

# “Bezalel, Oholiab, PayPal, and EFT...What?!”

A sermon by Pastor Steve Easterday-McPadden  
with Roxie Denning  
for FUMC Grand Junction, Sunday, June 27, 2021

This sermon can be listened to on the FUMCGJ website: <https://www.fumcgj.org/sermons/>

## Scripture Text:

Selected vv. from Exodus 35:4-36:7 [NRSV]

## OPENING

Today’s worship focus – while on the surface looks like “stewardship” – is actually about discipleship, the process to which we give ourselves that helps us grow into mature followers of Jesus.

We haven’t talked about this for awhile, but here at FUMCGJ, we have what I call 5 Marks of Discipleship that both guide us *AND* evaluate us:

1. Worship and Study
2. The practice of spiritual disciplines – like prayer and Scripture reading – that cultivate a close, personal relationship with Christ
3. Stewardship of our resources for the betterment of the Body (of Christ) – financial to be sure – but also our time, talents, skills, and passions
4. Meaningful, caring connection with others in the Body of Christ
5. Service to the church, the community, and the world

They guide us in that they help us to see what’s

important in the life of a follower of Jesus.

They evaluate us in that, if we want to know how we’re doing in our Christian life, all we have to do is look through this list and see where we’re not spending any time.

And let’s face it...we all need both guidance and evaluation if we’re going to grow. Not because we’re bad people, but because we’re human beings. And it’s easy for us to get our lives out of balance – this helps us get our lives as disciples of Jesus back in balance.

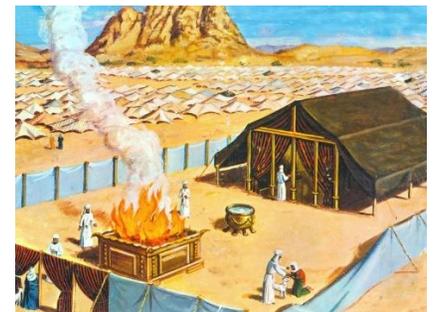
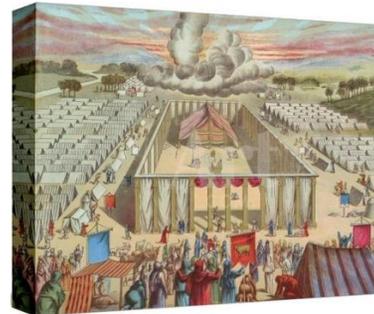
## SERMON THOUGHTS

Of these 5 marks of discipleship, today we’re focusing on #3:

*Stewardship of our resources for the betterment of the Body (of Christ) – financial to be sure – but also our time, talents, skills, and passions.*

To get into it, we need to go to the Scripture lesson for today.

## TO THE SCRIPTURES



This was not the Temple; it was a “portable”(!) worship space, a “sanctuary” comprised of the Tabernacle and everything associated with it, that was to accompany the Hebrew people in their desert sojourn, however long it lasted. As it turned out, the Temple wasn’t be built until the time of Solomon – 400+ years in the future!

The point is, the Tabernacle required A LOT of materials to build – some of those materials were just run-of-the-mill kinds of things, others were precious metals and stones, elaborate woods and trim, numerous crafted elements, complicated structures, etc. All of that needed to come from somewhere: the offering of the people, in goods *and* services.

The Scriptural account tells us:

*35:29 All the Israelite men and women whose hearts made them willing..., brought...[these things] as a freewill offering to the Lord.*

*36:2 Moses then called Bezalel and Oholiab and every skillful one to whom the Lord had given skill, everyone whose heart was stirred to come to do the work ; <sup>3</sup> and they received from Moses all the freewill offerings that the Israelites had brought for doing the work on the sanctuary....*

They understood this third mark of discipleship:

*Stewardship of their resources... – financial to be sure – but also...time, talents, skills, and passions.*

## SERMON THOUGHTS

And then, the text tells us something extraordinary:

*<sup>5</sup>...[then Bezalel and Oholiab] said to Moses, “The people are bringing much more than enough for doing the work that the Lord has commanded us to do.”*

They brought more than enough for the work to be completed!

