

THROUGH THE BIBLE STUDY

1 CHRONICLES 23-29

Tonight, I'd like to start with a riddle... *"Why did the orange stop in the middle of the road?"* Answer... *"It ran out of juice."* Believe it or not this was King David's concern. David was growing old. He knew he wouldn't live forever. He started thinking about his successor, and ways he could make his transition easier...

We learned last week, for 600 shekels of gold David purchased a level summit on the eastern ridge of Jerusalem – 35 acres. It was a threshing floor that David bought as the site for the Temple his son would build after he'd departed.

David also stockpiled materials for the construction of the Temple.

David's victories over his enemies created a period of peace where his successor could focus his energies on construction rather than conquest.

And in tonight's chapters we'll see how David organized the priests, and musicians, and gatekeepers for the service of the future Temple.

An elderly King David is about to hand off his kingdom to his son, and he doesn't want the nation to run out of juice. So he organizes for the continued growth and greatness of Israel. It's been said, *"Don't agonize... organize."*

That's David's strategy at the end of 1 Chronicles.

Chapter 23 “So when David was old and full of days, he made his son Solomon king over Israel.” David was just 70 years old when he died, but all the battles, and the nights sleeping in caves, and the days on the run from Saul had taken its toll.

David had been ridden hard and put up with too many times. Now he's at the end of his life – death is on the horizon – he's appointed his son, Solomon to be king. Josephus, the Jewish historian, says Solomon was just 14 years old when he came to the throne. David knew managing a vast kingdom and constructing an enormous Temple would be huge challenges for a teenager so he does what he can to help in advance. Here he organizes the priesthood...

Verse 2 “And he gathered together all the leaders of Israel, with the priests and the Levites. Now the Levites were numbered from the age of 30 years and above...”

It is interesting David became king at age 30 – the Law prohibited the priests from assuming office until they reached age 30 – Jesus didn't begin His ministry until He was about 30 years old. Evidently, age 30 is a mark of maturity.

“And the number of individual males (30 years old) was 38,000.

Of these, 24,000 were to look after the work of the house of the LORD, 6000 were officers and judges, 4000 were gatekeepers, and 4000 praised the LORD with musical instruments, “which I made,” said David, “for giving praise.”

Think of all the comings and goings of the White House in Washington, DC.

It's been estimated there are 3366 fulltime employees who work at the White House - and probably another 3000 part-time workers. Hey, it takes over 6000 people to oversee the traffic and security and business of the White House.

But that was nothing compared to God's House. The Temple would become a hubbub of constant activity – and it would require a large staff - 38,000 priests were assigned to serve as civil servants, security agents, worship leaders...

And unlike the White House, 4000 priests did nothing but praise the Lord. God wanted His house to be a musical place – a praise place – a house of praise.

Psalm 22:3 may make reference to the practice of praise in the Temple. David says of God, “You are holy, enthroned in the praise of Israel.” Or the OKJ puts it, “You inhabit the praise of Israel.” God loves to dwell within the sound of praise.

This is why when we praise God - He's prone to reveal Himself in special ways.

Notice also our text tells us David was an inventor of musical instruments. The 4000 priests praised God on instruments... “which I made,” said David...”

Amos 6:5 is a judgment on those who refused to hear Amos' warning, but the comment is made... You “invent for yourselves musical instruments like David...”

David was a musical engineer. He designed guitars, fiddles, ukuleles, etc...

And notice verse 5 tells us why David invented new instruments... **“for giving praise”**. Which brings up a question... if you own an instrument - a guitar, or a drum kit, or a keyboard... **what’s the purpose of your instrument?**

Are you using it to jam with friends - or show off your skill - or earn a record contract - or become famous - or entertain... The instrument God enabled you to purchase and play has a higher purpose. It’s been made to glorify God.

Which is why I don’t understand the Church of Christ and other denominations that prohibit the use of instruments in their public worship? David designed new instruments to be used to praise God... and what better place than in church.

In the remainder of chapter 23 David divides the Levites into three groups.

Verse 6 reads, **“And David divided them into divisions among the sons of Levi: Gershon, Kohath, and Merari.”** While the Ark resided in the Tabernacle the primary duties of Levi’s three tribes were the transport of the Tabernacle. The Kohathites carried the **furniture** – the Gershonites the **fabrics** – the Merarites the **frame**.

