

Pastor Jim Jackson, 8/7/16

*Exodus: Finding Freedom, pt. 25—The People Give to God*

Exodus 35:4-29; 36:2-7

### **The nation is given an opportunity to GIVE**

After a humiliating and harsh rebuke from God for breaking the covenant, Israel is given a chance at redemption. *Even in failure and punishment, God is merciful and redemptive.* Forty days earlier Israel had willingly given their gold to Aaron to make an idol. Now they are asked to willingly give to God for their place of worship—the tabernacle. *The ironic thing about this offering was that God had given it all to them through the Egyptians when they left Egypt* (Ex. 12:35, 36)! Sadly, some Israelites who had been slaves with almost nothing six months earlier were not moved to give back to God at all. *All possessions belong to God before we get it and belong to Him after we leave it—it's up to us in how we invest it.* Everyone has a something to give and opportunities to give it. Believers must look for every chance to bless others with God's blessing. To be able to give is a gift, to be able to bless others is a blessing. *Believers are overseers of God's property not owners* (Matt. 25:15-30).

### **The nation responds with overwhelming GENEROSITY**

*The people give their time:* everyone who saw God's work as a priority sacrificed their time to make it happen. Everyone has equal amounts of time in the day from God and opportunities to serve Him must take precedence. *The people give their talent:* all those who had skill in a particular area stepped forward to do it. Not all people are gifted the same and they must use their abilities to bless others with the skill God gives them. *The people give their treasure:* gold, silver, bronze, jewelry, gems, colored thread, colored linen, animal skins, wood, oil and spices. Owning these would be vital to social status and bartering or trading power yet they give freely to God. *All gifts of God are to be managed not amassed.* God could have demanded the offering but wanted *generosity* as the foundation for His place of worship. Israel is challenged to 'open-handed living' and they respond joyfully. In fact, they give so generously they are told to *stop giving!* It is more blessed to give than receive and God loves a cheerful giver (2 Cor. 9:7). *The quality of the heart determines the quality and quantity of the gift* (Luke 21:3, 4). As Israel worshipped each week, those with generous hearts saw their offering used to honor God. *As no one can out-give God, thankfulness to Him is measured in generosity* (2 Sam. 24:24; Prov. 14:31)!