

Exodus 35:1-35

In this chapter we see Moses gathering the whole congregation of Israel. He's about to give them the instructions for building the Tabernacle, but before he talks about "doing," he starts with "being." He starts with the Sabbath.

The Gift of Rest

In the first three verses, Moses reminds them: *"Six days shall work be done, but on the seventh day there shall be to you a holy day, a sabbath of rest to the LORD."*

Now, we need to understand something vital here. The Sabbath was a shadow of things to come, but the principle is timeless. Jesus told us that the Sabbath was made for man, not man for the Sabbath. This wasn't God trying to be a cosmic killjoy; it was a gift! God, in His infinite wisdom, knew that we are frame and dust. He knew we needed a day to just "kick back," to stop the grinding gears of production and simply rest in Him.

In our modern, high-octane society, we've almost lost the art of resting without guilt. We feel like if we aren't producing, we aren't valuable. But God says, "I want you to rest." Physically, mentally, and emotionally, you will be so much healthier if you take that time to just cruise with the Lord. It isn't about legalism—it won't make you "more saved" or more righteous—but it is about wisdom. If you don't take a break, you'll eventually break.

A Willing Heart

Then we move into the invitation for the offering in verses four through nine. Moses says, *"whosoever is of a willing heart, let him bring it, an offering of the LORD."*

This is the golden rule of Christian service and giving. God doesn't want anything from you that is given grudgingly or out of necessity. If you're writing a check or serving in the children's ministry while muttering under your breath, "I can't believe I have to do this," then, keep your money and stay on the pew! God doesn't want griping servants.

We see this beautifully mirrored in the New Testament where we are told that God loves a *"cheerful giver."* That word in the Greek is *hilaros*, where we get our word "hilarious." God wants you to be so excited about what He's doing that you find joy in giving.

I've seen churches use all kinds of pressure tactics—pledge cards, finance committees, high-pressure visits from "important" people. That's giving by constraint, and it cheapens the work of the Lord. Here, we believe that if God is leading the work, He will stir the hearts of His people to provide. We don't need to beg, and we don't need to push. If your heart isn't stirred, don't give. But when God moves, it is a beautiful thing to watch the resources pour in simply because people love Him.

Spirit-Led Craftsmanship

Finally, look at Bezaleel and Aholiab in the closing verses of the chapter. The Bible says God filled them with "*the Spirit of God, in wisdom and understanding*" to do the work of the craftsman.

Isn't that wonderful? Whether you are a preacher, a carpenter, a teacher, or a stay-at-home parent, God wants to fill you with His Spirit to do what He has called you to do. He provides the vision, He provides the materials through willing hearts, and He provides the skill by His Holy Spirit.

Practical Application & Challenge

The Challenge: Look at your schedule this week. Have you carved out time to simply rest in the Lord? And look at your service—are you doing it because you *have* to, or because you *get* to? I challenge you to surrender your "to-do" list to Him and ask the Holy Spirit to stir your heart with a fresh, willing spirit.

The Invitation: Maybe you're listening today and you feel like you've been running on a treadmill, trying to earn God's favor by being "good" or doing "work." But, you can't earn it.

The greatest work has already been done. Jesus Christ went to that cross and shed His blood to pay for every sin you've ever committed. He died in your place, and three days later, He rose again! That resurrection is the final proof—He is God, He is Savior, and He is Lord. He isn't asking for your "work" to save you; He's asking for your heart. If you will turn from your sin and put your trust in Him today, He will give you a rest that this world can never offer.

Let's look a little deeper at how this Old Testament picture of the Sabbath meets the reality of our life in Christ today.

The Sabbath and the Savior

In the Old Testament, the Sabbath was a specific day—a day of physical cessation from labor. But as we move into the New Testament, we see that the Sabbath was a "tutor" leading us to Jesus. The writer of the Hebrews tells us that there remains a "rest" for the people of God, and that rest is found in a Person.