I’ll let you read this list of names on your own – verses 7-23...

Do notice though one verse - verse 13, **“The sons of Amram: Aaron and Moses; and Aaron was set apart, he and his sons forever, that he should sanctify the most holy things, to burn incense before the LORD, to minister to Him, and to give the blessing in His name forever.”** Notice the fourfold duties of the High Priest...

Dedication of holy things – burning incense in the Holy Place – ministering to the Lord by the sprinkling of the blood – and declaring the priestly blessing to the people of Israel...
Remember the blessing God gave to Aaron to give to Israel...

Numbers 6:24-26 is also God's heart to you and me tonight - "The LORD bless you and keep you; the LORD make His face shine upon you, and be gracious to you; the LORD lift up His countenance upon you, and give you peace."

Verse 24 "These were the sons of Levi by their fathers' houses - the heads of the fathers' houses as they were counted individually by the number of their names, who did the work for the service of the house of the LORD, from the age of 20 years and above." Notice, priests had to be 30 years old – Levites, 20 years old.

"For David said, "The LORD God of Israel has given rest to His people, that they may dwell in Jerusalem forever"; and also to the Levites, "They shall no longer carry the tabernacle, or any of the articles for its service."

What had been the chief duty of the Levites – transport of the Tabernacle - had become obsolete. The *portable tent* was being replaced with a *permanent Temple*.

"For by the last words of David the Levites were numbered from 20 years old and above; because their duty was to help the sons of Aaron in the service of the house of the LORD, in the courts and in the chambers, in the purifying of all holy things and the work of the service of the house of God, both with the showbread and the fine flour for the grain offering, with the unleavened cakes and what is baked in the pan, with

what is mixed and with all kinds of measures and sizes; to stand every morning to thank and praise the LORD, and likewise at evening; and at every presentation of a burnt offering to the LORD on the Sabbaths and on the New Moons and on the set feasts, by number according to the ordinance governing them, regularly before the LORD...” The construction of the Temple radically revolutionized the role of the Levites. Their job description changed.

They became servants of the Priests. Verse 32, “And that they should attend to the needs of the tabernacle of meeting, the needs of the holy place, and the needs of the sons of Aaron their brethren in the work of the house of the LORD.”

In chapter 24 David organizes the priesthood. “Now these are the divisions of the sons of Aaron. The sons of Aaron were Nadab, Abihu, Eleazar, and Ithamar.

And Nadab and Abihu died before their father, and had no children; therefore Eleazar and Ithamar ministered as priests.” Remember Nadab and Abihu were the maverick priests who offered profaned fire on the altar – somehow they sinned in their duties - and God sent fire from heaven that turned them into crispy critters.

But Aaron’s other two sons continued the succession of High Priests.

In David’s day, Zadok was the leader of the sons of Eleazar – and Ahimelech was the chief of the family of Ithamar – and according to verse 3, David “divided them according to the schedule of their service.” He organized priestly shifts.

The priests were placed in 24 divisions, and their order of service was chosen by lot. They trusted God to oversee the rolling of the dice, or drawing of straws.

If you want to know who was first – who was second – who was 24th... check out verses 7-18. Notice the 8th in verse 10, the division of “**Abijah.**”

Luke 1:5 mentions a priest of this same division who had waited his turn.

By the first century AD the priesthood was so large it was a lifelong dream for a priest to be selected to serve in the Temple. Verse 9 says the lot fell on this man to “**burn incense**” in the Temple. His name was “**Zacharias,**” and while doing his duty an angel appeared to him, and promised him a son. We call him *John the Baptist*.

Back to Chronicles... verse 19 sums it up, “**This was the schedule of their service for coming into the house of the LORD according to their ordinance by the hand of Aaron their father, as the LORD God of Israel had commanded...**”

No single priest hoarded the privilege of serving God. **The Lord is an equal opportunity employer.** They all had opportunity to serve on a rotating basis.

And if you’re wondering about the use of the number “24” – this had nothing to do with a popular show that aired on Israeli TV - “24.” It was a calendar issue...

There was an ancient lunar calendar that divided the year into 48 weeks. Thus, 24 divisions of priests, and gatekeepers, and soldiers served two week shifts.

