

“My Cup REALLY Overflows!”

A sermon by Pastor Steve Easterday-McPadden
for First UMC, Grand Junction, Sunday, Nov. 15, 2020

This sermon can be listened to on the FUMCGJ
website: www.fumcgj.org/sermons-2/

Scripture Text:

Exodus 35:4-12, 20-21, 29; 36:1a, 2-7 [NLT]

OPENING

- David wrote in Psalm 23, “...my cup overflows”. He’d probably jump for joy to see Anna’s hot cocoa mug overflowing with marshmallows!

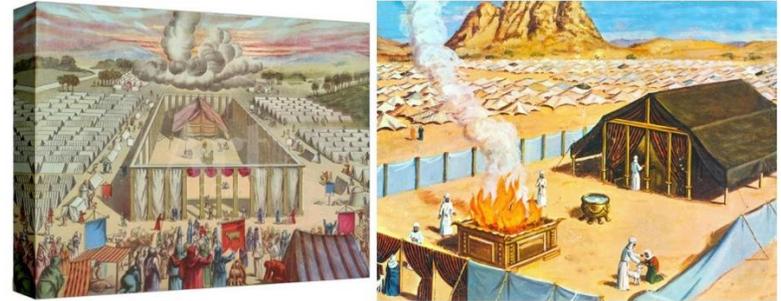
TO THE SCRIPTURES

- The Scripture text this morning tells the story of abundant joy and blessing – Moses’, for sure, but also that of the craftsmen and craftswomen along with the people as a whole – in response to Moses’ simple call to bring a sacred offering to the LORD.

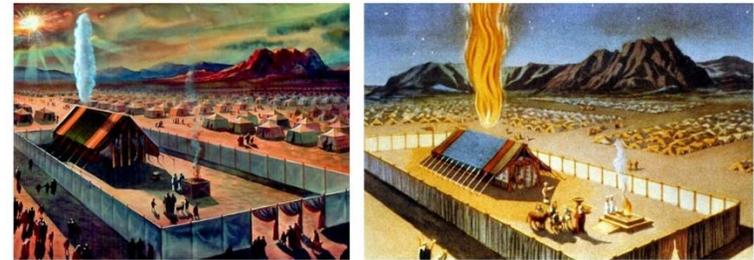
This offering was to be used for crafting a place of worship for God, a reminder of God’s abiding presence with the Israelites as they learn to trust Him in the wilderness.

- Setting of the Exodus 35 & 36 Scripture passage

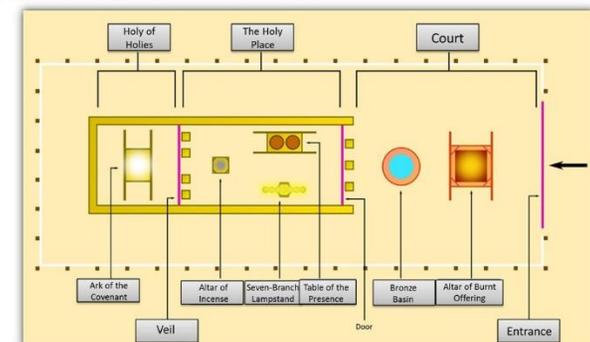
The Tabernacle in the Desert



The Tabernacle in the Desert



The Tabernacle in the Desert



Priestly Garments



This was the desert, not the Promised Land! Their experience of abundance in the Promised Land would not be for another 40 years!

- A few things I would point out in the text this morning:
 1. The response of the people was conditional.
 - ✓ That is, the invitation was made to all of the Israelites, but specific mention is made (in a couple of different places) of those “whose hearts were stirred and whose spirits were moved” (35:21) as being those who responded and brought gifts.
 - ✓ Similarly, in 35:29, specific mention is made of “every man and woman who was eager to help in the work” brought their gifts.
 - ✓ Note that no comparison is made of what some gave and what others gave; not even relative amounts were mentioned. Just that those with generous hearts and spirits gave of their abundance. When that happens,

blessing abounds and there is more than enough to meet the needs of ministry.

It seems the Apostle Paul would be influenced by this generations later when he would write, “Each of you must give as you have made up your mind, not reluctantly or under compulsion, for God loves a cheerful giver.” [2 Cor. 9:7, NRSV]

2. And not just goods, but skills and time were given in abundance, as well. Specific mention is made of the two craftsmen, Bezalel and Oholiab, and certainly their role was important. But Exodus 35:34 also mentions that both of them were inspired to teach others their crafts, so there would be no shortage of artisans to complete the work on the Tabernacle of the LORD.
3. And so the offering was brought – so much so that Moses had to tell the people to stop! And the work was completed to the satisfaction of the LORD, Moses, the artisans, and all the people. And there was great joy and celebration.

SERMON THOUGHTS

- Vision for ministry
Notice that Moses asked the people to give with ministry in mind. What was his vision? The tabernacle and all its instruments for the worship

of God, down to the details of what the priests should wear and why.

Our vision looking ahead into next year and considering what we can each give with joyful hearts to the ministry of God in our own congregation is a bit different, but not 180 deg's out from Moses':

- ✓ For us, the Sanctuary is here, so that's not the need. And the space for people to work and come together for study, fellowship, and planning is here, so that's not the need, either. And I believe we'll be using this space again for those purposes again by next Summer.
- ✓ The need we do have is for what it takes to keep the ministry programming going – and growing. Much like the whole tribe of the Levites, out of which came the priests and Tabernacle/Temple attendants who led the people in their devotion to God, our need is for people who can focus their attention on helping the body “to worship God by bringing Christ to the community and the community to Christ”, like our Church's mission statement says. That doesn't happen without our generous giving to enable quality leadership – those who not only do the work, but involve, teach, and empower others do the work God has called them to do.

- Make “the Exodus Connection” to our Membership Vows and ministry
 - Prayers
 - Presence
 - Gifts
 - Service
 - Witness
 - Study of our sacred Scriptures, in other words, commitment to growth in faith/discipleship

CONCLUSION

1. Words of thanks for the giving of the past year,
2. Mention of the letters going out in the coming week...

♪ “All That We Have” for 11 AM Reflection song