

God's Big Building Project

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[0 : 00] is young and inexperienced. The task is great because this palatial structure is not for man but for the Lord God. With all my resources I have provided for the temple of my God.

Gold for the gold work, silver for the silver, bronze for the bronze, iron for the iron and wood for the wood, as well as onyx for the settings, turquoise, stones of various colours and all kinds of fine stone and marble, all of these in large quantities. Besides in my devotion to the temple of my God I now give my personal treasures of gold and silver for the temple of my God over and above everything I have provided for this holy temple. Three thousand talents of gold, gold of Ophir, seven thousand talents of refined silver for the overlaying of the walls of the buildings, for the gold work and the silver work and for all the work to be done by the craftsmen.

Now who is willing to consecrate themselves to the Lord today? Then the leaders of families, the official officers of the tribes of Israel, the commanders of thousands and commanders of hundreds and the officials in charge of the king's work gave willingly.

They gave towards the work on the temple of God five thousand talents and ten thousand daricks of gold, ten thousand talents of silver, eighteen thousand talents of bronze and a hundred thousand talents of iron. Anyone who had precious stones gave them to the treasury of the temple of the Lord in the custody of Jehiel the Gershonite. The people rejoiced at the willing response of their leaders for they had given freely and wholeheartedly to the Lord. David the king also rejoiced graciously. David praised the Lord in the presence of the whole assembly saying, Praise be to you Lord, the God of our father Israel from everlasting to everlasting.

[1 : 53] Yours Lord is the greatness and the power and the glory and the majesty and the splendor for everything in heaven and on earth is yours. Yours Lord is the kingdom. You are exalted as head over all.

Wealth and honour come from you. You are the ruler of all things. In your hands are strength and power to exalt and give strength to all. Now our God we give you thanks and praise your glorious name.

But who am I and who are my people that we should be able to give as generously as this? Everything comes from you and we have given you only what comes from your hand. We are foreigners and strangers in your sight as were all our ancestors. Our days on earth are like a shadow without hope. Lord our God all this abundance that we have provided for building you a temple for your holy name comes from your hand and all of it belongs to you. I know my God that you test the heart and are pleased with integrity. All these things I have given willingly and with honest intent and now I have seen with joy how willingly your people who are here have given to you. Lord the God of our fathers Abraham, Isaac and Israel keep these desires and thoughts in the hearts of your people forever and keep their hearts loyal to you and give my son Solomon the wholehearted devotion to keep your commands statutes and decrees and to do everything to build the palatial structure for which I have provided.

Then David said to the whole assembly praise the Lord your God so they all praise the Lord the God of their fathers they bowed down prostrating themselves before the Lord and the king. This is the word of the Lord.

Let me add my welcome. I'm just going to declutter here a little bit.

[3 : 52] I hope you are suitably encouraged and excited and inspired after hearing about the finance update. The Lord friends is clearly at work in the life of this church family and so many of you here are already giving so generously with your time and money and the the passage we just read in 1 Chronicles is a real endorsement of that. It's so worth it to give to the work of the Lord. So let's ask for the Lord's help as we come to think about what he's saying to us through his word. Let's pray.

Father we ask for the Holy Spirit to help us receive your word to us today with willing and joyful hearts.

We pray that you would encourage us and inspire us and motivate us as we think about how we are to give of ourselves to you and to your work in response to the gospel.

In Jesus name. Amen. Well I don't know what goes through your head when you think of the most beautiful house in the world but according to Witold Rybczynski Callum if we get the slides there. According to Rybczynski and I can only apologize to any Polish speakers here this morning but according to this guy Witold Rybczynski the most beautiful house in the world was designed and built by Witold Rybczynski.

I mean it's hardly spectacular architecturally speaking but it began with a dream of a boat.

[5 : 48] Now his dream was not simply to own a boat but to build a boat and in order to build a boat he first had to build a boat building shed and then he realized that actually it'd be quite nice and quite handy to have somewhere to lay down his head and sleep and somewhere to eat and so little by little the whole thing evolved and before he knew it it'd become a lifelong passion a lifelong obsession like that.

Witold Rybczynski's big building project. He was all in. Totally invested in this project. So the most beautiful house in the world according to Witold Rybczynski is the one that you build for yourself. Well we're thinking about God's big building project today and the chronicler is writing in about 450 BC about 500 years after the events described.

He's writing a kind of motivational history for God's people and by describing the way King David and the people gave themselves freely and wholeheartedly to God's big building project it's meant to inspire the original readers to give of themselves to the Lord and his work to recommit themselves to God's work to the temple work of their day.

Now we can see that from the key verse halfway through verse 5. Now who is willing to consecrate themselves to the Lord today?

