

16 September 2018 The Source and the Future Part 10 – Ps John Bendixen (Witbank)

Scripture Reference: Luke 16:1-16 (AMPC)

Praise Jesus! Hallelujah! I thank You Father for supernatural impartation to me, that I may deliver Your Word the way that it comes out effectively, efficiently not, leaving anything out, but that I can deliver it with speed and that I don't get caught up in the details. Thank You Lord that Your people have the Spirit to receive it, they have understanding of this Word. Amen.

So, you all know that I have labelled this whole series of messages, "*The Source and The Future*." And then part of the story of *Jacob's Constellation* is - I've got a bit of feedback here now (referring to mic) - but part of this whole story of the Constellation, Jacob's Constellation includes Laban. And so, I didn't initially want to talk too much about Laban because it is generally a message I preach to business people and it is in our business leadership program that I designed, but as I was going on I felt the Lord begin to say to me, "I want you to preach on Laban syndrome and there are some things I want to give you that are added to the revelation that you have.

And so, I think Pastor Sharon did a really excellent job last Sunday of talking about the difference between someone who is neutral towards God and someone who is spiritual and serving God. And so I just want to remind you that the Laban syndrome is a spirit that is at work in the world and it works through men, and Jacob's Constellation was that he had the blessing of his father, he had the blessing of the future, which he had an encounter with God on his way to Laban. It turned out to be Laban, but he was going to his father's people so he could find a wife there. He had the blessing of the father, the blessing of the future and after he left Laban, he was on his way back to his father and he had the blessing of identity change. And so those are the three blessings that I preached on at length over that whole period, that we have, as people, we have the blessing of the father, we have the blessing of the future and we have the blessing of identity change.

So, as I began to minister about Laban I told you that Laban is a spirit in the world which *the main purpose of the Laban syndrome is a spirit working through personality and choices of humans and the main purpose of which is to control and direct what God has declared over you, so as to prevent you from becoming all of what God has planned for you. Effectively preventing you and others from establishing His Kingdom, His covenant and His church on the earth.* So the Laban syndrome is to prevent you. He does it through distraction, he does it through taking your energy, redirecting your resources, taking the blessing and the covenant that God has with you for abundance and wealth and using it for his own purposes. Laban syndrome.

I had mentioned to you on the first time I preached it that these are the eleven main characteristics of Laban.

Number one; he is all about credentials and accomplishments. Achievements are the main source of his influence, (when I say him, I mean it operates through him or her or the system of the world). Okay?

Loves money, riches and wealth. In other words, if they have a choice to make between serving God or serving money they will serve money, because they put their trust in money and riches and wealth before they will put their trust in God.

Status and honour are important tools for the person or the persons used by the person. So if somebody is operating in the Laban syndrome, status and honour are important tools in the way that they use the Laban syndrome. And almost always they want to connect with people that have status and honour, because it gives them status and honour.

They're very savvy and opportunity sensitive. This is the Laban syndrome. So now remember I told you, that you may have one or all of these operating in your life at some time, because I told you about the Pharisee heart, that how the Lord showed me that at times I had the Pharisee heart operating in me. For me the way that I know how to deal with a Pharisee spirit or a Pharisee heart is a Pharisee heart wants to be right and he wants to prove others wrong when it comes to the Bible. So the way that you can defeat the Pharisee spirit in your life is that you don't choose to be right or wrong when it comes to the things of God, you choose to walk in love. You put the relationship above your doctrine. That doesn't mean to say you compromise your doctrine, it just means you put the relationship above your doctrine. Otherwise if you always want to be right, then you are always going to take issue with people who have a different belief to you. That's a Pharisee heart. So if you have these symptoms of the Laban syndrome that operate in your life, then you have to deal with it by the Word of God. I am going to show you today how you deal with it and/or the next time I finish it.

Number five, the Laban syndrome is practiced in the art of collecting information and using information for benefit and advantage – the person or persons will know a lot about you and you may think you know them in the same way, but in reality you only know what they show to you for their ultimate advantage.

Number six, the Laban syndrome person is neutral towards God and His ways. He may even be a Christian, very often they are Christians; may practise ceremonies of gods and people and appear to be very devout, but will normally stay away from strong commitments towards God, unless God forces the occasion through a covenant believer or a disciple.

Number seven, a Laban syndrome recognises the favour, the blessing, skill and order of things, in order to position for advantage. So they can see blessing and favour on people's lives, they can see the order of God in people's lives, they can see skills, and they can see callings, and they can see gifts that are on people, and they will position themselves around those people for their advantage. This, you will not find in anybody's book written anywhere, this is revelation given to me by God; all of these things can be found in the way Laban operated. I didn't find this by looking in another book; I found this in the Bible.

