

AGAPE LESSON 22

REPAIRING THE FOUNDATIONS

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[Isaiah58v12] (ISV) And your people will rebuild the ancient ruins. You will raise up **the age-old foundations**, and people will call you, “Repairer of the broken walls. Restorer of streets to dwell in.

[Isaiah 61v4] And they shall rebuild the old ruins, they shall raise up the former desolations, and they shall repair the ruined cities, the desolations of many generations

[Luke3v9] And even now the axe is laid to the root of the trees. Therefore, every tree which does not bear good fruit is cut down and thrown into the fire.

God has given us principles in the Scriptures for the administration of the kingdom on the earth. We have been blessed with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places in Christ (Ephesians1v3). The principles are kept in the heavenly places for us to access.

[Numbers18v20—21] Then the lord said to Aaron, “**You shall have no inheritance in their land, nor shall you have any portion among them; I am your portion and your inheritance among the children of Israel.** (21) Behold, I have given the children of Levi all the tithes in Israel as an inheritance in return for the work which they perform, the work of the tabernacle of meeting.

[Nehemiah 12v44] And at the same time some were appointed over the rooms of the storehouse for the **offerings**, the **first fruits** and the **tithes**, to gather into them from the fields of the cities, the portions specified by the Law for the priests and the Levites who ministered.

There are three distinct offerings mentioned in the above Scripture:

- Offerings, which were brought any when, and as an on-going provision.
- Tithes, which are seasonal.
- First-fruits, also seasonal.

Offerings (terumah in Hebrew) This includes the following:

- Heave offering
- Any offering (burnt, peace, sin, dedicated things)
- An offering to God
- An offering of grain, money, etc.
- Contributions

The Nation of Israel were introduced to these principles in the wilderness. They had not worked or earned anything. All they had was the wealth they plundered the Egyptians before their hasty exit.

[Exodus25v1—7] Then the Lord spoke to Moses saying, (2) “Speak to the children of Israel, that they bring Me an offering from everyone who gives it willingly with his heart you shall take My offering. (3) And this is the offering that you shall take from them: gold, silver and bronze; (4) blue, purple and scarlet thread, fine linen and goat’s hair; (5) ram’s skins dyed red, badger’s skin, and acacia wood; (6) oil for the light, and spices for the anointing oil and for the sweet incense; (7) onyx stones, and stones to be set on the ephod and in the breast-plate.

The church has never known the importance of offerings (terumah), and the weight they carry in the building of the Kingdom. Offerings are one of the foundational principles given to the church for the

running of the church. When we grew up, the priests/pastors were poorer than the church mice that ran in their church buildings.

The principles of our faith are kept and loosed in heaven. Ours is to loose them here on the earth. A Jew would never appear before God empty-handed. He would bring his offering from home and well prepared (Deuteronomy 16v16).

It is a very good habit to pray over your offering, a night before or on the morning of the service so that you are not taken by surprise when it is time for offering – you come prepared. Visit most churches today, people come unprepared for offering and they will fish for the smallest amount from their purses and throw into the offering basket.

Our upbringing in the faith was grossly wrong. As children, the indoctrination we received in the how and what to give crippled our walk of faith from the very onset. Most of those who grew up with me do not have a clue about offerings. As a result, most are not able to endure, when tribulation and persecution arise for the word's sake; immediately they stumble. Their earth is stony. The word cannot take root and therefore, the word in them is easily scotched by the sun (Mark4v16—17).

I will share from my own experience:

- Most of the time we carried no offering to church.
- Sometimes we would be sent to go find change so we would be given worthless coins to take to church as offering.
- At our Sunday school we were taught a song that said, “We bring coins to give to Jesus because He needs them, to build His church.”

Now this is the foundation that was engraved in our minds from a young age. We have carried these dead roots and our walk of faith has cracks that cripple us. We wonder why most fail to stand during tough times. Most will not tithe or give first-fruits, not because they don't want to or don't know. The roots have no depth. It takes concrete faith in the Living God and His word, to risk and give your last. May I tell you from experience, “God remains faithful always, will always honour His word.”

[Mark12v41—44] Now Jesus sat opposite the treasury and saw how the people put money into the treasury. Many who were rich put in much. Then one poor widow came and threw in two mites, which make a quadrans. (43) So, He called His disciples to Himself and said to them. “Assuredly, I say to you that this poor widow has put in more than all those who have given to the treasury; (44) for they all put out of their abundance, but she out of her poverty put all that she had, her whole livelihood.”

I don't doubt that God came through for her in her poverty. It is not about the amount you give, but the understanding of the principle and the attitude of your heart toward your act of giving. Honouring the principle will sure deliver us from the dead roots/foundations we come from.

Churches out there have found ways to con people into giving:

- Some churches devised a system of tickets and they call it, “MALIHAMBE,” which is not in the word of God.
- Some have to give a specific amount every month to the church Mkhokheli, which ensures that the church will bury you. This one also is not in the word of God.
- Institutions hire and fire men of God, as they please. This also is not Scriptural.
- They teach them to give in order to get. This is false doctrine. It is not in the word of God. They twist the meaning of (Luke6v35--38) This verse is talking about: Loving your enemies,

being kind, merciful and thankful; that is what you receive back – not money. You joyfully give because the word of God commands us to give. We give out of obedience.

- I lodged in one of the pastor's home some years back. Once a year, sometime early in the year, church members would bring groceries to this home and they called it, "Isondlo somfundisi." Most of these groceries would rot in the cupboards because it was senselessly too much. As you can imagine, the spirit of hoarding also came into play.
- Gimmicks and prosperity messages mesmerise the people of God and they frantically give for wrong reasons.

