

newDAY

“Freely Giving”

1 Chronicles 29:1-17

Idea: Believers are given opportunities to freely give back to God.

Intro: Show testimonial video.

Last week we talked about the building of the Tabernacle in the wilderness as described in the final chapters of the book of Exodus. The Tabernacle was a huge capital construction project, costing over \$60,000,000. The Lord, however, as we learned had provided the resources in advance by putting the plunder of Egypt in the pockets of the people before they had departed the land of slavery.

Inquiry: Well, today let’s advance the story. The Tabernacle was built, and Israel entered the Promised Land through the leadership of Joshua. Then came the dark days of the Judges, which led to Israel desiring a king. Israel’s first king was a man named Saul. King Saul’s reign began strong but ended in ruin. After Saul, the shepherd boy David was raised up to lead his people, and he became Israel’s most famous king. Into David’s heart God placed a vision and a dream. Approximately 500 years had passed since the construction of the Tabernacle, and despite its incredible value and workmanship, it was becoming tattered. Israel was no longer a nomadic nation; they were securely established in the Promised Land and had become a great empire during David’s reign. Jerusalem was the capital. Now, late in his life, God gave David a desire to build in Jerusalem a permanent Tabernacle – a Temple – based on the pattern of the ancient wilderness tent.

This Temple was to be unlike anything ever built – grander and greater than any edifice on earth. Although King David knew that he himself would never actually see this building (it was a project for the future to be built during the reign of David’s son, Solomon), he felt he could help with the preparations. Knowing that one of the hardest aspects of the project would be raising the needed funds, he took upon himself the responsibility of seeing that resources were gathered.

We have two wonderful chapters in the Bible about how he went about it. In chapter 28, David charged both Israel and Solomon with the responsibility of building the temple. He gave Solomon the plans for the Temple, its houses, furnishings, and everything needed for the worship of God. Then, David said to Solomon, *“Be strong and courageous and do it. Do not be afraid and do not be dismayed, for the Lord God, even my God, is with you. He will not leave you or forsake you, until all the work for the service of the house of the Lord is finished”* (1 Chron 28:20).

I think we all can understand how Solomon and the Jews might have been afraid to take on this project. It was enormous! It was a God-sized project! Likewise, for our size of church, what we are seeking to do for the Lord is enormous. It is God-sized, and some of you are scared. Perhaps, you have even determined that there is no way it can be done because we have families who live on a fixed income, and because we don’t have a church full of doctors, lawyers, and executives.

Hear again 1 Chron 28:20. *“Be strong and courageous and do it. Do not be afraid and do not be dismayed, for the Lord God, even my God, is with you. He will not leave you or forsake you, until all the work for the service of the house of the Lord is finished.”* The burden of the project rests on the shoulders of God. Let us be strong, courageous, and remember that our God is faithful, present, and powerful. Let us then, rise and build (Neh 2:18).

Some of you may feel the newDay campaign is a high-pressure technique to get you to give. Nothing could be further from the truth. We are simply casting the vision of what we believe God is calling our church to do. We are sharing the need. And we are showing you how God is always faithful to His Word and His people. This year we spent seven months studying through the book of Nehemiah. We saw God’s faithfulness, provision, protection, and spiritual nourishment. Who would have thought that a rag-tag bunch Jews could have rebuilt the wall of Jerusalem in 52 days? But that is what they did with the help of God. We’ve seen how God empowered Noah to build an ark for the salvation of his family. We’ve seen how God provided for Abraham, protected Moses, and was present for Peter and the disciples. Have you listened to God’s Word this year? Has your faith deepened as a result of listening and learning the Word of God (Rom 10:17)? This is not a high-pressure sale. We want you to hear from God and, like we saw in Exodus 25 and will see today in 1 Chronicles 29, freely give as God moves your heart.

Some of you are financially strapped. There is no wiggle room in your budget because due to debt. To you I would say, “You don’t need to give to newDay right now. You need to get your finances in order. You may need some help and accountability. You definitely need to get on a budget. In your budget, however, God needs to get your best and your first. Put your tithe at the top of the budget and pay the Lord first (Mal 3:10). Then, when you are in a more stable financial position you can give above and beyond the tithe to newDay.

In all of the capital campaigns we are looking at this month in God’s Word, the giving was voluntary. The people were asked to give freely to the campaign. I want us to study this story from 1 Chronicles 29 and see how the people were freely giving to the vision. As we begin reading, we bump into the first lesson immediately. We see the task, and we learn that we are called to a great task.

