

EXODUS 36 – 40

REPENTANCE, REVIVAL AND RE-FOCUS

Carl Windsor wrote a book entitled: *On This Day*. On the page for Valentine's Day he told the story of a grandmother celebrating her golden wedding anniversary. During the celebration she was asked the secret to her long and happy marriage. "On my wedding day I decided to make a list of ten of my husband's faults which, for the sake of our marriage I would overlook," she said. She was then asked what some of the faults on the list were. "To tell you the truth my dear, I never did get around to listing them. But when my husband did something to make me hopping mad, I would say to myself, *lucky for him that's one of the ten.*"

We have all had instances when we have had a major blow-up with our spouse, friend or child – maybe even a boss. However, whenever one or both of the individuals involved apologizes and makes up, things are usually better than before.

That's the way it is with God. As we wind up the book of Exodus, we find Israel at the beginning of one of those make-up periods. They had a big party where they worshipped the golden calf and were confronted by God. Many of them repented. God then put the incident in the rear-view mirror, and everyone moved on from there. This marks one of those good times when everyone is pumped and gung-ho about doing the will of God.

If you are reading this section of Exodus in one sitting, you will notice all the repetition. We then, in our modern context wonder why. What is the purpose of writing and then re-

writing all these details? As it turns out, there was a purpose for this in their ancient world. Whenever a covenant or treaty was broken and then reinstated, it was customary to re-write the covenant with all the pertinent details. The covenant after all, was a legal document and therefore, all the details of that covenant had to be stated once again. The repetition was for clarity, as well as legal purposes.

God has given them the Law. He has given them the blueprints for all the furniture of the Tabernacle and now it is time to build it all. They have a blueprint for a Godly society, and they have a mission to accomplish. Now it is time to get busy.

Exodus 36

1 “And Bezalel and Aholiab, and every gifted artisan in whom the Lord has put wisdom and understanding, to know how to do all manner of work for the service of the sanctuary, shall do according to all that the Lord has commanded.”

What I would like for us to focus on is that we have all been in that honeymoon or make-up period with God, but we cannot stay there. We have to continue to keep moving. After a week or so on a honeymoon we all had to go back to work. However, going to work was easier to do knowing that there was someone waiting on you at home. It is the same when you have a baby. It is easier to go to work knowing that there is a new addition to the family waiting on you.

So, when we repent of something and our relationship with God is restored, we can go through our day with a new bounce in our step, no matter how hard our jobs are. We have to go to

work. We have to keep moving forward. We have a life to live and that life is to be lived in the will of God. And that is where Israel finds herself. She is on the heels of a great national repentance and has a great task before her. Everyone is stoked to be a part of the mission. But you may ask, “What about those that aren’t gifted metal workers, carpenters, etc.?” Well, look at the next verses.

2 Then Moses called Bezalel and Aholiab, and every gifted artisan in whose heart the Lord had put wisdom, everyone whose heart was stirred, to come and do the work. 3 And they received from Moses all the offering which the children of Israel had brought for the work of the service of making the sanctuary. So they continued bringing to him freewill offerings every morning. 4 Then all the craftsmen who were doing all the work of the sanctuary came, each from the work he was doing, 5 and they spoke to Moses, saying, “The people bring much more than enough for the service of the work which the Lord commanded us to do.” 6 So Moses gave a commandment, and they caused it to be proclaimed throughout the camp, saying, “Let neither man nor woman do any more work for the offering of the sanctuary.” And the people were restrained from bringing, 7 for the material they had was sufficient for all the work to be done—indeed too much.

Wow!!! That is awesome! The taking up of the offering had to be stopped. The people had given more than what was required. What a problem to have...

In verse two we see that everyone the Lord had gifted AND everyone whose heart was stirred to give, donated to the project.

The Bible says that God loves a cheerful giver. God wants to freely give. He wants us to give and serve Him as well as others because we want to do so. He doesn't want to have to push us. No one in authority likes having to try to motivate someone. I have always found that the best workers are those that take pride in what they do and want to work. The guy that has to be made to get up and work is not the one you want. It is the person that wants to do his job to the best of his ability.

We also see that these people had their hearts stirred. How were they stirred? They were first told of the need. Then their love for God moved them to give. They realized that all they were doing was giving back to God what He had arranged for the Egyptians to give to them in the first place. That is still the case for us today. When we give we are simply giving BACK to God. All that we have has come from Him anyway. If we don't acknowledge that then we have to question our relationship with Him.

We are to be thankful for what He has supplied us - both in our gifts and by what we give. It is a sign of our love for Him. Fellows, try giving your wife a \$5.00 ring for your anniversary and see how it goes. Try just blessing her with your presence instead of being there for her and listening to her. See how far that gets you. It doesn't say much about your love for her. It works the same way with God. Our love for Him and others is manifested in our service and giving to Him as well as others.

Now Israel gets busy building the Tabernacle and all that goes with it. We read about all of this in the next four chapters.