Number eight, will learn the language of many “ways” in order to remain neutral. So neutrality is important to them, because they don’t want to be labelled as a fanatic, they don’t want to be labelled on this side or that side. They learn the order of many ways, so where ever they are and they find themselves they will fit into those ways, because they want to found to be neutral, because they look for advantage more than anything else. Even seem to be totally committed to a particular way or person to obtain advantage. So they will sometimes appear to be a person’s best friend, or most loyal to a person, or most committed to a person, but the motive behind it is for personal advantage and personal gain. Deliberately, perhaps subconsciously has developed a carefully constructed / instinctive possibility triggering system, or an alarm in order to position early and properly for advantage. They have early warning systems that allow them to maximize opportunities, and most of those early warning systems are connected to people. May appear peaceful, but will often be ready to be vengeful. You will find out that if people don’t get their way, they will start to speak a language of criticism; they will start to speak a language of obstruction. They will speak a language of disrespect, dishonour and they will do all the things here; they will discredit, they will talk against, they will try and demean and dishonour when they actually don’t get their way. They have vengeance in their hearts. Sometimes they will become violent, mostly not but sometimes they will. Number eleven, they operate through manipulation and hidden advantages and becoming angry, or demanding, or fault finding, or disagreeable in order to gain or regain an advantage, when wisdom, anointing and/or the Word of God have delivered and outsmarted the Laban syndrome to set you free. Hallelujah.

So I used to work for a boss that was completely captivated by the Laban syndrome. He loved money, he loved the order of money and he positioned himself always so that he was in the right books with the right people. He wanted me to swear loyalty to him and in return he would give me a seat on the executive team of that particular company and his words to me were this, “If you stick with me John, I will make you very rich.” Exactly, “If you stick with me John, I will make you very rich.” He said, “But I will own you, while you work for me.” This is what he said, he said, “I can call on you any time of day, anytime of night and I will expect you to deliver the highest level of excellence and quality.” So I said to him, “I have a marriage, sir.” He said, “Sometimes you have to sacrifice something in the short term to gain something in the long term.” I said, “I am also very involved in my church.” He said, “That’s your business not mine.” So I said, “Respectfully, I thank you for the offer but I am not your man.” He then became very vengeful towards me and tried to fire me. But by the favour of God, by the faith of God and by my walk with God, praying in the Holy Spirit, praying in tongues, God was able to give me business that actually helped him make his bottom line profit. Without my business he wouldn’t have made it, which meant his credibility with his bosses would have been in a bad place. You’re with me? And so this was my prayer, I said, “Lord, I will work in this company on my own terms and I will be blessed by You and not by him. You will make me wealthy, not him. You will promote me, not him.” And I said, “I will be ready to leave when I’m ready to leave in wisdom with You, not because he is telling me to leave.”

So, that's what happened. When I made a pot full of money for myself, and him, I said, “It’s time to leave.” And then he didn’t want me to leave. That’s typical of the

Laban syndrome. They remain neutral and they want you, when they see the blessing and favour on your life, they want you to stay. Years later when, I was part of the executive team, the thing that he offered me, God gave me with another company later on and we were into the annual awards and my division and my business that I was responsible for, we earned the best award in the industry. So, they had an Annual Awards Dinner to give in the industry awards for outstanding achievements in the industry.

So, I would represent our company as the executive involved and you know my managing director was there as well because it's a prestigious event and so when I walked in there, the first person I bumped into was him. He came straight over to me and he said, "John, it doesn't surprise me to see you here, because I always knew you were going to make it." You know, well thank you very much. I know you could see that, but you wanted it on your terms, not my terms. This is not my terms, this is God's terms, that I am standing here, you know. Praise the Lord.

If you stand with God, He will always vindicate you, and He will always bring you, what Laban offers you God will bring you without all of the demands that Laban will make upon you. I am preaching very well already.

So, what Pastor Sharon preached was that if you are neutral towards God, then if you are neutral, you're not engaged on either side, you're impartial. You're not helping or supporting either side, you have no strongly marked or positive characteristics or features. You belong to neither extreme, in one type or kind nor another and then she gave you this description of what, she might not have actually, but after I got back from Ethiopia, we were talking about this yesterday. And if you are not spiritual, if you're not neutral, then you must be spiritual. So, either you're, if you're neutral, you're actually backsliding. You don't know it, but you are going backwards, because God is never static, God is always moving forward. So, if you are remaining neutral in your position towards God, so you can gain advantage in the world system, then you are going backwards with God. So then you are in the process of back-sliding, going backwards.

God never intervenes in your life, so that you can take, have a position of destruction. He always intervenes in your life so He can force you to make a decision, so that you can go forward, not backwards. If you choose to not go forward, then that's your choice to take that position. Let me rephrase this, another way. Jesus became the Rock of offence. Offence is never given; offense is only taken. I don't care what you do to me, if I don't want to be offended by what you do to me, you can't offend me. Doesn't matter how you treat me but if you say something bad about me, and I take it personally and I get offended by it and then I, "ek wip myself" - good Afrikaans word, in this community, "ek wip myself, ne" - and I just kind of, you know, that's it, I'm not talking to you again, I'm not this, I'm not that, that means I've taken the offence. What right have they got to speak to me like that, they don't know nothing about me? Yes?

