



*by Beatrice Ofwona*

One out of every six verses of the books of Mathew, Mark and Luke deals with money. Of the 29 parables, 16 deal with a person and his money. A correlation exists between man and his money and between man and his God. We are even told that where the ones heart is where one's god is. Money reveals our true selves. It has a character and we cannot effectively serve God if we revere it.

Some of the greatest givers worldwide are not even Christians but they have bought into the godly principle of giving- that if we want to receive more, we must give. Biblically when we give, we are in effect trusting in God. Abraham had a relationship with God and he did not have to be coerced into giving, in fact we are told of how he met and gave a tenth of what we had to Melchizedek who is Jesus Christ.

We should ask God to guard us from the love of things that he has put us in charge of. We are only custodians of what He has blessed us with; we are not the owners of these things. All the wealth that we think belongs to us is really His. We should learn from the Israelites who when they tried to keep the manna, realized that it went bad. God had cautioned them not to forget that He was their deliverer and they needed to look up to Him only. In Deuteronomy 8:11 we see a similar declaration, 'Be careful that you do not forget the Lord your God, failing to

observe His command, His laws and His decrees that I am giving you this day'.

That good job that you have is not because you have done anything good for Him to let you have it. It is not because you are so articulate and it is not because you are the best there is. The wealth that you have is not because you worked hardest of all. Many are they that work hard but are yet to get the kind of breakthrough that you have had. It is through God's blessing that you are where you are; as such you should honor Him with all that you have. Deuteronomy 8:18 says, 'But remember the Lord your God, for it is He who gives you the ability to produce wealth and so confirms His covenant, which He swore to your forefathers as it is today'. Similarly Proverbs reminds us in 3:9-10, 'Honor the Lord with your wealth, with the first fruits of all your crops; then your barns will be filled to overflowing and your vats will brim over with new wine. What we have should have a kingdom focus.

Abraham himself had to go through certain things in order to be a fully generous man. Firstly is the question of prompt obedience versus delayed obedience. Abraham did not take time to decide to sacrifice his only son Isaac who was also God's will and fulfillment of the promise he had made to him. Many of us would have hesitated and wondered why God would want the very thing he had blessed us with to fulfill a promise He had made over our lives, but not Abraham. When God asked for Isaac, Abraham got ready to sacrifice him. We learn therefore that when God asks something of us, we should quickly answer Him by obeying. We should not even delay in carrying out that which He requires of us because delayed obedience is just as bad as disobedience. Only God can change our fortunes from grass to grace yet when we delay to obey, we may miss out on these blessings of our Father.

Secondly is the question of faith versus reason. As Christians we live by faith and although we may sometimes doubt what we are having faith in, we should be reminded that even salvation itself is by faith. Abraham may have wondered who his heir would be if Isaac was out of the way, but he did not reason like a man would, instead he chose to have faith in a God who would resurrect Isaac if need be. It is this faith that we are told is credited to Abraham as righteousness. Therefore, on matters of faith, defy logic; let reason not rob you of your faith in God for our Lord delights in those who have faith. And there will be a time that He will speak to us and we will need to have faith and believe that indeed He has spoken.

Thirdly is the scarcity versus an abundance mentality. In this we see God revealing an abundance mentality in His servant Abraham in Genesis 22:8 who when Isaac asks him about the lamb for the sacrifice proclaims, 'God Himself will provide the lamb for the burnt offering'. When one has this mentality one believes that there is enough for all and that one need not be selfish with what one has. A scarcity mentality, on the other hand, is had by those who think that they must keep for themselves what they have. This is why we are told that the difference between successful people and the less successful people is in their attitudes. An abundance mentality knows that there is enough for all. Even Revelation 7:9 tells us that heaven is not only for certain races, tribes or ethnicities, it is for all and it declares, 'After this I looked and there before me was a great multitude that no one could count, from every nation, tribe, people and language, standing before the throne and in front of the Lamb. They were wearing white robes and were holding palm branches in their hands'.

## Generosity Matters

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A person with scarcity mentality will be noted in the way he impatiently cuts in front of other road users on the road or in the way he refuses to queue like the rest in banks or in supermarkets. This mentality will be noted in the way some people will try and pray out their bosses out of positions forgetting that what God has planned for us cannot be taken away by anyone and that there will be good positions for all when the Lord opens our ways. The person with this mentality will also find it very hard to be a giver as he will struggle with sharing what he has.

God is a generous giver. He gave His only Son for our salvation. He did not hold back that which was precious to Him. We too must therefore generate this generosity and ensure that the church stays relevant. No one needs to go hungry when some of us are throwing away food. No one needs to stay home because he has no fees when some of us have more than we need in our bank accounts.

But it all begins with an encounter with Christ because we cannot give of our property if we have not given of ourselves. In the book of 2 Corinthians we come across the Macedonian churches which gave of themselves but were careful to first give themselves to God through Christ.

(from a sermon by-Pastor Kuchio-NPC-Kenya )

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*Most of these writings are sermons by various pastors. More of my work can be found in:--*

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