

The Apostles' Feet

“34 Neither was there any among them that lacked: for as many as were possessors of lands or houses sold them, and brought the prices of the things that were sold, 35 And laid them down at the apostles' feet: and distribution was made unto every man according as he had need.” (Acts 4:34-35 KJV)

From the Scriptures, we learn important things to practice so that we can serve the Lord and His people in a more effective way. The apostles were the ones responsible for what was going on in the life of the church. **Even today, it is right that whatever offerings, tithes or firstfruits are brought to the church, and those who do the apostles' ministry will be the ones to receive it.** It is mentioned, *“And laid them down at the apostles' feet.” (Acts 4:35 KJV)* **They were trustworthy people with a clean heart and clear motive and were not after dishonest gain. That is why it is so important in the life of the church that the leaders of the church need to be honest and transparent about finances.**

The purpose of bringing the money to those who do the apostles' ministry is for the following reasons:

- To verify the source of money
- To verify the life of the person who has given the money
- To verify the motive for giving
- To discern the various needs in the life of the church and the members of the church
- To take serious decisions about giving and spending, and for proper budgeting and saving
- To counsel the people and lead them to live in integrity with regard to finances

The term ‘apostles’ feet’ has been repeated in other places in Scripture too. Reading these verses of Scripture will illuminate our minds further to understand the reasons mentioned above.

“34 Neither was there any among them that lacked: for as many as were possessors of lands or houses sold them, and brought the prices of the things that were sold, 35 And laid them down at the apostles' feet: and distribution was made unto every man according as he had need. 36 And Joses, who by the apostles was surnamed Barnabas, (which is, being interpreted, The son of consolation,) a Levite, and of the country of Cyprus, 37 Having land, sold it, and brought the money, and laid it at the apostles' feet.” (Acts 4:34-37 KJV) Their sources of income were verified and the lives of people were examined. The selling of their lands and houses and the proceeds of the sale was monitored by the apostles. The money was to be brought to the apostles' feet.

The movement of money inside the church should be monitored carefully by the church leaders. The following event in the book of Acts will show clearly why the money had to be brought to the apostles' feet:

“1 But a certain man named Ananias, with Sapphira his wife, sold a possession, 2 And kept back part of the price, his wife also being privy to it, and brought a certain part, and laid it at

the apostles' feet. 3 But Peter said, Ananias, why hath Satan filled thine heart to lie to the Holy Ghost, and to keep back part of the price of the land? 4 Whiles it remained, was it not thine own? and after it was sold, was it not in thine own power? why hast thou conceived this thing in thine heart? thou hast not lied unto men, but unto God. 5 And Ananias hearing these words fell down, and gave up the ghost: and great fear came on all them that heard these things. 6 And the young men arose, wound him up, and carried him out, and buried him. 7 And it was about the space of three hours after, when his wife, not knowing what was done, came in. 8 And Peter answered unto her, Tell me whether ye sold the land for so much? And she said, Yea, for so much. 9 Then Peter said unto her, How is it that ye have agreed together to tempt the Spirit of the Lord? behold, the feet of them which have buried thy husband are at the door, and shall carry thee out. 10 Then fell she down straightway at his feet, and yielded up the ghost: and the young men came in, and found her dead, and, carrying her forth, buried her by her husband. 11 And great fear came upon all the church, and upon as many as heard these things.” (Acts 5:1-11 KJV)

Ananias, with Sapphira, had the wrong motive in giving. They wanted to be known by others as givers. They gave but not the correct amount. When they brought only part of the money to the apostles' feet, Peter discerned the sin through the help of the Holy Spirit and faced them and rebuked Ananias and his wife Sapphira. The judgment of God upon them brought the fear of God upon the whole church.

