

Title: More than Enough  
Text: Exodus 35.1 – 36.7  
Theme: True repentance is seen in true generosity  
Series: Exodus # 54  
Prop Stmtnt Worship-driven generosity will meet all true needs for the Lord's work.

Read Text:

On behalf of the Finance Team, I would like to read the following statement. Although there are two Sundays left in the year, we are no longer receiving any offerings for 2009. At this point, all of our building indebtedness has been paid off, all ministries are fully funded, all equipment needs, furniture needs, sound, lighting and video upgrades are done and improvements are provided for, all missionaries fully supported, all internships are endowed, new busses have been purchased, a fully-functioning commercial kitchen has been designed, built and is now operational, additional homes for interns have been purchased and remodeled, our church-planting fund is more than adequate and all of our staffing needs are completely satisfied. At this point there is not one additional thing that we can think of, no families in the church are without basic needs, so we are suggesting that you find other ministries or schools to support since we have all that we could ever use for the rest of this year. Ok, that didn't come from the Finance Team, but wouldn't we love to hear that sometime?

When you stop and think about this, it initially seems to be a little, well, ironic, in a sense. The God of all, who with his very breath, created the entire universe and everything in it, who, by virtue of being Creator and Sustainer is both author and owner. He owns the copyright on copyright – if you know what I mean. This God, who just destroyed the economy, religion and military of the world's superpower of its day, opened up a way of escape for the children of Israel through the Red Sea, who feeds them daily with manna from the sky is now taking up an offering from a bunch of homeless, former slaves, living in a desert, so that he can have a place to stay. Does that not strike you as being a bit odd? Well, perhaps we need to completely overhaul our way of thinking when it comes to giving. Since God does not need what we have, then maybe we need to see that giving is not so much for his benefit, as it is for our growth. When you step back from the text for a second it is obvious that God cares about how his children handle their finances, which means this is a good and godly issue to address.

There are plenty of motives that abound for giving. At this time of year, they are on full display. For example,

1) Guilt (true or false)

If I walk into a store, I hear the bell ringing, and see the red kettle. It doesn't matter if I just put money in the last one, I feel like a scrooge walking by one and not putting something in. And if I don't, I feel like I have to explain why I didn't. But, no sooner do I get done with that, when someone is standing in between lanes of traffic at intersections collecting for something else, many cashiers are asking me if I want to donate extra

money to another cause and there are people that I pass on the side of the road who are asking for something and solicitations come in the mail with pictures of needy situations. I know that I am not alone on this. There are many needs. So, in this season of asking, I am not interested in simply being one more bell that irritates you. Far from it! I am interested in helping you discover what these people experienced so that our joy is truly increased. So, yes, the message this morning is about giving because that is what this text is all about. However, this text is not about giving because of false guilt.

## 2) Good Feelings

One of the reasons why we are encouraged to give is because it will make us feel good, and it does when you know that your gift is going to help. In fact, truth be told, growing in the grace of generosity is an incredible joy! However, that is not the motive that this text speaks of as the reason for giving.

## 3) Glory (self)

Do you find anywhere in this text a promise from Moses that a plaque with the names of those who give the most will be inscribed on the Ark of the Covenant, and the names of those in the second-tier will have their names engraved on the altar of incense, and the names of the those in the third-tier will have their names engraved on the bronze altar, and the rest will get their initials in the curtains? No, but how many charities would simply dissolve if their donors were not listed somewhere?

## 4) Need

Even need is not mentioned as a driving motivation for people to give. Now, need is a legitimate reason to give. This is obvious in the NT, when Paul takes up an offering from the predominantly Gentile churches for the believers in Jerusalem. But the children of Israel were not taking up a collection in this case because the LORD was in need of it. Seriously, talk about giving somebody a gift who has everything – this is clearly a case of that.

The motive for giving is simple. Notice verse 5. *“From what you have, take an offering for the LORD. Everyone who is willing is to bring to the LORD an offering....”* No fund-raising donor banquets, no direct-mail or phone-call solicitors, just a command from the LORD who says to take an offering from those who are willing. That idea is expanded on just a bit down in verse 20, where we read, *“and everyone was willing and whose heart moved him came and brought an offering the LORD for the work on the Tent of Meeting....”* Go on to verse 22, *“All who were willing, men and women alike came and brought gold jewelry of all kinds... They all presented their gold as a wave offering to the LORD.”*