When Jesus cried out, "It is finished!" on the cross, He completed the work of redemption. The "work" of saving your soul is done. You can't add to it by your efforts, and you can't take away from it by your failures. Our "Sabbath" now isn't just twenty-four hours of sitting still; it is a lifetime of resting in the finished work of Jesus Christ.

From Law to Love

In Exodus, we see the Tabernacle being built. Every piece of furniture, every curtain, and every golden hook pointed to Jesus:

- The Altar: Pointed to the sacrifice of His blood.
- The Lampstand: Pointed to Him as the Light of the World.
- The Bread: Pointed to Him as the Bread of Life.

When Moses called for the offering, he wasn't just asking for materials; he was asking for a response to God's presence. That is the key for us today. We don't serve because a law tells us to; we serve because the Love of God constrains us. When you realize that the Creator of the universe shed His blood for *you*, your heart becomes that "willing heart" Moses spoke about.

A Moment of Reflection

I want to invite you to just take a breath right now. If you've been stressed, if you've been weary, if you've been trying to "work" your way into God's good graces, just stop.

"Come to Me, all you who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest." (Matthew 11:28)

That is the invitation of Jesus. He is our Sabbath. He is our Peace.

The Tabernacle wasn't just a tent in the desert; it was a physical map of the way back to God. Every single detail—from the sockets of silver to the curtains of goat hair—points directly to the person and work of Jesus Christ.

As we look at the furnishings Moses called the people to build in Exodus 35, we see a beautiful progression of how we come to know our Savior.

The Courtyard: The Way In

Before you could enter the presence of God, you had to pass through the outer court. This is where the "work" of sacrifice happened.

- **The Brazen Altar:** This is the first thing you would see. It was where the animals were sacrificed. This is a picture of the Cross. Before anything else, there must be a sacrifice for sin. Jesus, the Lamb of God, shed His blood on the altar of the Cross once and for all.
- **The Brazen Laver:** This was a large basin of water where the priests washed. It represents the "washing of water by the Word." Once we are saved by the blood, we are continually cleansed by the Word of God as we walk through this dusty world.

The Holy Place: The Walk of the Believer

Once inside the tent, you find three items that describe our daily fellowship with the Lord.

- **The Golden Lampstand:** There were no windows in the Tabernacle; the only light came from this lampstand fueled by pure oil. This points to Jesus as the Light of the World, and the oil represents the Holy Spirit who illuminates the Word to us.
- **The Table of Showbread:** This held twelve loaves of bread. It speaks of fellowship and provision. Jesus is the Bread of Life who sustains us. We don't live by bread alone, but by every word that proceeds from the mouth of God.
- **The Altar of Incense:** This stood right before the veil. The smoke rising up represents the prayers of the saints. It reminds us that Jesus ever lives to make intercession for us.

The Most Holy Place: The Presence of God

Beyond the veil (which was torn from top to bottom when Jesus died, signifying that the way is now open!) was the heart of the Tabernacle.

- **The Ark of the Covenant:** Inside were the tablets of the Law, Aaron's rod that budded, and a golden pot of manna.
- **The Mercy Seat:** This was the solid gold lid on top of the Ark. Once a year, blood was sprinkled here. This is the most beautiful picture in the whole building. The Law (which condemns us) was inside the box, but it was covered by the Mercy Seat where the blood was applied.

God doesn't look at your brokenness or your failure to keep the Law; He looks at the blood of His Son that covers it all.

Practical Application

This week, as you go about your business, remember that you are now the "temple of the Holy Spirit." You don't have to travel to a tent in the desert to find God and you don't have to visit a "church building." Because of the resurrection, the Living Christ dwells in you!

The Challenge: Which piece of furniture do you need to visit today? Do you need to go back to the Altar and remember you are forgiven? Do you need to sit at the Table and feed on His Word? Or do you need to stand at the Altar of Incense and just talk to your Father?