

BUILDING GOD'S WAY

The Tabernacle

Exodus 25:1-9

INTRODUCTION: Folks, I hope you know this already, but if you don't, let me tell you: God is right in the middle of a huge building project here at St. Andrew Baptist Church. And some of you are saying, "Well, yeh, it began with Hurricane Michael!"

But the truth is that the part of the building project that remains began before Hurricane Michael blew through. Our church decided to remodel our 30 year old worship center in such a way as to help us reach the younger generations, long before the hurricane arrived. The month before October, 2018, our church engaged COSCO and Associates as a Design/Build Team to help us in the design and construction of the renovation of our Worship Center.

Then Hurricane Michael made its unwelcomed landfall and changed everything! Or so it seems. But the hurricane and everything associated with it did not change any of God's plans.

- We just did not know that God planned a campus-wide renovation for every single one of our buildings.
- Who knew that we would end up with a new roof on every single one? Only God!
- Who could have imagined that many of our buildings would get new paint and flooring? Only God!
- But by the grace and providence of God, our whole campus has been renovated with only one building left. And now, God is ready to begin work on that final building, our Worship Center!

And as God always does with His people, the Lord invites us to join Him in this work.

To help us do that well, to help us be good fellow laborers with God in the renovation of our Worship Center, I want us to look at what the Scriptures teach us about BUILDING GOD'S WAY.

The best way I know how to do that is to look at four major building projects that are described in Scripture. Each of them tells us things about BUILDING GOD'S WAY and

about how to join God in His work without getting in the way! If we will be both attentive and obedient, God's Word will instruct us on how to be useful co-laborers with God, as He Himself does the renovation on our Worship Center.

God's first building project was the universe, but mankind was not created until the end of the project, and therefore did not get to be part of the work. And quite honestly, once we did arrive on the job site, very much after all the building had been completed, we messed it up royally!

That God would even allow us to join Him in His work of building things at all is a testimony to His forgiveness and grace! But He does. Inviting us to join Him in His work of building is very much a part of BUILDING GOD'S WAY.

The first building project described in Scripture in which man had a real opportunity to join God in His work was the building of the tabernacle.

The descendants of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob had been in Egypt for over 400 years. They entered the foreign land as welcomed guests, but after a season, they were enslaved by the Pharaohs. God raised up a man named Moses to join God in His work of the deliverance of this people group called Israel from their slavery to the Egyptian Empire.

Moses, nor all of Israel had the power to free this people, but God with a mighty outstretched arm did great miracles that caused Pharaoh to finally release God's chosen people. When we get to Exodus 25 where our text for today is, Israel is encamped around Mount Sinai, and Moses has gone up to the top where God is meeting with him.

Here God instructs Moses about BUILDING GOD'S WAY.

Let me ask you something. **Would you be willing to receive God's instruction about BUILDING GOD'S WAY?**

- **Would you be willing to say to God, "You are the Architect. I want Your design."**
- **Would you be willing to say to God, "You are the Contractor, I want Your expertise."**
- **Would you be willing to say to God,**
 - **"I want to be a fellow laborer with You, Lord.**

- **“I just want to be a helper.**
- **“God, would You let me join You in Your work?”**

Would you be willing to say that to God in prayer right now?

So, let's get our instruction.

Exodus 25:1–9 NKJV 1 Then the LORD spoke to Moses, saying: 2 “Speak to the children of Israel, that they bring Me an offering. From everyone who gives it willingly with his heart you shall take My offering. 3 And this is the offering which you shall take from them: gold, silver, and bronze; 4 blue, purple, and scarlet thread, fine linen, and goats' hair; 5 ram skins dyed red, badger skins, and acacia wood; 6 oil for the light, and spices for the anointing oil and for the sweet incense; 7 onyx stones, and stones to be set in the ephod and in the breastplate.

8 And let them make Me a sanctuary, that I may dwell among them. 9 According to all that I show you, that is, the pattern of the tabernacle and the pattern of all its furnishings, just so you shall make it.

Folks, God's first instruction to those of us who would learn how to BUILD GOD'S WAY is that ...

WE MUST SHARE GOD'S VISION.

- God's vision is always greater than our vision.
- That was true for the tabernacle.
 - You may be thinking, “The tabernacle was just a tent!”
 - But it was no ordinary tent!
 - In Exodus 38 where we read the details of construction, we find that more than 29 talents of gold were used to build the tabernacle.
 - In today's price of gold, that is more than \$82 million dollars.
 - There is still the value of the four tons of silver and five tons of brass, and precious jewels used to make the tabernacle what God designed it to be.

- God was the architect!
- And the Lord was very particular and precise. Just the initial description of the tabernacle takes 7 chapters in Exodus.
- The creation of the universe only took two! Of course, God wasn't having to tell men and women how to do it!
- God not only described in words how to build the tabernacle, He showed Moses plans for it.

Exodus 25:9 NKJV According to all that I show you, that is, the pattern of the tabernacle and the pattern of all its furnishings, just so you shall make it.

- Hebrews 9 tells us that the pattern for the earthly tabernacle was taken from the design of the tabernacle in heaven.
- No wonder the earthly tabernacle was so ornate and luxurious.

Folks, the point here is not that our Worship Center will be ornate or luxurious. Not every building designed by God was ornate and luxurious, as we shall see.

The point is, our renovated Worship Center is to be what God desires it to be.

- Not what Bro. Mike wants
- Not what the Building Team wants
- What God wants!

