

## Message #48

## Exodus 25:1-9

It does not matter what the dispensation, whether the O.T. and Israel or the N.T. and the Church, God wants His people to have a corporate place where they can gather together to worship. He wants His people to have a place where they can gather collectively to worship Him.

It has often been said and rightly so that the Church is not the building; it is the people. In fact, we certainly brought that point out in our study of Ecclesiology. In fact, the very word “church” in Greek “ekklesia” (Εκκλησια) refers to people who have been called out by God. Our actual English word “church” comes from the Scottish word “kirk” and to the German word “kirche” which comes from a Greek word that means belonging to the Lord. **So the basic idea of the word church is a group of people who have been called out by God, who belong to the Lord.**

Now when the Church Age began, it met in different places. It would meet in a field (Acts 16:13); it would meet in a home (Acts 18:7; I Cor. 16:19) and it met in a rented school building (Acts 19:9-10). There is historical evidence that churches were constructed for worship in Syria shortly after the apostolic era.

The truth is even though the Church is not a building, it does need someplace to corporately gather and that point is clear from the book of Exodus and the beginning structure of things that God gave to Israel.

Now Israel was camped in the wilderness of Sinai. She was not even close to getting to her final destiny. But God wanted a place for worship constructed. He wanted a place that demonstrated His presence among His people (25:8; 29:45). He wanted a sacred spot where He could meet with His leaders (29:42) and His people (29:43) collectively for worship and He gave specific instructions as to what He wanted built and to how He wanted it built.

What we do see from this text is this:

**GOD WANTS HIS PEOPLE TO BUILD HIM A PLACE OF WORSHIP AND HE WANTS PEOPLE TO PARTICIPATE IN BUILDING HIS PLACE OF WORSHIP THROUGH THEIR VOLUNTARY CONTRIBUTIONS.**

Now let’s think about this for a moment. God could have provided everything He wanted on His own for this construction. He could have had everything just show up at the work site or better than this, He could have just spoke the tabernacle into existence. However, He delegated this to His people because He wanted them to have the responsibility and the opportunity to experience wonderful things through their participation, generosity and self-sacrifice.

If God’s people would actually get directly involved in building this place of worship for Him, He would bless them in some ways they would never even dream.

Now we want to observe from **verse 1** that the text begins by saying, “Then the LORD spoke to Moses.” This is certainly not a new statement in this book of Exodus. What this means is that God Himself is revealing His Word to Moses and Moses will have the responsibility to communicate the Word of God to the people.

So what is discussed in these verses about building a place of corporate worship is, in fact, the Word of God. This is inspired truth specifically revealed by God to His people.

Now as we look at these verses there are primarily three main messages God gives to Moses:

**MESSAGE #1** – God tells Moses to tell His people that a sanctuary is to be built through the voluntary contributions of His people. **25:2**

God says to Moses, you tell My people that I want a corporate place of worship built, a sanctuary, and I want this built by voluntary contributions. The funding to build this place is to come from voluntary contributions. It is interesting how this begins. God does not show them the design and say this is how much we will need; He first says we need contributions. Now most congregations want to see a design first before they contribute. But not here. They are told that they need contributions and the people start bringing them.

Now there are three key observations we want to make about this:

**Observation #1** - Moses is to tell God’s people about this project. **25:2a**

It is the responsibility of a true man of God to communicate to the people the Word of God and sometimes the subject is contributions.

**Observation #2** - Moses is to tell God’s people to raise contributions for God. **25:2b**

Moses himself did not have to raise contributions, the sons of Israel needed to raise it. But do not miss the point here; these contributions were for “for God.” In other words, God viewed contributions given to His work as being given to Him. God keeps track of the contributions and He knows who willingly and joyfully gives to Him.

**Observation #3** - Moses is to tell God’s people to raise contributions from every man whose heart moves him to give. **25:2c**

I understand this to mean that you don’t beg, you don’t plead, you don’t try and manipulate; you simply communicate the Word of God about this project.

People were not to give because they were forced to give or because it was regulated that they had to give a certain amount; each person was left to the promptings of his own heart.

What Moses was to say was we need to build this place of worship and we need you to contribute to this place of worship which is for God, and all who have a heart to give please give because we need your contributions for this project.

This was to be a voluntary, “free-hearted offering.”

If you don’t have a heart to give, don’t give. But you will miss out in the end. You will miss out big time.

We learn from **Exodus 35:21-22** that many men and many women had hearts that were moved to contribute to this wonderful project of building a new sanctuary for God, which would become a prelude to the Temple.

**MESSAGE #2** – God tells Moses to tell His people what they are to specifically give in their voluntary contributions. **25:3-7**

Now there was a list of things that could be given by people to help build this place. Some gifts would be more substantial than other gifts; however, all gifts were needed to complete this project. Now you could not just bring anything to the job site; it had to fit the criteria or specs of God for the building.