*<sup>6</sup> So Moses gave command, and word was proclaimed throughout the camp: “No man or woman is to make anything else as an offering for the sanctuary.”*

*So the people were restrained from bringing; <sup>7</sup> for what they had already brought was more than enough to do all the work.*

Can you imagine the feeling of exhilaration on the part of the people, the workers, and the leaders knowing they had brought more than enough to complete the work that God had commanded them to do?! And I can imagine Moses not only being exhilarated for God because of all of this but also being deeply grateful to the people because of their response – and because of what that response said about their faith and trust in God.

I feel that in times of blessing, when we have more than enough to accomplish the ministry of the moment. And I feel the strain when we don’t. And I am always grateful to God and to you when I see that we have what we need for our work.

In addition to the ministries that are ongoing around here, we have also given to the community in many significant ways, just in the first 6 months of this year:

- Make-a-Change offerings: \$2,700
- Mission Moments, esp. the Valentine's Candy Gram drive and Grand Mesa Camp: \$8,000
- \$17,000 in scholarships to six recipients, with another pending
- And the ShareFest projects in late April that Wayne Salladé lifted up for us back in May

We have been about Kingdom work this year!

### SHIFT TO ROXIE

One of the features common to the Hebrews of Moses' day and to us is change. Imagine with me the kinds of change they had to deal with: You don't have to imagine much! You hear early on the grumbling of the people because they no longer have a stable source of food and water. They're hot and tired in the desert, some having even given up and simply awaiting death. Sickness runs rampant through the bone-tired community. They're constantly on the move, no homes to go to at the end of the day – only tents hastily put up over the desert sands. And yet, they brought their offerings to the LORD when called upon to do so.

It reminds me a lot of our experiences that the pandemic brought to us this past year. And while we weren't wandering in a physical desert, the feelings of deprivation many of us felt were very real – deprivation of contact and connection with each other, deprivation of familiar routines, the fear of disease, etc. And, like the Hebrews, you kept up with the needs of the ministry – because those needs didn't let up.

I've asked Roxie Denning to share some of her

thoughts on the changes we experienced this past year and to speak to ways of giving that can enhance our work and ministry together. Roxie serves on staff as our financial secretary, *AND* she serves in a volunteer capacity as the Chair of our Administrative leadership team, the CF&A, or Council on Finance and Administration.

(\*Roxie...\*)

### THANKS TO AND FOR OUR VOLUNTEERS

(\*Observation about the location of the altar of burnt offering on the Tabernacle grounds and the similar location of our offering plate pedestal in our Sanctuary...\*) But you know...it's not just finances that our stewardship is about. It's also time, talents, skills, and passion. It's the intangible things that make a community feel active and alive. It's the things volunteers bring to the church out of their love for God and their buy-in to what ministries of transformation can mean. It's the desire to give back to the Body of Christ because of what Christ has done in and for each of us.

We have talked in a few different settings over the course of the past couple of months – in Staff meetings, Committee and Program Ministry Team meetings, Administrative leadership meetings, etc. – about the number and quality of those who serve in ministry as volunteers in our Church. And we have been blown away!

One of the hardest things in leadership is to express adequate appreciation for all of those hours and all of

that love that is expressed by you who give of your time, talents, gifts, and skills – driven by your passion for Christ and His church – and not leave anyone out...or...single folks out who don't want to be singled out – they're quite content being truly “quiet disciples”.

We're working on it, but with the emphasis on stewardship today, it is totally appropriate for me to say how very much you are appreciated, no matter how your love for God and His church is expressed. When I think about it, it's not unlike the gratitude Moses, Bezalel, Oholiab, and all the rest probably felt when they looked around and saw the magnificence of their sanctuary in the desert, a sanctuary they had built simply from what they had to give.

### CONCLUSION

And Joe and I want to offer a song of thanks to each of you for the sanctuary you contribute to with all you have to give.

♪ “All That We Have”

Prayer of Thanksgiving at 9 AM (Debbie Beth)  
at 11 AM (Amy Gibbs)