

"HEAR YE HIM"

A Devotional Series For Radio

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The Sermon: THE STOREHOUSE

Scripture: Doctrine and Covenants 42: portions of 8 and 10.

If thou lovest me, thou shalt serve me and keep all my commandments. And behold, thou wilt remember the poor, and consecrate of thy properties for their support, that which thou hast to impart unto them, with a covenant and a deed which can not be broken And again, if there shall be properties in the hands of the church, or any individuals of it, more than is necessary for their support, after their first consecration, which is a residue, to be consecrated unto the bishop, it shall be kept to administer to those who have not, from time to time, that every man who has need may be amply supplied, and receive according to his wants. Therefore, the residue shall be kept in my storehouse, to administer to the poor and the needy and for the purpose of purchasing lands for the public benefit of the church, and building houses of worship, and building up of the New Jerusalem that my covenant people may be gathered in one, in that day when I shall come to my temple.

Let the bishop appoint a storehouse unto this church, and let all things, both in money and in meat, which is more than is needful for the want of this people, be kept in the hands of the bishop.

Most schemes for sharing the wealth -- of which there have been a great many in the history of the world -- are unjust, impractical, and wrong. They are usually based on compulsion. They excite resentment in those whose property is confiscated, and greed on the part of those who expect to get something for nothing. They often remove the wealth from those best equipped by temperament and experience to handle and to manage and increase it, and give it to those who waste and dissipate it, making all poor instead of all rich. Such schemes are often fostered and controlled by bureaucrats and politicians who are primarily interested in the power and profits they can acquire for themselves; therefore, after they take their cut, there is little left to share with the people who are really in need.

The way of sharing the wealth suggested by modern revelations to the church is through the law of the consecration of surplus, and the principle of the storehouse. The term "consecration" as it is used here means dedication of the surplus by legal means to the use of the religious or stewardship group of which one is a member. "Surplus" is property not necessary for daily support and future security, and not needed in carrying on one's stewardship profitably and

efficiently. Surplus therefore varies with the individual, with his needs, the needs of his business or stewardship, his capacity for using and managing money and property, his probable need for the future. The exact amount of surplus is determined by consultation and mutual agreement between the bishop of the church (who receives, holds, and administers the proceeds of this consecration) and the one desiring to consecrate his surplus. It should be noted at this point that there can be no estimate of "surplus" until the steward has rendered an accounting of his possessions to the bishop, and paid the tithe or tenth of the increase thereon. It should also be noted and emphasized again that consecration of surplus is an entirely voluntary act. No force or compulsion is used. It is the result of free will on the part of those who desire to share that for which they have no immediate or foreseeable future need.

In the light of what we have just said, another fact should be obvious. The principles of consecration of surplus and the storehouse can be applied only to a select group -- to those who are "heirs according to the laws of the kingdom." (D. & C. 70:2) In order to live willingly and whole-heartedly by this law or

principle, men must be regenerated -- born again -- converted. They must be dedicated to the well-being of their neighbors, and to the work of establishing God's kingdom on earth in business, industry, and politics, as well as in the things of the spirit. They must be loving, unselfish, obedient. They must be men of faith. They must be diligent, wise, and faithful stewards. Only ruin for all could result if unregenerate, ignorant, rebellious, lazy, and selfish persons attempted to set up a storehouse in the hope of living without work, or getting all and giving little or nothing.

The purposes or functions of the storehouse are well defined in the revelations given to the church through Joseph Smith. The storehouse is first of all for the security of the group. It constitutes the reserves of the group, both in money and in goods, which are set aside for use in times of stress or emergency. Because it is a group reserve, rather than an individual reserve, there can be more security than if each individual tried to guarantee his own.

Second, the assets of the storehouse may be used to provide inheritances for those not able to provide them for themselves. An "inheritance" may be defined as the assets, capital, property, and equipment necessary to live comfortably and earn one's living. It may include a home, an education, a farm, a business, the tools of one's profession or trade, a working capital, and a reasonable provision for security in old age. Inheritances are not necessarily provided from the storehouse as gifts, but the recipient is expected to pay for that which he receives, as he is able, and in turn to consecrate of his own surplus (when he accumulates one) to the storehouse.

The assets of the storehouse may properly be used to purchase lands for the public benefit of the church, for the establishment of agricultural or other stewardships, for the building of churches, or for the development of central areas to which groups of the people of the church may gather. The assets of the storehouse may be loaned to stewards who need extra capital to assist them in improving their stewardships. Last, but in some respects most important, these assets may be used for temporary relief or long-range rehabilitation of the poor, the

sick, the handicapped, who need help.

Assistance from the assets of the storehouse in any of the ways described should be more than temporary relief. In some cases, such as complete and permanent disability, repayment would be an impossibility; but the principle is: "Thou shalt not take thy brother's garment; thou shalt pay for that which thou shalt receive of thy brother." Whenever possible, assistance from the reserve assets of the storehouse should be treated as a loan, and paid back, together with any additional surplus which may later be accumulated by reason of the help given.

Certain obligations are implied, though not expressly stated, when the bishop accepts a consecration of surplus. If one who has consecrated his surplus later needs capital to expand his stewardship, or if he falls into misfortune which places him in need of assistance -- either because of sickness, disability, or disaster -- then he should have a moral claim on any available assets in the storehouse in order to meet his need, subject to the same obligations of repayment as any other man.

The principle of consecration of surplus to a storehouse reserve is significant because it recognizes each man's right to own, possess, and control private property as a steward -- as much as he needs and can profitably and efficiently use. It also recognizes man's responsibility to the society or group of which he is a part, through the socialization--not of all property - but only of surplus property. The purpose of such socialization or consecration is to provide individual and group security; to give equal opportunity to all good stewards through provision of working capital; to increase the common wealth and the common welfare through more efficient production of goods and services for the benefit of all.

"Inasmuch as they receive more than is needful for their necessities and their wants, it shall be given into my storehouse, and the benefits shall be consecrated unto the inhabitants of Zion, and unto their generations, inasmuch as they become heirs according to the laws of the kingdom This is what the Lord requires of every man in his stewardship. (Doctrine and Covenants 70:2.3.)