Message #68

I came to faith in Jesus Christ in 1976. Most of you know my story. When I trusted the Lord there was no one around. It was just God bringing me under conviction and drawing me to faith in Christ. But what I learned shortly after this happened is that I had a desire to go to church. To that point in time, Sunday was just a day to relax or party. But after God saved me, I wanted to go to church.

Now this desire, I would later learn, was produced by the Holy Spirit. When people have a relationship with God they will have a God-given desire to worship God with other people of God.

Now let’s keep the context in mind. God had just restored a relationship with His people in the aftermath of their terrible idolatrous sin. God told Moses there had been complete restoration of the relationship and now it was time to move forward in a relationship with Him and in order to do that, they needed to build a place of corporate worship.

GOD HAD RESTORED A RELATIONSHIP WITH HIS SINFUL PEOPLE AND HE BEGINS BY COMMANDING THEM TO OBEY HIS WORD AND _BUILD_ HIS TABERNACLE SO THEY MAY WORSHIP GOD.

In the aftermath of the fact that God had reestablished a relationship with Israel after she had so grossly sinned against God, it was critical that Moses remind Israel that they needed to get back on track and get refocused on their relationship with God.

There are two main parts to this series of verses:

PART #1 – The _commands_ of God to the people. 35:1-19

There are three commands:

Command #1 - The people are to keep the _Sabbath_. 35:1-3

Now the vast majority of information from chapters 35-40 has to do with the construction of the Tabernacle, so one question comes to mind and that is why does God start off by reminding Israel they need to keep the Sabbath? One answer to that question was the Sabbath was a sign between God and Israel of His covenant relationship with that nation (31:13, 17).

These people needed to refocus their covenant relationship with God. They needed to take the seventh day and make it a Sabbath rest day to the LORD. They were to not do any work or even build a fire to cook or even for warmth. It was a day to just sit and do nothing except think.
If you were to eat something on the Sabbath day, you could not light a fire and cook it. If you were cold, you could not build a fire to keep warm. You simply needed to bundle up. J. Vernon McGee said we must always remember that this Sabbath day was between God and Israel and not God and the Church. This not building a fire was certainly legitimate in the context of the nation Israel in the Promised Land because the climate made this possible. But for the Church Age this is not possible. If someone did not have heat or fire in their home in the state of Michigan, they would freeze to death.

Years ago I knew of some guys who went hunting in the mountains who tended to be Sabbath day legalists. They would just sit around camp on Sunday. One man said well you aren’t going to build a fire are you? You are not going to cook are you? You are not going to have heat in your tent are you? Because if you do we will have to execute you. They got the point. The Sabbath is for Israel, not the church.

Now why did God begin with this re-focus on the Sabbath Day? Because these Israelites had just been involved in worshipping a golden calf. This was a national day for Israel that became the formal starting point of the relationship with God. This was a legal mandate of God that would begin to rebuild this relationship. These people had just been involved in idol worship and God starts off by saying we are going to take the 7th day and you are going to sit in your tent and think about your relationship with Me, your covenant God.

One other point is worth considering. God is about to give them another challenge to complete the tabernacle. He did not want them building this on this day.

**Command #2** - The people are to *willingly* give contributions to the Tabernacle project.  
**35:4-9**

It is clear from verse 4 that Moses spoke to “all the congregation.” All the people needed to hear what he had to say. It was good for these people to realize that the Tabernacle project had not been scrapped by God.

Let’s face it, God needed to reiterate these things because these people had really blown it. Everything was going along fine and then they fell into idol worship; so God needed to show these people that the tabernacle project was still a go. He would permit these people to worship Him.

Now let’s remember that many of these Israelites had already willingly given a bunch of stuff and made a bunch of contributions to a worthless idol. They had wasted their money on nothing.

I just recently heard a very good Bible teacher say that he was shocked by the amount of people who gave their money not to the Church, but to charities that for the most part and in many ways turn people away from God. There are all kinds of charities that will take your money, but ask yourself this question–how many of them are out to communicate God’s Word to a lost world so they can be saved? How many are on the front lines of presenting Jesus Christ?
Eternity is at stake in people’s lives and many people make contributions to charities that could care less about ever telling these people about Jesus Christ as the only means of going to heaven.

So in all reality, even to this day many are giving their contributions to nothing more than some idolatrous charitable system.

God wanted willing contributions. If His people were giving willingly to other things, they certainly can give to God.