Peter said to Ananias, *“why hath Satan filled thine heart to lie to the Holy Ghost, and to keep back part of the price of the land?” (Acts 5:3 KJV)* So Satan filled the heart of Ananias and prompted him to do that. Even today, Satan tempts people and prompts them to do the same, to be dishonest in money matters. **Therefore, laying down finances at the ‘apostles’ feet’, those who do the apostles’ ministry for money matters to be monitored is essential in the church.**

There are people in the church who love to help others and give them cash to earn a good name. Some of the others like to help because they pity the people and out of emotions reach out to them. Such offers of help stem from wrong and incorrect motives. There are people who are genuinely in need and there are people who want to give them so that they can boast. That is why Jesus said to those who like to boast, *“1 Take heed that ye do not your alms before men, to be seen of them: otherwise ye have no reward of your Father which is in heaven. 2 Therefore when thou doest thine alms, do not sound a trumpet before thee, as the hypocrites do in the synagogues and in the streets, that they may have glory of men. Verily I say unto you, They have their reward. 3 But when thou doest alms, let not thy left hand know what thy right hand doeth: 4 That thine alms may be in secret: and thy Father which seeth in secret himself shall reward thee openly.” (Matthew 6:1-4 KJV)* **Therefore, the church leadership should be there to check out people's motive. Offers from people who want to give for the sake of boasting or earning a good name should be rejected. The needs of people can be met by the finances the church is collecting rather than by the personal finances of certain people. Jesus did that. He gave some money to the poor from the bag of money that Judas was holding. “27 And after the sop Satan entered into him. Then said Jesus unto him, That thou doest, do quickly. 28 Now no man at the table knew for what intent he spake this unto him. 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 13:27-29 KJV)** So the apostles at the time of Jesus were giving money to the poor from the bag of money in which they were collecting.

* Some people inside the church receive money from others just by cooking up stories that appeal to the emotions of others and take advantage of them. Either they invent personal stories to extort or in the name of charity, ask for donations. So the church's responsibility should be to protect those cheerful givers from being abused by others. * I inform the cheerful givers of our congregations that the church has set aside five percent of the collection to cater to the poor and needy and so they didn't have to worry about giving from their personal finances. * We don't allow anyone to give directly from his personal money to the poor and needy. If they want to give, then they need to give it to the church and the church will decide the amount and the recipient to whom the money should go. In this way, the wrong motive of giving and receiving can be exposed, controlled, and gotten rid of.

* Even with regard to borrowing money from one another within the church, I have instructed them to do it with the church's knowledge and approval. I have instructed the workers and committed members in the church that I oversee, that there should be no borrowing or lending without the church's knowledge and approval. * This will offer more protection to the finances of the members. The church will evaluate the situation and see if it is a need or not, and will witness the transaction when it is made. In this way, swindlers who use the church to make money will be exposed and controlled.

I have also instructed all my leaders, pastors, workers, and committed members in the church that I oversee, that before they move or transfer a certain amount of money, say 1000 dollars or more, they need to come and seek advice from the church leaders in order to evaluate the need for that transaction. All the concerns and the needs should be placed and examined and decided upon at the apostles' feet. This is solely for the protection of God's flock.

The central government of the church with the central treasury to monitor the people's lives and worship was instituted in the life of the people of God in the Old Testament through Moses and continued to the New Testament through the apostles.

The following Scriptures stress about the importance of the central government and the central form of the treasury to monitor the lives of the people and their finances.

In the Old Testament:

A. In the wilderness, "1 And the LORD spake unto Moses, saying, 2 Speak unto Aaron, and unto his sons, and unto all the children of Israel, and say unto them; This is the thing which the LORD hath commanded, saying, 3 What man soever there be of the house of Israel, that killeth an ox, or lamb, or goat, in the camp, or that killeth it out of the camp, 4 And bringeth it not unto the door of the tabernacle of the congregation, to offer an offering unto the LORD before the tabernacle of the LORD; blood shall be imputed unto that man; he hath shed blood; and that man shall be cut off from among his people: 5 To the end that the children of Israel may bring their sacrifices, which they offer in the open field, even that they may bring them unto the LORD, unto the door of the tabernacle of the congregation, unto the priest, and offer them for peace offerings unto the LORD. 6 And the priest shall sprinkle the blood upon the altar of the LORD at the door of the tabernacle of the congregation, and burn the fat for a sweet savour unto the LORD. 7 And they shall no more offer their sacrifices unto devils, after whom they have gone a whoring. This shall be a

