

introduction

Last week, we looked at Jesus' parable in Luke 12, where we learned the danger of greed and the folly of storing up treasures only for ourselves. We ended by considering Jesus' invitation to be "rich toward God" through generosity.

This week, we turn to the story of God's people in Exodus 35. Here, the Israelites are invited to give toward the building of the tabernacle — the place where God's presence would dwell with them. What stands out in this passage is not pressure or compulsion, but the joyful willingness of the people. Together, their giving — whether precious metals, yarns, wood, or skill — created a dwelling place for God among them.



Can you share a gift or act of generosity that met a need you couldn't meet on your own? How did it affect you?

read

Exodus 35:4-10, 20-29 (NIV)

⁴ Moses said to the whole Israelite community, "This is what the Lord has commanded: ⁵ From what you have, take an offering for the Lord. Everyone who is willing is to bring to the Lord an offering of gold, silver and bronze; ⁶ blue, purple and scarlet yarn and fine linen; goat hair; ⁷ ram skins dyed red and another type of durable leather; acacia wood; ⁸ olive oil for the light; spices for the anointing oil and for the fragrant incense; ⁹ and onyx stones and other gems to be mounted on the ephod and breastpiece.

¹⁰ "All who are skilled among you are to come and make everything the Lord has commanded:

²⁰ Then the whole Israelite community withdrew from Moses' presence, ²¹ and everyone who was willing and whose heart moved them came and brought an offering to the Lord for the work on the tent of meeting, for all its service, and for the sacred garments. ²² All who were willing, men and women alike, came and brought gold jewelry of all kinds: brooches, earrings, rings and ornaments. They all presented their gold as a wave offering to the Lord. ²³ Everyone

who had blue, purple or scarlet yarn or fine linen, or goat hair, ram skins dyed red or the other durable leather brought them. ²⁴ Those presenting an offering of silver or bronze brought it as an offering to the Lord, and everyone who had acacia wood for any part of the work brought it. ²⁵ Every skilled woman spun with her hands and brought what she had spun — blue, purple or scarlet yarn or fine linen. ²⁶ And all the women who were willing and had the skill spun the goat hair. ²⁷ The leaders brought onyx stones and other gems to be mounted on the ephod and breastpiece. ²⁸ They also brought spices and olive oil for the light and for the anointing oil and for the fragrant incense. ²⁹ All the Israelite men and women who were willing brought to the Lord freewill offerings for all the work the Lord through Moses had commanded them to do.

Take a few moments to reflect on the Scripture. Share some insights, questions, or points that strike you. Then read what follows.

context

Exodus 35 takes place after Israel has been rescued from Egypt (chs. 1-13), wanders in the wilderness (chs. 13-24), and brought into the covenant with God at Mount Sinai, only to fall into idolatry with the golden calf (ch. 32). Yet God, in his mercy, renews his covenant with his people (ch. 34). Now, in chapters 35-40, the focus shifts from God's instructions for the tabernacle (chs. 25-31) to the people's faithful implementation of those instructions.

willing hearts

A striking emphasis in Exodus 35 is that giving was voluntary and joyful. In verse 5, Moses' invitation is clear: "Take among you a contribution to the Lord. Whoever is of a willing heart, let him bring it (v. 5). The people were not coerced or pressured; rather, they gave from a "willing heart." Men and women alike, leaders and commoners, each contributed what they could — whether costly items or skilled labor. The inclusivity of this invitation shows that everyone has something meaningful to bring to God's work. Building the tabernacle was not limited to only certain individuals; the entire community shared in the vision and work of building the dwelling place of God.

This is the kind of generosity that God delights in: cheerful, sacrificial, and motivated by love (cf. [2 Corinthians 9:7](#)). Our participation in God's mission is not measured by the size of our gift but by the posture of our hearts. When Christians give freely, cheerfully, and willingly, not under compulsion, whether that's time, treasures, talents, skills, their offerings become more than just contributions; they become a visible witness to God's grace at work among them.

"Each of you should give what you have decided in your heart to give, not reluctantly or under compulsion, for God loves a cheerful giver."

