**The Holy Assembly**

Exodus 35:1-29

**Good Morning Beloved,**

* A group of people hid in the shadows…
	+ The unsuspecting person doesn’t realize that his every move is being studied and calculated.
		- The group moves toward him with intensity as everyone shouts “Happy Birthday”.
			* The lights flash on… singing begins as a cake with candles comes around the corner.
* Isn’t it so interesting how the set-up for a celebration could also be the set-up for a crime?
	+ Crime – the robbers hid in the shadows
	+ Celebration – the singers burst out in song as cake is plated
* In the Book of Exodus, we have seen how disastrous it can be when the people assembled.
	+ Ex. 32:1b - *the people gathered themselves together to Aaron and said to him, “Up, make us gods who shall go before us. As for this Moses, the man who brought us up out of the land of Egypt, we do not know what has become of him.”*
* But we hear in the final five chapters of the Book of Exodus about….
	+ *1 Moses assembled all the congregation of the people of Israel*
		- Rather than demanding… *make us gods.*
			* The TRUE God
		- NOW the LORD God Almighty gives hearts to the congregation so that they may rest and rejoice.

**The Reading of God’s Word** – Exodus 35: 1-29 (Page 75 in the Pew Bible)

*1 Moses assembled all the congregation of the people of Israel and said to them, “These are the things that the Lord has commanded you to do. 2 Six days work shall be done, but on the seventh day you shall have a Sabbath of solemn rest, holy to the Lord. Whoever does any work on it shall be put to death. 3 You shall kindle no fire in all your dwelling places on the Sabbath day.”*

*Contributions for the Tabernacle*

*4 Moses said to all the congregation of the people of Israel, “This is the thing that the Lord has commanded. 5 Take from among you a contribution to the Lord. Whoever is of a generous heart, let him bring the Lord's contribution: gold, silver, and bronze; 6 blue and purple and scarlet yarns and fine twined linen; goats' hair, 7 tanned rams' skins, and goatskins; acacia wood, 8 oil for the light, spices for the anointing oil and for the fragrant incense, 9 and onyx stones and stones for setting, for the ephod and for the breastpiece.*

*10 “Let every skillful craftsman among you come and make all that the Lord has commanded: 11 the tabernacle, its tent and its covering, its hooks and its frames, its bars, its pillars, and its bases; 12 the ark with its poles, the mercy seat, and the veil of the screen; 13 the table with its poles and all its utensils, and the bread of the Presence; 14 the lampstand also for the light, with its utensils and its lamps, and the oil for the light; 15 and the altar of incense, with its poles, and the anointing oil and the fragrant incense, and the screen for the door, at the door of the tabernacle; 16 the altar of burnt offering, with its grating of bronze, its poles, and all its utensils, the basin and its stand; 17 the hangings of the court, its pillars and its bases, and the screen for the gate of the court; 18 the pegs of the tabernacle and the pegs of the court, and their cords; 19 the finely worked garments for ministering in the Holy Place, the holy garments for Aaron the priest, and the garments of his sons, for their service as priests.”*

*20 Then all the congregation of the people of Israel departed from the presence of Moses. 21 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. 22 So they came, both men and women. All who were of a willing heart brought brooches and earrings and signet rings and armlets, all sorts of gold objects, every man dedicating an offering of gold to the Lord. 23 And every one who possessed blue or purple or scarlet yarns or fine linen or goats' hair or tanned rams' skins or goatskins brought them. 24 Everyone who could make a contribution of silver or bronze brought it as the Lord's contribution. And every one who possessed acacia wood of any use in the work brought it. 25 And every skillful woman spun with her hands, and they all brought what they had spun in blue and purple and scarlet yarns and fine twined linen. 26 All the women whose hearts stirred them to use their skill spun the goats' hair. 27 And the leaders brought onyx stones and stones to be set, for the ephod and for the breastpiece, 28 and spices and oil for the light, and for the anointing oil, and for the fragrant incense. 29 All the men and women, the people of Israel, whose heart moved them to bring anything for the work that the Lord had commanded by Moses to be done brought it as a freewill offering to the Lord.*

**The Preaching of God’s Word**

1. **Rest on the Sabbath (vs. 1-3)**
	1. *1 Moses assembled all the congregation of the people of Israel and said to them, “These are the things that the Lord has commanded you to do. 2 Six days work shall be done, but on the seventh day you shall have a Sabbath of solemn rest, holy to the Lord. Whoever does any work on it shall be put to death. 3 You shall kindle no fire in all your dwelling places on the Sabbath day.”*
		1. This part of the book is not filled with new commands, but in reflecting on what has already been stated.[[1]](#footnote-1)
			1. Exodus 16:23-30 – The Sabbath law governs the enjoyment of manna
			2. Exodus 16:29 – The Sabbath is the Lord’s gift
			3. Exodus 20:8 – The Sabbath is the likeness of the Creator in his creatures
			4. Exodus 23:12 – The Sabbath is a day for no work, only rest and refreshment
			5. Exodus 31:13 – The Sabbath is a sign between the Lord and his redeemed, and our keeping of it is a recognition that he has set us apart
			6. Exodus 31:16 – The Sabbath is a perpetual obligation
			7. Here… the commandment is the same…
				1. Six days work and on the Sabbath rest.

