

Store Houses, Versus Empty Houses Part 1

“20 There is treasure to be desired and oil in the dwelling of the wise; but a foolish man spendeth it up.” (Proverbs 21:20 KJV)

*“3 Behold, I will corrupt your seed, and spread dung upon your faces, even the dung of your solemn feasts; and one shall take you away with it.”
(Malachi 2:3 KJV)*

The Bible tells us that the things collected from the people, the tithes and the offerings and various kinds of income are to be kept in storehouses and treasuries in the church. A record of it has to be maintained and it has to be stored carefully until it is used.

Let us meditate on these examples from the Scriptures:

I. Storehouses:

*“56 And the famine was over all the face of the earth: and Joseph opened all the storehouses, and sold unto the Egyptians; and the famine waxed sore in the land of Egypt.”
(Genesis 41:56 KJV)*

“8 The LORD shall command the blessing upon thee in thy storehouses, and in all that thou settest thine hand unto; and he shall bless thee in the land which the LORD thy God giveth thee.” (Deuteronomy 28:8 KJV)

“28 Storehouses also for the increase of corn, and wine, and oil; and stalls for all manner of beasts, and cotes for flocks.” (2 Chronicles 32:28 KJV)

*“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.”
(Malachi 3:10 KJV)*

II. Treasuries:

“19 But all the silver, and gold, and vessels of brass and iron, are consecrated unto the LORD: they shall come into the treasury of the LORD.” (Joshua 6: 19 KJV)

*“24 And they burnt the city with fire, and all that was therein: only the silver, and the gold, and the vessels of brass and of iron, they put into the treasury of the house of the LORD.”
(Joshua 6:24 KJV)*

“26 For these Levites, the four chief porters, were in their set office, and were over the chambers and treasuries of the house of God.” (1 Chronicles 9:26 KJV)

“11 Then David gave to Solomon his son the pattern of the porch, and of the houses thereof, and of the treasuries thereof, and of the upper chambers thereof, and of the inner parlours thereof, and of the place of the mercy seat.” (1 Chronicles 28:11 KJV)

“12 And the pattern of all that he had by the spirit, of the courts of the house of the LORD, and of all the chambers round about, of the treasuries of the house of God, and of the treasuries of the dedicated things.” (1 Chronicles 28:12 KJV)

“1 Thus all the work that Solomon made for the house of the LORD was finished: and Solomon brought in all the things that David his father had dedicated; and the silver, and the gold, and all the instruments, put he among the treasures of the house of God.” (2 Chronicles 5:1 KJV)

“27 And Hezekiah had exceeding much riches and honour: and he made himself treasuries for silver, and for gold, and for precious stones, and for spices, and for shields, and for all manner of pleasant jewels.” (2 Chronicles 32:27 KJV)

“12 Then brought all Judah the tithe of the corn and the new wine and the oil unto the treasuries.” (Nehemiah 13:12 KJV)

“13 And I made treasurers over the treasuries, Shelemiah the priest, and Zadok the scribe, and of the Levites, Pedaiah: and next to them was Hanan the son of Zaccur, the son of Mattaniah: for they were counted faithful, and their office was to distribute unto their brethren.” (Nehemiah 13:13 KJV)

“11 So Ebedmelech took the men with him, and went into the house of the king under the treasury, and took thence old cast clouts and old rotten rags, and let them down by cords into the dungeon to Jeremiah.” (Jeremiah 38:11 KJV)

“6 And the chief priests took the silver pieces, and said, It is not lawful for to put them into the treasury, because it is the price of blood.” (Matthew 27:6 KJV)

“41 And Jesus sat over against the treasury, and beheld how the people cast money into the treasury: and many that were rich cast in much.” (Mark 12:41 KJV)

“43 And he called unto him his disciples, and saith unto them, Verily I say unto you, That this poor widow hath cast more in, than all they which have cast into the treasury.” (Mark 12:43 KJV)

“1 And he looked up, and saw the rich men casting their gifts into the treasury.” (Luke 21:1 KJV)

“20 These words spake Jesus in the treasury, as he taught in the temple: and no man laid hands on him; for his hour was not yet come.” (John 8:20 KJV)

“6 This he said, not that he cared for the poor; but because he was a thief, and had the bag, and bare what was put therein.” (John 12:6 KJV)

The Scripture informs us that the money collected from people:

1. is not the personal property of anyone but God's
2. is not to be put into the purse (wallet) or pocket of a person

3. is to be stored in storehouses, treasuries, or bags
4. is to be under the responsibility of certain people

The following Scriptures will reveal to us who should be responsible for the people's contribution to the church:

"22 The sons of Jehieli; Zetham, and Joel his brother, which were over the treasures of the house of the LORD." (1 Chronicles 26:22 KJV)

"24 And Shebuel the son of Gershom, the son of Moses, was ruler of the treasures." (1 Chronicles 26:24 KJV)

"26 Which Shelomith and his brethren were over all the treasures of the dedicated things, which David the king, and the chief fathers, the captains over thousands and hundreds, and the captains of the host, had dedicated." (1 Chronicles 26:26 KJV)

"25 And over the king's treasures was Azmaveth the son of Adiel: and over the storehouses in the fields, in the cities, and in the villages, and in the castles, was Jehonathan the son of Uziah." (1 Chronicles 27:25 KJV)

"15 And they departed not from the commandment of the king unto the priests and Levites concerning any matter, or concerning the treasures." (2 Chronicles 8:15 KJV)

"44 And at that time were some appointed over the chambers for the treasures, for the offerings, for the firstfruits, and for the tithes, to gather into them out of the fields of the cities the portions of the law for the priests and Levites: for Judah rejoiced for the priests and for the Levites that waited." (Nehemiah 12:44 KJV)

"29 For some of them thought, because Judas had the bag, that Jesus had said unto him, Buy those things that we have need of against the feast; or, that he should give something to the poor." (John 13:29 KJV)

The purpose of God for such an arrangement is the following:

1. No one out of greed will covet them.
2. No one, who covets and has greed, will have the opportunity to be tempted and to be able to steal.
3. To store and preserve the treasures for over long periods of time in order to meet the needs when they arise especially because some of these materials that are stored are organic materials.
4. To keep a clear record of what is collected and stored, so that the data can be used in the planning of certain projects.
5. To keep a reserve to fill the gap in time of scarcity and famine.

The storehouses that keep the money of the church like metal treasuries, bank accounts, or other means, how much is the amount of money, how is the money organized, and to what is the money allocated reflect the maturity of the church and the attitude of the people who are in charge of serving the Lord in the church.

The church that is organized in dealing with finances and is totally transparent in its financial dealings, displays maturity and integrity and the right attitude in serving the Lord.

The Scripture shows us that there were people who had built up the treasuries and the storehouses to do mighty exploit for God.

For example, King David built up a big treasury for the house of God and he included all that was collected before him and he organized a team of Levites to manage it properly as we can read below:

"20 And of the Levites, Ahijah was over the treasures of the house of God, and over the treasures of the dedicated things. 21 As concerning the sons of Laadan; the sons of the Gershonite Laadan, chief fathers, even of Laadan the Gershonite, were Jehieli. 22 The sons of Jehieli; Zetham, and Joel his brother, which were over the treasures of the house of the LORD. 23 Of the Amramites, and the Izharites, the Hebronites, and the Uzzielites: 24 And Shebuel the son of Gershom, the son of Moses, was ruler of the treasures. 25 And his brethren by Eliezer; Rehabiah his son, and Jeshaiah his son, and Joram his son, and Zichri his son, and Shelomith his son. 26 Which Shelomith and his brethren were over all the treasures of the dedicated things, which David the king, and the chief fathers, the captains over thousands and hundreds, and the captains of the host, had dedicated. 27 Out of the spoils won in battles did they dedicate to maintain the house of the LORD. 28 And all that Samuel the seer, and Saul the son of Kish, and Abner the son of Ner, and Joab the son of Zeruiah, had dedicated; and whosoever had dedicated any thing, it was under the hand of Shelomith, and of his brethren." (1 Chronicles 26:20-28 KJV)

This treasury was used to support the building of the temple of God in Jerusalem. It reminds me of what Jesus said, *"28 For which of you, intending to build a tower, sitteth not down first, and counteth the cost, whether he have sufficient to finish it? 29 Lest haply, after he hath laid the foundation, and is not able to finish it, all that behold it begin to mock him, 30 Saying, This man began to build, and was not able to finish." (Luke 14:28-30 KJV)* How can we sit down and plan to do great things for God without having adequate finances? It requires good stewardship to collect finances patiently and to be disciplined in spending. If we look at the life of David, his life was full of suffering and he had to face repeated battles. However, when he won victories over the nations around him and got plunder, he collected and preserved for the work of God instead of spending it on himself. He gathered much and saved it to build a house for God. He did not spend it on himself because it was in his heart to honor God. He had no selfishness, greed, or wrong motive. He was not taking it as a source for a living or a way to increase his own treasures but his heart was knit with God to do His work on earth.

