

No More Offerings!

Did you know that there was once a time in the Bible where God's people were told to stop giving? It's true. In the book of Exodus the story is told of the building of the tabernacle. If you remember the tabernacle was built while the children of Israel were in the desert. I am not sure if you know this or not but there are not any Lowe's or Home Depot in deserts. So how in the world were they going to build a tabernacle?

The answer came from Moses who said, "This is what the Lord has commanded: From what you have, take an offering for the Lord. Everyone who is willing is to bring the Lord an offering..." Where were they to get all this stuff? They had it with them. For if you will remember on the night they left Egypt the Egyptian people gave the Israelites anything they asked for just to get them out of the country. The Bible says the Israelites asked for articles of silver and gold and for clothing. Exodus 12:36 says, "The Lord had made the Egyptians favorable disposed toward the people, and they gave them what they asked for; so they plundered the Egyptians. You see God knew there was an offering coming and He prepared His people ahead of time so they could give.

So when it came time to build the tabernacle and take up an offering to supply what was needed Moses asked the people to give. In Exodus 35:21 it says, "and everyone whose heart was willing and whose heart moved him to come and brought an offering to the Lord." They kept on coming and giving until in Exodus 36:6,7 this is recorded, "Moses sent out orders through the camp: 'Men! Women! No more offerings for the building of the Sanctuary!' The people were ordered to stop bringing offerings! There was plenty of material for all the work to be done. Enough and more than enough."

There are several take aways from this story. One is that when God wants to do something He gives us a chance to be involved in that. Another is that before He asks us to do something, like give an offering, He has already provided a means by which we can give. The final is that when we have hearts that are willing and moved we give in abundance. The people of Israel knew the work of the Lord was important and they willingly gave to support it.

Every week here we take up an offering and before we do so we try to help you see what your generous gifts do. We do that to help you too give from a willing heart. In the New Testament we are told that God loves a cheerful giver. When our hearts are willing our offering will be cheerful! So, let's give today with willing hearts!