Verse 20, “Now the rest of the sons of Levi...” They’re listed through verse 30.

Verse 31, “These also cast lots just as their brothers the sons of Aaron did, in the presence of King David, Zadok, Ahimelech, and the heads of the fathers' houses of the priests and Levites. The chief fathers did just as their younger brethren.” Seniority provided no perks. Young and old served alike.

Chapter 25, “Moreover David and the captains of the army separated for the service some of the sons of Asaph, of Heman, and of Jeduthun, who should prophesy with harps, stringed instruments, and cymbals...” Notice a second reason for musical instruments... **prophecy**, or conveying God’s message.

Guys, music has two primary purposes... *to praise or to proclaim... to magnify or prophesy...* All music should either *speak about God or for God*. God invented music and musical instruments to *praise His wonders and proclaim His wisdom...*

Even a love song - or what we might call a “*secular song*” - should give God praise. All music should either *celebrate the beauty of life, or expound on God’s purposes for life*. I don’t think the only music we should listen to are songs with overt Christian themes, but all music should point us to God in some way.

Verse 1 continues, “And the number of the skilled men performing their service was...” And he lists the Temple

musicians - but notice first how he describes their ministry... **“performing their service”** not *servicing to perform*. Hey, worship leaders come in two varieties – performers and servants. And they’re easy to distinguish.

To the performers – *the people exist for them. It’s their music!*

To the servants – *they exist for the people. It’s God’s music.*
A servant is focused on *the glory of God, and the good of the people*. Tell a servant to alter his musical style a bit - so the songs will better minister to the people, and he’ll gladly comply. *His ego was checked at the door*. But tell a performer to alter his style - and he’ll raise the roof and pitch a fit.

Once a guitar player had his amp blaring as he was grinding on a rock n’ roll favorite. A neighbor in the apartment next to his, stuck his head in the door, and shouted, **“Do you know, there’s a sick, little-old-lady upstairs?”** The guitar player put down his instrument, and scratched his head, **“I’m not sure, hum a few bars.”**

It’s amazing how music can be a blind-spot. You’re *oblivious* to what everyone else sees is *obvious*. You don’t realize how selfish you’ve been until it’s too late...

Verses 2-4 list the musicians and notice the 24 different divisions are grouped under three leaders - verse 2, **Asaph** - verse 3, **Jeduthun** - verse 4, **Heman**

I love these names for they speak to the qualities of every worship leader.

“Heman” means *“faithful”* – for a good worship leader has to be faithful.

“Asaph” means “gatherer” - and a good worship leader should be a gatherer of new songs, new people, new instruments, new styles, and new equipment.

“Jeduthun” means...*and you’re not going to believe this...* that’s why I got it from the renown Hebrew scholars Keil and Delitzsch. I’ve got dead Germans backing me up on this... believe it or not, “Jeduthun” means “**praiseman**”.

“Faster than a drummer who just drunk a pot of coffee... more powerful than a lead guitar player whose deaf... able to leap over a stage-full of microphone cords in a single bound. It’s a bird (*well, he’s a little flighty*), it’s a plane (*nothing boring about this guy*)... no, it’s... *Praiseman.*” Jeduthun wore a big “P” on his chest.

God wants every worship leader to be a *Praiseman*. His heart should be bubbling up, and overflowing with praise to God, and love for people.

Hey, I’m glad we’ve got a Praiseman. Ole Josh may struggle with details for the Announcement Sheet, but Josh has a heart for worship. He’s a Praiseman.

Every church needs a Praiseman... and preferably more than one.

Let’s read through chapter 25 and note some characteristics of Praisemen...

Verse 5 “**All these were the sons of Heman the king's seer in the words of God, to exalt his horn. For God gave Heman 14 sons and 3 daughters.**” A good worship leader multiplies. And Josh has had no problem here... *two in two years.*

But I think a Praiseman also multiplies spiritually. He

produces a lot of little Praisemen. His heart for worship is contagious and rubs off on others.

Verse 6 “All these were under the direction of their father for the music in the house of the LORD, with cymbals, stringed instruments, and harps, for the service of the house of God. Asaph, Jeduthun, and Heman were under the authority of the king.” Understand the Temple players weren’t just a bunch of maverick musicians.

