

FROM YOU AND FOR YOU 1 CHRONICLES 29:10-18

In almost every place I go in town where I am a regular and people know who I am and what I do—the hairdresser, the gas station, the doctor’s office, the bank, the hardware store—I am asked the same question, followed by the same comment, and then followed up by another question. “How’s the church building coming along? Boy it sure looks good! When’s it going to be done?”

By now all these people know, because of our previous conversations, that EBC’s construction project is not typical, at least not in the U.S. Since we did not have all the funds in the bank before we started, nor did we secure a construction loan, we are proceeding by faith, and, thus, we cannot project a finish date. We are trusting God to provide the funds and resources we need as we build, so that when the construction is completed we will not incur any debt that will hamper or hinder the ministries that God has called us to do—substantial ministries that require substantial funds.

I always enjoy being asked these questions, because it is an opportunity for me to glorify God. I tell these people that the building project is steadily coming along because God continues to provide. I tell them how God has been faithful to answer our prayers, and I am often able to recount specific occasions when He has provided just the right amount to do what needed to be done next. I tell them that we don’t have a projected finish date, but that we are confident God will continue to lead us and continue to supply what is needed until the end.

Then I tell them that the best part of all is that God is using the building process to teach us things about Himself that help us know Him better, and that compel us to love Him more.

In other words, I tell them that our building program is all about Him. It’s not so much about completing a construction project. It’s about what He wants to reveal about Himself; it’s about what He wants to do *in* us as we learn to know Him better and trust Him more; it’s about what He wants us to do *through* us as we respond to His promptings to give, or serve, or pray, or whatever else He asks us to do; it’s about Him glorifying Himself so that His character and attributes are magnified.

These have always been God’s intentions when He leads His people to undertake something for Him that is way bigger than themselves. Such was the case when He asked Moses to lead the people of Israel out of Egypt, or when He asked Joshua to lead the people to take possession of the Promised Land, or when He asked Gideon to go up against the massive Midianite army with just 300 men. It was also the case in the construction of the LORD’s temple in Jerusalem, which is the context of the passage we are going to look at this morning.

So before we look at David’s prayer in 1 Chronicles 29:10-18, I’d like to talk about that context for a few moments. David, man after God’s own heart, was nearing the end of his reign as king of Israel. During his reign, Israel had become a great and powerful nation, and God had used David to accomplish some remarkable things. But as much as he wanted to, God forbid David to build a temple for Him, because David was a warrior and his hands had shed too much blood.

And so David, in his final act as Israel’s sovereign, gathered all the Who’s who and VIP’s of Israel in that day and assembled them in Jerusalem. We are told in verse 1 of

chapter 28 that in this assembly were *“all the officials of Israel, the officials of the tribes, the officers of the divisions that served the king, the commanders of thousands, the commanders of hundreds, the stewards of all the property and livestock of the king and his sons, together with the palace officials, the mighty men and all the seasoned warriors.”* In other words, anybody that was anybody in that day was present. And they were present because David was doing two very important things. First, he was unveiling a detailed set of building plans for the temple that would be built by his son, Solomon, who would reign as king of Israel in his place.

And second, he was asking these VIP's to contribute from their own wealth for the construction of the temple, which David calls the LORD's palace.

Prior to making this request, David put *his* money where his mouth was. He dipped into his own personal savings account and donated 7,000 talents of silver and 3,000 talents of gold to the project (29:4). A talent weighs seventy-five pounds (thirty four kilograms). So David's offering was no small amount. I did some calculations and discovered that the value of this offering in today's market would be \$142,800,000 (one hundred and forty two million, eight hundred thousand dollars) in silver, and \$4,752,000,000 (four billion, seven hundred and fifty two million dollars) in gold.

Afterward, the VIP's of Israel took up a collection and gave nearly double that amount. So, even before Solomon took the throne and began to break ground on the temple there was over \$13 billion in the building fund. And we are told that when they collected all this wealth and all this treasure for the construction of God's temple, that *“...the people rejoiced because they had given willingly, for with a whole heart they had offered freely to the Lord. David the king also rejoiced greatly”* (29:9).

It was this involuntary joy that prompted David to blurt out the following words in the presence of all those who were assembled: **verses 10-13.** ¹⁰ ... *David said: “Blessed are you, O LORD, the God of Israel our father, forever and ever. ¹¹ Yours, O LORD, is the greatness and the power and the glory and the victory and the majesty, for all that is in the heavens and in the earth is yours. Yours is the kingdom, O LORD, and you are exalted as head above all.*

¹² *Both riches and honor come from you, and you rule over all. In your hand are power and might, and in your hand it is to make great and to give strength to all. ¹³ And now we thank you, our God, and praise your glorious name.*

This is a prayer of praise to Yahweh. And David is beside himself with joy and awe at just how marvelous God is and just how generous God has been with them. One Bible scholar commented that “David's prayer ransacks the theological dictionary for terms expressing God's sovereign and boundless power and regal grandeur” (Allen, *1, 2 Chronicles*, 191). With one superlative after another David ascribes to Yahweh the possession of every attribute that would exalt Him to the highest possible status. To Him belong greatness, power, glory, victory, and majesty. What is more, he ascribes to Him the possession of everything *in* heaven and earth, and sovereignty *over* all those things. His is the kingdom and He is exalted as head over all.

