



# BRINGING OUR ALL AND EVEN MORE

*SERIES: THE TABERNACLE: GOD'S PRESENCE WITH HIS PEOPLE*

Exodus 35:1–36:7

15th Message

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The story of the woman with the alabaster flask is told in all four gospels. In a room full of men the woman approached Jesus and on him poured out her costly gift, an alabaster flask of ointment worth almost a year's wage. The men watching her were hostile and indignant. The woman was silent but the men were quick to speak. "What a waste!" said the disciples in Matthew and Mark. Her precious offering could have been used so much more productively if it had been sold and the money given to the poor. In John's account Judas Iscariot also thought it should have been sold, not because he cared for the poor, but because he was accustomed to helping himself to the common purse. Jesus defended the woman, "She has done a beautiful thing to me." In Luke's account, the host, a Pharisee, dismisses the woman as a sinner. She is indeed a sinner, though not necessarily a prostitute. She is a sinner, but Luke's gospel is full of sinners and they all find in Jesus someone who cares for sinners, who loves them and forgives them. The Pharisee had failed to extend a hospitable welcome to Jesus, a gesture intended to publicly humiliate him. Jesus rebuked the Pharisee and commended to him the woman as a role model for what true hospitality should be. He followed with the punchline: "I tell you, her many sins have been forgiven—as her great love has shown. But whoever has been forgiven little loves little." Yes, the woman is a sinner, but she has been forgiven much and so she loves much. With eyes only for Jesus she has braved the scorn of the self-righteous men. She has brought herself and her precious gift to the Savior who loves, forgives and welcomes sinners. In love and gratitude she has brought her all and even more.

Israel was a sinful people. God had redeemed Israel from harsh slavery in Egypt and brought them to Mount Sinai; he brought them *to* himself and *for* himself. He had entered into covenant with them: I will be your God, you will be my people and I will dwell with you. They now belonged to him and owed him their allegiance. But within a few weeks Israel had broken that allegiance, worshiping a golden calf. They broke both the first and second commandments. God disowned them and wanted to destroy them. But Moses, the faithful mediator, had interceded. He pleaded for the people and begged God not to destroy them. God listened to Moses: he spared the people. Moses asked God to show him his glory, and God had proclaimed to him his Name, this Name which we said together after our prayer of confession, this Name that we're hearing every week so that it sinks into us and forms how we think about God:

**"The LORD, the LORD, a God merciful and gracious, slow to anger, and abounding in steadfast love and faithfulness, keeping steadfast love for thousands, forgiving iniquity and transgression and sin." (Exod 34:6-7 ESV)**

Falling down in worship, Moses petitioned God,

**"If now I have found favor in your sight, O Lord, please let the Lord go in the midst of us, for it is a stiff-necked people, and pardon our iniquity and our sin, and take us for your inheritance." (34:9)**

"Forgive us and take us as yours." We've been hearing this also each week. God did; he made a new covenant which Moses wrote on a fresh pair of stone tablets. He descended Mt Sinai carrying those tablets.

As we saw last week, the people were initially afraid of his shining face. But he called the leaders and then "all the people of Israel came near, and he commanded them all that the LORD had spoken with him in Mount Sinai" (34:32). We pick up the story in Exodus 35:1. The passage consists of four scenes. In the first scene (35:1-20) Moses assembles Israel to pass on to them God's instructions.

## 1. Moses delivers God's instructions (35:1-20)

Moses assembled the whole congregation of Israel to tell them the things which the Lord had commanded him atop Mt Sinai. God had delivered those instructions to Moses in chapters 25–31, and Moses had descended the mountain. But he had been unable to deliver the instructions to the people because he found Israel worshiping the golden calf. Moses had shattered the tablets and the instructions were never delivered. Now he has a fresh pair of tablets and has come down the mountain. This time he does deliver the instructions. He does so in two parts: instructions about the sabbath (1-3) and instructions about the tabernacle (4-19).

The first instructions concern the sabbath (35:2-3).

**Six days work shall be done, but on the seventh day you shall have a Sabbath of solemn rest, holy to the LORD. (35:2)**

These instructions about the sabbath were the very last instructions that God had given Moses (31:12-17). Israel's sin with the golden calf is thus bracketed between these two sets of instructions about the sabbath. The sabbath was a sign of the covenant between God and his people, that he was their God and they were his people. The basic premise was that Israel imitated God. His presence was a transforming presence: the people were to be formed by his presence in their midst; they were to be like him. God had done his work in six days and on the seventh he rested from his work. So should Israel do in imitation of God. God's work was the work of creation. Israel is about to embark on a work, that of a new creation: building the tabernacle. Israel is called to imitate God on the six days and on the seventh day.