There was a chain of command - the worship leaders were these 3 chief musicians – the 3 were under King David – and David was under God.

And so it is in our church... Jesus is the King. I’m under Jesus. Josh is under the senior pastor. Then all the players and singers are under Josh.

“So the number of them, with their brethren who were instructed in the songs of the LORD, all who were skillful, was 288.” And I’m sure of these worship leaders some were more skilled and talented than others - but “they cast lots for their duty, the small as well as the great, the teacher with the student.” They all took turns.

There was a schedule, and everyone served when their number was called. Verses 9-31 established their order – numbers 1-24... there were 24 divisions.

Here’s a final word if you’re a worship leader - before you plug in your pick-up - or crank up your amp - or sound check your microphone... remember to follow Jesus and pick up a bowl and a towel - and have the attitude of a servant.

Chapter 26 begins, “Concerning the divisions of the gatekeepers...” These were the Temple ushers, and security guards. They’re listed in verses 1-11.

Verses 12-13 tell us the gatekeepers were posted at the gates - or entrance-ways – into and out of the Temple. Their positions were chosen by casting lots.

In David’s day they *rolled the dice* - in our day we *roll with the Spirit*. Recall Gideon trusted in a fleece. We need to listen to the Spirit of the living Lamb.

I believe G. Campbell Morgan speaks for all Christians when he declares, “Our method is not that of casting lots, but of seeking the direct guidance of the Spirit.”

Verse 14 “The lot for the East Gate fell to Shelemiah. Then they cast lots for his son Zechariah, a wise counselor, and his lot came out for the North Gate; to Obed-Edom the South Gate...” Remember, after David’s failed attempt to bring the Ark to Jerusalem. The Ark of the Covenant was kept temporarily in the home of Obed-Edom. What a responsibility! Here he’s rewarded with a job as gatekeeper.

And David even looks out for his sons... “to his sons the storehouse.”

“To Shuppim and Hosah the lot came out for the West Gate, with the Shallecheth Gate on the ascending highway - watchman opposite watchman.

On the east were six Levites, on the north four each day, on the south four each day, and for the storehouse two by two. As for the Parbar on the west, there were four on the highway and two at the Parbar.” What in the world is “the Parbar”?

It was the place you get a coke after you'd played 18 holes of golf.

Actually, we have no idea! Maybe it was a Temple closet, or chamber – or nearby suburb – or an archway that led from the Westside of the Temple to the priestly section of Jerusalem... Whatever it was, it was guarded by 2 gatekeepers.

The chapter continues with the Levites oversaw the Temple treasuries...

Verse 27, “Some of the spoils won in battles they dedicated to maintain the house of the LORD. And all that Samuel the seer, Saul the son of Kish, Abner the son of Ner, and Joab the son of Zeruiah had dedicated, every dedicated thing, was under the hand of Shelomith and his brethren.” In the time of Solomon the Temple was packed with battle spoils that his predecessors dedicated to God.

David also appointed judges over the land.

The rest of the chapter tracks these civil appointments. Look at the last line of verse 32 – these men were established, “for every matter pertaining to God and the affairs of the king.” David had overseers throughout all the land of Israel.

In chapter 27 David organizes his standing army into twelve divisions, “And the children of Israel, according to their number, the heads of fathers' houses, the captains of thousands and hundreds and their officers, served the king in every matter of the military divisions. These divisions came in

and went out month by month throughout all the months of the year, each division having 24,000.”

By the time David gets to the end of his reign the countries around Israel have been conquered. All that’s needed is a peace-keeping force. David divides the Israeli army’s 288,000 troops into 12 divisions that serve one month at a time.

He keeps a national guard of 24,000 just in case of trouble.

Verses 16-22 lists the leaders of the various tribes of Israel...

Verses 23-24 tell us of David’s aborted census... “But David did not take the number of those 20 years old and under, because the LORD had said He would multiply Israel like the stars of the heavens. Joab the son of Zeruiah began a census, but he did not finish, for wrath came upon Israel because of this census; nor was the number recorded in the account of the chronicles of King David.”

Understand, what we’re reading is not “the chronicles of King David” – that was his official state record lost to antiquity. We’re reading “the chronicles of Ezra.”

The rest of the chapter lists the men who supervised David’s vast holdings...

