

“The Joy of Generosity”

Study: Exodus 35:4-39:40

Reading: –

Memory: Proverbs 3:26

Exodus



Once had a college student ask me what the secret was to my “financial success.” I had to chuckle at this statement because I had been anything but “financially successful” throughout my years as a pastor. The reason he asked me this was because our family has lived a full life, traveling many places and experiencing many different things. The answer I gave him was relatively simple. It wasn’t about making money. Seldom did I make more than the average yearly income that most Americans make. Often, I made much less than the average American. The secret to living a full financial life is one of contentment, godliness and giving. The emphasis that I gave this young man was an emphasis on giving. When you choose to give to God, not expecting anything in return, He gives back to you and does it in many different ways. By giving, I didn’t just mean the 10% that many people give, but I was referring to giving much more and giving in a sacrificial way.

Today, we are going to read about the free will offerings that the Israelites gave and will be reminded of the importance of giving to God.

What Does the Bible Say?

God had given Moses specific instructions on how to build the tabernacle, but he now needed the supplies to start the work on the tabernacle and the furniture that would be a part of the Israelites worship of God. Moses approached the people and asked them to consider giving some of their possessions to help in the building of the tabernacle. He listed several items that were needed and also made a general call for craftsman who would be willing to work on creating the items to be used (vs 4-19).

The people left the presence of Moses and began to contemplate what they could do to help build the tabernacle. They started coming back to Moses with their arms full of the items needed for the building process to take place. No one was forced to give towards this project, but those who gave did so out of a willing heart. They brought all sorts of gold objects and fine linen along with silver and bronze. Craftsmen and seamstresses

stepped up and volunteered to use their skills for this building. The free will offerings that were given were immense and provided everything that was needed for the tabernacle to be built. The spirit among the people was joyful as people willingly gave and were encouraged by others who willingly gave (vs 20-29).

Moses revealed that God had picked certain men to lead the skilled workers as God had gifted these men for the specific task of building the tabernacle. Moses gave these men the contributions that had been given so the men could start the work. The freewill offerings kept coming and anytime another item was needed, people would give for the cause. More than enough had come in to finish the tabernacle and Moses was proudly able to announce that they needed no more contributions for this project (vs 1-7).

The rest of chapter 36 through the end of chapter 39 described the completion of the items for the tabernacle. For devotional purposes, I would encourage you to read through these, but we will not spend any more time on the specifics.

How Does this Apply to Me?

Are you willing to give to the Lord? Do you give out of obligation or do you give out of a heart of love? II Corinthians 9:7 says, “Each one must give as he has decided in his heart, not reluctantly or under compulsion, for God loves a cheerful giver.” Not only does God love a cheerful giver, but when a person decides to freely give to God, he will experience the great joy that accompanies selfless surrender. Though the general biblical principle is to give 10% of your income back to the Lord, I believe that is just a starting point. It is between you and God how much you choose to give, but some of the most joyful people in the world are people who give generously. Not only does giving help meet the needs of people and organizations that you give to, it helps deepen your love and increases your joy. It also helps you to value the things of God more than the things of this world. Jesus said, “For where your treasure is, there will your heart be also.” (Matt. 6:21)

Suggestions for Prayer

- * Thank God for what He has given you.
- * Ask God to help you be willing to give back to Him.

Why is it important to note that Moses was simply declaring the commands of the Lord (vs 4)?

What was Moses told to collect (vs 5)?

What type of hearts was God looking for (vs 5)?

What did God ask the people to donate (vs 5-9)?

Where would the people have gotten these valuable items?

****The Israelites went to the Egyptians before they left and asked them for valuable items. The Egyptians also came to the Israelites after the final plague and begged them to leave Egypt. They brought all types of valuable gifts to the Israelites, imploring them to take the gifts and leave. Exodus 3:22 and 12:35-36 describe how the Israelites “plundered” Egypt in this manner.*

What did Moses ask for (vs 10)?

What was the result of the request that Moses made (vs 20-21)?

What were the people willing to give (vs 22-25)?

How did the people use the talents God had given them (vs 26)?

How was the offering given described (vs 29)?

What did Moses recognize about skills and talents (vs 30)?

What does verse 35 declare about talents and skills?

Why is it important to realize that God has gifted you with your abilities?

What skills and talents do you have that you are using for His kingdom?

How are you using what you have been blessed with?

Describe how you are generous with what God has blessed you with?

“The Presence of God”

Study: Exodus 40:1-38

Reading: --

Memory: Proverbs 3:26

When I did some substitute teaching I was always amazed about how different the students acted when the principal was around. Those in high school didn't act much different, but the elementary and the middle school students did. They would be goofing around and laughing, sometimes giving me grief, but as soon as they caught a glimpse of the principal, their whole demeanor changed.

Today, we are going to see how the presence of God among us should affect the way we live. Knowing that God is always with us through the Holy Spirit living in us should be a great comfort to our hearts.

What Does the Bible Say?

