

## SERMON NOTES

SERIES: Exodus: Set Free to Live Free

TITLE: Gospel-Centered Generosity

**SCRIPTURE: Exodus 35-40**

DATE: May 14, 2017

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We are in a series on the Book of Exodus from the Old Testament. Why study this book? Exodus is the Old Testament story of the salvation of God's people that points forward to the great salvation that comes to us by faith in Jesus. Exodus helps us better understand what it means for God to *set us free* from our broken, messy lives so we can *live free* in loving, personal relationship with God.

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**Lead in** — Oddly enough, the book of Exodus concludes with God's people giving an incredibly generous offering to build the tabernacle. They give in response to God's command, but also, in response to grace. They give freely, willingly, from the heart. And we see the same kind of teaching on generosity repeated in the NT as well.

Today, we are still answering the question: *How does the tabernacle help us think about the church today?* But even more specifically: *How does the generosity of God's people in giving to the building of the tabernacle point forward to how we as the church should think about giving generously to God's work today?*

**READ Exodus 35:4-9; 35:20-29; 36:1-7**

**The foundation we will build upon:** *Gospel-centered generosity begins with the counter-intuitive understanding that God doesn't need your money. [i]*

**Five Observations from Exodus 35-36**

- 1. The people gave in response to God's command.**
- 2. God used their stuff to build his tabernacle.**
- 3. Everyone contributed something.** But not the same things or things worth the same amount.
- 4. God commanded them to give freely and generously from the heart** (35:5, 21; 29)
- 5. The people gave in response to God's grace.**

**The BIG question:** *If we have received God's grace in a much greater way than the Exodus generation, how much more should we respond to the grace we have received in Jesus?*

**From Exodus to Paul**—2 Corinthians 9:6-11 [see also 2 Cor 8:9 and 2 Cor 9:15]

- When you give generously to God's work in response to God's grace, God pledges himself to take care of you and to multiply what you have so you can give even more.

- The point is: God increases your income, not just to increase your standard of living. He increases your income to increase your capacity for giving.

### **Conclusion**

1. What statement does my giving make about how much I value God and his grace to me?
2. What does your giving show you trust in most?
3. What does what you do with your money reveal about whose kingdom you are serving?

There shouldn't be any guilt in those questions. Paul said: *Each one should give as he has decided in his heart, not reluctantly, not under compulsion*, God loves cheerful givers. God loves people who give because they want to, not because they have to.

**BIG IDEA:** When you give generously to God's work in response to God's grace—he says—"Don't worry." God pledges himself to take care of you and multiply what you give so you can give even more generously. There's no better way to say "thank you" for the indescribable gift of grace that you've received in Jesus.

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### **For Discussion —**

1. Have a couple of people summarize in their own words the main teaching from Exodus today.
2. In what ways do we see God's grace more clearly than the children of Israel?
3. How does Exodus 35-36 find its way into Paul's teaching about Gospel-centered, grace giving in 2 Corinthians 8-9? What are the echoes from the Old Testament story to New Testament teaching?
4. Does (or how does) fear factor into your giving?
5. What does Paul say in 2 Corinthians 9:6-11 speak to the issue of fear when it comes to giving.
6. What do you think about the statement: *God increases your income, not just to increase your standard of living. He increases your income to increase your capacity for giving?*
7. Anything else?

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[i] Thanks to J.D. Greear for this point and for other insights and illustrations I've included in this message.