The men who were over “the king’s treasuries... the storehouses in the field, in the cities, in the villages, and in the fortresses... those who did the work of the field for tilling the ground... the vineyards... the vineyards for the supply of wine... the olive trees and the sycamore trees... the store of oil... the herds that fed in Sharon... the herds that were in the

valleys... the camels... the donkeys... the flocks.” Verse 31
“All these were the officials over King David's property.”

Verse 32 “Also Jehonathan, David's uncle, was a counselor, a wise man, and a scribe; and Jehiel the son of Hachmoni was with the king's sons.

Ahithophel was the king's counselor...” He was also Bathsheba’s grandpa - who turned on the king in his heart after he violated grandpa’s little girl and killed her husband. *Ahithophel never forgave David.* He allowed a root of bitterness to spring up in his heart. Ahithophel becomes a leader in Absalom’s coup de that.

“Hushai the Archite was the king's companion. After Ahithophel was Jehoiada the son of Benaiah, then Abiathar. And the general of the king's army was Joab.

Chapters 23-27 prove that David was a prolific organizer. Ezra points all this out to stress to the Jews returning from Babylon the importance of organization.

It’s said, “Structure without life is dead, but life without structure is unseen.”

All living things need organization to function, and that includes the church.

In chapter 28 David calls the nation together, and gives his farewell speech.

“Now David assembled at Jerusalem all the leaders of Israel: the officers of the tribes and the captains of the divisions who served the king, the captains over thousands and captains over hundreds, and the stewards over all the

substance and possessions of the king and of his sons, with the officials, the valiant men, and all the mighty men of valor.” It was an occasion full of pomp and circumstance.

“Then King David rose to his feet and said, "Hear me, my brethren and my people: I had it in my heart to build a house of rest for the ark of the covenant of the LORD, and for the footstool of our God, and had made preparations to build it.

But God said to me, 'You shall not build a house for My name, because you have been a man of war and have shed blood.' "However the LORD God of Israel chose me above all the house of my father to be king over Israel forever, for He has chosen Judah to be the ruler; and of the house of Judah, the house of my father, and among the sons of my father, He was pleased with me to make me king over all Israel.” Saul was the people’s choice. David was God’s choice.

“And of all my sons (for the LORD has given me many sons) He has chosen my son Solomon to sit on the throne of the kingdom of the LORD over Israel.”

Now He said to me, 'It is your son Solomon who shall build My house and My courts; for I have chosen him to be My son, and I will be his Father. Moreover I will establish his kingdom forever, if he is steadfast to observe My commandments and My judgments, as it is this day.' Next David issues Solomon a charge...

He says to his son, "Now therefore, in the sight of all Israel, the assembly of the LORD, and in the hearing of our God, be careful to seek out all the commandments of the LORD your God, that you may possess this good land, and leave it as an inheritance for your children after you forever. "As for you, my

son Solomon, know the God of your father, and serve Him with a loyal heart and with a willing mind; for the LORD searches all hearts and understands all the intent of the thoughts.”

I like this combination – “a loyal heart... a willing mind...” Does God have my heart and my mind? My heart is in love with God, and my mind is in His Word.

“If you seek Him, He will be found by you; but if you forsake Him, He will cast you off forever.” What a profound promise David makes to his son, Solomon!

If you have ever played hide-in-seek with a two year old you know it’s not uncommon for him or her to “hide” in full view - right in the middle of the room.

It’s because a two year old enjoys being found a lot more than staying hidden.

This is God’s attitude. God desires for every heart to find Him. That’s why He promises to reveal Himself to anyone who makes an honest effort to seek Him.

David challenges Solomon in verse 10, “Consider now, for the LORD has chosen you to build a house for the sanctuary; be strong, and do it.”

Then David gave his son Solomon the plans for the vestibule, its houses, its treasuries, its upper chambers, its inner chambers, and the place of the mercy seat; and the plans for all that he had by the Spirit, of the courts of the house of the LORD, of all the chambers all around, of the treasuries of the house of God, and of the treasuries for the dedicated things; also for the division of the priests and the

Levites, for all the work of the service of the house of the LORD, and for all the articles of service in the house of the LORD.”

Notice in verse 12 the source of all these plans. They came “by the Spirit...”

