

Exodus Chapter 35 v 10 - 19

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[0 : 0 0] Good evening. Welcome. It's good to be out together in the worship of our God. Please would you turn in the Psalms to Psalm 113. I'm going to read a psalm together as we come to worship, as we do from time to time on a Sunday evening. Psalm 113.

Just listen as we follow as I read from God's Word. Praise the Lord, or as we would often say, Hallelujah. Hallelujah's got a more of an uplifting ring, hasn't it, than praise the Lord? It's got a real sense. I know it's a Hebrew word. We don't speak Hebrew, but it's Hallelujah. Praise the Lord, you His servants. Praise the name of the Lord. Let the name of the Lord be praised, both now and forevermore. From the rising of the sun, the place where it sets, the name of the Lord is to be praised. The Lord is exalted over all the nations, His glory above the heavens. Who is like the Lord, our God, the one who sits enthroned on high, who stoops down to look on the heavens and the earth. He raises the poor from the dust and lifts the needy from the ash heap. He seats them with princes, with the princes of His people.

He settles the childless woman in her home as a happy mother of children. Hallelujah. Well, let's continue to praise the Lord as we command it here, aren't we? Ye servants of God, your master proclaim and publish aboard His wonderful name. 192. Let's stand and worship the Lord.

Let us pray and praise. Hallelujah. We do praise you, O Lord our God. Hallelujah. We praise you, sovereign King, ruler of heaven and earth. Hallelujah. We praise you, thou one who sits enthroned in glory, the one who stoops down to look at the heavens and the earth, because you are so high and exalted and lifted up. Hallelujah. We praise you, O Lord, that even this day, your name has been worshipped and praised from the place where the sun rises to the place where it sets. That you have a people, Lord, of every nation and every time zone and every continent. You have a people, O Lord, who are your own. And we are part of that glorious, massive family of those who have become children of God.

Children not by our own decision. Children not of human birth or right, but children born of God. We thank you, O Lord, that this evening we come to you, our Father. We thank you that there is no longer any barrier, no longer any fence, no longer any wall. There is nothing that separates us from you.

[3 : 4 8] Where once there was our sin, now it has been removed. As far as the east is from the west, Lord, you have chosen to remember it no more. And we are accepted in the beloved, in Jesus, your son.

Lord, when you look at us, you see us completely, you know us entirely. But we thank you, O Lord, you see us and you smile. Not because of our sin, but because we resemble your son. Because we are clothed in his beauty and majesty and loveliness and righteousness. You smile, O Lord, at us and over us. And Lord, we thank you for that. For it is the smile of grace. It is the smile of wonderful mercy.

It is the smile which is more than simply the moving of your heart. It is that which is the very heartbeat of your love towards us, which means that you work all things for our good. That you have moved heaven and earth to save us. And, O Lord, you will continue to fulfill your purposes and your plan in bringing us into your eternal heavenly kingdom on the day that you have appointed. Whether that be the day of our death, whether that be the day of the return of your son, we know, O Lord, that we are safe in your almighty, omnipotent house. We pray that again as we come this evening, Lord, move our hearts, stir us to worship, to praise. Your word encourages us, urges us, commands us to praise the Lord. And, O Lord, we ask that we might do that, not because it is a command that we find a burden, but because it is the wonderful delight and desire of our lives to praise you and to worship you.

That, in one sense, wild horses couldn't keep us from worshipping and adoring and praising you. O come, O Lord, by your Holy Spirit afresh upon us, your people. And again, not only upon us, but wherever your people meet, to sing your praises and to reclaim your word. O may your blessing be poured out upon them too, we pray. And may it be even this night that somewhere, Lord, there may be those who are born again of your spirit. Somewhere the preaching of the word has power to convict and to save. That somewhere, O Lord, there may be men and women and boys and girls who are ushered into, drawn into, swept into the kingdom of the living God. O Lord, may heaven rejoice over one sinner who repents. And may heaven rejoice over many who repent. Lord, we pray that there may be much rejoicing in heaven over the people of Whitby in the days ahead, that there may be those who repent and are saved. Lord, equip us, strengthen us, encourage us to this goal and to pray and to work to this end.