Once all the articles for the tabernacle were made, the tabernacle was ready to be erected. God told them to assemble the tabernacle on the first day of the month so the presence of God could descend upon it and dwell there. He described to Moses where he wanted all of the items placed and told Moses that once they were in place he should anoint them with oil. The priests were to be washed with water and then they were to put on the special garments that were made for them. Following the cleansing, the priests were to be anointed (Aaron and his sons) which was to establish a priestly line so that all the descendants of Aaron would be the ones who would serve as priests (vs 1-15).

Moses followed everything that God commanded, and after spending several months preparing the items for the tabernacle, the tabernacle was erected. The Israelites had left Egypt on the 14th day of the first month and arrived at Sinai about three months later. The Jewish Calendar was a little different than our calendar today, but they did have 12 months with 29 or 30 days in each month. The tabernacle was erected on the first day of the first month, indicating that they had taken around 6-7 months to build and prepare the tabernacle. Moses erected everything just as God had asked and the place was now prepared for the glory of God (vs 16-33).

Once the tabernacle was erected, the pillar of cloud that had led the Israelites covered the tabernacle and the glory of God moved inside the

Holy of Holies. At this point, Moses was not able to enter into the tabernacle because the presence of God was there. We are given no further explanation about why Moses was unable to enter. It does seem a little odd since we were told before that Moses was able to be in the presence of God. This could simply be a statement describing that it was now the duty of the priest to enter the tabernacle and not the duty of Moses.

From this point on, until the Israelites reached the promise land, the cloud would dwell over the tabernacle in the day. When it was time for the Israelites to move, the cloud would lift up and lead them. The cloud would turn into a fire by night so that the children of Israel could continually see that the presence of the Lord was with them (vs 34-38).

How Does this Apply to Me?

In Deuteronomy 31:6, the Israelites were told, “Be strong and courageous. Do not fear or be in dread of them, for it is the LORD your God who goes with you. He will not leave you or forsake you.” God wasn't just telling the Israelites something they hadn't seen. They experienced it as they saw His presence continually with them. Though you don't have the visible presence of God among you today, you have something much better. You have the Holy Spirit, the presence of God, living inside of you. This presence can help guide and direct you in how you should live your life. You might think it would be easier if you saw the presence of God in a cloud, but a study of the Israelites shows that it wasn't. Just as the Israelites were to choose to yield to the plan of God when the cloud moved, you are to yield to the Holy Spirit when He moves in your life.

Suggestions for Prayer

- * *Thank God for the Holy Spirit living inside of you.*
- * *Ask God to help you continually acknowledge His presence.*

Thought for the day

When were the Israelites to erect the tabernacle (vs 1-2)?

Where was the ark of the testimony to be placed (vs 3)?

Why do you think it was placed there?

What are the items that would be placed in the tabernacle (vs 4-8)?

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.
- 5.
- 6.

Why do you think God wanted them to anoint everything in the tabernacle (vs 9-10)?

What position was Aaron given (vs 11-13)?

Who else were to serve as priests (vs 14-15)?

Why do you think it was important for Moses to follow all the instructions of God (vs 16)?

Why do you think there was such a great emphasis placed on the tabernacle and it being setup exactly how God described?

What were they to wash when they approached the tabernacle (vs 31-32)?

Why do you think they were commanded to do this?

What happened once the tabernacle was finished (vs 34)?

Why was Moses not able to enter (vs 35)?

Where did the presence of God settle (vs 36)?

How did God use this to lead His people (vs 36-38)?

Memorization

(review this week's memory verse)

Proverbs 3:1 My son, do not forget my teaching, but let your heart keep my commandments, 2 for length of days and years of life and peace they will add to you. 3 Let not steadfast love and faithfulness forsake you; bind them around your neck; write them on the tablet of your heart. 4 So you will find favor and good success in the sight of God and man. 5 Trust in the LORD with all your heart, and do not lean on your own understanding. 6 In all your ways acknowledge him, and he will make straight your paths. 7 Be not wise in your own eyes; fear the LORD, and turn away from evil. 8 It will be healing to your flesh and refreshment to your bones. 9 Honor the LORD with your wealth and with the firstfruits of all your produce; 10 then your barns will be filled with plenty, and your vats will be bursting with wine. 11 My son, do not despise the LORD's discipline or be weary of his reproof, 12 for the LORD reproves him whom he loves, as a father the son in whom he delights. 13 Blessed is the one who finds wisdom, and the one who gets understanding, 14 for the gain from her is better than gain from silver and her profit better than gold. 15 She is more precious than jewels, and nothing you desire can compare with her. 16 Long life is in her right hand; in her left hand are riches and honor. 17 Her ways are ways of pleasantness, and all her paths are peace. 18 She is a tree of life to those who lay hold of her; those who hold her fast are called blessed. 19 The LORD by wisdom founded the earth; by understanding he established the heavens; 20 by his knowledge the deeps broke open, and the clouds drop down the dew. 21 My son, do not lose sight of these— keep sound wisdom and discretion, 22 and they will be life for your soul and adornment for your neck. 23 Then you will walk on your way securely, and your foot will not stumble. 24 If you lie down, you will not be afraid; when you lie down, your sleep will be sweet. 25 Do not be afraid of sudden terror or of the ruin of the wicked, when it comes, 26 for the LORD will be your confidence and will keep your foot from being caught.