There are churches today who’ve substituted organization for the power of the Spirit – it’s tragic! But don’t go to the other extreme. I get frustrated with believers who consider all planning and organization a fleshly activity. They believe in just letting the Holy Spirit lead... but in verse 12, David got his plans from the Spirit.

That’s the balance we should seek in a nutshell.

I believe in *Spirit-led organization* AND *Spirit-led planning*! A plan helps the church maximize its resources, and direct its energies. Yes, we need to be led by the Holy Spirit, but we also need to plan and organize – and I don’t think the two are mutually-exclusive. We need to seek the Lord for our plans and structures.

David also gave Solomon the gold he would need to for the lampstands, the table of showbread, the altar of incense, the forks, basins, utensils, etc. And verse 18, the gold needed for “the construction of the chariot, that is, the gold cherubim that spread their wings and overshadowed the ark of the covenant of the LORD.”

In the Temple huge gold cherubim, or angels, overshadowed the Ark of the Covenant. Here the Ark is called “the chariot”. Remember, when the Prophet Ezekiel saw

God's throne in heaven he saw wheels spinning – within wheels.

Evidently, God's throne isn't a stationary monument – God has wheels!

Hey, God is always on the move! He's out and about doing stuff. That's why God's throne is mobile – it's a vehicle – it's a work truck. Psalm 18:10 tells us God “rode upon a cherub... and flew upon the wings of the wing...” God took Elijah to heaven in a fiery chariot. God swooped down in his throne to get him.

Verse 19 is a summary statement. “All this,” said David, “the LORD made me understand in writing, by His hand upon me, all the works of these plans.”

“And David said to his son Solomon, “Be strong and of good courage, and do it; do not fear nor be dismayed, for the LORD God - my God - will be with you.

He will not leave you nor forsake you, until you have finished all the work for the service of the house of the LORD. Here are the divisions of the priests and the Levites for all the service of the house of God; and every willing craftsman will be with you for all manner of workmanship, for every kind of service; also the leaders and all the people will be completely at your command.” His father has provided Solomon all that he'll need - but he has to be strong and courageous - and do it!

Chapter 29, “Furthermore King David said to all the assembly:” Now David addresses the people of Israel. “My son Solomon, whom alone God has chosen, is young and

inexperienced; and the work is great, because the temple is not for man but for the LORD God. Now for the house of my God I have prepared with all my might: gold for things to be made of gold, silver for things of silver, bronze for things of bronze, iron for things of iron, wood for things of wood, onyx stones, stones to be set, glistening stones of various colors, all kinds of precious stones, and marble slabs (not the ice cream, but the countertops) in abundance.”

David has given out of his own coffers.

“Moreover, because I have set my affection on the house of my God, I have given to the house of my God, over and above all that I have prepared for the holy house, my own special treasure of gold and silver: 3000 talents of gold, of the gold of Ophir, and 7000 talents of refined silver, to overlay the walls of the houses; the gold for things of gold and the silver for things of silver, and for all kinds of work to be done by the hands of craftsmen.” Remember a talent was about 100 pounds.

At today’s prices... 3000 talents of gold at \$650 an ounce is worth \$3.12 billion. And 7000 talents of silver at \$13 an ounce is worth a little over \$145 million. This was David’s contribution to the building project. *But now he solicits the people...*

“Who then is willing to consecrate himself this day to the LORD?”

“Then the leaders of the fathers' houses, leaders of the tribes of Israel, the captains of thousands and of hundreds, with the officers over the king's work, offered willingly. They gave for the work of the house of God 5000 talents and

10,000 darics of gold (a daric was an ancient Persian coin), 10,000 talents of silver, 18,000 talents of bronze, and 100,000 talents of iron. And whoever had precious stones gave them to the treasury of the house of the LORD, into the hand of Jehiel the Gershonite.” Like their king, Israel gave to God willingly.

Verse 9 sums up their giving, “Then the people rejoiced, for they had offered willingly, because with a loyal heart they had offered willingly to the LORD; and King David also rejoiced greatly.” Acts 20:35 recalls a quote from our Lord.

Jesus said, “It is more blessed to give than to receive.”

Giving always unleashes blessing. When you give freely to God – He in turn gives freely to you. And it’s a fact... *no one has ever out given God.* As one man put it, “I shovel to God. He shovels to me. But God has the bigger shovel.”

