earthly wealth was no more primal or of first importance.

Likewise the Apostle Paul when he received the Lord Jesus as his Lord and Saviour, he said in Philippians 3:8,

*Yea, doubtless, and I count all things but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord: **for whom** I have suffered the loss of all things, and do count them but **dung**, that **I may win Christ.***

Or *”What is more, I consider everything is lost compared to the surpassing greatness of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord, **for whose sake** I have lost all things. I consider them **rubbish** that **I may gain Christ.**”*
(NIV)

When he had met Christ, the Apostle Paul stated that of all things he counted them but dung or rubbish compared to the salvation bestowed by the Lord.

So, if today we still consider the earthly wealth very precious, we might not realize yet how invaluable the salvation God the Father has given us through the sacrifice of Jesus His only Son. When we understand how precious this salvation is, we will no more consider earthly wealth as something too important.

In his book entitled *“Nilai Keselamatan (The Value of Salvation)”*, the writer explained that gold became valueless compared to diamond. When we buy a gold ring with a big piece of diamond, the gold will not be put into the account because its value will be too trivial compared to the costly diamond. That was what the Apostle Paul said. When he learned that the salvation through Christ was so invaluable, he counted all earthly wealth

and other things only dung or rubbish. When we still consider wealth as something very valuable, we should search deeper to know about the value of the salvation in Christ Jesus.

Second, Zaccheus said, *And if I have taken any thing from any man by false accusation, I restore him fourfold.* **Zaccheus had made his decision to earn money honestly.** He stated that he would not earn it improperly anymore, even if he had taken money by false accusation in the past, he was ready to return it or repay because for him to accumulate money was of no importance anymore. So, he did not want to gain money by wrong means.

As it is recorded in Ephesians 4:28, *Let him that stole steal no more: but rather let him labour, working with his hands the thing which is good, that he may have to give to him that needeth.*

If we truly belong to the fourth type Christians, we definitely will not earn money by deceiving, blackmailing, stealing, cheating, and other ways that are not in line with God's word. Even as employees we will not be corruptive, be bribed, receive commision, and the kinds. We also do not feign illness, work leasurely, rather we will work hard and do the best we can.

Third, we also choose to do only **good and honest jobs.** In other words, we "**do only legal or rightful jobs**". If we have received Christ as our personal Lord and Saviour, we will no more seek to find unrightful earnings such as gambling, adultery,

cheating, intimidating, usurer, and so on. We want to gain an honest livelihood in accordance with God's word.

To Pay Tax and To Give Tithe

Luke 20:25 records, *And he (Jesus) said unto them, **Render therefore unto Caesar the things which be Caesar's, and unto God the things which be God's.***

Render unto Caesar the things which be Caesar's? Naturally this is very clear. What we ought to give to Caesar or the government is the tax. We as good citizen should duly pay tax to our government. And honestly this had been the writer's struggle since the year 2000. In the year 2002 the writer wrote a book entitled "*Menang Dalam Persaingan Gereja*" This is a book about how to apply the modern management in the church so that they can win when competing with activities and entertainments from outside the church. A lecturer of a Theological School in Bandung invited the writer to convey the material to his post-graduate students. So the writer did after introducing himself to the students.

During the Question and Answer Session, a student asked, "*Pak Yunus, You are a businessman, aren't you? Do you pay your tax duly?*" Wow, the writer was very surprised and shocked by that question. He answered apologetically because he had not

paid his tax as he should, and he was really embarrassed. That is why the writer has been trying to pay his tax duly since then. Yet there was no opportunity since if we fix our tax, than that tax value could be used by the officials as the basis for setting or correcting of our past taxes. And the amount of the correction would be very extensive and possibly the fine would not be in our capacity to pay. Just during the tax amnesty from government in the year 2017 we got the chance to pay tax rightly because the government granted tax amnesty to businessmen who had committed mistakes in their responsibilities to pay tax in the past years. But after the clearance, as we want to start paying tax honestly 100% the challenging question popped up. Should we pay? Why?

Firstly, in 2015 the writer got 2 honorary acknowledgments. One of the writer's restaurants gained the acknowledgment from the Municipality Government of Bandung as a dutiful tax payer and the writer personally won the recognition as the third highest tax payer from The Internal Revenue Service. With those honorary recognitions the writer and his enterprises have been ranked as a good tax payer in the sight of the government.