For we ask it now, in and through, in the name of Jesus Christ, our Saviour and King. Amen. A bit later on. Now this sermon should have been delivered over a fortnight ago, because I'd prepared it to preach, not last Sunday, but the Sunday before that. And that Sunday I wasn't very well. And then last Sunday decided to snow, and we had to cancel our evening service, because so few would be able to get through. So let me say this to you, above all, this sermon's for you, because the Lord has kept it three weeks to make sure you hear it. Okay? So I don't know what he's trying to say to you particularly, but it's here. So we'll see what the Lord has to say later on.

[7 : 29] But we're going to read God's Word first of all. And I'm going to read from Ephesians chapter 4, that's page 1175. And we're going to read the first 16 verses. First 16 verses of Ephesians chapter 4.

As a prisoner for the Lord, then, I urge you to live a life worthy of the calling you've received.

Be completely humble and gentle. Be patient, bearing with one another in love. Make every effort to keep the unity of the Spirit through the bond of peace. There is one body and one Spirit, just as you were called to one hope when you were called. One Lord, one faith, one baptism, one God and Father of all, who is over all and through all and in all. But to each one of us, grace has been given as Christ apportioned it. This is why it says, when he ascended on high, he took many captives and gave gifts to his people. What does he ascended mean except that he also descended to the lower earthly regions? He who descended is the very one who ascended higher than all the heavens in order to fill the whole universe. So Christ himself gave the apostles, the prophets, the evangelists, the pastors and teachers, to equip his people for works of service, so that the body of Christ may be built up until we all reach unity in the faith and in the knowledge of the Son of God and become mature, attaining to the whole measure of the fullness of Christ.

Then we will no longer be infants tossed back and forth by the waves and blown here and there by every wind of teaching, by the cunning and craftiness of people in their deceitful scheming.

Instead, speaking the truth in love, we will grow to become in every respect the mature body of him who is the head, that is Christ. From him the whole body joined, held together by every supporting ligament, grows and builds itself up in love as each part does its work.

[10:01] Turn with me please to Exodus 35. In previous weeks, the last two weeks of course, but in previous weeks we've been working through Exodus probably a year or more and particularly the last several weeks thinking about the tabernacle, that huge tent that God commanded to be built for the worship and sacrifice and offering of his people and looked at the Ark of the Covenant and some of the altars and the other furniture inside as well. And we're going to continue with that in chapter 35. I'm going to read from verse 10 through to verse 19. Verse 10, that's page 94. If you've got one of the church Bibles, page 94.

Exodus 13, reading from verse 10. All who are skilled among you are to come and make everything the Lord has commanded.

The tabernacle with its tent and its covering, clasps, frames, crossbars, posts and bases, the Ark with its poles and the atonement cover with the curtain that shields it, the table with its poles and all its articles and the bread of the presence, the lampstand that is for the light with its accessories, lamps and oil for the light, the altar of incense with its poles, the anointing oil and the fragrant incense, the curtain for the doorway at the entrance to the tabernacle, the altar of burnt offering with its bronze grating, its poles and all its utensils, the bronze basin with its stand, the curtains of the courtyard with its posts and bases, the curtain for the entrance of the courtyard, the tent pegs for the tabernacle and for the courtyard and their ropes, the woven garments worn for ministering in the sanctuary, both the sacred garments for Aaron the priest and the garments for his sons when they serve as priests. What a list. What a list of things to be built and to be made. This was a huge undertaking, wasn't it? This isn't just a little bit of embroidery here or there. The tent itself required 10 curtains which were each 42 feet long, six foot wide. The courtyard in which it stood consisted of fabric sections which were connected by 20 poles, seven and a half feet high, 75 feet wide and 150 feet long.

And then there was all the altars, the ark, the tables, the lamps and so on. How on earth was Moses to do all these things? How on earth was he to build this tabernacle? Seemed like it would take as long as Noah took to build the ark if it was just up to him. But of course it wasn't, was it? God didn't intend Moses to do it by himself. Rather God had given people, skilled men particularly, craftsmen to oversee the work.

They mentioned a bit earlier on in this same, in chapter 2, sorry, chapter 36, verse 1. Bezalel and Aholiab, they were skilled as craftsmen in metal work and working with jewels and silver and bronze and so on.

[13:15] And even they themselves were not to work by themselves. For we read there, verse 1, Bezalel, Aholiab and every skilled person to whom the Lord has given skill and ability to know how to carry all the work of constructing the sanctuary are to do the work as the Lord has commanded.