***statute for ever unto them throughout their generations."** (Leviticus 17:1-7 KJV) Those who were offering sacrifices and were not bringing them to the door of the tabernacle were considered offering to devils. God prohibited them from doing that, and they were obliged to bring their sacrifices to the place that He determined, the door of the tabernacle. Those who would not comply will be cut off from among God's people, "8 **And thou shalt say unto them, Whatsoever man there be of the house of Israel, or of the strangers which sojourn among you, that offereth a burnt offering or sacrifice, 9 And bringeth it not unto the door of the tabernacle of the congregation, to offer it unto the LORD; even that man shall be cut off from among his people."** (Leviticus 17:8-9 KJV)*

B. In the Promised Land, "1 These are the statutes and judgments, which ye shall observe to do in the land, which the LORD God of thy fathers giveth thee to possess it, all the days that ye live upon the earth. 2 Ye shall utterly destroy all the places, wherein the nations which ye shall possess served their gods, upon the high mountains, and upon the hills, and under every green tree: 3 And ye shall overthrow their altars, and break their pillars, and burn their groves with fire; and ye shall hew down the graven images of their gods, and destroy the names of them out of that place. 4 Ye shall not do so unto the LORD your God. 5 But unto the place which the LORD your God shall choose out of all your tribes to put his name there, even unto his habitation shall ye seek, and thither thou shalt come: 6 And thither ye shall bring your burnt offerings, and your sacrifices, and your tithes, and heave offerings of your hand, and your vows, and your freewill offerings, and the firstlings of your herds and of your flocks: 7 And there ye shall eat before the LORD your God, and ye shall rejoice in all that ye put your hand unto, ye and your households, wherein the LORD thy God hath blessed thee. 8 Ye shall not do after all the things that we do here this day, every man whatsoever is right in his own eyes. 9 For ye are not as yet come to the rest and to the inheritance, which the LORD your God giveth you. 10 But when ye go over Jordan, and dwell in the land which the LORD your God giveth you to inherit, and when he giveth you rest from all your enemies round about, so that ye dwell in safety; 11 Then there shall be a place which the LORD your God shall choose to cause his name to dwell there; thither shall ye bring all that I command you; your burnt offerings, and your sacrifices, your tithes, and the heave offering of your hand, and all your choice vows which ye vow unto the LORD: 12 And ye shall rejoice before the LORD your God, ye, and your sons, and your daughters, and your menservants, and your maidservants, and the Levite that is within your gates; forasmuch as he hath no part nor inheritance with you. 13 Take heed to thyself that thou offer not thy burnt offerings in every place that thou seest: 14 But in the place which the LORD shall choose in one of thy tribes, there thou shalt offer thy burnt offerings, and there thou shalt do all that I command thee. 15 Notwithstanding thou mayest kill and eat flesh in all thy gates, whatsoever thy soul lusteth after, according to the blessing of the LORD thy God which he hath given thee: the unclean and the clean may eat thereof, as of the roebuck, and as of the hart. 16 Only ye shall not eat the blood; ye shall pour it upon the earth as water. 17 Thou mayest not eat within thy gates the tithe of thy corn, or of thy wine, or of thy oil, or the firstlings of thy herds or of thy flock, nor any of thy vows which thou vowest, nor thy freewill offerings, or heave offering of thine hand: 18 But thou must eat them before the LORD thy God in the place which the LORD thy God shall choose, thou, and thy son, and thy daughter, and thy manservant, and thy maidservant, and the Levite that is within thy gates: and thou shalt rejoice before the LORD thy God in all that thou puttest thine hands unto. 19 Take heed to thyself that thou forsake not the Levite as long as thou livest upon the earth. 20 When the LORD thy God shall enlarge thy border, as he hath promised thee, and