Secondly, our department of finance reminded the writer about the financial condition of the business enterprise. *"Sir, this is the condition of our enterprise. You certainly know about the rivalry among restaurants these days. When we raise our tax*

payment, then here is the list of our restaurants that are threatened to be shut down.” Even before we can pay our tax rightly the possibility of such a big loss was so apparent. How much more when we do pay rightly. So, the writer and his wife struggled whether to pay tax honestly or not. In the end, we decided to pay our tax honestly with the assumption to be able to pay 100 % by the end of the year.

Then, as it was already reminded by our department of finance, in August 2017 one of the restaurants we owned had to be shut down due to the great loss which could not be covered. And it was our biggest one, our pride, a two-floor restaurant in Jakarta. The restaurant was often reserved for wedding parties or used for our special company programs we usually arranged there. The site was 3000 square meters, quite spacious and the restaurant was actually our pride. Again, the writer and his wife struggled whether to continue being honest in paying tax, or not. To continue could cause another list of restaurants be shut down too. After the hard struggle the writer and wife agreed to continue with the decision and keep on paying tax 100% although we might have to shut down some more restaurants and only half of them left, we would comply.

Then the Lord reminded the writer to report and to pay tax for a certain transaction. This transaction was done in the past and if the writer reported it he would have to pay a very large

amount, really huge. At first, we wanted to start anew and closed the old, but the Lord reminded the writer about Zaccheus. Thus, the writer had to report and to pay the tax which actually could be kept safe and would not be tracked by the Internal Revenue Service.

We keep struggling since the tax is very high. Just early last August we resolved to pay.

Why are we obliged to pay? There are 3 reasons.

First, we learn to be obedient. Not to gain some compliment. No. If only for a compliment, it would be too expensive since the writer had to pay hundreds of thousands dollars. We only want to obey because the Lord has put on us the responsibility to pay tax. So, we do it.

Second, The writer knows that to be a follower of Christ there is a price to pay.

Third, the writer used to go to swim with his friends and other entrepreneurs. It has been done for a long time. After swimming, we usually enjoyed breakfast and chatting together. The writer remembered that one day someone among them stated, *“Now listen, when we talk about paying tax, none would do it rightly. So, everybody is a thief. Whatever religion they follow, there is no difference. The Christians too are thieves.”*

Fortunately, his statement stopped there. If it were prolonged, we might hear some comments like this, *“Christians, either just members or activists or elders or preachers or christian writers like Yunus here, are no different. All are thieves.”* That is why the writer since then always pray to the Lord, *“Oh Lord, please help me never to cause Your Name be ridiculed.”*

When someone talks about Christians, he or she is talking not only about the followers of Christ but also about Christ Himself as Lord of the Christians. So, when somebody says that Christians steal in the issue of taxation, it means he or she directly or indirectly are mocking God for assuming Him of being unable to teach His people to be dutiful tax payers. For that reason, the writer prayed, *“Lord, please enable me to pay tax honestly so that your Name will not be blesphemed.”*

To Give the Tithe

Then, *Render unto God the things which be God's!* This concerns our tithe. We ought to give our tithes which actually are our responsibility as Christians. The writer has been faithfully giving his tithes for 20 years but during that time the writer had stopped practising it twice. However, about the year 2003, the writer started to give tithes again until now. Through the

experience of giving tithes then stopped it and started again, the writer can feel the difference between giving and not giving tithe. The writer belongs to those who often encourage others to give their tithes without intending to keep those tithes for himself because the writer is not a minister nor a pastor. So, he will never accept tithes from the congregation for himself but he do encourage them to practice it as God has promised to bestow a great blessing upon them, as we can read in Malachi 3:10-12.

3:10 Bring ye all the tithes into the storehouse, that there may be meat in mine house, and prove me now herewith, saith the LORD of hosts, if I will not open you the windows of heaven, and pour you out a blessing, that there shall not be room enough to receive it.

Or *“Bring the whole tithe into the storehouse, that there may be food in my house. Test me in this, says the LORD Almighty, and see if I will not throw open the floodgates of heaven and pour out so much blessing that you will not have room enough for it.”* (NIV)

3:11 And I will rebuke the devourer for your sakes, and he shall not destroy the fruits of your ground; neither shall your vine cast her fruit before the time in the field, saith the LORD of hosts.

Or *“I will prevent pests from devouring your crops, and the vines in your fields will not cast their fruit,”* says the LORD Almighty. (NIV)

3:12 And all nations shall call you blessed: for ye shall be a delightsome land, saith the LORD of hosts.