Do you remember? We prayed much about that.

- And before we drew a single line of a plan
- Before we hired a Design and Build company to help us
- Before we even elected a Building Team

We prayed and heard God's answer. We said we all believed, unanimously I remind you, that God wanted us to renovate our Worship Center in such a way as to help us reach more from our younger generations.

Folks, we cannot approach the building of our Worship Center with an eye to pleasing ourselves.

We must share God's vision and make His vision become our vision!

God's second instruction to those of us who would learn how to BUILD GOD'S WAY is that ...

WE MUST UNDERSTAND GOD'S PROVISION.

I do not know who first observed this truth in Scripture and verbalized it. It was way before my time, but I want to repeat it, for it is true.

God never gives vision without provision.

- God provided for the building of the tabernacle.
 - Remember, this two and a half million people camped around Mount Sinai, were recently rescued slaves.
 - Every one of them, except for Moses, had been in slavery all of their lives.
 - What did they own?
 - What wealth did they have?
 - They only had what God gave them.
 - What did God give them?
 - Everything they needed and more.
 - Do you remember?
 - The story begins in Exodus 3, when God was speaking to Moses out of the burning bush.
 - He tells Moses HOW He is going to deliver Israel.

Exodus 3:19–22 NKJV 19 But I am sure that the king of Egypt will not let you go, no, not even by a mighty hand. 20 So I will stretch out My hand and strike Egypt with all My wonders which I will do in its midst; and after that he will let you go.

21 And I will give this people favor in the sight of the Egyptians; and it shall be, when you go, that **you shall not go empty-handed.** 22 But **every woman shall ask of her neighbor, namely, of her who dwells near her house, articles of silver, articles of gold, and clothing;** and you shall put them on your sons and on your daughters. **So you shall plunder the Egyptians."**

- So, God sends Moses to Pharaoh and says, "Let My people go."
- Pharaoh says, "Who is the Lord that I should obey Him. I do not know the Lord, and I will not, let Israel go,"
- So God sends ten plagues on Pharaoh and Egypt to convince him to obey God.
- Read with me about the last one.

Exodus 12:29–36 NKJV 29 And it came to pass at midnight that the LORD struck all the firstborn in the land of Egypt, from the firstborn of Pharaoh who sat on his throne to the firstborn of the captive who was in the dungeon, and all the firstborn of livestock. 30 So Pharaoh rose in the night, he, all his servants, and all the Egyptians; and there was a great cry in Egypt, for there was not a house where there was not one dead.

31 Then he called for Moses and Aaron by night, and said, "**Rise, go out from among my people,** both you and the children of Israel. And go, serve the LORD as you have said. 32 Also **take your flocks and your herds,** as you have said, and be gone; and bless me also." 33 And the Egyptians urged the people, that they might send them out of the land in haste. For they said, "We shall all be dead." 34 So the people took their dough before it was leavened, having their kneading bowls bound up in their clothes on their shoulders. 35 **Now the children of Israel** had done according to the word of Moses, and they **had asked from the Egyptians articles of silver, articles of gold, and clothing.** 36 And **the LORD had given the people favor in the sight of the Egyptians,** so that **they granted them what they requested.** Thus they plundered the Egyptians.

- When the people gave their offerings for the tabernacle, they gave out of what God had provided.

When God gives vision, He always makes provision.

- More than four years ago, God gave us the vision for the renovation of our Worship Center to help us reach more of the younger generations.
- And God has been giving us His provision.
 - Some have jobs.
 - Some have other sources of income.
 - Some have checking accounts and savings accounts.
 - Some have stocks and bonds.
 - Some have mutual funds.
 - Some have houses, lands, and other properties.
 - Some have gold and precious jewels.
 - Some have antique cars and other things of value.

And lest we too quickly revert to the thinking of the world and say, "But I have worked for those things all my life!"

Let us remember what the Lord said to this same people later in their journey,

Deuteronomy 8:18 NKJV "And you shall **remember the LORD your God, for it is He who gives you power to get wealth**, that He may establish His covenant which He swore to your fathers, as it is this day.

God's first instruction about BUILDING GOD'S WAY was

WE MUST SHARE GOD'S VISION.

God's second instruction about BUILDING GOD'S WAY was

WE MUST UNDERSTAND GOD'S PROVISION. All that we have is by the gracious provision of Almighty God.

Folks, God's final instruction for the day to those of us who would learn how to BUILD GOD'S WAY is that ...

WE MUST MAKE OUR DECISION WITH A WILLING HEART.

Exodus 25:2 NKJV "Speak to the children of Israel, that they bring Me an offering. From everyone **who gives it willingly with his heart** you shall take My offering.

Folks, I'm not a fundraiser. I'm your pastor.

I'm not a promoter. I'm a preacher.

It is my calling, my responsibility, my great privilege to proclaim to you the whole counsel of the Word of God. That is what I have tried to do every single week of the 15 years God has allowed me to serve Him with you.

I am not going to start now pressuring anybody to give.

I will teach you what God's Word says if you want to learn.

I will do my best to explain it to you if you don't understand.

But each one of us must make our own decision. And God wants what we give out of His provision in our lives to be given with a willing heart. We are not hiring Fund Raisers. Not launching a big campaign. Not forming a bunch of committees. We will receive God's instruction, pray, and commit to give with a willing heart.

My prayer is that three weeks from today, on January 30, we will each make our decision of what we will give out of a willing heart, and that our decisions will be pleasing to God.