In other words, you could not bring just any old thing as a gift; it had to be legitimate to what God viewed as an acceptable gift.

As near as I can determine there were 13 different gifts people could voluntarily give that were acceptable to God.

**Gift #1** - People were to contribute gold. **25:3a**

The first three gifts are metal gifts and no other metal gifts were ever accepted but these three. There are no other metals that were used for the construction of this tabernacle.

Now gold was and still is an expensive metal. It is the most precious of all the metals. As we will see there will be a lot needed and used in this tabernacle. This sanctuary was not going to be cheaply made.

**Gift #2** - People were to contribute silver. **25:3b**

**Gift #3** - People were to contribute bronze. **25:3c**

**Gift #4** - People were to contribute colored material. **25:4a**

Now the next voluntary gifts needed were fabric gifts.

Material that had colors of blue, purple and scarlet were acceptable gifts. These were not cheap fabric gifts. In fact, the purple material came from a very expensive dye and it was a rich and brilliant purple. This was a colored material worn by magistrates. Well, this material was to show up in the sanctuary of the King of Kings. The scarlet was a deep, dark red scarlet that was compared to our sins (Is. 1:18).

**Gift #5** - People were to contribute fine linen. **25:4b**

The Egyptians were known for their fine linen and obviously when Israel left Egypt, much had been given to them.

**Gift #6** - People were to contribute goat hair. **25:4c**

The next three voluntary gifts were animal skin gifts.

**Gift #7** - People were to contribute rams' skins dyed red. **25:5a**

**Gift #8** - People were to contribute porpoise skins. **25:5b**

**Gift #9** - People were to contribute acacia wood. **25:5c**

As we will see, acacia wood is a high grade of wood that will not rot or decay. It may be compared to a western red cedar wood used for a high quality wood to build log homes.

**Gift #10** - People were to contribute oil for lighting. **25:6a**

**Gift #11** - People were to contribute spices for anointing oil and fragrant incense. **25:6b**

**Gift #12** - People were to contribute onyx stones. **25:7a**

**Gift #13** - People were to contribute setting stones. **25:7b**

Now these stones would go to help make the priests' breastplate. God considered it as an offering to Him, but in all reality it would be going in part to a chosen leader.

Now there was value to every one of these contributions. All were needed and all would be accepted. In our day, we cannot bring these kinds of things to build a new sanctuary; our offerings are money. Some can give more than others. But all offerings are important and needed whatever the amount because it is all going to help build the sanctuary.

All people were to give if their hearts moved them to give and if their hearts did not move them to give to this project; it was not demanded of them that they give.

However, what people whose hearts were not moved to give needed to realize is God is keeping track of who is giving what and if one's heart is not moved to share in this glorious project, something is drastically wrong in his relationship with God.

It would be wise for one to go to God and ask God to change the heart so they could become part of this wonderful project.

**MESSAGE #3** – God tells Moses to tell His people that they are to construct a sanctuary.  
**25:8-9**

There are different names used for sanctuary—sanctuary (miqdash) that means a sacred or holy and consecrated place (25:8); “Tent of Meeting” that refers to the purpose of the structure (27:21); and “Tabernacle of the Testimony” (38:21) or the “Tent of the Testimony” (Num. 9:15) that refers to the place where the Word of God is protected and communicated.

There are three key points we need to see here:

**Point #1** - God's people are to construct a sanctuary for God. **25:8a**

God wanted His people to construct a public place that would be viewed as a sacred, consecrated, holy place. In fact, it is legitimate to actually read the Hebrew this way: “They will make Me a Holy Place.”

Now it is important to see that they are not doing this for Moses; they are not doing this for themselves or even for the community; their primary reason for building this is for God. **They were to do this for God.**

**Point #2** - God's people are to construct a sanctuary so God may  dwell  among His people.  
**25:8b**

Now in Hebrew we could read this sentence, “They will make Me a Holy Place and I will locate among them.” God wanted a specific place built where all of His people could gather and actually have God's presence with them.

Now let us think about this for a moment. God did not require some building in order to dwell with His people. Obviously He has been with this people all the way out of Egypt. However, what this new building would do would be to make a statement to God that His people wanted a special, sacred place where His presence would be specifically there.

In other words, if people were willing to actually build this place through their voluntary gifts, they are making a statement to God that we want you to be present in this very special place we are building.

**Point #3** - God's people are to construct the sanctuary by following the precise pattern given by God. **25:9**

God says I am going to specifically give the blueprints for this sanctuary. I will actually show you how I want the tabernacle constructed and I will show you what the furniture is that I want in it. The first Hebrew pronoun "you" in **verse 9** is singular to Moses and the last pronoun "you" in **verse 9** is plural to all of Israel.

God had a pattern and a plan. He knew how this sanctuary was to be designed and He knew where things were to go in this sanctuary.