

GENEROSITY & SERVICE

EXODUS 35-40

Finishing up the rest of Exodus this morning. Reason is due to the exact repetition of materials found in chapters 25-31. God giving the design, here the description of the people obediently constructing according to the design

There are some key and important nuggets for us in these chapters, this is what I plan on reading for us this morning and summarizing the rest. A little unconventional I know...

Big idea: God's love for us ought to stir up generosity from our gratitude, and stir up service to His glorious work

Read Exodus 35-36:7.

Ch 36: Description of the construction of the tabernacle

Ch 37: Construction of the tabernacle furniture

Ch 38: Construction of the outer court and it's furniture

Ch 39: Making the priestly garments

Ch 40: Setting up the tabernacle and the consecration of the priesthood

Read Exodus 40:33-38.

I. Generosity

God reiterates, yet again, the importance of keeping the Sabbath. When God repeats something, you do well to listen closely. This is now the fourth time that God has given the command of the Sabbath as one of the key covenant signs of God's people living out the covenant relationship. For us, keeping the sabbath and being regular on Sunday gatherings go hand in hand. This is part of the outworking in our lives of the inward reality that we are a part of the covenant people of God in Christ!

God's love ought to prompt generosity from gratitude.

The people were moved because of their gratitude to the LORD for His covenant renewal!

The people had been waiting for the LORD's word on what He would do with them, and His gracious renewal is what they experience! Just consider the relief that they must have felt to know that the covenant had been renewed by God's grace! That He would lavish His compassion to a thousand generations! What thankfulness this must have produced in the people!

Gratitude is anchored in the renewal of our souls.

"For it is all for your sake, so that as grace extends to more and more people it may increase thanksgiving, to the glory of God" —2 Corinthians 4:15

God's grace produces gratitude. THE FIRST CRY OF THE CHRISTIAN UPON KNOWLEDGE OF HIS SALVATION IS "THANK YOU"!

Gratitude produces generosity, which produces gratitude.

Example of my kids sharing 85C pastries...back and forth, back forth sharing of their treats. Gratitude always produces generosity.

"You will be enriched in every way to be generous in every way, which through us will produce thanksgiving to God" - 2 Corinthians 9:11

Moses gives the call to the people to bring a contribution to the LORD for the construction of all the things needed for the tabernacle.

Notice what they are bringing: majestic and precious things, as well as mundane things. It is not the cost of what they bring that is important, but the heart behind it...Key words: "whoever is of generous heart" , "everyone whose heart stirred him, and everyone whose spirit moved him."

"And he sat down opposite the treasury and watched the people putting money into the offering box. Many rich people put in large sums. And a poor widow came and put in two small copper coins, which make a penny. And he called his disciples to him and said to them, "Truly, I say to you, this poor widow has put in more than all those who are contributing to the offering box. For they all contributed out of their abundance, but she out of her poverty has put in everything she had, all she had to live on." —Mark 12:41-44

So many lessons to learn from this beautiful passage, but the big thing to take away is the heart of the woman who gave her copper coins. She, is her worship of God, gave all she had! What trust! What affection! What zeal she had! Did she know that the One to whom she was giving the money was sitting across from her watching her? Did she see Him and make of show of this sacrifice! No! The LORD Himself saw the beauty of her sacrifice and the generosity of her heart and was pleased.

So what are the lessons we can glean from this? The LORD sees and knows our capacity and our heart behind our generosity in our lives...

"For if the readiness is there, it is acceptable according to what a person has, not according to what he does not have" —2 Corinthians 8:12

She did not have surplus, but she did have gratitude and love. Jesus, the One to whom she was truly giving her money, was most pleased because of her heart! I pray God sees the heart of generosity in our own hearts and is pleased because of it!

Key words: "whoever is of generous heart" , "everyone whose heart stirred him, and everyone whose spirit moved him"

Stir up = to rise up and take notice

Moved = to be incited to offer up

Emotional desire, physical follow through.

We can become convinced of the need to be generous, it is another thing entirely to follow through on that desire. We must be diligent to follow through with what we are led to be generous with!

Not just the desire, or leading to be generous, but the follow through is according to capacity. Capacity is not the limiting factor, but obedience to the LORD's prompting.

What is keeping you from being truly generous to the LORD with the LORD's stuff (remember that it was God who put the fear of the Israelites in Egypt so that they would give their gold and silver to them as they left!)? Is it fear that you will not be taken care of? Is it lack of trust in the God who so richly provides? Have you yet to feel a part of God's family? Is it that zeal for the work of the gospel has yet to truly grip your heart?

God has given us all things to use (stewardship), to share (fellowship), or to give away (generosity).

Notice now the materials that are being given, both the majestic and the mundane. Gold and silver as well as wood, yarn, goat hair....all of these things are needed for the glorious work of the worship of God. Each one of the things given were used for God's work.

Some could give lots. Some could only give a little. But what made the material sanctified for God's glory was the end to which it was used.

We do not give to the church or the work of the gospel out of duty or obligation, but to see the glorious work of the gospel go forth and bear fruit in our city. The gospel work is what sanctifies our contribution, whatever it is, not the amount or the composition of it.

****Interesting Note****

"The people bring much more than enough for doing the work that the LORD has commanded us to do." So Moses gave command, and word was proclaimed throughout the camp, "Let no man or woman do anything more for the contribution for the sanctuary." So the people were restrained from bringing, for the material they had was sufficient to do all the work, and more." —Exodus 36:5-7

Chris Purdue and I chalked up the dimensions of the tabernacle and the various furniture items, so for those of you who are visual people can literally see it with your eyes what it may have looked like...