And in these chapters 35, 36, all the way up to 39, really we have the construction of each part of the tabernacle, the tent and the holy of holies and so on, the list that we read just a few moments ago.

And in those chapters is revealed something very important, a truth I think that goes through all the rest of scripture as well into the Old Testament too. It's this, every person is to contribute to the growth of the church and every person is to be used by God to fulfill his purposes in the world.

That's why we read, as we did from Ephesians in chapter 4, that last verse about how the church is to grow and be built up and so on as each part does its work. Now that's pretty common, much common sense, isn't it? Pretty much obvious. A bit like that well-known phrase, many hands make light work.

So it is in the principle that God has placed in scripture that every part of the body of Christ, every person is to be at work and to be used by God to accomplish the building and the enlarging of his church. Now we might say, well that's normal, that's nothing exceptional. We take that for granted.

[15:05] In one sense that's true, but also I want us to recognize that this is actually an incredible and wonderful truth. That it is God who commands us in every age, in every situation, in every locality, in every group of his people, that we are necessary and that he works through us to the building up of his church. The tabernacle here is very much a picture of the church of Jesus Christ, later replaced, as we know, by the temple that Solomon built in Jerusalem. In the New Testament letters, we find the church being likened to that building, even here in Ephesians a little earlier in chapter 2. Paul writes here, in him, that's Christ, the whole building is joined together and rises to become a holy temple in the Lord. And in him, you too are being built together to become a dwelling in which God lives by his Spirit.

What is extraordinary is this, that the God that we serve and the God that we worship and the God that we trust in is the everlasting, almighty, self-sufficient God who does not need anything from anybody.

Paul, when he was in Athens and he spoke to that very religious group with all their offerings and temples and so on, he made this point, the Lord of heaven and earth does not live in temples built by human hands. He's not served by human hands as if he needed anything. God needs no human help to carry out his purposes of salvation for his people, his church. Yet, as we see here in Exodus and as we see through the whole of scripture, God wills and desires that the church that is his should be built by the contribution and the service of his members. In other words, God allows us to be, as Paul puts it, fellow workers with God, 2 Corinthians 6. And elsewhere, we see that the church of Christ is built up, brings glory to God, accomplishes that which he purposed for it as each one plays their part.

I think that's important for us to get hold of. I think we need to grasp that. God gives us the privilege of sharing in the work. He gives us the honor. He allows us to share in, to come and part of his work, his ministry, his good pleasure. He doesn't need us. He can save, can't he? He doesn't need us to save.

If he can speak through Balaam's donkey, he can speak through anyone or anything. He doesn't need me, doesn't need you. Yet, he calls us, he encourages us, he says, share with me in this vital, wonderful, marvelous work. I don't know what sort of relationship you had with perhaps your mother or your father, but as parents, one of the things we do with our children is we get them to share in the things we do, to share in the jobs. Not just because we want them to do our work and be our lackey, but we want them to, the cake that's finished, isn't it? You bake in a cake, you want your daughter or your son to be able to be involved in the making of the cake. So there's a sense of sharing in that.

[18:40] My father was a mechanic and even as a very young lad, he would take me with him to work on marine engines and things like that. There was a sense of sharing in the work. He did it all, of course, but I would tighten up a screw or a nut or whatever. There's a sense of sharing. And our heavenly father is the same. He doesn't need us, but for our blessing, for our pleasure, for our joy.

Now, of course, we've got to be very careful here, haven't we? We mustn't go the other way and there can be an aspect of that where we feel it's all up to us. Well, the church will never grow unless we do the work. God will never see people saved here in Whitby unless we do the ministry. It all depends upon us and there can be times we can feel crushed by that and overwhelmed by that. Oh, it's all up to us. God expects too much of us. He expects too much of me. I can't do it. Now, of course, that's not the case. And one of the things that comes out here again in Exodus 35, and it's very clearly pointed out, that those who God works are in use were those who were enabled and equipped by the Lord himself.