On this occasion, the giving was so joyous because it was done willingly.

No one was made to give. There was no pressure, no coercion. When people are *forced* to give they lose the joy of giving. It becomes a chore rather than an opportunity. Giving should always be voluntary. It should come from our heart.

I’ll be frank with you tonight. The offering at CC divided by the number of people who attend is very small. Not many people give God a regular tithe.

And it bothers me. People forget what David understood so well. It takes gold and silver to build a magnificent and

glorious Temple – as it does to build a growing church that keeps up with its needs and expands its ministries.

The temptation for a pastor is to hammer home the importance of giving.

Yet that's an approach I don't use. I'm convinced if you don't give willingly its best not to give at all. I don't want to build a Temple or a church with *begrudging gifts* – but with *willing gifts*. 2 Corinthians 9:7 tells us, “God loves a cheerful giver.”

When a church feels *pressured* to give - it robs givers of their joy, and dampens God's enjoyment. My prayer is that we'll give... *but willingly and enthusiastically*.

Verse 10, “Therefore David blessed the LORD before all the assembly; and David said: "Blessed are You, LORD God of Israel, our Father, forever and ever.

Yours, O LORD, is the greatness, the power and the glory, (sounds like Jesus' model prayer) the victory and the majesty; for all that is in heaven and in earth is Yours; Yours is the kingdom, O LORD, and You are exalted as head over all.

Both riches and honor come from You, and You reign over all. In Your hand is power and might; in Your hand it is to make great and to give strength to all.

Now therefore, our God, we thank You and praise Your glorious name.

But who am I, and who are my people, that we should be able to offer so willingly as this? For all things come from You, and of Your own we have given You.” In other words, we've only given to God what He's first given to us.

“For we are aliens and pilgrims before You, as were all our fathers; our days on earth are as a shadow, and without hope.” At this point in time, Israel’s history was “*A rags to riches story.*” A nation of slaves became a world-dominating empire.

"O LORD our God, all this abundance that we have prepared to build You a house for Your holy name is from Your hand, and is all Your own. I know also, my God, that You test the heart and have pleasure in uprightness.

As for me, in the uprightness of my heart I have willingly offered all these things; and now with joy I have seen Your people, who are present here to offer willingly to You. O LORD God of Abraham, Isaac, and Israel, our fathers, keep this forever in the intent of the thoughts of the heart of Your people, and fix their heart toward You. And give my son Solomon a loyal heart to keep Your commandments and Your testimonies and Your statutes, to do all these things, and to build the temple for which I have made provision." What a passionate prayer...

“Then David said to all the assembly, "Now bless the LORD your God."

So all the assembly blessed the LORD God of their fathers, and bowed their heads and prostrated themselves before the LORD and the king.”

What an awesome moment - the entire nation of Israel on their face before God. Is it any wonder God prospered them so abundantly at this time in their history?

“And they made sacrifices to the LORD and offered burnt offerings to the LORD on the next day: a thousand bulls, a thousand rams, a thousand lambs, with their drink offerings, and sacrifices in abundance for all Israel.

So they ate and drank before the LORD with great gladness on that day. And they made Solomon the son of David king the second time, and anointed him before the LORD to be the leader, and Zadok to be priest.

Then Solomon sat on the throne of the LORD as king instead of David his father, and prospered; and all Israel obeyed him. All the leaders and the mighty men, and also all the sons of King David, submitted themselves to King Solomon. So the LORD exalted Solomon exceedingly in the sight of all Israel, and bestowed on him such royal majesty as had not been on any king before him in Israel.

Thus David the son of Jesse reigned over all Israel.

And the period that he reigned over Israel was 40 years; 7 years he reigned in Hebron, and 33 years he reigned in Jerusalem. So he died in a good old age, full of days and riches and honor; and Solomon his son reigned in his place.

Now the acts of King David, first and last, indeed they are written in the book of Samuel the seer, in the book of Nathan the prophet, and in the book of Gad the seer, with all his reign and his might, and the events that happened to him, to Israel, and to all the kingdoms of the lands.” Our 1 & 2 Samuel was probably a combination of this trilogy – the books of Samuel, Nathan, and Gad.