If you say something about me that is, might be true, and it might be harsh and it might be terrible. I've got one of two choices. My father taught me this because he was in the ministry and he was suffering persecution, cause actually, he wanted to

liberate the black Assemblies of God, the black leaders, he wanted to liberate them and give them a proper voice in an apartheid era in the church. So, the white pastors were all, took, they persecuted him and a lesson I will never forget, I was about 15 years old and he was sitting in the kitchen and he poured salt in his hand like this, he was having dinner after spending a long day in the ministry, trying to, trying to mediate a solution. He sat with the salt in his hand and he said, "Now John, there is a lot of salt here." He said, "This is my plate of food." He said, "If I take all of this salt and I throw it on my food", he said, "I won't be able to eat my food because it will taste so bad." He said, "If I take a little bit of the salt and I just take the pinch of salt and I pour it on my food, it will make my food taste a lot better." He said, "What must I do with the rest of the salt that is in my hand?" He went like this, throwing it over his shoulder. He says, "I just don't eat it. I turf it. I throw it away." He said, "That's what you have to do with criticism in your life." He says, "If people criticise you, examine it and see if there's any truth in there that you can use, by the Holy Spirit. And if there's some truth in there that you can use by the Holy Spirit, not in your soul, by the Holy Spirit. If there's any truth that you can use, then sprinkle it into your life and use it with God, to become better." He said, "But most of the time when people persecute you and they criticize you it's because they have a problem and they're trying to put the problem on you. And you should not take that because it'll make your life very hard. So just throw it away and wipe your hands off it and eat your food. Good advice hey? Yeah. So offense is not given, offense is only taken because, listen, so the reason I pointed out Jan-Eben and Catherine today because as I was standing I remembered they have given money to missions and I forgot about them. So they could have become offended, but I know they won't be, you know, but you know they could have become offended and then they might have walked out here today and think, yeah we gave money to missions and he didn't recognize me and didn't give me a certificate and what kind of a Pastor is that? Now I know they won't, but that's how it happens. I could innocently have done something; they might think I did it deliberately, because I'm not giving them offence but they could take it. You understand?

Praise the Lord. Thank You Lord that You're helping me today. I need to read this passage of scripture to you today, in Luke chapter 16 verse 1 and I'm reading this out of the Amplified Bible. **¹Also [Jesus] said to the disciples, there was a certain rich man who had a manager of his estate, and accusations [against this man] were brought to him, that he was squandering his [master's] possessions. ²And he called him and said to him, What is this I hear about you? Turn in the account of your management [of my affairs], for you can be [my] manager no longer. ³And the manager of the estate said to himself, What shall I do, seeing that my master is taking the management away from me? I am not able to dig, and I am ashamed to beg. ⁴I've come to know what I will do, so that they [my master's debtors] may accept and welcome me into their houses when I am put out of the management. ⁵So he summoned his master's debtors one by one, and he said to the first, How much do you owe my master? ⁶He said, A hundred measures [about nine hundred gallons] of oil [Luke 16:1-5 AMPC].**

So this is obviously a big enterprise, he's the manager of a big company. Nine hundred gallons of oil is no little bit of oil. This is one debtor. You understand? This is like the CEO of Tiger Brands of the day, you get me? **⁶And he said to him, Take**

back your written acknowledgement of obligation, and sit down quickly and write about 450 gallons. So he halved his debt to his master. ⁷After that he said to another, how much do you owe? He said, A hundred measures [about 900 bushels] of wheat. He said to him, Take back your written (accountant) acknowledgement of obligation, and write 80 [about 700 bushels]. ⁸And [his] master praised the dishonest and the (unjust) manager for acting shrewdly and prudently; for the sons of this age, remember this is Jesus talking, the sons of this age are shrewder and more prudent and wiser in [relation to] their own generation [to their own age and kind] than are the sons of light. ⁹And I tell you, make friends for yourselves by means of unrighteous mammon (deceitful riches, money, possessions), so that when it fails, they [those you have favoured] may receive and welcome you into the everlasting habitations or (dwellings). ¹⁰He who is faithful in a very little [thing] is faithful also in much, and he who is dishonest and unjust in a very little [thing] is dishonest and unjust also in much. ¹¹Therefore if you have not been faithful in the [case of] unrighteous mammon (deceitful riches, money, possessions), who will entrust to you true riches? ¹²And if you have not proved faithful in that which belongs to another [whether God or man], who will give you that which is your own [that is, the true riches]? ¹³No servant is able to serve two masters; for either he will hate the one and love the other, or he will stand by and be devoted to the one and despise the other. You cannot serve God and mammon (riches, or anything in which you trust or and on which you rely) (Luke 16:6-12 AMPC).

