

Exodus 36:2-7

2 Moses then called Bezalel and Oholiab and every skillful one to whom the LORD had given skill, everyone whose heart was stirred to come to do the work; 3 and they received from Moses all the freewill offerings that the Israelites had brought for doing the work on the sanctuary. They still kept bringing him freewill offerings every morning, 4 so that all the artisans who were doing every sort of task on the sanctuary came, each from the task being performed, 5 and said to Moses, "The people are bringing much more than enough for doing the work that the LORD has commanded us to do." 6 So Moses gave command, and word was proclaimed throughout the camp: "No man or woman is to make anything else as an offering for the sanctuary." So the people were restrained from bringing; 7 for what they had already brought was more than enough to do all the work.

I'm going to start off today with a question, it is the title of the sermon. What do we do? Today's Scripture is a personal favorite. It is a wonderful and exciting story to tell and also like many other Bible stories it is a good story to envision and imagine. So, today I encourage you imagine. Do you remember the TV show *You Were There?* Walter Cronkite was the host. It had dramatic re-creation of past events. At the end he would state "What sort of day was it? A day like all days, filled with those events that alter and illuminate our times... all things are as they were then, and you were there."

I invite you today to put on your imagination hats and imagine you are there. You are there with Moses. Do you see him - Moses? You know who he is. He is a real life hero for you and your people. He has taken the entire nation to freedom. Now here he is in front of everybody. You are glad you get to see him with your very own eyes. You get to hear him live and in person. All the people are pressed around to see and hear. And here he is right in front of you - bigger than life. You get this feeling inside of you, a warm and fuzzy feeling, as you look at and admire your nations hero.

Then he speaks. At first it's hard to hear because the crowd is so big but when Moses begins to speak the crowd becomes silent and everybody listens. So, you get to hear him clearly. He speaks the word of God. This is an exciting moment for you. You look around and everyone is listening intently as Moses tells the people "this is what the Lord commands." First is a Sabbath regulation. You will work for six days and on the seventh day you will rest. This is a holy day of solemn rest to the Lord. You think "Wow, this is something new, did you hear that? This is news - big news - something we have never had before. A day of rest, solemn rest to the Lord. This is amazing!" You want to celebrate right then and there but there is more, so you listen. The second thing the Lord commands is the preparations for making a Tabernacle. Everybody with a generous heart, whose heart is stirred, will bring an offering to the Lord, a generous offering, of gold, silver, oil, fine linen, and leather. And they will offer their skills to make a Tabernacle, to make a holy place, for ministry. You stand there and listen and you get goose bumps as you realize that we are going to build something truly special - a special place, a holy place, a place that is reserved for honoring God. A warm, glowing, feeling burns inside of you. This is a proud moment knowing that you are part of this marvelous glory. Wow - a holy place built for God!

The assembly is over and you are the most excited you have ever been in your entire life! All of the people are excited and happy. Every morning you see people bringing lots of valuables as a freewill offering to the Lord. They are bringing their very best to the Lord.

I ask the question; it is the title of the sermon. What do we do? Let's look at today's Scripture. The people are bringing more than enough, much more than enough, for doing the work that the Lord has commanded. Yes, you can see it because you are there as the people are bringing more than enough for doing the work of the Lord. What an exciting moment! Then something strange happens, something different, something highly unusual and unexpected. You would not believe it if you did not see it with your very own eyes. But you are there and you see it. Moses gives the command to stop the offering. The response of the people, the free will offering, is so rich, so blessed, so abundant, they were told to stop. Pause for a minute, think about this, and let it sink in. They brought more than enough because they responded according to how they have been blessed. And you were there.

This is exciting! Let's stop, take a time out, and evaluate this. Most Christians read some of the Bible. Some Christians read all of the Bible. There are a few that have a disciplined daily reading. But what I think is exciting is what is revealed in the Bible when you take the time to study it. It is one thing to read it and think "OK, that's Exodus and Moses, they did this and they did that. It's about as exciting as going to school and doing homework. You read a story and you read another story but what is exciting comes with contemplation. You discover the context of what is really going on. The nation of Israel is the only group of people in the world that knows God. They are different from everybody else in the world. They are free people while others are not. They are free in a world of empires that conquer, kill, and enslave others. They are free because of God's providence. God sustains and guides their destiny. They owe a tremendous thanks to God. Out of their loyalty, devotion, and thankfulness to God they do something very special. They build a holy place for honoring God. We live in a world that can take it or leave it. People with inactive faith that don't see, or feel, the need to come to church. Temple worship is significant! Moses and his people recognize how special God truly is. Our God, the one and true God, the creator of the heavens and the earth, the almighty that sustains and directs our destiny, deserves a special place, a holy place, for the people to honor God. The church is not here to cater to the desire of the people; the church is a place to encounter God.

What do we do? In the Bible the response of the people is unusual. Moses had to tell the people to stop giving. Stop the free will offering. A free will offering is above and beyond the regular offering. They recognized that they are truly blessed by God. They valued what God had done for them so much that they couldn't help but give. Giving is not compelled. Giving comes from desire, it is a joyous response of thanks.

You have a strong history that demonstrates your faithfulness and is revealed through your ministry, your desire to worship God and serve God. Your outreach shows passion. You not only have a strong history, you have a strong present with a lively and loving Spirit and healthy outreach. Your future is uncertain. So, what do we do? Well, you know the famous question "What did Jesus do?" Jesus set up his legacy.

I invite you to meet with me to talk about your legacy - your continued success for God's glory. In the Bible the people did not respond because Moses was a bigger than life hero. They responded to God for the glory of God. What do we do? Let's get together and talk about what God is calling us to do for the future glory of God here. I invite you to meet with me - elders, leaders, others, anybody, everybody, all are invited to engage in conversation this Wednesday

12:00 in the fellowship hall to discuss what we are to do for the future, the glory of God here at Madison Heights Christian Church.