There are several things to note here. 1) The people, who are willing are called to give what they have and to give what they do. Some of the people who have, aren't so great at doing (construction and sewing) and some of the people who are skilled craftsmen may

not have that much money to give. 2) This is the first time that women are specifically mentioned as being part of this process. The men and women alike were called to give and to serve (that is those who are willing). Every person was given an opportunity. Later on we find out (38.24) that they brought around 28,000 pounds of gold, ninety-six thousand pounds of silver and seventy-seven thousand pounds of bronze. The gold alone is equivalent to about \$504,000,000. So, this is not only an enormous amount of money, but the manner in which this is collected is described as a wave offering. That means that 3) this offering was given with great joy. This was quite a scene. I had an opportunity to see an offering similar to this when I was in Haiti. It was harvest time and the people were bringing as an offering to the Lord, their crops. I watched as they literally danced with joy at God's provision from their gardens. They happily gave this to the church for the Lord's work. Why would these poor people in Haiti and these rescued bond-slaves in Exodus find such pleasure in giving to the Lord? Chapter 36 informs us that they gave so much that their generosity was getting in the way of carrying out the work and that the people actually had to be restrained from giving. That really is remarkable. Here were people responding to the command of God with enthusiasm that was clearly driven by a heart of worship.

But notice how the text begins. The first three verses are a review of the laws concerning the Sabbath. We have not only been through that when manna was provided (chapter 16) and then when the law was formally given (20) and again when the covenant was renewed (34.21). So, why would these specific instructions be repeated here, especially when none of the other 10 commandments are repeated? I believe that it is because, if there was ever a convenient excuse to work on the Sabbath, this was it. But, even the sacred and important work of constructing the tabernacle was not so important that you could violate the law of God in order to get it accomplished. So, God calls his people to participate in his work because it will stretch their joy, it will teach them about obedience and it will help them understand worship from the heart. Sure, it is all of God's anyway. But he loans it to people to grow them and stretch them and test them. We are in a very similar situation. When we give of our tithes and offerings, we are not doing it because someone is holding a gun to our head and threatening us. This is something that we do willingly. We know that ultimately it is God who gives it us, and God who allows us the opportunity to be involved in his plan. So, rather than us feeling the squeeze, this text is about how God graciously spreads his glory through the joyful giving of his people for the accomplishment of his work. The result was there was more than enough given for the Lord's work. Brothers and sisters there will be more than enough for the Lord's work when:

1. **We all realize what we have been saved from.**

Step back and look at where this comes in the Exodus account. You see a picture of what happens to a life that understands God's grace. They were rescued from slavery, rescued from the death angel, and then rescued at the Red Sea. When you realize what God has saved you from, and I mean really understand the hopeless condition that you were in, and the magnitude of God's grace to deliver you from that, your whole outlook is different. In fact, if you are not amazed at God's grace to you, then it is very likely that

you have never experienced God's saving grace. One of the marks of being a follower of Christ is one whose heart has been changed by grace and now reflects grace. My early days of ministry were influenced by the example of Robert Murray McCheyne, a Scottish minister whose love for God and devotion to his people continues as an example to this day, even though Robert died at the age of 29. Robert addressed what he thought was an ungenerous spirit within his church family and said,

*I am concerned for the poor but more for you. I know not what Christ will say to you in the great day.... I fear there are many hearing me who may know well that they are not Christians, because they do not love to give. To give largely and liberally, not grudgingly at all, requires a new heart; an old heart would rather part with its life-blood than its money. Oh my friends! Enjoy your money; make the most of it; give none away; enjoy it quickly for I can tell you, you will be beggars throughout eternity.*

Generosity, that is a willing spirit to give comes from a heart that has been transformed by God's grace. God did not have to promise to rescue Israel from Egypt, but he did and then he did it. God did not have to rescue you or me from meaningless and nothingness, and judgment, but he did. But there's more. There will be more than enough for the Lord's work when

## **2. We all realize what we have been called to.**

The night that Israel was delivered from Egypt, God ordained for them to plunder the Egyptians. They did it in a very unusual way. They did not steal or threaten or murder. They simply asked. God told them to. Meanwhile God had so thoroughly disrupted and disturbed life in Egypt that the Egyptians were willing to give the children of Israel anything and everything in order to get rid of them. So, that night, the children of Israel went from slaves to free and just as amazing, from being poor to being wealthy. Now, based on what was collected for the tabernacle, it is obvious that they were almost crazy wealthy. In fact, it looks like that God orchestrated the scene in such a way that in one night they were basically compensated for their many years of slavery. Now, what typically happens to people who, a moment before had nothing, but now have something of value?

