

Exodus 36-37

September 11, 2011

Introduction:

Some Old Testament chapters are filled with details. In today's case, we have construction details. But often we can find principles interwoven in these chapters that are completely relevant to our lives today.

Imagine that you have a friend who is very successful. He is very proud of himself and what he has achieved. Does he get the credit for his success? What does God have to do with his success?

- All of us have received skills, talents, and opportunities from God. **See 36:1-2.** God has given us our skill. **See 1 Corinthians 4:7** (*7 for what gives you the right to make such a judgment? What do you have that God hasn't given you? And if everything you have is from God, why boast as though it were not a gift?*)

What credit can we take for our achievements?

- When we achieve, we simply utilize what God has given to us (intellect, wisdom, willpower, determination, giftedness, opportunity). We could do nothing without the gifts that God has given to us. We achieve because of what God has done for us and in us.

What does **1 Corinthians 15:10** tell us about our achievements?

- We become who we are by God's grace. This verse tells us that we cannot achieve without God, but that He normally requires us to act. We do it *and* He does it through us. Without Him we cannot. Without us He will not.
- God determines our gifts: see **1 Corinthians 12:11 & 18.** God also determines our giftedness: see **Romans 12:3-6 and 1 Peter 4:10** (*manifold grace of God refers to how we have differing giftedness*). **See 2 Corinthians 10:17.** *17 As the Scriptures say, "If you want to boast, boast only about the Lord."**

Can wicked people experience what the world would call "success" in this life?

- Yes. **See Matthew 5:45 and Ecclesiastes 8:14.** **Read Psalm 73.** Before reading the Psalm, explain what is going on in it: the Psalmist compares his difficult life with some wicked people who seem to have "everything". He is confused and upset about this until he comes into God's presence. There he realizes that in the end the wicked lose and the righteous win.

36:1-2 In chapter 36 verses 1 and 2 God reveals why He blesses us. What does it say?

- He blesses us to do something for Him (*perform all the work*). **Ephesians 2:10** tell us that we were created for good works that God planned from before we were born.

36:4-7 What happens in verses 4 to 7?

- The people are being so extravagant in their giving that they were bringing far more than was needed.

Why do you think that the people gave the way that they did?

- They realized that all that they possessed had come from God. God told them to ask for it from the Egyptians (**Exodus 3:22**).
- The people put God and His will above themselves and their own wants.
- They were grateful (at this point) about what God had delivered them from (Egyptian slavery).
- They trusted God to meet their needs. He had given them water from a rock (**17:6**), quail (**16:9-13**), and manna each day (**16:4-5**).
- Having seen God's power, maybe they realized that everything belongs to Him.

Do you think that this would ever happen in our day? Why or why not?

- It probably would not happen today. People's lives are burdened by debt rather than characterized by savings. See **Proverbs 21:20**. A small minority of people today actually believe that they are stewarding God's money. Instead, they think that they are giving to God *their* money. Most people consider themselves to be the source of their money, not God. See **Deuteronomy 8:18**. Most people's financial security is not in trusting the Lord to provide as they give but rather in their own ability to earn and save. They feel "secure" because of what they have, not because of Who has them. Rather than putting God first, most people today serve Him with the "leftovers" of their lives (time and money).

Read **Luke 18:18-23**. (*18 Once a religious leader asked Jesus this question: "Good Teacher, what should I do to inherit eternal life?" 19 "Why do you call me good?" Jesus asked him. "Only God is truly good. 20 But to answer your question, you know the commandments: 'You must not commit adultery. You must not murder. You must not steal. You must not testify falsely. Honor your father and mother.'"*)

21 The man replied, "I've carefully obeyed all these commandments since I was young." 22 When Jesus heard his answer, he said, "There is still one thing you haven't done. Sell all your possessions and give the money to the poor, and you will have treasure in heaven. Then come, follow me." 23 But when the man heard this he became sad, for he was very rich. Was this man wise or foolish? Why?

- He was a fool. He sacrificed eternal life for temporal blessings. He sacrificed eternal rewards for present convenience. He chose to have things rather than to walk with the Son of God in a human body. He gave up the greatest adventure a person can know (following Christ) in order to have the security and pleasure of temporal things. See **Luke 12:15**.

Read 2 Corinthians 9:6-11. What do we learn from this passage?

- We determine how much we reap (get) by how much we sow (**give**): **9:6**.
- Our giving should be deliberate (we want to give), **not forced**: **9:7**.
- We should give hilariously (literally), **not begrudgingly**: **9:7**.
- God is able to provide us with all that we need: **9:8** (*having all sufficiency in everything*).
- God blesses us so that we can use our blessings to serve Him (*have an abundance for every good deed*): **9:8**.
- God supplies our need: **9:10**.
- Our giving is a part of becoming and being righteous: **9:10**.
- When we give generously (*liberally*), God promises to enrich us in everything: **9:11**.

Are these things true? If so, why do so few give to God as prescribed here?

- In our brokenness, we are like **Adam** and **Eve**. They doubted God's love for them and His goodness to them. They decided that trusting in what they thought and did was a better plan than trusting in what God said. They were wrong. It cost them and us paradise on earth.

The Tabernacle, as we discussed several lessons ago, was plain on the outside but incredible on the inside. The top of the "tent" was porpoise skin; it looked plain but it wouldn't leak. All of the furnishings were overlaid with gold. The Mercy Seat and its cherubim and the Lampstand were all pure gold.

Jesus became flesh and dwelt (literally "tabernacle") among us (**John 1:14**). Jesus was ordinary on the outside (**Isaiah 53:2**), but incredible on the inside (His character).