[Deuteronomy16v16] Three times a year all your males shall appear before the Lord your God in a place which He chooses: at the Feast of Unleavened Bread, at the Feast of Weeks, and at the Feast of Tabernacles: **and they shall not appear before the Lord God empty-handed. (17) Every man shall give as he is able, according to the blessing of the Lord your God which He has given you.**

Jesus' trade was carpentry, which He learnt from Joseph, His father. We never hear Him doing any carpentry to earn a living during His ministry.

[Luke 8v1—3] Now it came to pass afterward, that He went through every city and village, preaching and bringing the glad tidings of the kingdom of God. And the twelve were with Him, (2) **and certain women** who had been healed of evil spirits and infirmities—Mary called Magdalene out of whom had come seven demons, (3) and Joanna the wife of Chuza, Herod's steward, and Susanna, and **many others who provided for him from their substance.**

Judas kept the money-box for Jesus' ministry (John13v27—29)

The early church laid the money at the feet of the apostles (Acts4v34--37).

Some church leaders today have to work part-time because the church has no clue of this principle of offerings. The Lord stopped me from running around selling, and has never failed me. Sometimes I receive monies from people who are not even from our house, and not because I have done anything for them.

It is very unfortunate that some uninformed church leaders do not encourage or teach people in their houses to give. They say:

- (1) People are poor in this place.
- (2) Some pride themselves and feel that, because they are well-off, they will not take offerings from people.
- (3) Some, out of pride, think that people will think I want their money.

Know that a leader like that one, is killing you. You will never see growth and progress in your life, ever. This is an outright contradiction of the word of God.

[2Corinthians9v6—8] But this I say: He **who sows sparingly** will also reap sparingly, and he **who sows bountifully** will also reap bountifully. (7) So, let each one give as he purposes in his heart, not grudgingly or of necessity; for God loves a cheerful giver. (8) **And God is able to make all grace abound toward you**, that you, having all sufficiency in all things, may have an abundance for every good work.

(v6) He who **sows sparingly** will also reap sparingly.

Sowing sparingly sounds more like calculated, restricted, stingy giving, with a "what if?" or "in case" at the back of your mind. There is an element of fear, selecting the fewest from the

abundance. You silence the voice of the Holy Spirit by ignoring His promptings. You become an architect of your own destiny.

The man who believed in hoarding and thought to build bigger barns to store his plenty. His soul was required of him that very night. (Luke12v16—21). The poor widow's giving was bold and very sacrificial. She gave her all and the very last. She did not do any calculation. Her heart was free and open (Mark12v41—44). It is not about the amount, but about the attitude of your heart.

And he who **sows bountifully** will also reap bountifully.

The attitude of your heart tells God how much He can trust you with. We were saved to co-work with God in the **distribution** of the resources of the kingdom. If you are good at hoarding, God cannot trust you with the resources of the kingdom.

[Exodus 16v18] So when they measured it by omers, **he who gathered much had nothing left, and he who gathered little had no lack**. Every man had gathered according to each one's need.

Giving bountifully gives you the privilege to access more grace. Grace exposes you to receiving anointing, revelation, power, glory. Jesus walked and operated in the fulness of grace. We ascribe grace to Christ's sufficiency. He came full of grace and truth (John1v14).

(v7) So let each one give as he **purposes** in his heart, not **grudgingly** or of necessity; for God loves a **cheerful** giver.

Purposing has to do with your power of choice. The Holy Spirit will not override your power of choice. It is up to you to **fully yield your spirit to Him and fully trust Him to guide you**. The joy of the Holy Spirit will cheer you as you give. The Macedonian believers, in the face of their deep poverty, first gave themselves to the Lord and then to Paul's team. **Paul testifies that beyond their ability, they were freely willing**. Imploring them with such urgency to receive their gift (2Corinthians8v2—5).

(v8) And God is able to **make all grace abound toward you**, that you, always having all **sufficiency** in all things, may have **an abundance** of every good work.

All grace = God Himself; the very fabric of who He is. It is the very substance that God is made of. When He makes all grace to abound toward you = He is giving you the fulness of Himself. If you lay hold of Him, all grace is yours = revelation, anointing, power, glory. This is our inheritance. We are joint heirs together with Christ (Romans8v17).

Sufficiency (autarkeia in Greek) = a perfect condition of life in which no aid is needed – sufficiency of the necessities of life – a mind contented with its lot, contentment.

An abundance = overflow – too much of the muchness – beyond measure.

The resources of the kingdom are both spiritual and material. Most people think money is the only means of giving. Some of the resources of the kingdom are listed in (Luke 6v35—37):

- Loving your enemies.
- Doing good and lending, hoping for nothing in return.
- Being kind to the unthankful and evil
- Being merciful, just as our father is also merciful.
- Not judging.
- Not condemning.

- Forgiving – more especially when you think they are not deserving.

The Bible records that when you give the above, you will receive back good measure, pressed down, shaken together and running over

May I sound a warning here. Harboring unforgiveness and hatred is danger zone. It puts a dead stop to your progress.

[Mark11v25—26] (KJV) And whenever you stand praying, if you have anything against anyone, forgive him, that our Father in heaven may also forgive you, your trespasses. (26) But if you do not forgive, neither will your Father in heaven forgive you your trespasses.

Jesus full of grace was able to say, “Father, forgive them, for they do not know what they do.” (Luke23v34).