When it comes time for God to do the math on our giving, I truly hope that we spent more on the work of God than we did anything else. When it comes time for God to count our voluntary contributions, I hope they total a huge number, not just dollar amount but sacrifice.

Can you imagine someone getting before God and the math shows you gave more to Direct TV than God. You gave more to your computer stuff than you did to God. You spent a lot more on your own hobbies rather than God’s house.

In verses 5-9, God lists some things the people could bring as acceptable offerings to Him. This list of things is verbatim with that of Exodus 25:3-7. God expected His covenantal family to respond to the need and give to the project. If they would do that He would bless them.

1) They could bring gold, silver or bronze. 35:5
2) They could bring material of different color and different texture. 35:6-7a
3) They could bring acacia wood. 35:7b
4) They could bring oil. 35:8a
5) They could bring spices. 35:8b
6) They could bring various stones. 35:9

**Command #3** - The skilled men are to make the tabernacle and the furnishings. 35:10-19

Now I want to point out that again God stresses that this was to be done by those who were skillful. The potential for someone wanting to do something he was not skilled at was very real. Someone could have a good heart and want to do something for God in this project, but not necessarily have the skill to be able to do it. It is critical that we never think more highly of ourselves than we ought. Now there is a capsule form relisting of things that needed to be made by skilled people. There are nine items mentioned:
(Item #1) - The Tabernacle. 35:11 - described in detail in Ex. 26.

This of course was the house/tent where people would worship.

(Item #2) - The Ark Box. 35:12 - described in Ex. 25:10-16. God mentions the box and poles. He also specifically mentions this was the mercy seat and a curtain that shielded it.

(Item #3) - The Table. 35:13 - described in Ex. 25:23-27.

This table and its poles plus the utensils actually sat in the larger of the two rooms in the tabernacle. This table was to contain bread which was given to God in honor of His presence.

(Item #4) - The Lampstand. 35:14 - described in Ex. 25:31-36; 39-40. This lampstand was for the purpose of giving light.

(Item #5) - The Altar of Incense. 35:15a - described in Ex. 30:1-10.

This sat just in front of the curtain that went into the Holy of Holies.

(Item #6) - The entrance doorway screen. 35:15b - described in Ex. 26:36-37

This doorway was different than the one that gave entrance into the courtyard. This was, as it were, the door to the tabernacle.

(Item #7) - The altar for the burnt offering and wash basin. 35:16 - described in Ex. 27:1-8.

This was critical for the sacrifices and the wash basin was necessary for cleanliness.

(Item #8) - The hangings for the courtyard. 35:17-18 - described in Ex. 27:9-19.

This courtyard would be the sacred grounds in which was the tent and the other items for worship.

There needed to be pillars and sockets and pegs made, and cords.

(Item #9) - The woven garments. 35:19 - described in Ex. 28-29

There were many things that needed to be made and skilled people were needed to make these things.

Verse 20 says that when the congregation listened to Moses present this, they all departed from his presence and it is very clear that they were giving careful thought to what he was saying.
PART #2 – The responses of the people to the commands of God. 35:21-29

Now in verses 21-29 we see the response of the people.

Response #1 - Everyone who had a stirred heart and moved spirit brought a contribution to the Lord. 35:21

Response #2 - Everyone who had a moved heart brought proper contributions. 35:22-29

If God’s people are to complete some major project, it needs participation from the people. But Moses does not beg people or try to manipulate them; he simply says this is what you should do. We may notice from verse 22 that both men and women participated in the giving of their offerings. It is interesting to note that there were some ministries that were gender regulated. For example, the priesthood was limited to a specific gender. But this is one form of worship that is not gender regulated.

Both men and women can give offerings and God notices those men and women who do.

(Contribution #1) - Some brought gold. 35:22

(Contribution #2) - Some brought material. 35:23

(Contribution #3) - Some brought silver and bronze. 35:24a

(Contribution #4) - Some brought acacia wood. 35:24b

(Contribution #5) - Some skilled women made things from material. 35:25-26

(Contribution #6) - Some rulers brought stones and spices and oil. 35:27-28

Verse 29 says all of the Israelites, both men and women, who had stirred hearts, brought their “freewill offerings” to the Lord.

Notice the emphasis on “everyone” (21, 23, 24) and “all” the people (v. 22, 25, 26, 29). Everyone got involved in this project because they wanted to be involved. Everyone brought their offerings. You could not stop these people. You did not have to beg them or come up with some chart that showed how much they had. These people willingly brought their offerings to the Lord.

What all of this said is we are back in business in our relationship with God. We may have previously blown it, but we are now back in business.