

A Willing Offering (1 Chr 29)

Building a House for God's Name: Studies in 1 & 2 Chronicles

I. REVIEW: BUILDING A HOUSE FOR GOD'S NAME

- A. As the Lord has been at work in our church over the last season, he has been calling us into a focused season of ***building the house***. This is not only because of the particular story that the Lord has written for this spiritual family (a season to rebuild after a season of difficulty) but is also a part of the broader call to the church in light of where we find ourselves in the current cultural and spiritual moment of our world.
- B. One of the specific ways that we are seeking to understand, strengthen, and establish what God has put before us in this season is by preaching through the books of Chronicles. These books were written to the exiles who had returned from the Babylonian captivity who were charged with repairing the house of the Lord that had been destroyed (see 1 Chr 9.1-2).
- C. The books are designed to inspire a people looking at the “ruins” to take up their place and work in partnership with God's purposes.
- D. In 1 Chronicles 17, David had desired to build a house (dwelling place) for the Lord. We have seen that David possessed a unique revelation of the need for a place where God could rest. This vision consumed his life and leadership, dictating much of what he was given to in his life.

¹Remember, O Lord, in David's favor... ²how he swore to the Lord and vowed to the Mighty One of Jacob, ³"I will not enter my house or get into my bed, ⁴I will not give sleep to my eyes or slumber to my eyelids, ⁵until I find a place for the Lord, a dwelling place for the Mighty One of Jacob. (Ps 132.1-5)

- E. However, God did not allow David to build the temple. Rather, he made a covenant with David, promising to give him a name and a kingdom that would last forever (1 Chr 17.7-14). The rest of 1 Chronicles is concerned with David ***making preparations*** for Solomon to become king and build the Temple. This included extensive preparations to ready the ***resources*** (ch. 22), the organization and administration necessary to ***facilitate the worship*** in the temple (chs. 23-27), and the ***exhortation to the people and Solomon*** to respond to the Lord with a whole heart (ch. 28).
- F. The final chapter of 1 Chronicles outlines the response of the people to the Lord (1 Chr 29.1-9), David's response in prayer (1 Chr 29.10-22), and the anointing of Solomon (1 Chr 29.23-30).

II. THE RESPONSE OF THE PEOPLE (1 CHR 29.1-9)

- A. The first section of this chapter highlights the response of the people of Israel to the call David has placed before them. David reminds the people that Solomon is young and therefore will be inexperienced in fulfilling the task before him. Because of this, he has prepared extensively — even of his own personal storehouses — to make sure Solomon has what is necessary to fulfill the task before him.

¹Solomon my son, whom alone God has chosen, is young and inexperienced, and the work is great, for the palace will not be for man but for the Lord God. ²So I have provided for the house of my God, so far as I was able... ³Moreover, in addition to all that I have provided for the holy house, I have a treasure of my own of gold and silver, and because of my devotion to the house of my God I give it to the house of my God. (1 Chr 29.1-3)

- B. David then calls for the people to respond to the Lord by offering him, in kind, a freewill offering of their own. David declares that there is a dynamic relationship between offering freely to the Lord and a posture of open-handed consecration to the work that the Lord has called them into.

⁵Who then will offer willingly, consecrating himself today to the Lord? (1 Chr 29.5)

- C. After hearing David's final call to respond to the Lord, the Chronicler narrates the response of the leaders of Israel. They responded to God by giving a **freewill offering** to the Lord as a demonstration of their commitment to respond to his call.

⁶Then the leaders of the fathers' houses made their freewill offerings, as did also the leaders of the tribes, the commanders of the thousands and of hundreds, and the officers over the king's work (I Chr 29.6)

- D. The act of giving caused great joy among the people and for David.

⁹Then the people rejoiced because they had given willingly, for with a whole heart they had offered freely to the Lord. David the king also rejoiced greatly. (I Chr 29.9)

III. A FREEWILL OFFERING

- A. Throughout the Scripture, there are two broad categories of gifts that the people of God are invited to participate in.