Look at 35 and verse 31. He has filled him, that's Bezalel, the son of Uri, the son of Hur, filled him with the Spirit of God, with wisdom and understanding, with knowledge and with all kinds of skills to make artistic designs. And again, later on, verse 34, we talk about Oholiab, which we're told in verse 45, God has filled them with skill. And then again, chapter 36, verse 1, the Lord has given skill and ability. The others who join them and work alongside them over and over again, we're told the Lord was the one who equipped and enabled and empowered these people to do this work, to build this tabernacle for his glory, and ultimately, of course, for the blessing of his people, that they might have fellowship with him, that they might know forgiveness of sins, that the sacrifices and the offerings might be dealt with. And why has God included that in the revelation of his word? Why has he made that clear, that these people were equipped by him? Because ultimately, it is God's work from start to finish.

And because, of course, God desires and must have the glory. Remember, the design is God's design, he revealed to Moses. The workmen are his, the equipping is his, therefore the glory is his.

And once more, as I say, this is something which we keep seeing all the way through the scriptures. Go on further from Exodus into Joshua. Remember that incredible victory over the fortified city of Jericho. Now, who brought the walls down? That's the Sunday school. God did. Well, what were the people doing marching around? Seven days, they marched around. Seven days, they blasted the trumpets.

[21 : 46] They were obedient to God, and God used them, and he brought the walls down. Think of those numerous deliverances that God brought to his people in Judges. It's an incredible book. It's a terrifying book as well. If you read Judges, it's horrific. It's like the worst type of horror film at the end. But what do you see again and again? God raised up a judge. People think like Samson, an incredible story, how God, the spirit of the Lord came upon him, and the Philistines were defeated, and the people had freedom. It was God working through. And again, when we go into the New Testament, those churches that Paul and Silas and Barnabas and others planted, those people who were converted. What does Paul say in 1 Corinthians 3? He says, well, me and Apollos, we just sowed the seed.

Or we watered the seed. But God made it grow. Emphasis upon the Lord's work. Yet it was through the ministry, the service, the obedience of those people.

And even if we go into the reality of what it means to be a Christian day by day, as we live out the Christian life, week by week, what's going on? Well, Philippians 2, 12 and 13, urges us, continue to work out your salvation with fear and trembling. Full stop. That's the end. No, of course it's not. Work, continue to work out your salvation with fear and trembling. Why? For it is God who works in you to will and to act according to his good purpose. So even the Christian life, and there are times, aren't there, we thought a little bit about this one, it's daunting to live as a Christian in a world which is so, so misunderstand, so has a slanted view of the things of Christ. It's hard, but how can we do it?

Because it's God who's working. How are these people going to build this huge tabernacle? With all of its intricacies and its gold and its brass and its... How are they going to do that?

The Lord equipped them and worked through them. How are we going to reach the people of Whitby with the gospel? How is this nation going to hear the things of Christ? How are people, boys and girls, men and women, going to be saved? As we are used by God, in his hands, by his spirit, to take the message of his grace. So what can we learn here in this passage in Exodus 35 and 36, and from the rest of scripture? What can we learn about our role? It's clear, isn't it? It's obvious.

[24 : 29] I hope we've got hold of this one fact. God uses you and me. God works through you and me. God desires that we play our part and fulfill our role to build his church and to glorify his name. So what do we learn?

Well, one thing we surely must see and recognize, and it comes out again in that Ephesian reading, is this. Every single believer has a God-given gift. Every single believer has a God-given gift.

Now, I've mentioned just a couple of people here in Exodus, Bezalel and Aholiab, but there are a long list of different people that are mentioned. Either they are people who contribute by bringing something along, or they're people who have skills or abilities to construct it. Look at these verses with me, if you would. First of all, chapter 35, verse 22. All who were willing, men and women alike.

So it's not just men, and it's not just women. It's not just for us men to say, well, let the women get on with the work, you know, because, you know, they're the ones who should do it. Or it's not just the women to say, well, of course, you know, it's just the men. It's women and men alike. And they brought different things, didn't they? And brought different gifts, verse 22. Some brought gold jewelry, brooches, earrings, rings, and ornaments. They all presented their gold as a wave offering to the Lord.

But then others brought other things. Everyone had blue, purple, or scarlet yarn, or fine linen, or goat hair, or ramskins. They brought them, verse 23. And then we see as well, there were those who were the leaders as well. They brought things, verse 27. The leaders brought onyx stones and other gems to be mounted on. So it's clear that these other people, if I can put it this way, were the ordinary people. Oh, it's the church leaders. It's the pastor. It's the elders. It's the deacons. It's the Sunday school teachers. It's those people who are there to do the work. They're going to build the church.