So now I want to just tell you that this is Jesus talking about the Laban syndrome, okay. So this is the spirit of Mammon, it is money, riches, the ability or the desire to put your trust in material things; rather than in God. Stick with me because I'm about to show you something very powerful. Many people read this passage of scripture and they don't really understand it because in order to understand it, you have to have a revelation of some other things. But if you just read this passage of scripture in context and you understand and you read it, you understand what the Greek meanings of the words are, it in itself will give you a great deal of understanding.

So the first thing I want to say to you, is that Jesus was not giving His praise to unjust and unrighteous behaviour. Jesus was not doing that. In order for you to understand that Jesus was not praising unjust behaviour, you have to see what He said at the end of that message and the context was, if you cannot be faithful in a little thing or in money, how are you going to be given to be faithful in great things and in spiritual things? So He was immediately making a judgment on the man. Come on, now. This man was unfaithful in the way that he managed money. So Jesus was saying, "His unfaithfulness proved him to be unworthy of greater things in life." So Jesus was not praising his dishonesty and his poor management. Do you get that?

There's another thing I want to show you here, but if you understand the Greek you will understand this nicely. If we go to that scripture, the passage of scripture that says, ⁹" **And I tell you, make friends for yourselves by means of unrighteous mammon**" (Luke 16:9 AMPC). So that's money, possessions. Make friends with you of yourselves with money, so that, when it fails, not if it fails, when it fails. God has spoken to me to sow some seed. The seed that I'm about to sow is in US

dollars. And so I'm looking at the exchange rate and I'm looking at my seed in Rands and I'm thinking my seed in Rands is just deteriorated by 20 percent, 25 percent over the last month. So my mind wants to say to me, "Don't sow your seed." Because now the person who's receiving the seed in dollars is going to receive less dollars or it's going to cost me more money.

It's not about when it fails, it's not about if it fails, it's when it's going to fail. Let me tell you, this world system that we are operating in, has no answers for the poor. If the world system had answers for the poor, they would have already come up with the answers and the solutions for the poor. If you go to North Korea that is a communist, dictator, socialist government, they have the worst kind of poverty in the world because not only are the poor people poor, they are also oppressed.

In the years of Lenin and Stalin and all the years of Russia, communism and socialism kept people oppressed and they kept them poor. Come on now. If you go to another part of the world, people will tell you that the answer to economic problems is capitalism. So that capitalism stimulates entrepreneurship and it stimulates people's own ability to use their gifts and talents to make money. They don't have an answer for the poor either. Because if you look at Forbes, if you look at all of the private investment bankers around the world from HSBC to Lehman Brothers to whatever you want to call them, ah, Goldman, Lehman Brothers is already out of business, Goldman Sax, all of those people. If you go to ask them about wealth, they will tell you that the top percentage of wealthy people are only getting wealthier and wealthier and the people that are poor are getting poorer and poorer. Well that's not a surprise. That's what the Bible says is going to happen. The rich are going to get richer and the poor are going get poorer. They don't have an answer for that in the world system. So if they don't have an answer for it, what's the solution? The solution is not in an economic, politically motivated developed system. The answer is in a Kingdom of God system. So if you trust in a system of making wealth, your trust in that system will fail you. It's not a matter of if it will fail you, it will fail you.

And so the world system is trying very many different things and putting laws and all kinds of things in place to try and prevent the collapse that happened in 2008, 2009, 2010, that affects us even today in the economic system of today.

But I'll tell you it's just a matter of time before someone finds a loophole somewhere in a financial system and they trigger it and all of that triggering system comes down and hit's everybody else in the world. Let me just tell you, this is just based on my knowledge and I'm interpreting it as a spirit being. You heard the latest news that Russia and China are trying to form a coalition, against what Donald Trump's trying to do

Let me just tell you, this is just based on my knowledge and I am interpreting it as a spirit being. You heard the latest news that Russia and China is trying to form a coalition against what Donald Trump is trying to do, as trying to make America great again, which is his slogan. I'm not telling you what is right and wrong here, I'm telling you that the world, political system is shifting all the time, because there are things at work that you and I can't see or know, but God knows. And it is just a matter of time

before some political leaders decide something, somewhere and it is going to change everything. The democrats in America are using that fear factor to try and get Donald Trump out of power. Because they say, do you want a man who twitters this kind of way, with his finger on the nuclear buttons? So they are using a fear factor to try and get him out of power, because he has undone everything that Obama did in 8 years. Again, I'm not taking sides, I'm just making observations. And so South Africa stands in the middle so now, our new president is making a coalition with China and he has made it his mandate, I think he said that he is committing to bring R200 billion worth of investment into South Africa and he's got a commitment from China to bring R50 billion worth of investment into South Africa. Ah, let me tell you something, if you put your faith in that system, it is going to burn you.