1. The Task (vs. 1)

Read 1 Chron 29:1.

Ophthalmologists tell us there is a fairly common childhood vision difficulty called “amblyopia,” otherwise known as lazy eye. It is a condition noted by reduced vision not correctable by glasses or contact lenses. The interesting thing is that a disease in the eye does not cause it. The brain, for whatever reason, does not acknowledge the images seen by the amblyopic eye.

Sometimes Christians and churches have the same problem. They have lazy eyes and a deficient vision. Their brains and hearts, for some reason, don’t pick up the full extent of God’s leading in their lives. That was not a problem for David. He had 20/20 vision of what God wanted to do, and he told the people, *“The work is great, for the palace will not be for man but for the Lord God.”*

Thankfully, I don’t believe our church is suffering from spiritual amblyopia. We have been seeking the Lord’s face for months concerning His vision for our future, and we have learned that His vision is not small. He wants us to do something of eternal significance in and through us. He is calling us to embark on a spiritual journey. NewDay is a three-year giving journey

whereby God is going to fund our project by deepening our faith as we give sacrificially above and beyond the tithe. We have said from the beginning that this project is much bigger than wood and stone. God wants to grow and develop you, even as you give to build and renovate buildings.

David said that the task was great, and it was all the greater because it wasn't for himself, his kingdom, or his legacy. It was for the Lord his God. We can say exactly the same about our vision and our endeavor. The task is great, but it isn't for us. It is for the glory of our great God! It is for our Lord Jesus Christ! It is for His Kingdom!

That was the attitude of King David as he envisioned the building of the great Temple in Jerusalem for the glory of the Lord.

2. The Team (vs. 2-9)

We next notice that David pulled around him a team. He was perhaps the wealthiest man in the world, but he could not finance the project by himself. And he didn't want to do it by himself. He wanted all his leaders to become a part of it, and he wanted all the people of Israel to participate.

Read 1 Chron 29:2-5a, 6-9.

If you haven't yet grasped the magnitude of this task, you should now. David tells us that he gave from the treasuries of Israel great resources for the construction and furnishing of the Temple. He also personally gave to the campaign out of his wealth. In addition the leaders of the people gave to the campaign.

Take a look at what they gave collectively just in gold and silver to the campaign to build the Temple:

Gold		
<u>Kingdom</u>	<u>David</u>	<u>Leaders</u>
100,000 talents	3,000 talents	5,000 talents
7.5 million lbs	225,000 lbs	375,000 lbs
\$144,108,000,000	\$4,323,240,000	\$7,205,400,000

Total: \$155,636,640,000

Silver		
<u>Kingdom</u>	<u>David</u>	<u>Leaders</u>
1 million talents	7,000 talents	10,000 talents
75 million lbs	525,000 lbs	750,000 lbs
\$17,484,000,000	\$122,338,000	\$174,840,000

Total: \$17,781,178,000

Gold/Silver Total: \$173,417,818,000

Not everyone gave the same amount. It wasn't equal giving; it was equal sacrifice. And the Bible tells us that they gave willingly, sacrificially, and out of a great sense of excitement and expectation.

Illust: I have personally been through numerous capital campaigns. I've got to see how the Lord works through His people and builds a team of givers, and I've learned that it takes everyone to be successful. Years ago, as a college pastor, our church launched a campaign called "Special Treasures." We encouraged our people to give above and beyond the tithe, but we also emphasized liquidating their special treasures (jewelry, land, cars, boats, etc.) and giving the money to the Lord. Milton was one of my ministry leaders who caught the vision. He loved to bass fish, but because of his job, he didn't get to fish very often. So he sold his boat and gave the money to the campaign. He gave with a full heart and a smile on his face.

At my previous church, I became close to a senior adult man named R.C. after going through rehab together. He had had his knee replaced, and I had ruptured my patellar tendon, so we sat together three days a week for several weeks while the sadists pushed and prodded on our knees. When our church decided to buy 65 acres of land and relocate, R.C. immediately got on board with the vision. He had retired from TVA as an engineer. He wasn't extremely wealthy, but he was an astute moneyman who wanted to ensure that the church would be on solid financial ground after it relocated. Therefore, he wrote the church into his will. R.C. died before the new campus was finished. He never got to see the finished product that he had invested in, but after his death his estate gave \$750k to our campaign.

David understood that the task requires a team who will freely give to the campaign. This brings us to a third lesson.

