

Gaining a Heart to Give

Exodus 35:1-29

Pastor Guy Gray

Turning Spiritual Vision into Practical Reality

Exodus 34 is one of those chapters that can take you to the heights of spiritual experience. It's all about the Glory of God. It reveals the very heart of God. It illustrates a face to face relationship with God that literally transforms a life from the inside out. It is pretty "lofty" stuff! But then with Exodus 35, we are brought right back down to earth. This is the beauty of the story of God in Exodus. We get to see both sides of the equation. We get to see the inner workings of a deeply spiritual relationship with God as Moses grows in his faith and experience with the Lord. But then we are always confronted with the practical "ground level" challenge of real life in a broken and needy world. There is a major lesson in this. The lesson is turning spiritual vision into practical reality. It is not enough for Moses to have a grand vision of God on the mountain, as awesome as that is. It is not enough for Moses or the other Israelites to have a private personal spiritual experience. The goal is to turn spiritual vision into practical, tangible reality in the real world. And so God called them to build something together. God called them to come together to work and sweat and create something amazing in this world that could touch people's lives in a concrete way. This is always the way of God in our world.

The Things that Mean the Most to Us in Life Also Require the Most of Us

Exodus 35 is primarily about the taking of an offering so that the Israelites could build the tabernacle of God. This was the theme that was introduced back in Exodus 25, before the unfortunate "Golden Calf" episode. This was God's intention all along. God wants His people to build something tangible in this world that will be a testimony to His glory and His presence. This will be the most meaningful thing that these Israelites will ever build in their lifetime. But take note the things that mean the most to us in life also require the most of us. This is what it means to be really "invested" in something. And so the Lord tells the people to take an offering for the work of the Lord. In order to turn spiritual vision into practical reality the people are going to have to give. It's as simple and as practical as that. If the work of the Lord is going to actually take place, not just in someone's dreams or in their private inner spiritual experience, but in a tangible world impacting way, then the people are going to have to make a sacrifice and give to the Lord. As we will learn, all three dimensions of practical giving are represented in this chapter. *This is the giving of "time, talents and treasures."*

Why a Willing Heart is the Key

The theme repeated most often in this passage is that of the "willing heart." This is the most powerful part of the lesson. God wants our hearts. The attitude and love of our heart is only a feeling or idea until it is expressed in some concrete action—the things we actually do. What we do with our money and our "stuff" is probably the greatest window into what is really going on inside our hearts. It makes us ask the question—if I am not really willing to give generously to the Lord, then why not? Does God really have my heart and my life? If I have received the gift of life and redemption through Christ then shouldn't I express my love back to God by giving in a tangible way to His ongoing work in this broken world? And by the way, isn't it by the Lord's blessing that I have the things that I have anyway? Doesn't it really all belong to Him? In many ways this whole passage is a giant challenge for us to examine our hearts, our priorities, our faith and our love of God.

Changed Lives = Giving Lives & Giving People Change the World

What we find here is that the people do give—generously! They give because their lives have been changed by God's gift of redemption. They also caught the vision of what God can do in and through their lives in this world. They want to see that become a practical reality. Then there is the whole golden calf thing as well. Maybe they also know that to stay free of the idols of this world they need to give to God generously. This way they will continually let go of the idols of this world and live out their faith in the Lord and their spiritual values in the real world. The bottom line is that when our lives are touched and changed by the Lord, we each gain a heart to give—only giving people actually change the world! May the Lord help us to give—from the heart—for His glory!

Questions for Reflection & Discussion

Read Exodus 35:1-29

Spirituality that impacts the world

One of the lessons from this week is that of turning “spiritual vision into practical, tangible reality.” How does this reflect God’s heart for the world around us? Why is not enough to just have a “lofty” spiritual experience?

Willing Hearts

What you do with your money and your stuff is one of the greatest windows into what is really going on in your heart. Respond to this statement—is it a bit convicting? Why or why not? To what extent do you feel compelled to “willingly” and generously give to God because of what He has given to you? How might God be calling you to give right now?

WEDNESDAY 05/16

HS Pure Choice 07'
OSU, Corvallis
Meet @ 4:30pm, RWLG
Flyers in the lobby
Call Josh for Info

FRI/SAT 05/18-19

4TH/5TH Safari Sams
Overnighter
Check in starts at
Safari Sams @ 8:45

SUNDAY 05/20

Jr. High Movie Night
5:00pm @ Todd & Mary
Halvorson's
See Josh for Details

SATURDAY 05/19

New Mom's Brunch
11:30am @ Lake Grove
Contact Annie
Schilperoort @
880-4941

SATURDAY 05/19

Ministry Prayer Time
8-9:15am @ RWLG

SATURDAY 05/20

El Salvador
Information Meeting
7:15pm @ Lake Grove

SATURDAY 05/26

Family Fellowship
Day at the Park

Photo: Katie & Johanna Schmidt enjoy a great afternoon with their River West mom's group. If you are a new mom and interested in regular laughter, conversation & encouragement join Annie Schilperoort next Saturday May 19th at 10:30 at Lake Grove for a New Mom's Brunch. It will be a fun morning to get to know other mom's! RSVP with Annie at 880.4941.