Now you got to stick with me, because one thing about Laban is Laban knows how to work the system. I go back to this scripture here. I am not going to get through half of what I've prepared to speak, but I know you are getting blessed out of this, aren't you? Okay, so bear with me.

⁸The sons of this age are shrewder and more prudent and wiser in [relation to] their own generation. ⁹Make for yourself friends by means of unrighteous mammon, so that when it fails, those you have favoured may receive and welcome you into the everlasting habitations (Luke 16:8-9 AMPC). So, if you read that word everlasting habitations, you are tempted to think that this must be an eternal, spiritual condition. The word everlasting is not correctly, strictly speaking interpreted in the King James. That word everlasting is more accurately translated as permanent. Come on now, it makes a huge difference if you read it as everlasting or permanent. Because if you see that, that scripture says, so that favour those, they may receive you and welcome you into everlasting or permanent way of living, habitation.

Who is the god of this world? Talk to me. The devil. He has a right to operate as the prince of the power of the air, because man gave his authority to him that he may operate in this world. So his whole design is to control the wealth in the world and he's creating a permanent system of living. So what this scripture is saying, if you are going to deal in unrighteous money, deceitfulness of riches, the deceitfulness of riches is not the way that you deceitfully require riches, the deceitfulness of riches is that riches deceives you in believing that it is more powerful than God. So if you are going to operate in the deceitfulness of riches, then you must use the power that you have with money and make for yourself favours with men who operate in a permanent dwelling system of money and favouring with money and favouring with money and giving position and status and working in favours with each other. That is a permanent system that exists on the earth, it is the Laban syndrome. Favour me and I'll favour you. So if your money fails but you have favoured me and you've helped me, I will come and stand by you and I will help you out and I will give you a job and I'll give you some business and we will help each other and the network of favouring each other works. It works, that's why people do it.

So God says, Jesus is saying, "If you're going to operate in this system, then operate this way because when this fails you, you're going to have favours that you can call on. Because you are going to need your favours because you've chosen to operate

in this system.” In that way Jesus is saying, “The people that are of that system are shrewder than the sons of light.” Why? Because they operate their system completely. What do the sons of light do? They are uncertain of which master they should serve. So they see the system that works, favour for favour. So they want to live here but then they see, yeah, but then they see that God is preaching that if you sow your seed and you believe Me and you put your faith in Me and you put your trust in Me and you confess with your mouth and you believe with your heart, you can speak to mountains and cast them into the sea, and you can ask God for anything and He will give it to you. They see this system here and they say, “Yeah, but this one doesn't seem to work all the time but this favour system that is over here where you give favour for favour, this is a permanent system”. I'll rather work this system so it doesn't fail me.

Yeah, I'm preaching so good I'm even making myself happy. Then he goes on to say, ¹² **If you haven't been faithful in the unrighteous mammon who will entrust you to true riches,** and He's talking about being faithful to a system. ¹³ **No servant is able to serve two masters; for either he will hate the one and love the other, or he will stand by and be devoted to the one and despise the other. You cannot serve God and mammon (riches, or anything in which you trust and on which you rely) (Luke 16:12-13 AMPC).** This whole passage of scripture is not giving praise to an unjust man, He's highlighting what systems are you serving.

Now stick with me because I'm about to give you something that's really powerful about the Laban syndrome and then I'm going to have to finish off with this very powerful moment, so that you can come back and hear the rest of it. So we've got to this point where he says, “You can't serve two masters.” You serve one or the other, yes? Are you with me here? There's a system of money and favour for favour and there's the system of God. Do you now understand that on the one system this guy is praised for his shrewdness of working the system well, ok? On the other hand, God is saying, “This kind of shrewdness should be shown by the children of light. They should understand how to work their system, serving God with everything you got.” Now listen, that ends in verse 13. Verse 14 says this, ¹⁴ **Now the Pharisees, who were covetous and lovers of money, heard all these things [taken together], and they began to sneer at and ridicule and scoff at Him** ¹⁵ **But He said to them, you are the ones who declare yourselves just and upright before men, but God knows your hearts (Luke 16:14 AMPC).**

You see this is the thing about the Laban syndrome, because the Laban syndrome is about credentials and it's about finding advantage, it's about being neutral and it's about talking a language that other people will understand and in, let me tell you when I was in a big, big faith church and I was the head of the business people's fellowship at that time, this was the biggest thing at work. I didn't know then; I didn't have the revelation at the time but this was the biggest thing at work at a time. All the businessmen would come together and they would talk faith language. I'm believing God for this, I put my faith out for that, I've sowed my seed for this, I'm doing this and all they were doing is using the language to attain advantage in the connection of circle of Christians, so that they could get more wealthy.