—2 Corinthians 9:7

discuss

1. When you reflect on your own giving — whether it's time, money, skills, etc. — what usually motivates you (e.g., duty, guilt, joy, or gratitude)?
2. Looking back on your own journey of learning to give cheerfully (2 Corinthians 9:7), what encouragement or insights could you share with others? What has helped or is helping you grow in this way?
3. How can Christians encourage and support one another to keep growing in generosity?

every gift counts

Exodus 35 reminds us that everything needed to build the tabernacle — precious metals, fabrics, wood, oils, gemstones — was already provided by God. Much of the abundance that the Israelites offered up most likely came from when God moved the Egyptians to supply them as they departed (cf. [Exodus 12:35-36](#)).¹ The Israelites possessed these things not because of

¹ Motyer, J. Alec, *The Message of Exodus, Bible Speaks Today*, InterVarsity Press, 2005.

their own ability or merit, but because of God's gracious deliverance from Egypt. Even their skills in crafting, spinning, and artistry were God-given abilities, now redirected toward building the tabernacle. In the end, all that we can offer to God is what he has first given to us. Every gift we bring, ultimately, flows out of his kindness and grace. Our material resources, talents, and even opportunities to serve are signs of God's kindness, entrusted to us for his glory.

For the church today, the pattern remains the same. God supplies his people with everything necessary for worship and ministry. Just as he provided both the materials and the artisans for the tabernacle, he continues to supply his church with gifts of every kind. And everyone has something to bring — every gift matters for the building up of God's church, which is God's people. Generosity, then, is not only about finances. It is the offering of our time, our abilities, and our whole selves in joyful response to the God who first gave everything to us.

discuss

4. Why was it significant that the Israelites had resources only because God gave them favor with the Egyptians (cf. [Exodus 12:33-36](#))?
5. In a culture that prizes self-made success, this passage reminds us that all we have comes from God. How does that reality resonate with you personally?
6. Can you think of a moment when you realized that something you thought you “earned” was actually a gift from God? How did that experience shape the way you view your resources or abilities?
7. How might you use your talents, time, or resources to serve those around you — and for Christians, to support and advance the mission of Redeemer West Side?

closing the series

Share with the group one personal takeaway: a habit, a mindset, or a tangible action that will help them practice “fearless generosity” in the coming week(s).

group application

Consider how your group can serve together at RWS or by engaging our neighborhood in the coming weeks:

- **Block Cleanup:** Join the 83rd Street Neighbors on **Saturday, October 11**, from 10 am to 12 pm to clean the block, meet neighbors, and enjoy refreshments afterwards. Tools, gloves, and bags provided. Sign up [here](#).
- **Hell’s Kitchen Pickleball:** Lauren Davis leads a growing group of pickleball lovers at a park in Hell’s Kitchen on most evenings. We’re looking for additional Redeemer West Siders to join her endeavor in playing as a means to connect with locals and being a regular presence in the neighborhood. So if you enjoy pickleball and being there for others, please send her an [email](#) to participate.
- **All Angels’ Church:** Serve meals on the 2nd Sunday of each month, from 5:35 pm to 7:15 pm. Sign up [here](#).
- **Church family meal:** [email](#) Nicole Harris to volunteer

pray together

Ask God to grow in you a spirit of joyful, willing generosity that blesses our church, our neighborhood, and our city.

announcements

- Tuesday, September 23 | **Alpha, 7-9 pm**
Alpha is a dinner and conversation series thoughtfully designed for those open to exploring the Christian faith. Learn more about the series (which culminates in a getaway retreat) and think of a friend or two in your life who you can invite!
redeemerws.com/alpha
- Sunday, September 28 | **CG Leader Huddle, 1:15-2:30 pm**
Meeting for all CG Leaders. RSVP via email from Susana.
- Sunday, September 28 | **Spiritual Practices Workshop, 1:15-2:30 pm**
In a new workshop series, explore spiritual practices and work through how to practically live them out in our busy and complex world. This month's spiritual practice will be on generosity.
redeemerws.com/spiritualpractices
- Sunday, October 5 | **Church Family Meal, after both services**
Gather with your CG or sit with someone new for fellowship over a meal together.
redeemerws.com/familymeal