

CAN YOU BE RESTRAINED FROM GIVING?

I know some of you who have a foot shaped mouth like Peter have already given an answer to the question I have asked. And just like Peter I can really pat your back because you are the kind of people I admire. People who in their haste pass admirably some tests and fail miserably on other tests because you don't know what it means to be contemplative or take time to think through a question. Now it is not my intention to embarrass you and your answer. Moreover nobody knows what your answer is to the question so whether you have answered admirably or miserably is an issue that is known to you alone. Allow me to give a little background of that question.

I had previously written an article that was supposed to be posted this week but upon consultation with my colleague, we agreed to post it next week as we will be wrapping up the month of September. Be on the lookout for that and you will understand why that article has to be kept till month end. I realized I have to write another article as soon as I can so I took my time thinking about what would best be the issue I need to address or bring to your attention. Thankfully as I was thinking about it I found myself talking to a friend who along our chat was made aware of my writing situation. There are some chats that are definitely God-initiated and I believe this was one of them. "So you want to talk about the fundraising that will happen this week towards the manse project huh?" she probed into the matter. "Have you ever come across Exodus 35 and 36?" she asked. "I might have but I have forgotten what those two chapters talk about!" I subtly acknowledged my ignorance without appearing a dunderhead. "Go and study those chapters and I'm sure you will find something to talk about through those passages," she implored. As a humble student I had to say bye and cut the call so that I should go straight into those passages. I started with chapter 35 and slowly started building some ideas and thoughts I would extract through this. It wasn't long till I turned my focus to chapter 36 where I immediately saw inspiration, like a conqueror of my writer's block, coming riding on a horse.

God had commanded the children of Israel to build a tabernacle. It amazed me how God planned this whole project. If I could paraphrase the command of God to build the tabernacle I would think He said something like this, "Guys, I want you to build a tabernacle for me. The place will be used for my glory but I want you to use your own resources in doing that. You know I AM capable of raining manna from heaven which means I can also rain building materials for this tabernacle from my abode but let us not do it that way." The command was issued, Moses gave it to the people, and another thing that amazed me was that he asked for only those who were willing to give towards the project. Not only did he ask for willing givers, he also asked for willing workers towards this project. The people were dismissed from the meeting and went into their various homes. When you read the chapters you will be shocked at how these Israelites purposed to give towards this cause. It was an enormous giving that the 21st century church has never seen. Those who purposed to give wood towards this project started bringing wood daily, and those who purposed to give gold started bringing gold daily.

Those who purposed to give linen towards this brought linen daily, and some women even made themselves available to be there and started weaving tapestry that would be used in the tabernacle that was being built. This kind of giving continued daily to the point that each department of the workers had to go to Moses and ask him to tell the people that they could now stop giving towards the project. They did so because they had gathered more than enough and Moses issued the command to the people. Now you have to understand that these people were still giving when they were told to stop, when they were told it's enough!

That immediately challenged me and I want to pose the same challenge to the whole congregation and readers of this article. Michiru congregants, have we given enough towards the manse project to the point that the fundraising team can say "Abusa, auzeni anthu kuti basi zakwana?" Those who are not Michiru congregants, can you give to the point where the recipient would say, 'enough, don't give further'? I know some people will mock that question while shaking their heads like a cow that is trying to relieve itself from a swarm of flies on its head. More especially in a church setting most people would be answering within themselves and say, "We give but our greedy leaders will never say enough." Well if that is your thinking right now, I would implore you as a Christian to take time and pray for your leaders because that is what the Bible commands us, "to pray for those who are in positions." And if you are a leader who knows that you can be called out as such, I would ask you to take your time and examine yourself if you are still in the faith.

As we prepare for the fundraising this coming Sunday, I pray that Exodus 35 and 36 should be our motivation to willingly give towards the completion of our beautiful manse.

Article written by Tim Scander

A member of Michiru CCAP Church