thou shalt say, *I will eat flesh, because thy soul longeth to eat flesh; thou mayest eat flesh, whatsoever thy soul lusteth after.* 21 *If the place which the LORD thy God hath chosen to put his name there be too far from thee, then thou shalt kill of thy herd and of thy flock, which the LORD hath given thee, as I have commanded thee, and thou shalt eat in thy gates whatsoever thy soul lusteth after.* 22 *Even as the roebuck and the hart is eaten, so thou shalt eat them: the unclean and the clean shall eat of them alike.* 23 *Only be sure that thou eat not the blood: for the blood is the life; and thou mayest not eat the life with the flesh.* 24 *Thou shalt not eat it; thou shalt pour it upon the earth as water.* 25 *Thou shalt not eat it; that it may go well with thee, and with thy children after thee, when thou shalt do that which is right in the sight of the LORD.* 26 *Only thy holy things which thou hast, and thy vows, thou shalt take, and go unto the place which the LORD shall choose:* 27 *And thou shalt offer thy burnt offerings, the flesh and the blood, upon the altar of the LORD thy God: and the blood of thy sacrifices shall be poured out upon the altar of the LORD thy God, and thou shalt eat the flesh.* 28 *Observe and hear all these words which I command thee, that it may go well with thee, and with thy children after thee for ever, when thou doest that which is good and right in the sight of the LORD thy God.* 29 *When the LORD thy God shall cut off the nations from before thee, whither thou goest to possess them, and thou succeedest them, and dwellest in their land;* 30 *Take heed to thyself that thou be not snared by following them, after that they be destroyed from before thee; and that thou enquire not after their gods, saying, How did these nations serve their gods? even so will I do likewise.* 31 *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.* 32 *What thing soever I command you, observe to do it: thou shalt not add thereto, nor diminish from it.” (Deuteronomy 12:1-32 KJV)* The purpose of bringing all the tithes, the offerings, the sacrifices and the vows to one place where the priests and the Levites were located was to audit those items, their qualities and purpose, and to observe what was going on in the peoples’ lives who were coming to God. No one then was allowed to do his own will and wishes, but everyone would be admonished to observe and follow the instructions of God’s Word.

In the New Testament:

A. *The apostles’ feet,* “34 *Neither was there any among them that lacked: for as many as were possessors of lands or houses sold them, and brought the prices of the things that were sold,* 35 *And laid them down at the apostles’ feet: and distribution was made unto every man according as he had need.* 36 *And Joses, who by the apostles was surnamed Barnabas, (which is, being interpreted, The son of consolation,) a Levite, and of the country of Cyprus,* 37 *Having land, sold it, and brought the money, and laid it at the apostles’ feet.” (Acts 4:34-37 KJV)*

B. *The ministry of Apostle Paul,* He was called by God to preach the Gospel to the Gentiles and through him God reached many places and planted many churches. Even with such growth, the ministry of Apostle Paul was part and in link with the ministry of the apostles in Jerusalem. Paul endeavored to give the required updates and details of his ministry to the apostles in Jerusalem through personal visits to Jerusalem; that goes along the mind of God to maintain a central government for the church. “18 *Then after three years I went up to Jerusalem to see Peter, and abode with him fifteen days.* 19 *But other of the apostles saw I none, save James the Lord’s brother.” (Galatians 1:18-19 KJV)* “1 *Then fourteen years after*