We can read about how they made the Ark of the Covenant, the golden lampstand, the altar of incense as well as the altar of sacrifice. You can read of how they built the curtains and walls of the Tabernacle all the way down to how it was fastened together. Then, you get to the brass or bronze laver.

Exodus 38:8

8 He made the laver of bronze and its base of bronze, from the bronze mirrors of the serving women who assembled at the door of the tabernacle of meeting.

Have you ever wondered why this was made of bronze while everything else was made of gold? The clue is seen in verse eight. Bronze was used to make mirrors. They didn't use glass like we do. Mirrors don't lie, unless they are in a funhouse. Mirrors accurately reflect what is put in front of them. What you see is what everyone else sees. I know, yikes! But there was a purpose for this. When the priests and Israelites went to sacrifice, they had to wash in this giant laver. Think of a giant brass birdbath in which you would dip your hands and wash in a ceremonial way. As you did this you would be forced to look at yourself. That is part of repentance. We have to see ourselves in our sin as Jesus sees us. We have to have an accurate picture of ourselves as sinners. Part of being born again is recognizing that we are sinners and even the best of our works are as filthy rags. But this is a necessary step if we ever want to be in the presence of God, which was the equivalent of going into the Holy of Holies.

This also magnifies the purpose of the Law. Paul tells us that the Law was a schoolmaster instructing us in the holiness of God. It taught us that we are not capable of being holy as God is.

We have to be made holy through the blood of Jesus. He is the perfect sacrifice. We are only seen as holy when the righteousness of Jesus is imputed to us. We are given robes of righteousness the book of Revelation says. That righteousness is not ours but His.

In chapter 39 we see that the garments of the priests were also made and then everything was brought to Moses.

Exodus 39:42,43

42 According to all that the Lord had commanded Moses, so the children of Israel did all the work. 43 Then Moses looked over all the work, and indeed they had done it; as the Lord had commanded, just so they had done it. And Moses blessed them.

We all want to hear God say, “Well done my good and faithful servant.”

They had accomplished a great feat, but they couldn’t retire.

Chapter 40, verses 1 – 33 tell of the assembly of the Tabernacle and all that entails.

They now had to erect the Tabernacle and begin to sacrifice. They had to be an example to the surrounding nations.

And then the ultimate example of the presence of God manifested when they were finished with the assembly.

Exodus 40

34 Then the cloud covered the tabernacle of meeting, and

the glory of the Lord filled the tabernacle. 35 And Moses was not able to enter the tabernacle of meeting, because the cloud rested above it, and the glory of the Lord filled the tabernacle. 36 Whenever the cloud was taken up from above the tabernacle, the children of Israel would go onward in all their journeys. 37 But if the cloud was not taken up, then they did not journey till the day that it was taken up. 38 For the cloud of the Lord was above the tabernacle by day, and fire was over it by night, in the sight of all the house of Israel, throughout all their journeys.

God's presence and glory appeared. God's presence was back in the midst of His people. His people were glad to be in His presence also. The relationship was restored, and God was there among His people as was a healthy atmosphere of worship.

This is not something we should strive for just on Sundays. God fully intended for Israel to bask in His presence at all times. Worship is not an experience per se, but a lifestyle. The nation of Israel was to exist in an atmosphere of worship and holiness. The only problem was that they had to attempt this under the Law. We have the opportunity to live this way under grace. We don't have to sacrifice animals. We have the privilege and honor of sacrificing our own lives. We can give our lives, ourselves to Him because He has given all for us. We came out with the best deal there!

Israel had only been out of Egypt for a year by the time we get to the end of Exodus. Many of us have already been Christians for much longer than that. But can we say we walk and live in an atmosphere of worship and service? Is it obvious to those around us?

Israel was just getting started on their journey but look at all they have been through already. Like them, we will go through a great deal before our journey is through, but we can make our journey in God's presence and under His grace.

Lk 10:2,3

2 Then He said to them, "The harvest truly is great, but the laborers are few; therefore pray the Lord of the harvest to send out laborers into His harvest. 3 Go your way; behold, I send you out as lambs among wolves."

Until we understand that God's presence in our lives is paramount in living a rich, fulfilled Christian life that produces fruit, we will forever be running on half wattage. Until we understand that the Holy Spirit is the source of the power, encouragement and motivation we need to live out the lives of disciples, we will be running on four cylinders instead of all eight.

None of us like walking around with a lingering infection that renders us sick and leaves us lethargic. We all want to be feeling our best at all times. We all know someone who seems to be up and at 'em at the crack of dawn – that person that is a hive of productivity. Even if we aren't that person, most of us wish we could be.

Without the presence of God and the power of the Holy Spirit in our lives, we will be lethargic Christians at best. But if we seek out the heart and presence of the Lord, we will come to life in a way no one can deny. And when they can't deny it, they will ask what or whom our source is. When that happens, we are in a

position to minister and make disciples.

So let's repent, bask in the grace of God and walk in His will.
There is much to do.