Or *“Then all the nations will call you blessed, for yours will be a delightful land,”* says the LORD Almighty.” (NIV)

There are 3 blessings the Lord promises.

First, the Lord will open the windows of heaven and pour us out a blessing so much that there shall not be room enough to receive it.

Second, the Lord will rebuke all failures so that our efforts and plans would run well.

Third, the most remarkable issue is that we would be a delightful land. So, what is a delightful land? We know that a land consists of people, buildings, facilities, cultures, sites, air, water, community, environment, atmosphere, etc. The Lord promises to make everything good!

The writer started a business by running a small kiosk at a traditional market, Pasar Kosambi in Bandung, selling peanuts, frying oil, soaps, margarine and butter, and other kind of food stuff. The writer gave his tithes faithfully and he did not become impoverished by that. On the contrary, his financial condition was raised above the average. Actually, the writer is not the kind of person who likes to tell much about himself and his family. He is afraid of being considered as self-assertive or arrogant. But today, the writer is ready to tell all this frankly as a testimony.

The writer has been blessed with a wonderful wife. They have been married for 34 years and had quarreled but less than 20 times during their married. The writer has also been blessed with 3 good children. They are smart and brilliant and have been granted good achievements since their childhood. They are

polite and have never caused the family any trouble. The writer's second child was the only Indonesian invited officially to attend Obama's first inauguration as President of the United States of America.

The writer has also been blessed with a grandchild who is very sweet and brilliant. He got an A for all subjects and no B at all. The atmosphere in the writer's home is almost always quiet and restful, no loud cries of children and the writer has never seen his three children quarrelled with each other. Surely, the Lord has bestowed all the best to the writer and his family!

The writer would like to encourage all of us to give tithes so that we also can experience as Job's who said to the LORD, *I have heard of thee by the hearing of the ear: but now mine eye seeth thee.* (Job 42:5)

When we listen to God's word, we only hear. When someone gives a testimony, we only hear. **But God wants us to really experience, not only to hear** because our faith should be based on what we experience. So, we can say as what the Samaritans said to the woman in John 4:42, *Now we believe, not because of thy saying: for we have heard him ourselves, and know that this is indeed the Christ, the Saviour of the world.*

We ourselves experience what the Lord Jesus says so that we believe and are convinced that God is true.

Some people might say that to be able to experience God's power, it is not necessary by giving tithes. We can feel God's power by experiencing divine healing and other miracles. Indeed that is possible, but when we are healed from our sickness, oftentimes doubt flashed on our mind, *"Is it true that we are healed by our prayers? Or are we healed because the doctor is an expert, the medicines he gives are effective, the medical science is sophisticated and many other common reasons?"*

However, when we experience blessings by giving tithes, we will not doubt anymore about God's power since the matter does not agree with the rule of economy, finance, arithmetics, and other scientific calculations. All of them teach us that to be able to own more we have to spend less. But the Lord through His word tells us that we have to give our tithes to be richly blessed.

The Other Three Types of Christians Fail, Except the Fourth

In general, the first type Christians never go to church or go only a few times. The second type Christians rarely go to church. Sometimes they go, sometimes they do not because they do not maintain their faith. So, the attendance of the church are the third and the fourth type Christians. As it has been said previously,

only the fourth type Christians would be saved or would enter into the kingdom of heaven whereas the other three types Christians would leave God and their faith would die out.

The writer would like to end this book by quoting Matthew 7:21,

Not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but he that doeth the will of my Father which is in heaven.

This quotation is taken from a paragraph that consists of 3 verses. The paragraph was explained by the writer in his book entitled **“The Characteristics of God’s Children”**. So, whoever wants to gain more information about this can simply read the book.

However, here the writer intends only to explain in a simple way the meaning of this verse: *Not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven.* Surely, this part of the verse is very clear that not everyone who goes to church would be allowed to enter into the kingdom of heaven nor everyone who sings praises to the Lord. Also not everyone who listens to God’s word would gain access to enter into the kingdom of heaven nor everyone who are active in the ministry for the Lord. Even, not all who are venerable clergies nor preachers nor Christian writers like the writer himself could enter

into the kingdom of heaven for the other part of the verse says, *but he that doeth the will of my Father which is in heaven.*

Thus the key is doing the will of the Father. As long as we do not do this, we most likely would not be allowed to enter into the kingdom of heaven. Yes, definitely, the standard is not who cries “*Lord, Lord,...*” nor who attends the church, but who does the will of God.