The second set of instructions that Moses passes on to Israel concern the tabernacle. Earlier, at the beginning of the instructions, the Lord had told Moses,

**let them make me a sanctuary, that I may dwell in their midst. Exactly as I show you concerning the pattern of the tabernacle, and of all its furniture, so you shall make it. (25:8-9)**

The Lord had told Moses that the people were to bring and make: bring their contributions and make the tabernacle. These original instructions had covered six chapters (25–30).

Now Moses summarizes them in just 15 verses: bring and make. Bring your contributions and make the tabernacle. Moses had begged, “O Lord, please let the Lord go in our midst, for it is a stiff-necked people” (34:9). He knew that without the Lord in their midst this stiff-necked people Israel was lost, helpless and hopeless. The Lord heard and answered: bring your contributions and make the tabernacle. The Lord *would* go with his people. He *would* lead them through the wilderness. He *would* bring them into the land of promise. He was their God, they were his people, and he *would* dwell with them. And so Moses conveys the Lord’s instructions to the people: bring and make.

First, the bringing:

**“Take from among you a contribution to the LORD. Whoever is of a generous heart, let him bring the LORD’s contribution.”** (35:5)

The list of materials is essentially identical to 25:3-7—the precious metals of gold, silver and bronze; the textiles of blue, purple and scarlet, linen, and woven goats’ hair; animal skins and wood; oil for lamps and spices for incense; and precious stones. Everything that is needed for the next stage, the making of the tabernacle.

**“Let every skillful craftsman among you come and make all that the LORD has commanded.”** (35:10)

The skilled craftsmen are to make the tabernacle. They are to make the tent and the seven items of furniture: the ark and the atonement cover for the Most Holy Place; the table for the bread of Presence, the lampstand, and the incense altar for the Holy Place; the altar of burnt offering and the basin for the courtyard; and also the priests’ garments. These were described in great detail in chapters 25–30; here they are summarized in 9 verses.

Having received these instructions to bring and to make, the whole congregation which Moses had assembled went away. They’ve heard the Lord’s instructions: bring and make. How will they respond? Will anyone have a generous heart? Will anyone be moved to give? What if no one comes back?

## 2. The people bring (35:21-29)

The second scene (35:21-29) shows the people’s response; they do return. The people come bringing their contributions. First, a general statement:

**And they came, everyone whose heart stirred him, and everyone whose spirit moved him, and brought the LORD’s contribution to be used for the tent of meeting, and for all its service, and for the holy garments.** (35:21)

The people came to Moses and they brought with them their contributions, everything necessary for making the tabernacle. But this general statement that the people came and brought is not enough for the narrator. He wants us to slow down and linger over this scene. He wants us to see the procession. And so, after the general statement, he gives us a detailed description (22-29). They came and they brought...and they brought...and they brought... Seven times he says, “they brought”! They brought in all fullness.

Who came and brought? They all came and brought: “they came, both men and women” (22); “the leaders brought” (27); “All the men and women, the people of Israel, brought” (29). Who brought? They all came and brought. The word “all” is used 14 times in this paragraph. Who came and brought? All, all, everyone: they *all* came and

brought, every one of them. The entire congregation participated in this act of coming and bringing.

They brought willingly, of their own free will, with hearts moved to give: “everyone whose heart stirred him, and everyone whose spirit moved him” (21), “all who were of a willing heart” (22), “all...whose heart moved them” (29). “All the women whose hearts stirred them” used their skill to spin (26). As they brought their contributions they presented them to the Lord: “Here, Lord.” This was not giving in response to guilt or in response to Moses haranguing them. This was joyful giving. This was giving from hearts full of gratitude and appreciation. They all came to Moses and they all brought their willing contributions for the Lord. Their hearts were moved and their spirits were stirred to bring.

What a joyful procession this second scene is! How overjoyed Moses must have been that the people had responded this way, that their hearts were so moved and their spirits so stirred. How pleased the Lord must have been that they were so appreciative, that they brought their all and even more.

## 3. The craftsmen (35:30–36:1)

In the third scene Moses again addresses all the Israelites. Once again the entire congregation is assembled in front of him, this time with the contributions they have all brought. In this third scene Moses tells the people who will use these contributions to make the tabernacle.

**“See, the LORD has called by name Bezalel..., and he has filled him with the Spirit of God, with skill, with intelligence, with knowledge, and with all craftsmanship, to devise artistic designs, to work in gold and silver and bronze, in cutting stones for setting, and in carving wood, for work in every skilled craft. And he has inspired him to teach, both him and Oholiab... He has filled them with skill to do every sort of work done by an engraver or by a designer or by an embroiderer...or by a weaver—by any sort of workman or skilled designer.** (35:30-35)

Who is to do the work? God himself supplies the craftsmen and supplies them with the necessary skills to make the tabernacle. He has provided Bezalel to head up the project, calling him by name to this specific task. He has filled Bezalel with his Spirit. This is the very first person in Scripture to be filled with the Spirit. God’s Spirit equips him for the task: with skill in technical matters, with ingenuity, with ability, and with all craftsmanship. These skills enable him to do three things: to conceive the design; to execute the work, whether it be working with the precious metals, or cutting the precious stones, or shaping the wood; and to teach other craftsmen.