So they were positioning themselves constantly with their talk, their speak, their language, their connections the way they presented themselves but they remained

neutral in all negotiations because they were not sure where the lie of the land was going to be. And if somebody said something bad about the Pastor, they didn't take sides about the Pastor; they didn't defend him or promote him. They just you know; I hear what you're saying and then they go here and they go there. And the whole thing is about remaining neutral in everything you do towards God so you could position yourself for the next opportunity, the next deal that's going to present itself, could you speak the right language and you appear to be connected to the right people. And so they were presenting them as deeply, faith people themselves. I'm a faith person and because I'm a faith person, and how can you, how can you dispute my faith? Look at my wealth, look at the cars I drive, look at the houses I live in, look at the stuff, dispute my faith. I'm telling you, I'm a great person of faith because you can see my result of my faith. All they were doing is using what they had to their advantage to get more. And if they don't use that they will use something else. Come on, you can say to me, "You're preaching well Pastor John." It doesn't sound like you're convinced; you can say it again. Now that's a lot better. So watch this, God knows your hearts you see, because people present themselves like this, it takes a discerning Christian and sometimes as in the case of Laban and Jacob, it took Jacob 20 years to get free of Laban. But I've got good news for you and I will end with my good news today. **¹⁵But He said to them, - okay so - For what is exalted and highly thought of among men is detestable and abhorrent (an abomination) in the sight of God. ¹⁶Until John came, there were the Law and the Prophets; since then the good news (the Gospel) of the kingdom of God is being preached, and everyone strives violently to go in [would force his own way rather than God's way into it]. (Luke 16:15, 16 AMPC)** So that scripture in the King James Bible says, "And the kingdom suffers violent and the violent take it by force." The Amplified Bible puts a different picture to it, and its saying, "There are people that want to force their way into the ways of God on their own, and they want to have a walk with God and demand all the things of God with own ways rather than God's way". Huh?

This is designed to free us, not to cause you to have fear of any sort. So, I finish with this, this morning. If the world system works, then what are we to do with this working system, when we also know that God's system is the only true system to live by? Do you agree? If I had time today I would have got to Matthew chapter 6 verse 33 that says, "But seek ye first the Kingdom of God, and His righteousness; which is His way of doing things, and then all these things shall be added unto you." All these things that means anything you need will be added to you. So I'm finishing with this, so if that's God's Word on the matter, and if you read the whole book of Matthew chapter 6, He starts off with, you cannot serve God and Mammon at the same time. So don't worry about what you're going to eat or drink, because if you're going to trust God, He knows well what you need and He will give you what you need. But seek first the Kingdom of God and His righteousness, His way of doing things, and then all these things will be added to you. Yes? So we know that God's system is the true system that will exist and continue, and produce eternally. On the other hand, we know that there's a human system of mammon that has Laban operating through it that works. But it will fail. So what are we supposed to do as Christians? Here's what you do. What did Jacob do? Jacob went to Laban, and he didn't understand in the beginning, he didn't know that Laban was going to deceive him. So he worked seven years to get a wife that didn't become his wife because Laban changed the

rules on him. So he worked seven years to get Rachel, and then they have a party, he wakes up the next morning, and he wasn't sleeping next to Rachel, oh my Rachel. He was sleeping oh my Leah, oh Leah, Leah, Leah, o gaats Leah. It wasn't because Leah, I mean the Bible says that Leah had dull eyes, and Rachel had beautiful eyes. You know, I meditated on that just a little while and I thought, you know, beauty is in the eye of the beholder. It wasn't that Leah wasn't beautiful. It was that Rachel was really beautiful to Jacob.

So Laban watches Jacob working for seven years, and he sees that in these seven years while he's working for his bride, how his flocks are prospering. How everything is working very well under the hands of Jacob. So when the ceremony comes for him to pay his debt to Jacob, so that now he can see, if Jacob gets his wife and my daughter, I've got no more control over him. So he substitutes the girls, and gives him another girl, his firstborn daughter. And when he wakes up and he says, "Why have you deceived me?" He says, "Our tradition, our culture says, we cannot give another daughter until the first daughter is married." That was not part of the negotiation with Jacob. He changed the rules. If you read later on, you will find out that when Jacob has a conversation with these two wives he says, "Hasn't your father Laban changed my wages ten times in these years I've work with him?"

Laban syndrome is always changing the rules to his advantage. He is always shifting the goalposts for his advantage. That's why in the world system it will fail you. It's not a matter of, if it's going to fail you. It will fail you. Because the world system is always going to change the rules to its advantage. This manager that Jesus was talking about changed the rules as it suited him. Come on. That's the spirit of Laban. So what are we supposed to do? What did Jacob do? He said, "Ok, I'm forced to work in this system. For the time being, I'm going to work the system, but my covenant is not with Laban. My covenant is with God." And he waited for the right moment when God appeared to him, and said to him, "Jacob it's time to leave Laban. His attitude has changed towards you. He has something against you, and he is going to take you out." So then, what was his response? He obeyed the covenant of God, rather than stayed with the favours of men. Here's the thing, don't despise the Laban syndrome. Use it. We are in the world, but were not of the world.