But not only does He own everything, and not only is He in charge of everything, He also distributes His wealth according to His will. Wealth, honor, and strength ultimately have their source in Him, but He is the One who gives wealth, honor, and strength to those whom He wishes.

And in His sovereignty, He gave quite a bit of wealth to David and the Israelites at the time David prayed this prayer. It hadn't always been that way in Israel. Read the book of Judges and you'll find that there had been some lean times for the people of Israel, times when they were desperate, times when they were subjugated by other kings and kingdoms.

But by the time David's reign ended, Israel was extremely prosperous. That was because of God's grace, for David cries out in **verses 14-16**. ¹⁴ *"But who am I, and what is my people, that we should be able thus to offer willingly? For all things come from you, and of your own have we given you. ¹⁵ For we are strangers before you and sojourners, as all our fathers were. Our days on the earth are like a shadow, and there is no abiding. ¹⁶ O LORD our God, all this abundance that we have provided for building you a house for your holy name comes from your hand and is all your own.*

In our contemporary political climate, politicians and heads of state are very good at taking credit for their accomplishments and boasting about their wealth. They seem desperate for people to applaud them for their achievements and honor them for their status. "Look what I have done to garner so much power and accumulate so much wealth and earn a place in history."

But notice David's view of himself and his fellow countrymen. "Who am I and who are these men of Israel that we should be so blessed? Compared to you, O LORD, we haven't done anything of significance; compared to you, we don't have any resources. In fact, everything we have has come *from* you, and so the wealth we have given for the temple is just a matter of returning to you what was already yours in the first place.

"Besides, we are strangers and sojourners on this earth, and our lives are so temporary and so fleeting that we are like shadows. There is really no substance to them. Therefore, we don't deserve any credit for anything. All honor and all praise belongs to you."

David continues in **verses 17-18**. ¹⁷ *I know, my God, that you test the heart and have pleasure in uprightness. In the uprightness of my heart I have freely offered all these things, and now I have seen your people, who are present here, offering freely and joyously to you. ¹⁸ O LORD, the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Israel, our fathers, keep forever such purposes and thoughts in the hearts of your people, and direct their hearts toward you.*

David acknowledges that it is possible to generously give of our money and resources for a godly cause and yet have God be thoroughly unimpressed with our gifts—even *offended* by our gifts. There are many passages in the Old Testament describing how God rejected the offerings and sacrifices of His people because their hearts were not in the right place. They gave grudgingly, or with ulterior motives, or with guilt on their hands or malice in their hearts.

But David is convinced that, in this instance, their motives were pure. They gave their offerings out of pure devotion to Yahweh, and it was evidenced by the joy that accompanied their gifts.

And David is also asking the LORD to help them maintain that pure heart and joyous attitude. He wants the LORD to help them stay focused on His plans and purposes, rather than get sidetracked by their own selfish agendas.

That is a wonderful request! "Lord, give us an eternal perspective. Keep us on your frequency! Let us always be mindful of your purposes and always devoted to you."

By the way, this is the essential component of stewardship. It is being so devoted to God that He is ever on the forefront of our minds, and His greatness, power, glory, and

majesty are not abstract theological concepts, but daily realities that shape our attitudes and behavior. Furthermore, it is being so in tune with His purposes that those purposes are our priorities, and we cannot help but order our lives around and give of our resources for those purposes.

When we do this God is pleased. When we do this God often entrusts us with even more of His wealth and more of His resources. *Because God lavishes His unlimited resources on His loved ones so they can use them for His glory.*

We, at Emmanuel Bible Church, are not building God's temple on this property. That \$13 billion project in David and Solomon's day was the place where God's glory dwelt. It was His holy habitation on earth—Yahweh's *palace* as David called it—and for a God that was accustomed to the glory and grandeur of heaven, a \$13 billion building was a mere shack. Yet *God* gave David and the people of Israel more than \$13 billion of gold and silver so that they could return it to Him and have the joy of participating in the construction of the greatest and most important building that has ever been constructed on earth.

Today God doesn't live in a building. His temples nowadays are believers in Jesus Christ, who have been indwelt by the Holy Spirit and whose bodies are called "the temple of the Holy Spirit" (1 Cor. 6:19).

Our building at EBC is not a temple but a tool to enable us to increase and expand the work of God in our community, and in the world. And just as in David's day, He's given us just the right amount of wealth and resources so that, by returning it to Him, we can have the joy of participating in spreading His fame and expanding His kingdom.

That's always been the way God works on earth. *He lavishes His unlimited resources on His loved ones so they can use them for His glory.*

FROM YOU AND FOR YOU
2 CHRONICLES 29:10-18

Main Idea: *God lavishes His unlimited resources on His loved ones so they can use them for His glory*

Blessed is the LORD (10-12)

The meaning of “blessed” (10)

Reasons the LORD is blessed (11-12)

He owns everything (11a)

He is in charge of everything (11b-12a)

He sovereignly distributes His wealth (12b)

An appropriate response (13-20)

Give praise and thanks to God (13)

Give resources to God (14-17)

Because He provided them in the first place (14, 16)

Because our earthly sojourn is temporary and fleeting (15)

Because God delights in our joyful generosity (17)

A petition for an eternal perspective (18)

Always mindful of God’s purposes (18a)

Always devoted to God (18b)