

Scripture

As you decide what to do, two scriptures in particular have governed our thoughts so far. One addresses cheerful giving, the other sacrificial giving.

Cheerful Giving

In 2nd Corinthians chapter 9, Paul writes:

Each of you should give what you have decided in your heart to give, not reluctantly or under compulsion, for God loves a cheerful giver.

Ben will be writing more about this verse in the coming weeks, but the theological concept is that willing, happy gifts are way better for the soul of the church than anything else. It inculcates and potentiates spiritual growth in the church when people love to give.

Sacrificial Giving

In Haggai chapter 1, God himself says

“Is it a time for you yourselves to be living in your paneled houses, while this house remains a ruin?”

The people of God had returned to a ruined town after years in exile. As they set about rebuilding the city, often they prioritized their own homes over the house of God so Haggai (whose name is also to do with celebration and joy) calls them up to prioritize the Lord.

It’s not a perfect analogy (in Christ we are the temple, not this building) and it’s not an easy phrase to translate (paneled houses just meant rudimentary shacks not the beautifully clad rooms we might picture in our minds). But to put it another way what he means is that the work of the church must come before even basic shelter for ourselves, let alone luxury things. It’s a great verse about godly priorities, sacrificial giving, and what it’s like to take care of our church home.

For some of us, cheerful and sacrificial giving might mean some really inventive ideas. For example, one family has approached us already offering to sell a rare family heirloom to raise the funds. It’s a vintage, first edition *Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles* comic book—they can be worth an awful lot, and if it sells for a high price, we cannot wait to unveil the new Leonardo Hall or the Donatello Rooms.

We hope these biblical principles help you as much as they have helped frame our thinking so far.