The Scriptures also show leaders who had shown the wrong attitude towards God and that was reflected in the treasuries and storehouses of the house of God. We will study how these leaders with their disobedience, bad attitude, and lack of faith, pulled it down.

1. King Rehoboam, the son of Solomon: He did evil in the eyes of the Lord with the people of Judah, and therefore, God allowed the enemies to come and take important treasures. Rehoboam and the people with him did the following evils: *"21 And Rehoboam the son of Solomon reigned in Judah. Rehoboam was forty and one years old when he began to reign,*

and he reigned seventeen years in Jerusalem, the city which the LORD did choose out of all the tribes of Israel, to put his name there. And his mother's name was Naamah an Ammonitess. 22 And Judah did evil in the sight of the LORD, and they provoked him to jealousy with their sins which they had committed, above all that their fathers had done. 23 For they also built them high places, and images, and groves, on every high hill, and under every green tree. 24 And there were also sodomites in the land: and they did according to all the abominations of the nations which the LORD cast out before the children of Israel. 25 And it came to pass in the fifth year of king Rehoboam, that Shishak king of Egypt came up against Jerusalem: 26 And he took away the treasures of the house of the LORD, and the treasures of the king's house; he even took away all: and he took away all the shields of gold which Solomon had made. 27 And king Rehoboam made in their stead brasen shields, and committed them unto the hands of the chief of the guard, which kept the door of the king's house. 28 And it was so, when the king went into the house of the LORD, that the guard bare them, and brought them back into the guard chamber.” (1 Kings 14:21-28 KJV) They built and spent not only on unnecessary things but on things harmful that God had prohibited, and in this way, they made God jealous of them and they added to the sins of their fathers.

A. For they also built them high places: High places are counterfeits of the temple of God and people were prohibited to worship God in them. They had a centralized form of worship where they needed to go inside the temple of God in Jerusalem under the supervision of the priests and not to other places. The people went to the high places to do their own and not be open to the scrutiny of the priests of the temple. In the high places, they spent their treasures against the will of God. Many Christians attend worship in the church at the weekend but for the rest of the days they do their own in the high places and the church leaders keep quiet about it for fear of losing their members. Spending on things not ordained by God will finally weaken the individuals, the family and finally the church. That is why many families and churches are in debt.

B. Images: These are idols and figures that they admire, adorn, and put their trust on, instead of putting their trust on the Lord, or on His Words and commands. They spent on all these things instead of spending and dedicating what they have unto God. We as a church should be tactful and discerning to break down and demolish idols in the life of the people; idols they cling on to and depend on without putting God first.

C. Groves: “Thou shalt not plant thee a grove of any trees near unto the altar of the Lord thy God, which thou shalt make thee.” (Deuteronomy 16:21 KJV) Groves are gardens planted around altars to beautify them in order to make the worship places more appealing to the senses. Nowadays, food, festivals, appealing music, sophisticated sound systems, elaborate lighting, lasers, and sound effects are used by churches to attract and appeal to the sensuality of the people. Some of these churches are like discotheques. God does not want people to come to Him because of their affinity to sensuality, but He is looking for true worshippers who will worship Him in spirit and in truth and be drawn to Him for His Word. The responsibility lies in our hands.

D. There were also sodomites (homosexuals) in the land: Homosexuals were also in the land. Homosexuality is not only a sin as in adultery, stealing, or idol worship, but it is an abomination. “22 Thou shalt not lie with mankind, as with womankind: it is abomination.” (Leviticus 18:22 KJV) Incest and bestiality are other abominations mentioned in Leviticus 18.

Selling the lives of your children to the devil and making them walk through the fire and destroying their lives with ungodly practices is another abomination. “Thou shalt not do so unto the Lord thy God: for every abomination to the Lord, which he hateth, have they done unto their gods; for even their sons and their daughters they have burnt in the fire to their gods.” (Deuteronomy 12:31 KJV)

“There were also sodomites (homosexuals) in the land”, it means that they had tolerated this sin and were not bothered or disturbed by it. Abomination is anything that causes disgust or loathing a thing to abhor or hate. When people accept to live with sin without hating it, it is time for God’s anger and jealousy to be kindled against them. “21 Ye cannot drink the cup of the Lord, and the cup of devils: ye cannot be partakers of the Lord's table, and of the table of devils. 22 Do we provoke the Lord to jealousy? are we stronger than he?” (1 Corinthians 10:21-22 KJV)

E. And they did according to all the abominations of the nations which the LORD cast out before the children of Israel: When the people of God do such things as the unbelievers or even worse things, then it will be time for God to stretch out His rod of discipline towards such people and take away from them what He had given them.