You don't have to look far do you? Most children, after receiving a gift for Christmas develop a fierce territorialism don't they? A sibling may say, "Hey can I play with that?" And you can just watch the battle start brewing. It's no different for an adult. Let's say that someone gives you a brand new car. I mean, just gives it to you. And the very next day, someone dings it, or someone else wants to borrow it. It is so easy to hold on to what we now perceive to be ours, when moments before we did not have it. What happened to these people, who now, when given the opportunity, respond with such overwhelming generosity? I believe that they realized that the reason that God had given them such skills and had given them such things was to allow them to be part of what God was doing to establish a testimony for himself among them and in the world. They were called to be his people. That is, they were called to be the people with whom God

was going to live. And they were called to not only construct a tabernacle, so that God could live there, but they were called to be the people that God was raising up to be an example to the world of what it means to live as one of His. In other words, they were to be the kind of people that the rest of the world could look to and see how thrilling, satisfying, joyful, holy, truthful, safe and humble life is like when you happily live under the reign of the one, true King. Like King, like people! Our King is a generous King! Our King is a merciful King. So, what should his people look like? We should look like generous and merciful people. There will be more than enough for the Lord's work when

3. **We realize that giving is a privilege** (not just a responsibility). (20-21)

When you are young (and not so bright) you think that school is terrible. You think that until you become aware of what your life would be like if you did not have a mind that could learn or if you did not have opportunities to study. Your job can be your excuse for a rotten attitude until you don't have a job, or until your body breaks down under sickness and you are unable to work and then you realize what a blessing that work really is. That's how it is with giving to the Lord's work. If your heart is not right, then you will try to see how little you can give. You will look for every little excuse you can come up with as to why you are spiritually superior to be stingy. Listen, God does not need me to accomplish his work. I like what Mordecai said to Esther. Don't think that you are the only hope for the Jews. If you don't do your part, God will raise up someone else. But, you will have forfeited the opportunity to be connected at the heart level and will have forfeited the privilege of being part of what God's plan. Cornerstone, if we live for ourselves and see how little we can do, God's plan will go on. He will simply find someone else to do it. And, he will find a way to shift resources to those in order to accomplish it. When we realize that the reason that God has blessed us with money, materials, a mind and abilities is to show this world that we live for His kingdom, then, there will be plenty to meet the needs. There will be more than enough for the Lord's work when

4. **We realize that giving is to the Lord.** (v.22-24)

God demanded the finest of materials and the highest level of craftsmanship in the construction of this tabernacle, because this would be a statement to the world of his beauty, his excellence, and his glory. The materials that were brought were not only in large quantity, they were of the highest of quality. The precious metals, the finest of linen, the costly gems, the skilled embroidery all came together to make a statement. The statement was; this is what we think of God. Your giving is a reflection of what you think about God and what we think about God's plan. That is why this offering was not a tax that was assessed on the people, it was an act of sacrifice that was prompted by a willing heart. If you want to know what you really think of God's worth and the priority of his kingdom, then look at how you have given, with what you have been able to do. Giving to the Lord is simply returning what we have borrowed. If this text bothers you and you are uncomfortable with this issue, and you find yourself being skeptical, then not only do you not understand the heart of the leadership here, but you need the Spirit of God to do some surgery on your heart. If, on the other hand, your heart is nodding in

agreement and you connect with the pleasantness that comes with being a cheerful giver to the Lord's work, then that should encourage you that you are reflecting Christ. There will be plenty for the Lord's work when

5. **We realize what matters and what doesn't.**

What were these people giving to? They were giving to what the Lord had ordained to be the means through which he was going to display his glory to the nations. When you think about it, was there any greater use of their resources? Was there any greater cause? The tabernacle was eventually replaced by the temple. The tabernacle and the temple were previews of Christ! The glory of God that filled the tabernacle was a preview of God living on earth, not in a tent of materials, but in the tent of a body. Brothers and sisters, Christ is the ultimate! When Christ ascended back into heaven he told his disciples that he was doing that so that the Spirit could descend and carry on the work of Christ's tabernacling, through the church. That is what we are part of. Do you realize that the church is the means that God has ordained, that is, the church is the means that God has raised up to be the means through which he displays his glory to the nations? We, as local churches are part of the tabernacle of God that he is raising up all over this world. Brothers and sisters, you cannot give to a greater cause. You cannot invest in a more worthwhile endeavor. You cannot serve in a more noble, more life-changing, more important mission than the church.

It is always important that we ask, what does this have to do with Christ? I have already touched on the fact that the tabernacle was a preview of Christ, but there is a final thought that I want to leave you with. We follow a King and a Captain who perfectly lived what he preached. He gave his time to speak about and to build His kingdom. He did not use resources to indulge himself in a life of luxury and ease. Everything that he had was poured out for the sake of others. At the end of his life, he had given it all away, including his back to the scourgers, his beard to the tormenters, and his life for sinners. But his death was not the end. As the one who gave what we couldn't in our place, he has received the throne that one day he will sit on. That's our King. His kingdom is made up of people who follow him by trusting in him alone. The evidence of that trust is seen in lives that increasingly look like him and value what he values. Christ died for the church. So, what matters to you?