3. The Test (vs. 10-17)

As the needed resources of gold and silver were gathered, David's heart rose in praise and thanksgiving. In verse 10, he broke into a wonderful prayer. Read verses 10-11.

Now, skip down to verse 17, for there is an unusual word here – one we wouldn't expect to see – the word *test*. Read verse 17.

From time to time, we have an opportunity to be part of something big that God is doing. From time to time, we have an opportunity of building the Temple, so to speak. And God provides these opportunities partly as a means of testing us, to see where our treasures are, and to test the sincerity of our consecration to Him (vs. 5). Let's go back to verse 2 and see how this develops.

Read verses 2-3. Don't miss what David says here. *"I have a treasure of my own..."* Have you ever given God your personal treasures?

19 "Do not lay up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moth and rust destroy and where thieves break in and steal, 20 but lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust destroys and where thieves do not break in and steal. 21 For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also.

– Matt 6:19-21

Jesus wasn't saying we shouldn't be wise savers and investors. The Bible instructs us to provide for our families and to prepare for the future. But how easily those provisions and preparations can become treasures that we hoard.

Illust: The film *Schindler's List* chronicled the heroic efforts of a German industrialist named Oskar Schindler. Through his unselfish activities, over a thousand Jews on the trains to Auschwitz were saved. Although the film, even on television, has some very graphic and disturbing scenes, the message itself is profound.

After Schindler found out what was happening at Auschwitz, he began a systematic effort to save as many Jews as he could. For money, he could buy Jews to work in his factory, which was supposed to be a part of the military machine of Germany. On one hand he was buying as many Jews as he could, on the other hand he was deliberately sabotaging the ammunition produced in his factory. He entered the war as a wealthy industrialist; by the end of the war, he was basically bankrupt.

When the Germans surrendered, Schindler met with his workers and declared that at midnight they were all free to go. The most emotional scene of the film was when Schindler said good-bye to the financial manager of the plant, a Jew and his good and trusted friend. As he embraced his friend, Schindler sobbed and said, "I could have done more." He looked at his automobile and asked, "Why did I save this? I could have bought ten Jews with this." Taking another small possession he cried, "This would have saved another one. Why didn't I do more?"

One day Jesus is going to return for His church. On that day, it will not matter how much money we have in a mutual fund or how many bedrooms we have in our homes. The temporary satisfaction we have in vacations and nice cars will be gone. Only what we have done for the cause of Christ will matter. Or as Jesus put it, "*Where your treasure is, there your heart will be also.*"

Now, having set an example by giving from his own treasures to the Lord, David challenged the leaders and the people to do the same. Notice how he issued the call: "*Who then will offer willingly, consecrating himself today to the Lord?*" (vs. 5b)

He could have said, "Now who is willing to follow my example?" He could have said, "Who is willing to step up to the plate and help us?" Or, "Here is what I have given; now, how much can you give?" But that is not what he did. David simply said, "Who is willing to consecrate himself today to the Lord?" He understood that giving is an act of consecration.

This word is not one we use in every-day language, but it is often used in the Bible. It carries the connotation of being sacred and set apart as holy unto the Lord. Here David uses it in the sense of setting ourselves and our possessions aside for sacred use. He calls upon the Jews and upon us to devote ourselves and our resources to Almighty God and to the kingdom work of Jesus Christ.

When we give our tithes, offerings, and pledge our money to help fulfill the Lord's vision, it isn't just a matter of fundraising. We are consecrating ourselves and all that we have to the Lord. What a deep honor this is, and what a high privilege! What a holy thing! What a wonderful test from God.

4. The Truth (vs. 11-16)

Now, we come to the final principle: When we give our treasures as an act of consecration, we are simply giving God to back that which is already His own. Look again at David's prayer.

Read verses 11-16.

Did you catch what is said in verse 16? What we give to the Lord comes from His hand. The Bible's approach to gold, silver, money, mutual funds, land, bank accounts, and all the rest is this: God is the owner of it all. "*The earth is the Lord's and the fullness thereof*" (Ps 24:1). He gives you your daily bread. He gives you the ability to produce wealth. All that you have comes from His hand. One of the greatest joys of the Christian life is the opportunity to give back to God what is already His for the expansion of His kingdom and to the praise of His glory.

Conclusion: Today, we're at a critical and incredible juncture in the life of our church. We can echo with David that the work is great and we ourselves are inadequate for the task. But with God we can do all things. So who will freely and willingly consecrate themselves today to the Lord?