Jesus prayed, which is the next verse I was going to read you but I'm out of time, and He says in the book of John, He says, "Father, I'm not praying for these that You take them out of the world, but that You save them from the evil one." Did the Word of God not also say that it is the love of money that is the root of all evil? So when Jesus is praying over His disciples and He says, "I'm not asking You to take them out of the world, but that You will protect them from the evil one." In other words, He's saying, "Father, I'm not asking You to take them out of the Laban syndrome, but I'm asking You to protect them from the effects of the Laban syndrome". So you don't have to say, "I can't use the Laban syndrome." What you need to do is say, "I understand what's at work here and I'm using my faith to be free of it!"

And I'm only half way through my message about the Laban syndrome. Second instalment comes next weekend. Praise the Lord. I don't know about you, but I recognise and I see Laban at work around me all the time. I was, part of the reason I did leadership academy, why I have a Christian business school is because I myself

wrestled without knowing it was the Laban syndrome, I myself wrestled with the Laban syndrome because I could see what favours to each other does in the world system. And I could see it working, working, working, all the time and often it would work to my advantage. Come on now. Can I give you one last example?

I have told you this before, but anyway, it's a nice story and I'll end with this story. You know, I really, I was given an opportunity to handle computer sales into the whole of, in those years it was called the Barlow Rand Group, and they had a chief executive, a chief information officer that was over the whole Barlow Rand Group. But he was just an IBM man and everything he saw was IBM and I wasn't selling IBM, but I made it my business to deliver a service to him with such quality that he could not ever find fault with what I did. So even though he was a pro IBM'er, he could never find fault with what our product was doing and what our service was doing. Are you with me? On the contrary, he began to understand that I wasn't trying to undermine him; I was trying to work with him. This was the wisdom of God and the favour of God on my life. So one day he came to me and he said, "John, IBM can't solve a problem for me in one of our group companies, I think you can do it." He said, "There's a great deal of corruption going on in this company," so now he knows I'm a born again believer, he knows what I stand for. He says, "There's a lot of corruption going on in this company," and he says, "we believe that is comes," now he's taking me into confidence, he says, "we believe that it comes from the highest level," and he says, "we want to uncover it. And by the way, they are also not buying IBM, they are buying another computer system and a large portion of the corruption is happening around the purchase of the computer equipment and the services that go around it. So will you work with me on delivering a solution here that can help us uncover this?" I said, "I'll do it."

So I went about my business. So eventually the tender comes and, of course I didn't get the business, the other company got the business because there was corruption going on. But we went about it in such a way that we uncovered the corruption. So when, I mean literally this was a real life mafia kind of scenario, and when they took down the CEO it was in the Sunday Times newspapers, everything, literally the SAPS arrived there with helicopters, they arrived there with SWAT teams, everything, they took down the CEO and all the board of directors and took them into custody because that was how they recognised they could uncover this white collar crime.

I'm telling you this was a real heavy weight thing that happened, with me in the middle of it. So what happened was; I left the company I was representing at the time and I joined another company which ended up being Hewlett Packard and, so I'm not about to go back to this guy and sell him another computer because I've been telling him how good this other computer is. So my integrity, I can't do that. So I don't even call him. I just call him out of the courtesy to tell him I'm leaving here and I'm going to be here. Two years later he calls me. He says, "John, I want you to come see me." I go sit in his office and in those days you were still allowed to smoke and he was a heavy smoker and he sat in his office smoking. And he had brown teeth and brown stained fingers and, you know, one of those old school computer guys. Anyway, he sat there lounging in his chair and he said, "John, I want you to help me". I said, "Yes, sir?" He said, "I want to enter into a contract with the Hewlett

Packard group to be a major supplier here to the whole group.” He says, “I want you to please set up a meeting with your managing director and me,” and he said, “I want this to be at the highest level. I want it to be a blanket agreement”. He said, “You understand what the implications are?” Of course I understood. This is millions and millions and millions of Rands for us and for him. He’s putting his trust in our product and in our group. So I went back to my MD and I said, “I just got a call from this guy and this is what he said. Will you come?” We put on a lunch. Cut a long story short, a couple of month later we signed the contract. Big money.

I saw what in the world system looked like a Laban syndrome, favour for favour at work. It wasn’t favour for favour working. It was my faith. I don’t care whether Laban sees it as his system; it’s my system and my heart that matters. Don’t shout me down; no shout me down, come on. You see it’s my heart that matters, it’s how I operate. And so when the wealth comes into my hands what do I do with this money? I say, “Lord it’s not favour for favour that got me this money; it’s Your favour that got me this money. Therefore, this money does not belong to me it belongs to You. What must I do with it?” And He says, “Well first of all recognize Me that I am your God.” How do I do that? Ten percent, this is not a law; this is a covenant of my heart. Ten percent, for all this favour and blessing that You can give me? Ten percent. Listen, the world system does that with commission structures or introduction fees or you name it what you want, they do that, they give commission to each other. Where do you think they got it from? They got it from God.