[26 : 38] We can look to them. No, it's every single person. Leader or not. Some brought spices. Some brought oil.

Some brought gold. And so on. And the work that they did was different too. Bezalel was someone who worked with precious metals and jewels. Chapter 35, verse 32. To make artistic designs and work in gold and so on. But then Aholiab was gifted in engraving and embroidery and weaving. Verse 35 of that same chapter. He was filled. He has filled them with skill to do all kinds of work as engravers, designers, embroiderers. Different gifts, different abilities. We see that there were those women who could spin.

Verse 25. Every skilled woman spun with her hands and brought with them what she had spun. Blue, purple or scarlet yarn or fine linen. All the women who were willing and had the skill spun the goat hair.

And a great number of skilled craftsmen who did all sorts of different work. Chapter 36 and verse 4. So all the skilled workers who were doing all the work on the sanctuary. Everybody. Men and women, leaders and ordinary folk. People of particular skills and gifts. People who had different skills and gifts. And it's just the same today in the church of Jesus Christ, isn't it?

We've all been given gifts from God for the purpose of building his church. Oh, I don't know that I've been given a gift. Okay. 1 Peter chapter 4. You believe the Bible, don't you? You believe that what it says is true? 1 Peter 4 verse 10. Each of you should use whatever gift you have received. Every one of you. Peter doesn't say, if you have a gift, use it. But everyone should use whatever gift they have.

[28 : 40] That gift may be material wealth. That we can support the work of the gospel overseas or in some other way. It may be something very, very practical that we can do in the sense of a material or building or creating or skills like this. But it may be something else. We may have the skill of being able to teach or to listen or to comfort or to pray or whatever it may be. Every single one of us has a gift and that gift is essential to the work of God. And we need to acknowledge that these are spiritual gifts because they're God-given gifts. We can say, well, I haven't got any spiritual gifts.

I just am able to knit. But all these things, look at these skills here. Spinning and weaving and working. These, we're told, were God-given skills. There's no such thing as natural gifts. We are given those gifts. Whether we're given them from birth or whether we learn them later or whether God gives them in a very wonderful, we might say almost supernatural way, they are still God-given gifts.

And you read through 1 Corinthians 12, you get all these different gifts that are spoken of. But in the midst of all of them are some that we wouldn't expect to be there. The gift of helping others.

The gift of administration. Now, I have to say, that's one gift I haven't got. But, well, I know some of you have. We need one another's gifts. Rather, God wants one another's gifts.

The question is not, do I have a gift? The question simply is, what is the gift that God has given me? What is the gift that God has given me? And I just want to spend the time that we've got left thinking about that.

[30 : 34] If we acknowledge that God wants and works through every believer, which we've seen from Scripture, I hope, and are convinced of, and we've seen from Scripture that God gives gifts to each and every one of us, even if it's just one gift, or maybe two, maybe more, then the question is, well, Lord, I want to use the gifts you've given me, but I'm not sure what they are.

A couple of questions, and a couple of ways that we can, in one sense, apply sanctified common sense to this.

What are you good at? What are you good at? Are you good at cooking? Are you good at maths? Are you good at DIY?

Are you good at decorating? Or teaching? Or listening? Or visiting? Or whatever it is? If you're good at something, it's because God has gifted you with that.

And that is one of the gifts that surely God wants you to use. Within his church. For the building up of the gospel. Don't poo-poo it.

[31 : 50] But what are you good at? That knowledge. And give thanks to God for that gift. Say, well, I'm good at this or that.

Well, have you tested it, if I could put it that way? If you think that you might have a gift in a particular area, have you tested that gift? Say you feel that that gift is to get alongside people.

And to listen to them, and to pray with them, to encourage them, or support them. Or whatever it may be. Have you tested that? Have you gone and visited somebody? Have you given it a try? You see, it's only as we actually try out the gift that we can recognize whether we have the gift or not.

It's not going to be suddenly a flash of inspiration necessarily. We've got to test it. We've got to test it and try it. And not only for ourselves, but also for the church.

The church and one another, we need to be able to say, yeah, this person clearly has a gift in this area. Can we encourage it? Can we give opportunity for it?