The Lord has provided him with an assistant: Oholiab. Together they are able to work as engravers, designers, embroiderers, and weavers. And the Lord has provided other craftsmen:

**“Bezalel and Oholiab and every craftsman in whom the LORD has put skill and intelligence to know how to do any work in the construction of the sanctuary shall work in accordance with all that the LORD has commanded.”** (36:1)

The Lord has provided everyone necessary and equipped them with every necessary skill for building him a sanctuary, the tabernacle.

#### 4. The craftsmen receive (36:2-7)

In the fourth and final scene the craftsmen get to work. They start by receiving the contributions which all the people had brought to Moses, the materials that they will use in making the tabernacle.

**And Moses called Bezalel and Oholiab and every craftsman in whose mind the LORD had put skill, everyone whose heart stirred him up to come to do the work. And they received from Moses all the contribution that the people of Israel had brought for doing the work on the sanctuary. They still kept bringing him freewill offerings every morning, so that all the craftsmen who were doing every sort of task on the sanctuary came, each from the task that he was doing, and said to Moses, “The people bring much more than enough for doing the work that the LORD has commanded us to do.” So Moses gave command, and word was proclaimed throughout the camp, “Let no man or woman do anything more for the contribution for the sanctuary.” So the people were restrained from bringing, for the material they had was sufficient to do all the work, and more. (36:2-7)**

Moses summons the craftsmen and they receive all the contributions that the people had brought to him. But the people kept bringing more contributions every morning—until the craftsmen had to interrupt their work and go to Moses and say, “The people bring much more than enough” (36:4). It’s not simply enough, it’s more than enough. Moses gave the command to stop, and the people were restrained from bringing. Their work of bringing was enough for the craftsmen to do their work of making the tabernacle. It was more than enough, for there were leftovers. The people had brought their all and even more.

This was not compulsory giving. It was not giving under duress or coercion. It was not giving by an unwilling people. This was voluntary giving, it was freewill giving. It was giving from stirred hearts and moved spirits. It was giving impelled by what was in the hearts of the Israelites.

There was compulsory giving for Israel. They were to contribute their tithe, a tenth of their produce. This was used to provide for those who had no resources: for the Levites who had no inheritance in the land and were thus unable to provide for themselves. The Levites in turn gave a tenth, their tithe, to the priests. The tithe was also to support the orphan, the widow and the stranger, those who were weak and vulnerable in Israelite society. And the tithe was used to celebrate, to have a party in God’s presence, to eat and drink before him. But the tithe was not used for the building of the tabernacle or later of the temple.

A second compulsory contribution was the annual half-shekel tax given by every adult. This provided the ongoing service in the tabernacle and temple: the regular burnt offerings morning and evening, the bread of the presence that was placed on the table each week, the oil for the lampstand, the incense for the golden altar.

But the tabernacle itself and later the temple was not to be built with money given of necessity or compulsion. It was to be built with freewill offerings, brought by people whose hearts were moved and whose spirits were stirred; brought by people filled with appreciation at God’s grace, at his forgiveness, and at the privilege of having the God whom the heavens cannot contain nevertheless take up residence in their midst—that God would really come and dwell among them, a stiff-necked people. Moses had pleaded, “O Lord, please let the Lord go in the midst of us, for it is a stiff-necked people” (34:9). The Lord said yes. And the people—this stiff-necked people

whom the Lord had forgiven and taken as his—gave. They came and they brought and they brought and they brought. They came and brought until there was enough and still they brought until there was more than enough. Their grateful hearts and spirits impelled them to give.

Israel was a stiff-necked people but forgiven by a gracious God, who abounds in steadfast love and forgives. Israel’s sin was inexcusable, but God had forgiven the inexcusable. As a result, their hearts stirred them and their spirits moved them. They came and they gave. They brought their all and even more.

Many years later it was time for Solomon to build a temple in Jerusalem. King David led in providing materials: “I have provided for the house of my God...gold... Moreover, in addition to all that I have provided...I have a treasure of my own of gold and silver, and because of my devotion to the house of my God I give it... Who then will offer willingly?” (1 Chr 29:2-5). The leaders and the people did. “Then the people rejoiced because they had given willingly, for with a whole heart they had offered freely to the Lord. David the king also rejoiced greatly.” (29:9) And he offered a beautiful prayer, part of which formed our call to worship:

**Yours, O LORD, is the greatness and the power and the glory and the victory and the majesty, for all that is in the heavens and in the earth is yours... But who am I, and what is my people, that we should be able thus to offer willingly? For all things come from you, and of your own have we given you. (1 Chr 29:11, 14)**

David was a sinner, guilty of inexcusable sin of adultery and murder. But God had heard his cry for mercy and his petition for the creation of a clean heart. He was forgiven and he was full of gratitude. So he brought his all and even more.