God did the following to discipline His people: “2 And it came to pass, that in the fifth year of king Rehoboam Shishak king of Egypt came up against Jerusalem, because they had transgressed against the LORD, 3 With twelve hundred chariots, and threescore thousand horsemen: and the people were without number that came with him out of Egypt; the Lubims, the Sukkims, and the Ethiopians. 4 And he took the fenced cities which pertained to Judah, and came to Jerusalem.” (2 Chronicles 12:2-4 KJV) The meaning of Shishak is ‘greedy of fine linen’. God will send someone greedy to discipline His people and to make them realize that they should not have spent of what God had given them on wrong things. Economic penalties, fines, bankruptcy, and theft are some of the ways used by God to discipline His church and His people who had squandered what He had given them in their pursuit of worldliness in high places. “9 So Shishak king of Egypt came up against Jerusalem, and took away the treasures of the house of the LORD, and the treasures of the king's house; he took all: he carried away also the shields of gold which Solomon had made.” (2 Chronicles 12:9 KJV) The people of God will face impoverishment when they end up doing abominations in the sight of God. This kind of poverty and impoverishment is caused by sin and is different from the other state of poverty. When King Rehoboam lost his treasures, he replaced the shields of gold that Shishak had taken with shields of bronze. This had nothing to do with good stewardship with regarding saving, but he was forced to replace them with bronze because of his impoverished state. Let us keep this point in our mind, that if we don’t behave, then we will just have to wait for Shishak to come upon us and take away everything from us. But if we fear God and live for Him, then, even if we are attacked by enemies like Shishak, our treasures will be preserved by God whom we have revered and honored, by valuing the things that He has given us.

My dear and beloved: Let us come now to God committing ourselves to abide and to apply what we had learned from the message; that we need to have treasury to collect and keep with good records what the people bring to God, to be placed under honest people and to be used wisely according to God’s purpose and to be available in the time of need.

Let us also take heed and warning of the bad examples that God disciplined them as they did not fear Him and did not live according to His Word and His will. Therefore, let us take warning and be thankful to God and use wisely what God had given to us from resources in a Godly way with good stewardship and for His glory. Let us pray ...

My Prayer: *Father God I come before you in the name of Jesus, who died on the cross for my sins and rose from death on the third day to give me eternal life. Lord thank you for your Word that taught me to be a good steward to all what you had given to your church. Lord thank you for the warning, the teaching, the corrections and the admonishments that we had received in this message. Lord thank you for all the resources that you had placed in our hands to be kept and used for your glory.*

Repent and renounce all your sins. Repent of your carelessness and your bad stewardship. Repent of wasting the resources of God's church and having no concern to keep treasuries and good records for the money of the church. Repent of your pride, worldliness, and all your idols and abominations, following worldly things and allowing your children to go through evil and dangerous things that might destroy them. Repent of your non concern to build God's church and your non willingness to serve God and suffer for Him. Repent of not reading the Bible and your lack of prayers. Repent of doing your own will and plan and not the will nor the plan of God in your life. Lord forgive me I repent of the following sins:

_____.

Lord I commit my life to you, to live in the fear of you, to start to serve you, to be good steward to what you had given to me and to your church. Lord I commit myself to keep good planning for the future and to use wisely your resources and keep aside some of them for the future to come and for the time of need. Lord I commit myself to live in holiness and to raise my children in the fear of you and go along the good plan that you have for me and for your church.

Lord, thank you for all my Brothers and Sisters who had committed themselves to go along your plan and will and along the teaching that we had received in this message. Lord use them to serve you and to do the good work that you entrusted to your church. Lord help them and provide for them to raise their children in a Godly way and to be good testimonies to others to follow you. Lord help and stabilize their jobs and resources and provide all their needs.

Lord, I pray for us as a church to help us to go on in serving you and doing your work and your will. Lord, we commit ourselves to apply what we received in this message; to be good steward to all the resources that we received from you, and to have a treasury, keeping a good record and entrusted to faithful people who fear you. Lord we commit ourselves to live in holiness and to use all our finances wisely and according to your will and the leading of the Holy Spirit. Lord, fill us once again with the Holy Spirit and enable us to evangelize and reach new people with the Gospel of Jesus Christ and with the Word of God. Lord, we pray that you will enable us to plant new Bible studies and new congregations for the church. Lord fulfill the vision of the church, 'Multiplication in peace with implementing the whole will of God'. Lord Bless us, enlarge our territory, let your hand be with us and free us from harm so that we will not feel pain. May the grace of the Lord Jesus and the love of God and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with us all in Jesus name, Amen.

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