[32 : 53] Can we use that gift? Of course, there will be times when we think we've got a gift in something, and actually we're the only ones who think we've got the gift in that area. But that's why we need one another.

To say, brother, sister, I know that you'd like to do that. But that probably isn't where God has gifted you. Where may that be?

Try it out. Again, what do we like to do? You see, sometimes we think that God will give me a gift to do something I really hate. God's going to, I really don't get on with, this is an illustration, okay?

Really don't get on with children. I just don't get on with, never any children of my own. Don't really get on with children. Now, it may be that you'll be brilliant with kids, but it's probably unlikely that you're going to have a gift to work with children when you don't actually like children.

It's a simple illustration. What do you like doing? Do you like visiting people? Do you like praying with people? Do you like reading the scriptures with people? Do you like working with children? Do you like catering?

[33 : 56] Do you like, these are the gifts to try, to test. And make opportunities to do that. See, whatever gift you've got, I believe that God has a place for you to use that gift for his glory within the church.

Go back here to these people. Something quite extraordinary happened. From verse 3.

They received, chapter 36, verse 3. They received from Moses all the offerings the Israelites had brought to carry out the work of constructing the sanctuary. The people continued to bring freewill offerings morning after morning.

So all the skilled workers who were doing all the work on the sanctuary left what they were doing and said to Moses, the people are bringing more than enough for doing the work the Lord commanded to be done.

And Moses gave an order and they sent this word through the camp, no man or woman is to make anything else as an offering for the sanctuary. So the people were restrained from bringing more.

[35 : 02] Because what they'd already had was more than enough for the work. In other words, they gave so generously that there came a time when there was no more to be given.

One of the commentators writes this. It must have been both a disappointment and a frustration to those who had delayed giving their gifts because they could not bear to part with their treasures and who now found that God had no further need of them.

His work was finished. But they had excluded themselves from any share in it. God deliver any of us from such a frustration. In other words, there is an opportunity for us to use our gifts while we've got them and while we're able to use them.

Who's to say that the financial gifts that we've got will not be gone in a month or a year or whatever and we're not able to then give them to serve the gospel? Who's to say that the gifts that we've got in practical ways, that we'll be able to have the strength to do in a little time in the future?

We're to use them now. Not to say I'll store them up and wait to use them when the time comes. There's opportunities now. We've only got this life, haven't we?

[36 : 20] We've only got this one life to live for the glory and the service of God. And I keep thinking, now that I'm 50, it's really old.

I keep thinking, what about in 20 years' time or 30 years' time if the Lord spares me? Will I be able to say at the end of it, Lord, I've used the gifts you've given me.

I hope that I will, but I think also at the end of it, I'll be thinking, I wish I had longer. I wish I had more time. I wish I had another life to live, another opportunity to serve you.

I believe that as Christians, as we get to the end, there's a sense of frustration. Lord, I wish I could have done more. Now, that's not a wrong thing necessarily, but what a terrible thing it would be to be able to look back over our lives and see that the gifts that God has given us, we haven't used at all.

Or in such a small way, that now as the end comes, in one sense, we're turned away. I don't need your gift anymore. You can't use and give your gift anymore.

[37 : 27] I think that's a very marked event. And a real warning to us, there's an opportunity. Look for that opportunity, dear friends.

Seek it out. Pray about it. Talk to other people in the church about it. Yesterday we had that work morning and a day, and several folk came.

That was great. But please don't take this too wrongly. More of us could have come and given of ourselves to the work of the gospel, to giving ourselves to the prayer meeting, giving ourselves to support other aspects of the ministry.

What else do we learn here? I think, again, these things are all very important, I believe. Notice that the giving of these people came because their hearts were moved.

In other words, they gave freely. Do you notice that in verse 21 of Exodus 35? All who were willing.

[38 : 33] All who were willing gave. Men and women alike came and brought gold and silver. And that phrase keeps cropping up in these two chapters. In chapter 35, verse 5.

From what you have taken offering to the Lord. Everyone who is willing. We've read verse 21. And everyone who was willing and whose heart moved then came and brought their gifts.

And we can go through. Chapter 36, verse 2. Moses summoned Beziel and Olehab and every skilled person to whom the Lord had given ability who was willing. One of the worst things that we can possibly do as Christians is to serve the Lord our God begrudgingly.

