

When Jesus is first His people give gladly.

Lesson for Sunday, January 26, 2025

MAIN TEXTS: Exodus 25; 35:20-29; 40:16-38

BEGIN WITH SOME POPCORN TESTIMONIES:

- ⇒ Over the last two weeks, the class members have heard stewardship testimonies. What about them? Ask the following questions to facilitate a brief discussion on the topic.
- ⇒ How did you first learn about stewardship? Who taught you?
- ⇒ Is there anyone that found it difficult to tithe at some point? Let them explain...
- ⇒ Who can say that they have been blessed as a result of their giving?

INTRODUCTION:

- ⇒ Today we wrap up our annual stewardship emphasis. Today is Chest of Joash Sunday in our morning service. *Be sure to thank all the people for being present!*
- ⇒ Who can remember the three points that make up the foundation for biblical stewardship?
 - God owns it all; we are His managers; the tithe belongs to the Lord.
- ⇒ The one thing we must remember is that our giving is more than a mechanical act. We can give with the wrong attitude! (Remember the Pharisee's in Luke 21:1-4.)
- ⇒ We know the Bible instructs us to be cheerful in our giving (see 2 Corinthians 9:7). But what else does the Bible teach us about our attitude as we give? That is the focus of this week's lesson.

BIBLE STUDY: *Three characteristics of a Godly attitude toward giving...*

1. Redeemed people give from the heart.
 - a. In Exodus 25, God is dictating a message to the Israelites through Moses (1). Remember what God had done for these people!
 - i. They were enslaved in Egypt for over 400 years.
 - ii. God delivered them from slavery and brought them through the Red Sea by His power.
 - b. As God began to establish His new relationship with His people, He asked them to bring an offering (2). How did God describe what their attitude should be?
 - i. "Give it willingly" – their offering should not be viewed as a forced, legalistic rule to follow.
 - ii. "With his heart" – they should give an offering to God from their heart, a heart that was warm toward God for His many blessings.
 - iii. Compare this account with Exodus 35:21-22, 29. This is a theme throughout God's instructions to the Israelites.
 - iv. DISCUSS: What has God done for us? Should there be a similarity in our giving?
 - c. Interesting point: If you read Exodus 35:20, you see the end of God's instructions – through Moses – to the children of Israel.
 - i. Chapters 25-31 – God delivers His message to Moses.
 - ii. 35:1 – Moses gathers the congregation to convey God's message.
 - iii. 35:20 – Moses finishes delivering the message.
 - iv. Now look at verses 21 and 22 – both verses begin with "and they came."
 1. This is a stylistic parallel which contains an indication to the swift response of the children of Israel to the request for contributions to the Sanctuary that God had requested.

2. As soon as Moses ended his address they left to fetch their gifts and immediately returned with their offerings.
 - v. This is a beautiful picture of a people giving to the Lord with the right heart attitude. They were not giving out of duty; they were giving to God because God has so bountifully given to them.
2. Redeemed people give of whatever God has entrusted to them.
 - a. When we observe the giving of the Israelites, we see that they gave willingly. Read Exodus 35:21.
 - i. APPLICATION: What is your attitude toward your giving?
 - ii. Most of us probably give without much thought – it is a good habit! At the same time, we ought to consistently evaluate our motives. Are we giving willingly? Are we giving gladly? Or are we going through the motions.
 - b. Second, we see first that they gave of their possessions. Read Exodus 35:22.
 - i. Each person is called upon to give, and each person’s giving is between himself and the Lord.
 - ii. Every person doesn’t have the same possessions, so every person can’t give the same amount.
 - iii. But remember the Lord’s comments on the poor widow (Luke 21). It’s not the amount that impresses Jesus, it is our heart attitude toward Him.
 - c. Third, we see that they gave of their abilities. Read Exodus 35:25-26.
 - i. Their giving was much more than their money!
 - ii. Stewardship includes our talents and service. Stewardship includes our time.
 - iii. How has God especially gifted you to give?
 3. Redeemed people give because of what can be accomplished together.
 - a. Imagine what the tabernacle meant to the children of Israel.
 - b. Imagine the (healthy) sense of pride they had when it had been built and God’s glory filled the tabernacle (see Exodus 40:34).
 - c. With each person giving willingly, from their heart, through their possessions and abilities, something great was accomplished!
 - d. The same is true today! God’s plan for this age is the local church.
 - i. When a group of believers come together within a church, they can accomplish much more together than they ever can alone.
 - ii. God’s plan is for His people to fund the work of the local church (Malachi 3:10).
 - e. FBT is a powerful testimony to what can be accomplished when God’s people choose to simply obey and follow the Lord.
 - i. ILLUSTRATION: Our missionary to the Philippines, Marc Buxton, recently shared how his first church plant was recently able to build their own building. That church will be used for decades to come to reach people for Christ.
 - ii. Our church gave Marc a significant amount of money to help with the construction. If you gave, you have a part in that work!
 - iii. That one illustration can be multiplied 100x’s over through the work of FBT and the missionary families we support. That should excite us and motivate us to even more faithful giving!

CONCLUSION: When is the last time you evaluated your own heart attitude toward your stewardship? Are there adjustments you need to make?