There are many directions I could go with this wonderful text. I could give a talk on giving. Talks on giving make people squirm, make them feel embarrassed. But this is how giving should work: not out of compulsion but out of grateful hearts. I could give a talk about how God provides the workers and the materials. If he wants something built he will provide the resources for that. If he wants the church to be the body of Christ, a dwelling place for himself, he will supply everything necessary: all the body parts, equipped by his Spirit.

But I want to dwell on this idea of moved hearts and stirred spirits. Israel had compulsory giving: the half-shekel tax and the tithe. But it also had this voluntary giving from moved hearts and stirred spirits, whereby the tabernacle and the temple were built, whereby God lived among his people. The New Testament doesn’t have these compulsory gifts. The half-shekel temple tax and the tithe were just for Israel. We don’t have a temple to maintain. But the principle of giving out of moved hearts still applies. Paul devotes two chapters to this sort of giving (2 Cor 8–9). Paul wanted the largely Gentile churches in Galatia, Asia, Macedonia and Achaia to take up a collection and so contribute to the needs of the church in Jerusalem. The basic principle is: God has abounded or overflowed into their hearts, so that they can abound or overflow to others who are lacking. So, we give not out of compulsion or necessity but willingly out of hearts that are moved. This basic principle that God overflows to us so that we can overflow to others I find has far-reaching implications.

I am pastor of biblical studies here at PBCC. My role is to study and teach. I study Scripture so that God overflows to me. I study so that I have a heart that is moved and a spirit that is stirred to overflowing. Out of that overflow I then teach with the goal that you

overflow. Then all together, with moved hearts and stirred spirits, we overflow and give willingly; we bring our all and even more. We bring our very selves to God and to the Lord Jesus Christ.

Last week we sang,

Come down, O Love divine!  
 seek thou this soul of mine,  
 and visit it with thine own ardor glowing.  
 O Comforter, draw near,  
 within my heart appear,  
 and kindle it, thy holy flame bestowing.

We want the God of love to pour out his love deep into our hearts so that we become together what A.W. Tozer describes as the fellowship of the burning heart. Everything else that we do is the overflow of this.

Today's service is a beautiful illustration of this overflow. We meet each Tuesday morning to plan the following Sunday's service. I had already picked for the Scripture reading the story of the woman with the alabaster flask. I had in mind the line "she loved much for she is forgiven much," which I wanted on the cover of the worship guide. I was looking for a picture of the scene to accompany that verse. Someone immediately suggested *The Woman who Loved Much* that Nancy Woodward had painted for the first Luke show of Art in the Auditorium in 2013. Nancy wrote this description for that show:

Luke is my most beloved gospel because Luke shines a light on several women, many in whom I see myself... the woman, realizing her need and who He [Jesus] is, pours out love from her heart... Her offering is lovingly accepted by Christ... Similarly I came to Him, broken, immoral, and in desperate need. His love poured over me and changed my life. I owe Him everything.

We had the art, now we needed a song. As I described the scene of the Israelites coming and bringing and bringing and bringing their contributions until it was enough and more than enough, Kady Taylor was so moved that she wrote a song *Alabaster Jar*, with the refrain "I bring my all and even more, love poured out from my alabaster jar." She sang this as our offertory today. All that remained was for me to change my sermon title from "Hearts Moved to Give" to "Bringing Our All and Even More."

So today we have contributions by two of our artists whose hearts and spirits have been stirred. We also have hanging on our walls here contributions from other artists and craftsmen: the two cherubim sewn by Robyn Haney, Kathy Woodward's painting *Cleft of the Rock*, and Tom Carr's photo *Blaze of Glory*. These have been contributed out of full hearts.

Israel had sinned but was forgiven; all Israel brought their all and even more. David was a sinner but was forgiven; he brought his all and even more. The woman with the alabaster flask was a sinner but was forgiven; she brought her all and even more. We are sinners, but are forgiven; we bring our all and even more.

We bring our very selves. We present ourselves to God as a living sacrifice, which is our act of worship. We present ourselves to God and say, "Here I am to worship, here I am to bow down, here I am to say that you're my God."

*The LORD bless you and keep you;  
 the LORD make his face to shine upon you and be gracious to you;  
 the LORD lift up his countenance upon you and give you peace.*  
 (Num 6:24-26)

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