To serve the Lord our God with a sense of duty. With a sense of, I've got to do it because nobody else will do it.

Or I've got to do it because it's expected of me. Or I've got to do it because what will others think of me? Or, or, or. No one here gave apart from those who were willing.

[39 : 45] They didn't, there's no great speech with Moses as it were, sort of characterised sort of American preacher about give your money to the Lord.

Stop being, you know, making you feel guilty about it. We must never do anything out of a sense of guilt, dear friends. Apart from bring our sins for forgiveness. But when we're Christians, everything's got to flow from love.

It's got to flow from a willing heart. A joyful heart. A heart that says, Lord, whatever I have is yours. No gift was to leave our hand because it's been pulled from us.

Nobody gave their work. Nobody gave what they had because they were under duress. Why were they so generous? Why were they so sacrificial in the giving? Well, surely it must have been because God, the Holy Spirit, had touched their heart.

We're told there that their hearts were moved. Who moves the human heart? But God, the Holy Spirit. Moves us with thankfulness for all that the Lord has given us and poured that into our lives.

[40 : 50] Moves us with thankfulness for the cross and the sacrifice of his son. How can we withhold anything of our time, our effort, our energy, our finances, anything from the Lord who gave the greatest and most precious gift of all when he gave his son to suffer and die for us?

How can we? Why? Yet we do because we forget these things. The Holy Spirit's work is to remind us of these things. the normal reaction of the heart of a believer in response to the saving grace of God is to give.

Remember that woman broke the nard of oil over the head of Jesus. She loves much because she forgiven much. God gave the gifts and God moved the heart so that the gifts and the lives worked for his glory and praise.

God has gifted me and he's gifted you and he wants us to use those gifts but he wants them to flow from a heart of love. A longing heart not a forceful heart.

Paul when he writes to the Corinthians 2 Corinthians 9-7 talks there about their giving to the Lord's work and he says each of you should give what you have decided in your heart to give not reluctantly or under compulsion for God loves a cheerful giver.

[42 : 28] Not reluctantly or under compulsion. You see we can legalistically give can't we? We can legalistically give of our finances. Well we're going to you know in the Old Testament they were to give 10% a tithe so that's what we'll do and I remember Christians speaking to me in the past and say well is that net or gross?

Before tax or after tax? It's not meant to be that isn't it? It's decide what you give in your heart. If you've got to work out whether it's before tax or after tax then you're already on a wrong foot don't you?

In one sense there's a sense of what can I keep? What should I keep hold of? How much can I give? Can I give more? That runs in the face doesn't it of the world in which we live.

As Christians we're to be people who run in the face of the world in which we live. God doesn't want unwilling gifts or unwilling service. He doesn't want us to be hypocrites. It's an insult to his grace if we give out of fear or an attempt to bribe him or to quieten our conscience or to make ourselves look good.

His gifts are love gifts. Every one of them he gives that we may give it in return. Every gift that you and I have the ability to work and earn the ability to do the things that we can do we're given by God that with joy and delight we may give them back to him and give them back to him.

[44 : 07] I'll close with these words of our Saviour the Lord Jesus. They're misused I know by others but I hope that we understand them right. Luke chapter 6 verse 38 Give and it will be given to you.

A good measure pressed down shaken together and running over will be poured into your lap for with the measure you use it will be measured to you.

It's more blessed to give than to receive. Let's pray together. Let's respond to God's word in prayer. Lord you know us and you know the gifts you've given us and you know the struggles we have when it comes to giving and sharing and serving.

Lord you know that we are so strongly influenced by our peers and the world around about us and Lord we ask you to forgive us forgive us for begrudgingly giving.

We've done it Lord we confess begrudgingly giving. Give us Lord that cheerful heart to give and give and give help us not to look at one another and say well they're not giving enough and I'm giving more than them deliver us from that comparison giving or serving but help us to give gladly willingly joyfully to you and Lord we thank you for the privilege of being called to share in this amazing work.

[45 : 47] Lord you've given us such a privilege that we sinful foolish people are instruments in your hand for your glory for your praise for the building up of your church and kingdom oh make us joyful make us willing move our hearts in this fellowship we pray that oh Lord you would be pleased to glorify your name in us and through us for we ask it in that dear name above all names the name of Jesus Amen