Total cost of the tabernacle/court/furniture/clothing

Just shy of \$69 million!

Example of WeSeeYou needing to turn down food due to such an over abundance and supply!

We have some goals that we want to accomplish as a church

Rent the building next door = \$2500/month (includes large parking lot)

Build a new playground area for kids

Provide to give our part time staff a raise

Three part-time staff: Kelly, Kristen, Ryan Leech

We have a budget goal of \$30K/month

What would it look like for our church to be so well supplied that we actually asked you to stop being so generous? Maybe with the amount of couches we have in our upstairs room...haha....

II. Service

God's love for us stirs us up to serve in His glorious work

God given skill

Oholab and Bezalel were given the gift of the Spirit in order to accomplish the work.

"And Moses called Bezalel and Oholab and every craftsman in whose mind the LORD had put skill, everyone whose heart stirred him up to come to do the work." —Exodus 36:2

Notice the similar language used here as above about the contributions....

God has given each of us skills to be put to use for His work.

God is glorified in how we go about doing our work. Glorify God in our vocation

When we were building the shades and the trash fence, Kelly was so meticulous in his measurements and leveling and all aspects of construction, and it turned out beautifully! I think that God was smiling when Kelly was doing this, you could just sense that he was doing it for the LORD and not for man's praise. Me, I would have just slapped some 2x4 together and called it a day....

"The Christian shoemaker does his Christian duty not by putting little crosses on the shoes, but by making good shoes, because God is interested in good craftsmanship." —Martin Luther

Example of the great J.S. Bach and his signature being "soli Deo gloria" at the end of every single one of his pieces, and we are talking like thousands of works!

How do you go about your work? Are you working as for the LORD and not for man? If not, why not? How would it change the way you work if you really did it for God and not for man's praise or approval?

God is glorified in seeing our work also draw others to Him (evangelistic)

Using my skills and passions to further the kingdom work is just as important as how I go about my vocation. We are all called to make disciples. None of us are on the sidelines of the kingdom work, for we have been called a "kingdom of priests". Some of us, yes, will be set aside to uniquely devote their time and energy to that end specifically, but most will not, and yet can, and are called to, make disciples and further the kingdom in this life.

I keep thinking about those football players, when they make a touchdown, some kneel and offer a prayer to God for giving them that goal. Kind of cheesy, but at the very least it seeks to direct honor to God, drawing others to Him.

God's work multiplied

"And he has inspired him to teach, both him and Oholiab the son of Ahisamach of the tribe of Dan" - Exodus 35:34

Along with the skills needed to construct the tabernacle, God also gave them the skill in teaching and multiplying the laborers! Bezalel and Oholiab were not just expected to do the work, but to raise up others who could do the work also.

This is part and parcel with God's design for us too! He does not just want us to use our skill and resources to contribute to the kingdom, but to be part of the process of raising up laborers for the kingdom who will join in the work!

"and what you have heard from me in the presence of many witnesses entrust to faithful men, who will be able to teach others also." —2 Timothy 2:2

We receive, we pass on, they pass on

Don't need to be a Bible expert, but you do need to know Jesus. Teach what you know, and where you have been.

"Now when they saw the boldness of Peter and John, and perceived that they were uneducated, common men, they were astonished. And they recognized that they had been with Jesus." —Acts 4:13

God glorified

Notice at the end of the chapter 40:33 that all credit is given to Moses for the completion of the tabernacle...what about that?

When we remember that Moses is the captain of his people, and the mediator between God and man, it makes sense that credit would end up flowing up to him, as the representative of the people. But in

Moses we see the foreshadowing of the true Captain of God's people, and the true mediator between God and man, Jesus Christ.

Thus, the One who receives all credit and glory for the work of the gospel and the work of the kingdom, is not me, but Christ in me. Not man, but God in the God/man! It is all for Jesus' fame and honor that we do anything at all.

God has given each of us spheres of influence to make Christ known. Not all the Israelites were the ones working with the gold or silver, some were simply fashioning the wood or tanning the hides, or sewing the cloth. But each contributed, not just stuff, but their labor as well. The kingdom of God, the gospel work, requires both our resources and our efforts. God uses them to advance His kingdom and His Church in the world. It is an immense privilege to be part of the Church and to be a part of this glorious work of God's glory in the world, no matter if that part is small or if it is large. It is the end to which we labor, the glory of God, that makes it beautiful!

Conclusion

What are you thankful to God for today?

How are you following through with being generous back to God for all His blessings and provisions in your life? What do the habits of your money say about your heart of gratitude toward Christ? How might God be leading you to change that today?

How do you work? Do you work with all your might as for the LORD? Are you making Christ known in your vocation? What ways might God be leading you to serve His Church? There are lots of opportunities for people to serve in this church, perhaps God is leading you to start?

We must remember that at the end of the day, we are utterly dependent upon the LORD for all things. Notice that Moses summarizes the next 38.5 years of Israels time in the wilderness by saying that they waited upon the LORD to move. This is a good lesson for us to consider in our lives. In all things we must patiently wait upon the LORD and trust His guidance and provision. God is to be the center of our lives and our church, and we are to humbly worship and trust in this great and glorious Lord and Savior with all of our lives. Let's pray

Lord's Supper

At the table we taste the generous heart of God to provide the way to be reconciled back to Him and to truly know Him. We receive the gift of God's grace in the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ for our sins and our sanctification. Here we proclaim the efficacy of Christ's work to rescue and redeem His people from the slavery to our sin, and the promise of the future glory and inheritance of the saints in light. Here we are renewed in our souls for the work God has called each of us to, that the glory and gospel of salvation might be advanced in our days.