But now there is a new stipulation… *You shall kindle no fire.*

* + 1. The first thought seems to go to basic survival needs…
			1. Heat for shelter in the cold or heat for food preparation.
				1. But the last line in the Book of Exodus gives us greater clarity than just essentials.

Exodus 40:38 - *For the cloud of the Lord was on the tabernacle by day, and fire was in it by night, in the sight of all the house of Israel throughout all their journeys.*

* 1. Point: FIRE shows the presence of the Lord your God.
		1. THE LORD is your basic need for life.
			1. Exodus 3:2 – God made himself known in the flame of fire out of the midst of the bush.
				1. He sees you.
			2. Exodus 12:21 – God leads his people with the pillar of fire.
				1. He guides you.
			3. Exodus 19:18 – God descends upon Mt. Sinai in fire.
				1. He dwell among you.
	2. The reason you don’t kindle a fire in your homes is because God Almighty will kindle the fire in the Tabernacle himself.
		1. Here is the One who rules over all… and HE commands you to rest in HIS Presence.
			1. The rest of the chapter focuses on the entire community serving… but Coates is correct when he states…
				1. “We shall not work with God if we have not known what it is to rest with him.”
		2. Application:
			1. A commandment to those prone to anxiety about the future.
				1. Luke 12:32 - *Fear not, little flock, for it is your Father’s good pleasure to give you the kingdom.*
			2. A commandment to those concerned about the present
				1. 2 Peter 1:3 - *His divine power has granted to us all things that pertain to life and godliness, through the knowledge of him who called us to his own glory and excellence,*
			3. A command to those fixated on the past.
				1. Romans 8:27-28 - *27 And he who searches hearts knows what is the mind of the Spirit, because the Spirit intercedes for the saints according to the will of God. 28 And we know that for those who love God all things work together for good, for those who are called according to his purpose.*
	3. Pause… pray… rest on the Sabbath by resting with the LORD.
		1. Questions for us all:
			1. Are you enjoying God on Sundays?
			2. Are you listening to God’s Word with eagerness?
			3. Are you listening to God’s people with love?
			4. Are you stopping from regular activates to be spiritually renewed and supernaturally refreshed?
		2. These are aspirations for all of us… and prayers for one another to always have on our list… Lord, help me truly rest in YOU on YOUR day.
1. **Rejoice as Stewards (vs. 4-29)**
	1. Now the entire congregation joins in the awesome task of constructing the Tabernacle.
		1. In verse 4, the Lord’s commands are announced.
			1. *“This is the thing that the Lord has commanded.*
				1. And throughout the next five chapters, the people of God obey the laws of God.

In reverse of Nehemiah’s day.

There the people obey… then give way to wickedness.

In Exodus, the people gave way to the Golden Calf and then they give themselves to the law by building the Tabernacle.

WHY the change?

* + 1. In verses 5-9, there is one unique identifying characteristic…
			1. “Generous of heart” (vs. 5)
				1. Observing the 7th day is anything but voluntary…

But giving gifts was not compulsive.

* + - 1. Yet gifts abound as people give joyfully.
				1. Don’t you love the diversity…?

Metals – gold, silver, bronze

Woods – Acacia

Delicacies – olive oil, spices, perfumes,

Things I wouldn’t know to bring – hides of sea cows…

* + - 1. POINT: Each willingly gives from the heart…. BRINGING Their best…. Because they are stewards.
				1. What does it mean to be a steward?
	1. Stewardship means that the talents, abilities, gifts, and time you and I have belong to the LORD.
		1. I have no inherent rights before the Lord…
			1. Luke 17:7-10 - *7 “Will any one of you who has a servant plowing or keeping sheep say to him when he has come in from the field, ‘Come at once and recline at table’? 8 Will he not rather say to him, ‘Prepare supper for me, and dress properly, and serve me while I eat and drink, and afterward you will eat and drink’? 9 Does he thank the servant because he did what was commanded? 10 So you also, when you have done all that you were commanded, say, ‘We are unworthy servants; we have only done what was our duty.’”*
		2. POINT: Stewardship does not lead to apathy, but to attentiveness.
			1. Illustration based on a car:
				1. Stewardship is not a rental car.

We never clean a rental car before we take it back.