1. **Tithe**: The concept of the tithe is a Biblical commandment related to giving our firstfruits to the house of God (in our context this would be the local church). Through the OT, this was a tenth portion (10%) that was given on the net increase. For believers in the new covenant, the tithe remains an important (although not salvific) element of walking in obedience to Jesus (arguments can be made as to the percentage or the application). The principle of giving of the firstfruits demonstrates both a posture of **thankfulness** ("God, you have given me all of this") and **dependence** ("God, I trust that you will do more with my 90% than I could do on my own with 100%").
2. **Freewill offering**: Beyond tithing, the people of God were always given the opportunity to offer unto the Lord as their hearts were so moved.

- B. One of the realities that we must see throughout Scripture, is that the **freewill offering** often served as an external witness of an internal desire to respond to the work that the Lord was doing. We see that these offerings include:

1. **Finances and resources**: the use of particular resources to meet the needs of God's family as they step toward fulfilling his work.

¹The Lord said to Moses, "Speak to the people of Israel, that they take for me a contribution. From every man whose heart moves him you shall receive the contribution for me. ³And this is the contribution that you shall receive from them: gold, silver, and bronze, ⁴blue and purple and scarlet yarns and fine twined linen, goats' hair, ⁵tanned rams' skins, goatskins, acacia wood, ⁶oil for the lamps, spices for the anointing oil and for the fragrant incense, ⁷onyx stones, and stones for setting, for the ephod and for the breastpiece. ⁸And let them make me a sanctuary, that I may dwell in their midst. (Exod 25.1-8)

⁷They gave for the service of the house of God 5,000 talents and 10,000 darics of gold, 10,000 talents of silver, 18,000 talents of bronze and 100,000 talents of iron. ⁸And whoever had precious stones gave them to the treasury of the house of the Lord (I Chr 29.7-8)

⁴⁵And they were selling their possessions and belongings and distributing the proceeds to all, as any had need. (Acts 2.45)

2. **Labor and energy**: there are times when the external demonstration of commitment comes through sacrificial gifts of time and energy to do the work required to respond to what God has called.

⁷Thus says the Lord of hosts: Consider your ways. ⁸Go up to the hills and bring wood and build the house, that I may take pleasure in it... and be glorified... ¹⁴And the Lord stirred up... the spirit of all the remnant of the people. And they came and worked on the house of the Lord of hosts, their God. (Hag 1.7-8, 14)

3. **Skills and talents:** we also see that this includes individuals orienting their skills and trades in a way that serves to accomplish the work before God's people.

¹The Lord said to Moses, ²"See, I have called by name Bezalel the son of Uri, son of Hur, of the tribe of Judah, ³and I have filled him with the Spirit of God, with ability and intelligence, with knowledge and all craftsmanship, ⁴to devise artistic designs, to work in gold, silver, and bronze, ⁵in cutting stones for setting, and in carving wood, to work in every craft. (Exod 31.1-5)

- C. Practicing such offerings in the grace of God helps us to cultivate an inner disposition toward our resources such that we take God at his word and believe that there is a greater **blessedness of giving** than the apparent blessedness of receiving.

³⁵remember the words of the Lord Jesus... 'It is more blessed to give than to receive.' (Acts 20.35)

- D. As we are conformed into the image of Jesus, one of the markers of our maturity will be a greater disposition to meet the needs of others in the ways that present themselves before us (this is not always material, but can also be through prayer, operating in the gifts of the Spirit, service, etc.).
- E. Jesus himself demonstrated the **nature of God** by pouring himself out through his life. There is something about God's nature that is self-giving at his core that we are invited into through acts of generosity.

⁶though he was in the form of God... ⁷emptied himself, by taking the form of a servant (Phil 2.6-7)

²⁸the Son of Man came not to be served but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many (Matt 20.28)

- F. Paul emphasizes the glorious grace of generosity that was expressed among the Macedonian churches and how this gave demonstration to the grace of God made known in Christ Jesus.