[7 : 28] Now who is willing to set themselves apart to the Lord today? In other words, who's all in? Now before we come on to this verse we need to ask what's going on here and what it's got to do with me.

Right at the end of his life in his twilight years, so to speak David's getting things ready for his son Solomon to build the temple.

And he recognizes the magnitude of the task. So look with me at verse 1. Then King David said to the whole assembly said to the whole church assembly is literally church wherever you see assembly it's church, ecclesia David said to the whole church the task is great because this palatial structure is not for man but for the Lord God.

So to use technical jargon from the construction industry this project is a biggie it's truly monumental in scale and the preceding chapters are all about the preparations for it and the people in it.

Now you don't need to turn there now but in chapter 22 we're told the house to be built for the Lord should be of great magnificence and fame and splendor in the sight of all nations.

[9 : 00] In other words it's of global significance and the whole world needs to know about it. God himself is going to dwell there.

So we're talking about the dwelling place on earth of the living God so that his glory may be displayed and proclaimed to all nations.

Now just scan across the page there to chapter 28 on page 432 if you've lost a place. Chapter 28 verse 1 David has summoned the people to assemble to church as he gives the charge in verse 8 to build the temple and then in verse 11 of chapter 28 he gives Solomon the architectural blueprints the plans for the temple for the layout of all the rooms there and then just look with me at 28 verse 19 David says all these plans I have in writing as a result of the Lord's hand and he himself has enabled me to understand all the details of the plan.

So this temple we know as Solomon's temple one of the wonders of the ancient world it's actually a temple commissioned designed and dwelt in by the Lord God the creator of the universe it is God's temple it's God's design it's God's big building project and we friends get to be a part of that.

So in our chapter David is calling on God's people challenging all God's people to invest in this to give ourselves to this freely wholeheartedly to God's big building project.

[10 : 53] who then is willing to offer themselves in consecrated devotion of the whole of your life to the work of the Lord's temple?

Now it's important for us to recognize that the temple described here in chapter 29 of 1 Chronicles pictures for us it prefigures the living church today.

Not talking about bricks and mortar but followers of Jesus indwelt by the Holy Spirit the living assembly of God's people. It's possible Paul says don't you know you are the living temple of God you yourselves are God's temple.

So as we are challenged to give of ourselves to this work fully freely wholeheartedly we're going to see that these two things always go hand in hand.

The people's willingness to give on the one hand and the generous provision of the Lord on the other hand two belonging together our giving and the Lord's hand always together.

[12:05] So first then a willing people now at today's market prices gold is currently trading at 72,500 pounds per kilogram silver at 812 pounds per kilogram God's big building project doesn't come cheap.

This isn't a bargain basement job King David is totally committed to it. So he gives exhaustively and he gives personally.

We're told in verse two that it's with all his resources that King David provided for the temple. It may well be that this is referring to the official state treasuries in verse two.

But what's so striking in verses three to five that it's not just from the public purse. No, he gives also from his own personal wealth fund. 3,000 talents that's about 100 metric tons of gold and add to that the 235 tons of silver you're looking at about 7.5 billion in today's prices.

That's just the materials. So to put that in perspective back in the days when I was practicing architecture the biggest project the most expensive project that I ever worked on was the Renaissance Museum in Oman.

[13:29] The construction budget for that was 150 million. The Sultan of Oman didn't get to spend as much on gold as King Solomon. By the way our design didn't win we were runners up and it's probably just for the best since there are all sorts of ethical issues with that project in Oman.

Closer to home the huge expansion of Glasgow University's Gilmore Hill campus I think last time I checked was valued at one billion pounds. David Duncan will probably correct me on that if I'm mistaken.

Even that sum is dwarfed by David's offering and the reason for David's radical generosity is given in verse three.

In my devotion to the temple of the Lord I now give my personal treasures. David gave freely to the work of the Lord out of his devotion for him.

And what generosity looks like will differ depending on people's different circumstances. It's certainly possible to give large sums of money and not be generous if we're withholding more from the Lord.

[14:48] On the other hand it's possible to give relatively little and be giving generously because we're not withholding from the Lord. Jesus was far more impressed by the generosity of the poor widow who gave her two little coins because it was out of her poverty that she put in everything.

It's out of David's personal abundance that David gives like the poor widow. He gives exhaustively and he gives personally radical generosity.

So it's on the back of that King David's act of willing wholehearted sacrificial devotion to the Lord that the challenge is issued in the key verse five. Now today who is willing to consecrate themselves to the Lord?

Who is willing this day to consecrate yourself, to set yourself apart, to give yourself freely with abandon to the work of the temple, to God's big building project.