I went up again to Jerusalem with Barnabas, and took Titus with me also. 2 *And I went up by revelation, and communicated unto them that Gospel which I preach among the Gentiles, but privately to them which were of reputation, lest by any means I should run, or had run, in vain.* 6 *But of these who seemed to be somewhat, (whatsoever they were, it maketh no matter to me: God accepteth no man’s person:) for they who seemed to be somewhat in conference added nothing to me:* 7 *But contrariwise, when they saw that the Gospel of the uncircumcision was committed unto me, as the Gospel of the circumcision was unto Peter;* 8 *(For he that wrought effectually in Peter to the apostleship of the circumcision, the same was mighty in me toward the Gentiles:)* 9 *And when James, Cephas, and John, who seemed to be pillars, perceived the grace that was given unto me, they gave to me and Barnabas the right hands of fellowship; that we should go unto the heathen, and they unto the circumcision.* 10 *Only they would that we should remember the poor; the same which I also was forward to do.” (Galatians 2:1-2, 6-10 KJV)* The Scriptures shows that churches that Paul planted, were financially linked with the apostles in Jerusalem. “25 *But now I go unto Jerusalem to minister unto the saints.* 26 *For it hath pleased them of Macedonia and Achaia to make a certain contribution for the poor saints which are at Jerusalem.* 27 *It hath pleased them verily; and their debtors they are. For if the Gentiles have been made partakers of their spiritual things, their duty is also to minister unto them in carnal things.* 28 *When therefore I have performed this, and have sealed to them this fruit, I will come by you into Spain.” (Romans 15:25-28 KJV)* “1 *Now concerning the collection for the saints, as I have given order to the churches of Galatia, even so do ye.* 2 *Upon the first day of the week let every one of you lay by him in store, as God hath prospered him, that there be no gatherings when I come.* 3 *And when I come, whomsoever ye shall approve by your letters, them will I send to bring your liberality unto Jerusalem.* 4 *And if it be meet that I go also, they shall go with me.” (1 Corinthians 16:1-4 KJV)* Paul with this ministry of making contributions to the saints showed that the finances of the churches in Macedonia, Galatia, and the Corinthians were linked with the treasury in Jerusalem.

“19 *And not that only, but who was also chosen of the churches to travel with us with this grace, which is administered by us to the glory of the same Lord, and declaration of your ready mind.” (2 Corinthians 8:19 KJV)* Those who brought the money, not only gave the funds, but they gave other important details regarding the spiritual and financial status of the churches. In return, the apostles in Jerusalem gave further instructions regarding the ministry and finances, “10 *Only they would that we should remember the poor; the same which I also was forward to do.” (Galatians 2:10 KJV)*

My dear and beloved: It is clear from the Scripture the responsibility of the church to monitor and to control the flow of the finances in order to verify the source of money, to verify the life of the people who has given the money, to verify the motive for giving, to discern the various needs in the life of the church and the members of the church, to take serious decisions about giving and spending, and for proper budgeting and saving, and to counsel the people and lead them to live in integrity with regard to finances.

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 makes me understand the purpose of one treasury and the responsibilities of your

church to monitor and to control the flow of the finances. Lord, thank you for all the teaching, the admonishments and the corrections I received in this message.

Repent and renounce all your sins. Repent of your pride, boasting, showing off and led by your emotions. Repent of lies, dishonesty, cheating, extorting money and swindling. Repent of your wrong motive of giving. Repent of your worldliness, your idol worship and following worldly things. Repent of doing your own will and plan and not the will nor the plan of God. Repent of your non willingness to serve God and suffer for him. 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 do your will, to live according to your ways and the good plan that you have for me. Lord I commit myself to the teaching that we received in this message. Lord lead me out from sin and guide me to do your will in full and accomplish the task that you ordained for me to do.

Lord, I pray for my Brothers and Sisters who had humbled themselves before your Word and committed themselves to do your command and abide with the instructions we received in this message. Lord help them and provide for them to continue to serve you and do what is right.

Lord, I pray for us as a church to help us to go on in serving you and doing your work and your will in pertain to the finances that are flowing to the church. Lord we commit ourselves to implement this teaching to your church and to discipline those who are in sin and not willing to comply. Lord lead us to deal with those who are corrupted and are not transparent in their finances with your church. Lord, refill 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 we pray for more people to be water Baptized and receive the Holy Spirit Baptism. Lord fulfill the vision of the church, 'Multiplication in peace with implementing the whole will of God'. Lord prepare us for your coming to go with you when you come. 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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