* + - * 1. Stewardship is your Father’s kindness .

We drive knowing that he has given to us in love and he has every right over the car.

* 1. In verses 10-19, the men respond to the commands of God by offering up their skills and abilities.
		1. Then the refrain begins again… as people offer willingly from the heart in verse 20-24, but now it is not just the men of the congregation… the women also play a pivotal role.
	2. In verses 25-26, it is the skills of noble ladies that will be called forth.
		1. The book of Exodus has not mentioned a woman favorably since Miriam took up her tambourine in chapter 15.
	3. In verses 27-28, the urgency of heart moved the leaders of the people to do their best so that the passage concludes.
		1. *29 All the men and women, the people of Israel, whose heart moved them to bring anything for the work that the Lord had commanded by Moses to be done brought it as a freewill offering to the Lord.*
	4. SUMMARY of the HOLY ASSEMBLY: All the people are celebrating God’s kindness from the heart with love.
1. Conclusion
	1. The passage shows a people who now rest in the Sabbath and rejoice as stewards.
		1. The primary description all throughout the passage is that they are “generous of heart”.
			1. That term will show up again in Number 21:17-18 and in Judges 5:2,9 and the portrait showcased is of “A Magnanimous Person”.
				1. Dictionary - Magnanimity is the virtue of being great of mind and heart. It encompasses, usually, a refusal to be petty, a willingness to face danger, and actions for noble purposes.
		2. Yet the reality is…
			1. Jeremiah 20:9 - *The heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately sick; who can understand it?*
				1. The Word of God declares the desperate state of our assembly when we read…

Romans 8:7 - *For the mind that is set on the flesh is hostile to God, for it does not submit to God's law; indeed, it cannot.*

The Book of Exodus is so wonderfully instructive because it gives us stories and pictures of what people are in and of themselves.

By ourselves… our assembly is *weak… ungodly… sinners… and enemies of God* (Rom. 5:6-10).

* 1. But when Moses assembled the people of God in our passage… God animated the people to rest and rejoice from the HEART!
		1. Their response to God’s grace leads to generosity and joyful service in a way that is descriptive of the transformation in Romans.
			1. Romans 6:18 *- and, having been set free from sin, have become slaves of righteousness.*
			2. Romans 6:22 - *But now that you have been set free from sin and have become slaves of God, the fruit you get leads to sanctification and its end, eternal life.*
	2. How does a group that has the name “RABBLE” (Numbers 11:4) associated with it become a HOLY ASSEMBLY?
		1. ONLY through the MAGNANIMOUS Grace of the TRUE Owner, the TRUE LORD, the TRUE Master.
	3. Jesus Christ is the true leader of the holy assembly who commands us to rest in the presence of the LORD our God.
		1. For He, the Son, is the Eternal God who rested in perfect fellowship with the Father and the Holy Spirit.
			1. Rev. 1:8 - *“I am the Alpha and the Omega,” says the Lord God, “who is and who was and who is to come, the Almighty.”*
		2. Here is the way that we know that God dwells among us… not fire in an Earthly Temple but…
			1. Romans 5:10-11 *- For if while we were enemies we were reconciled to God by the death of his Son, much more, now that we are reconciled, shall we be saved by his life. More than that, we also rejoice in God through our Lord Jesus Christ, through whom we have now received reconciliation.*
		3. For Jesus Christ is the One who out of the treasures of His grace gave all so that he might possess you as a pearl of Greatest price through His death on the Cross (Matt. 13:45-46).
			1. Now the Eternal Son, who became man, is the Hilarious Giver.
				1. 2 Cor. 8:9 - *For you know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that though he was rich, yet for your sake he became poor, so that you by his poverty might become rich.*
	4. Application… so that we would do TWO THINGS.
		1. #1 – Rest in Jesus by Faith.
		2. #2 – Rejoice in Jesus by Stewardship
			1. Eph. 2:19ff -  *19 So then you are no longer strangers and aliens, but you are fellow citizens with the saints and members of the household of God, 20 built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Christ Jesus himself being the cornerstone, 21 in whom the whole structure, being joined together, grows into a holy temple in the Lord. 22 In him you also are being built together into a dwelling place for God by the Spirit.*
	5. Beloved, may the Holy Spirit descend upon you now in power so that the flames of His fire (Acts 2:3-4) would mark you out as believers united into a Holy Temple (1 Cor. 6:19-20) as we give freely from the heart.

**Prayer**

Rev. 21:22 - *And I saw no temple in the city, for its temple is the Lord God the Almighty and the Lamb.*

**Benediction – Numbers 6:24-26**

*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.*

1. J. A. Motyer’s summary of the previous commands relating to the Sabbath were so helpful in *The Message of Exodus*, 318. [↑](#footnote-ref-1)