It's a great project with God at its center, with its aim, that the whole world would know him and his glory. Who's all in?

[16:09] That's a key verse. Who today is willing? And the people responded, how?

Tight Fistedly? No. Cautiously? No. Begrudgingly? Okay, if I must. No.

They responded with extravagant generosity. Verse 6. Then the leaders of the families, the officers of the tribes of Israel, the commanders and the officials in charge of the king's work gave willingly.

They gave towards the work and the temple of God tons and tons of precious metal. Anyone who had precious stones gave that too. The people rejoiced at the willing response of their leaders for they had given freely and wholeheartedly to the work of the Lord.

David the king also rejoiced greatly. They gave towards the work of the Lord if you work it out more than 12 billion in today's prices.

[17 : 20] Did you notice verse 9? The whole thing is marked by joy. Great joy. The people rejoiced. King David rejoiced because they had given freely and willingly.

No half measures. David doesn't have to twist their arms. He doesn't have to coerce them. He's not levying attacks on a reluctant people. It's all willing.

It's free. It's joyful giving to the Lord and his work. You know this heart motivation really matters. That's what David's on about later on in verse 17 when he says I know my God that you test the heart.

All these things I have given willingly and with honest intent and now I see with joy how willingly your people have given to you. Who then will offer themselves like this to God's big building projects?

the joyful willingness of the people to give. That's the first part. Secondly we have a generous God. Behind the costly sacrifice of a willing people is the amazing providence of a gracious and generous and faithful God.

[18 : 45] Always remember the two go together. Our giving and God's provision. devotion. David's prayer in verse 10 is instructive.

We're to look to him. We're to look to God. We're to look to him firstly because he is deserving of our devotion. David praised the Lord in the presence of the whole church saying praise be to you Lord.

The God of our father Israel from everlasting to everlasting yours Lord is the greatness and the power and the glory and the majesty and the splendor yours Lord is the kingdom.

Maybe you recognize the words from the Lord's prayer that we prayed earlier. Maybe this is the inspiration behind the Lord's prayer. Here is the one who deserves our praise and devotion.

Here is the one to whom it's worth our giving everything to. The only one worthy of your wholehearted willing free joyful devotion.

[19 : 48] that's one thing to give of ourselves to something temporary something that doesn't last. St. Peter's seminary in Cardross on the way out to Helensburgh is widely considered as the most significant post-war Scottish architecture in the country.

Finest example of post-war architecture here. You may disagree with that but its architects Izzy Metstein and Andy McMillan went to their graves heartbroken because the building they poured their lives into went up in flames and it's left there now in the woods as a rotting carcass of a building.

God's big building project isn't going to be like that. It's a house for the one who is from everlasting to everlasting. Jesus says I will build my church and the gates of Hades will not prevail.

We're to look to him because he deserves our devotion. We're to look to him secondly because he's the one who has limitless resources. Verse 11 Yours Lord is the power and the glory for everything in heaven and earth is yours.

Yours Lord is the kingdom. Wealth and honour come from you. If people looked at the task of building Solomon's temple if they looked at the task ahead and the sums of money involved in getting the project off the ground it must have been daunting it would have been overwhelming it would have been paralysing even for the work of the gospel.

[21 : 24] But why on earth be anxious? This is God's big building project. He is faithful and he has all the resources in the heavens and the earth.

All that is needed he will provide. So we're to look first to him. But then verse 14 we're to look in the mirror.

Verse 14 a sober assessment of ourselves is what's required. Now when Bart Simpson is asked to say grace he says dear God we paid for all this stuff ourselves so thanks for nothing amen.

The watching adults gasp Mr. Burns chuckles and says only an innocent child could get away with such blasphemy God bless them all. It's funny because it dares to say what many of the watching adults are thinking.

We did go to work we did earn our money we did pay for it ourselves so why give thanks not the way David sees it in verse 14 is it but who am I who are my people that we should be able to give as generously as this how on earth can we at St.