¹We want you to know, brothers, about the grace of God that has been given among the churches of Macedonia, ²for in a severe test of affliction, their abundance of joy and their extreme poverty have overflowed in a wealth of generosity on their part. ³For they gave according to their means, as I can testify, and beyond their means, of their own accord, ⁴begging us earnestly for the favor [grace] of taking part in the relief of the saint — ⁵and this, not as we expected, but they gave themselves first to the Lord and then by the will of God to us. (2 Cor 8.1-5)

⁹For you know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that though he was rich, yet for your sake he became poor, so that you by his poverty might become rich (2 Cor 8.9)

- G. God desires to bring transformation within our hearts toward a spirit of generosity. Later in 2 Corinthians, Paul highlights that God desires that his people give with **cheerfulness** and not out of compulsion. This demonstrates that the **inner disposition** is what God is longing for in his people — not the amount, the act, or even the exact expression.

⁶The point is this: whoever sows sparingly will also reap sparingly, and whoever sows bountifully will also reap bountifully. ⁷Each one must give as he has decided in his heart, not reluctantly or under compulsion, for God loves a cheerful giver. ⁸And God is able to make all grace abound to you (2 Cor 9.6-8)

IV. OUR OWN RESPONSE

- A. As we come to the close of this year, in the midst of a season we have been receiving a call from the Lord to **build the house**, it is essential for us to look toward the ways that we are going to respond to him together in the coming year.
- B. Through the course of this fall, I have consistently asked the Lord to "stir up the hearts" of the people of Redeemer as he is inviting us into this new work together.

- C. At the end of this year — and into next year — I believe there are many concrete opportunities for us to say “yes” to what the Lord is doing with a heart that is disposed toward putting external expression to our internal desires and commitment.
- D. **Sunday Gathering:**
1. One of the primary things the Lord is calling us to in “rebuilding the house” is to order and orient our whole life as a spiritual family (and our lives individually) around rightly ordered worship to King Jesus!
 2. In January we will be preaching three sermons at the beginning of the year outlining a particular burden that God has given our elders related to the work before us (from Isaiah 61), and then resume 2 Chronicles at the end of January.
 3. As we do so, we will see time and time again the pattern of renewal that comes when people reclaim the importance of worship at the center of their life together as God’s people.
 4. As we enter into the new year, there is an invitation for us to “consider our ways” and a call to orient our lives, our weeks, and our schedules around the gathering of God’s people together on the Lord’s Day.
- E. **Wednesday Night Prayer:**
1. God has called us to become a praying church. The primary aspect of how we are pursuing that together as a corporate people is by gathering on Wednesday nights to seek the face of God and ask him to fulfill his purposes in our church and our city.
 2. I believe that Wednesday night prayer is (outside of Sunday gathering) the most important thing in our church’s life together. If you are looking for “step two” in the life of our church, there is an invitation to come to this prayer meeting consistently.
- F. **Sunday Schools:** In January we are expanding our offerings in our Sunday School hour. Our Sunday schools are one of the key places where we learn the truth of God’s word and how to order our lives around the Lordship of Christ in every place.
- G. **A Bible reading plan:** When David charged Solomon in obedience to the task before him, he called him to **know God**. Reading God’s word is an essential element in growing in our knowledge of God (which is an essential aspect of responding to him with a whole heart!). Go into the new year with a **plan** for how you are going to engage God’s word in 2024 (e.g., Bible in 90-days group).
- H. **Give sacrificially to our church:** We cannot shortchange the dynamic relationship between our hearts and our resources. God has called us to respond in specific times and specific ways by giving of our resources in sacrificial ways to what God is doing.
1. **Tithing:** This is the starting place for all Christian giving. If you are not tithing, set your heart to respond to the Lord in this way, and step into it. It has been said: “you cannot afford to not tithe.”
 2. **Building project:** Several months ago, we opened our building fund as we are making some needed changes to our physical spaces to respond to what God is doing in our church. Consider giving of your resources to the “external” elements of our building as a commitment to your internal agreement with what God is at work doing in our church.
 3. **Christmas Eve benevolence offering:** Every year at our Christmas Eve service (6:30pm) we take an offering to fund our benevolence for the next calendar year. Benevolence exists as a mercy ministry of our church that primarily exists to help members who are walking through a season of financial need. Each year we determine a number to fill our benevolence fund and give anything beyond that from the offering to our city partners (City Union Mission, RefugeKC, CarePortal).