You covenant with Me, give tithes. Show Me your heart with your tithes. Ok, now do you really want to operate in abundance and wealth My way? Yes, Sir. Well then why don’t you hear from Me what to do with the rest of your wealth not just your tithe? Ok? What do you want me to do with the rest of my wealth? Well, I’m glad you asked and I’m not asking you to do this but I’m just using it as an example because I talked about it today. There’s this Ethiopia project going on the way, don’t you want to give a million rand of your money to this Ethiopia project? A million rand? I only have two million. Oh well, really? You want to covenant with Me and turn your two million into four million maybe? Six million? Well, I’m not sure that I can trust You God with my million because after all I’m not giving it to You, I’m giving it to man. That’s the whole point, I’ve delegated authority to man. If you can’t trust that, then you’re not trusting Me. Because whether I use that money and I use myself as a representative, whether I use that money with wisdom or not, is not depending, it doesn’t impact your trust in God.

Because here on earth the book of Hebrews says, men receive tithes but in heaven it is God that receives the tithes. So my judgement of how to spend money should not be the quantitative decision whether you tithe or not or whether you give your money or not. Oh, Pastor John you’re talking a lot about money. Because the Laban syndrome is about material possession. It is about advantage in life. And the love of money is the root of all evil.

You want to hear more of this, don’t you? There’s a lot more to come from where I’m going. That’s why I was, I really felt led of the Lord to start a Christian business school. Why I did Leadership Academy, because I wrestled with this all my time while I was in the corporate world. Because I know this favour for favour system works, but

I know that God's system is a better, higher system and I want to put my trust in God's system not in man's system and as God began to speak to me and as He began to prosper me and began to bless me but Pastor Sharon and I, what we started to do was not give 10% but give 20% off the top, off the gross of everything.

Let me tell you something people, I understand what it means to write out a cheque that has got many, many noughts on it, that goes hundreds of thousands and even more I know what it is to put a cheque like that in the offering and when you look at that cheque and you say, "This cheque can buy me houses, not one house but houses, that become an investment for my retirement. And now I'm giving it away into the church or into the hands of men?" I know what those thoughts are that go on in your head. What are those thoughts? That's the Laban syndrome, the Mammon system of this world that's wrestling with you and your future because it is designed to stop you from walking in your inheritance. It's designed to stop you from walking in your assignment because if you are the people that will walk in that assignment, there is no telling what God can do on this earth. He needs people to believe Him to do what He needs to do. He doesn't need people that will sit here with one foot in this system and another foot in that system. He said, "You cannot serve both masters." You got to choose one or the other and if you choose one then work it. But don't pretend that God is doing you any favours. It is the pretence that God hates. Praise the Lord.

I'm already way over time. Ag, dankie julle. Thank you. Oh, I've got to do a collection. Praise the Lord. It is a good time to do an offering, hey? Praise the Lord. Can you tell that I'm passionate about this? This is part of my calling you know. It is very seldom that I get to operate so sweetly in what I'm called to preach. So sweetly in what I'm called to teach. Praise the Lord. Look I'm called to teach on church governance and the church discipleship and making disciples but this subject, that's a passion for me because I know what it's like to be in that world. And how strong the pull of that world is because when you see somebody driving that new Mercedes and that new BMW, and you've just put a cheque in the offering that could buy one for you and you're still driving the old model, come on now. I tell you I know what it is to do wrestling with that spirit. But don't worry; just be patient because God will deliver. He is true and every man is a liar. That's the Word of God. Hallelujah. Won't you all stand with me please? Hallelujah.

Did you get something out of this meeting today? This message? I want to pray over it, asseblief. Because I want to pray over you because I know that your energy is not revealed in goats and sheep, your energy is revealed in money. Yes? So I want to pray for you and as we stand with this money here, that we have put as our tithes and offerings and if you do it by electronic funds transfer, you are included in this prayer. Father we agree that all tithes and offerings and giving that we have given You, I thank you Lord that we are being delivered from the spirit of Mammon. We are being delivered from the spirit of Laban. And I thank you Lord that we are shrewder than the sons of men. We are a shrewd because we live in the light and I declare that money and wealth comes to us in abundance in the Name of Jesus. And I declare that Your system of sowing and reaping is the preeminent system that we put our trust in. And therefore I ask you Father that You will reward your children with a great harvest because of their sowing and because of their faith, in Jesus Name. And

I ask You Father to protect them; no weapon formed against them will prosper. I pray great peace upon them, I pray Your favour upon them and I say Father that Your Word and the blood of Jesus will surround them and that they are blessed going out and blessed coming in. And no weapon formed against them will prosper in the Name of Jesus. If you agree with that prayer please say, "Amen" again. Thank you for coming. God bless you.