[22 : 45] Silas give with the same generous abandon freely wholeheartedly with such radical generosity here's David's answer everything comes from you Lord and we have given you only what comes from your hand Lord our God verse 16 all this abundance that we have provided for building you a temple for your holy name comes from your hand and all of it belongs to you our giving the Lord's hand someone put it like this one way to think about how much money a church has is to check the balances and see how much money is sitting in the bank account another way to look at it is to consider our collective resources as a church family our incomes our savings our assets our time energy gifts abilities and skills that's how much the church has in terms of resources it all comes from

God anyway who then today is willing to give of ourselves freely wholeheartedly back to the Lord what belongs to him in the first place how much are we willing to give of ourselves to God's big building project our giving the Lord's hand the two belonging together now as we draw things to a close I thought it'd be helpful for us to think through a couple of examples of this played out in action the generous faithful provision of God and the willing sacrificial costly giving of God's people two examples the first one is a personal example so early on in our marriage there was a season when the Lord was teaching us me and Alice to trust in him to depend on his gracious provision and looking back on it

I'm absolutely certain that he was using this time in our lives to prepare us for depending on him for his provision through the generosity of his people through the far more costly expense of supporting us through gospel training so stepping out in faith I'd left the architecture profession and for 18 months or so I'd been working freelance on design projects with a kind of hand-to-mouth existence one project at a time sort of thing but in the summer of 2017 the work dried up there's absolutely nothing in the pipeline nothing on the horizon that way and approaching the end of the month we realized that there was no prospect of paying the bills the savings had long since dried up that way we could do nothing but turn to the Lord in prayer to him to whom all things belong and on Thursday the 27th of July I know the dates because I journaled it we prayed earnestly and we prayed expectantly and we prayed precisely for the £1,100 we knew we needed to get through the month Thursday passed nothing no answer to the prayer by close of play on Friday again nothing no sign of any work we were in the Lord's hands about an hour or so later things started happening out of the blue we received an email from friends from church entirely unexpected unsolicited they knew our situation they wanted to bless us with £500 we could scarcely believe it we were on our knees Alice and I in tears giving thanks to God for his gracious provision through the costly sacrifice of our friends from church next morning the doorbell rang and a different set of church friends appeared turned up at our front door to drop off a bag of scones underneath the scones were banknotes for £200 they'd hidden them underneath and apparently they'd been round the corner from ours for brunch and as they'd been giving thanks to

God for the food the Lord had burdened them to give to us that amount again completely unsolicited on the Sunday someone else from church anonymously left an envelope in the offering box marked for the attention of the Middletons inside the envelope £150 meanwhile £250 are tiered in the bank account from a previous job and you had it all up the Lord answered our prayers faithfully with absolute precision all that we needed his hand provided through the generosity of his people second example Gilcombs Church Aberdeen in 2013 the church had stepped out in faith leaving the denomination leaving the church of Scotland losing their building in the process a number of years later the opportunity arose for them to buy back their building and its prominent city centre location but here's the catch the problem was they had to raise 750,000 pounds in the space of a few short weeks three quarters of a million pounds in the space of just a few weeks economically it's not an especially wealthy church imagine the demographics are fairly similar to here numerically significantly smaller than

[29 : 15] St. Silas is now a congregation of about 200 people although many more throughout the world who have a long association with that church required within a matter of weeks to raise that kind of money seemed impossible we need to remember that all things are possible for him who is able to do immeasurably more than we ask or imagine and boy did the money start pouring in to the bank accounts and on the day that the money was due to be paid the building fund account had in it just over 754 thousand pounds not even including the gift dates immeasurably more than we can ask or imagine!

God generously provides for God's big building projects it's not about the bricks and mortar it's about what happens in and through the building the assembled church proclaiming Christ in whatever part of the world it gathers our giving the Lord's hand so here then is a project that we can invest in give ourselves in wholehearted willing surrender to the first audience received this text in 450 BC recording events 500 years previously as a wake-up call great summons to give themselves afresh to the Lord they'd returned from exile to Jerusalem to rebuild the old temple of which this is a record but the people wept because the new one was so pathetic in comparison but for us we know that

Jesus through his death and resurrection replaced forever all the promises of God concerning the Old Testament temple with Jesus God came and dwelt among us with Jesus he once and for all paid the sacrifice fulfilling the purposes of the temple in that respect with Jesus we no longer worship God in Jerusalem but in spirit and in truth because he now dwells within us and the church is now the temple of the living God what then is this great project of which we are called to give of ourselves freely in wholehearted devotion joyful devotion to the Lord what then is this great project building is Christ's church the gathered people for the proclamation of Christ's glory across the world what a project to be involved in will you give yourself to that your time your energy your gifts your resources

God's big building project the most beautiful house in the world and we get to be a part of that let's pray oh Lord Jesus praise be to you you are the king of kings who gave of yourself exhaustively at such tremendous personal cost your death giving us life Lord Jesus we want to respond with wholehearted all of life devotion to you and your church your big building project we acknowledge everything we have comes from your hands with gratitude would you inspire in us and by the Holy Spirit that dwells within us a radical generosity with all the resources that you have blessed us with as individuals and as a church so that you would continue to build your church here in this city and in

St. Silas that your name would be proclaimed to the nations it's in your name we pray Amen