

**Underwriting the Temple:
I Chronicles 29**

Franklin Church of Christ Edwin Crozier December 11, 2005 AM Worship

Introduction:

In **I Chronicles 17**, God forbade David to build a temple. Solomon would build it. If he could not build it, David would at least prepare for it. In the same way, we are preparing for and building the temple of the Lord today. In **Ephesians 2:19-22**, the scripture says we, His church, are the Lord's temple. With everything we do, we are striving to add new stones into this temple and strengthen the ones already here, anchoring every one to the foundation of the apostles and their teaching and to the cornerstone of Jesus Christ. David, however, saw a problem. How were they going to pay for that massive temple? In **I Chronicles 29**, he appealed to the people to underwrite the temple. Today, we cannot get away from the same problem. How are we going to pay for it? In just a few weeks, a new year is going to start. We have determined to make it a year of evangelism, leadership development and personal spiritual growth. That, however, takes money. It takes money to provide materials. It takes money to provide facilities. It takes money to provide for local evangelists. It takes money to support foreign evangelism. It takes money to provide relief to God's children in need. According to my most recent talk with the elders, we should come pretty close to meeting our budget this year. What does that mean? It means if we want to have another year just like this one, we don't have to do much different. However, if we want a powerful year of building the Lord's temple in Franklin, Tennessee, we need to raise everything up a notch or five. As we plan our giving for 2006, specifically notice some lessons about giving to underwrite the Lord's work demonstrated in **I Chronicles 29**.

Discussion:

- I. *"The temple is not for man, but for the Lord God."*—**I Chronicles 29:1**
 - A. We must understand the purpose behind the work we do. We are not paying for buildings, salaries, materials or utilities. We are not offering a bit of benevolence here and there.
 - B. We are building the Lord's Temple. As **Hebrews 12:22-24** says, we are bringing people to the sprinkled blood of Jesus Christ that washes away their sins, adding them into the body of believers who glorify the Lord God. The collection is not for men, but for the Lord God.

- II. *"Who then is willing to consecrate himself this day to the Lord?"*—**I Chronicles 29:5**
 - A. As David pleaded with the Israelites, he did not ask them to dig deep in their pockets. He did not ask them to make a sizable donation. He did not ask them to pledge a certain percentage. He asked them to consecrate themselves to the Lord.
 - B. Jesus taught this when some Herodians questioned Him about taxes in **Matthew 22:15-22**. Jesus asked them whose likeness was imprinted on the money. "Caesar's," they answered. In one of His most famous repartees, Jesus responded, "Render to Caesar the things that are Caesar's; and to God the things that are God's." We know what belongs to Caesar by whose likeness is on it; we know the same thing about what belongs to God. Remember **Genesis 1:26**? Who is willing to turn themselves completely over to God?

- III. *"Yours, O Lord, is the greatness and the power and the glory and the victory and the majesty..."*—**I Chronicles 29:11**
 - A. **I Peter 3:15** says, "Sanctify the Lord God in your hearts..." (KJV). That is, place God on a pedestal. He is to be set apart from all other things. David's prayer in **I Chronicles 29:10-13** is a verbalized expression of sanctifying God. According to **I Chronicles 29:2-4**, David had himself given an amazing amount to the work of the temple. Why? Because he believed God and God's work were worth it. He had sanctified them in his heart.
 - B. What does God mean to us? What does the work of God mean to us? Why do people give to the American Cancer Society or the American Heart Association? Because they believe the work is important. Often they do so because someone close to them has been affected by these things. How much more important is God than these? How much more important is His work of forgiveness? Everyone we know has been killed by sin? How much should we sanctify God and the life that comes through accomplishing His work?

- IV. *“For we are sojourners before You, and tenants, as all our fathers were...”*—**I Chronicles 29:15**
- A. One of the biggest problems we have with giving is that it eats into our pocketbooks. It cuts into our stuff. If we give regularly, we can't afford as nice of a house, car, clothes or other goods. Giving may adversely affect our retirement savings. It will certainly diminish the inheritance our children receive. With all of these thoughts in mind, we hang on to those dollars, concerned that giving them to underwrite the Lord's work will adversely impact our security in this world.
 - B. Here is the newsflash, this world, by definition, is insecure. Jesus explained this in **Matthew 6:19-21**. Additionally, no matter how well our money provides for us throughout this life, we are all going to die and leave all our stuff right down here. Money may open doors on earth, but not in heaven as the rich man of Jesus' parable found out in **Luke 12:16-21**. We need to remember our place in this earth and know the true value of money.
- V. *“...this abundance...is from Your hand, and all is Yours.”*—**I Chronicles 29:16**
- A. We too often try to figure out how much of what we have belongs to God. Is it a set amount? Is it a percentage? How big a percentage? I have actually discovered the answer to that question and it is a percentage. God owns 100% and has simply allowed us to borrow it. He has made us stewards in order to provide a return for him (**cf. Matthew 25:14-30**).
 - B. Further, since all we have comes from God, it stands to reason when we use His blessings to accomplish His work, He will provide for us (**II Corinthians 9:6-11**). This differs from the fallacious health and wealth gospel in one fundamental way. The health and wealth gospel treats giving like an investment. If you give, God will make a return to you. What Paul actually taught was God provides blessings for those who use His blessings to accomplish His good work. When we consecrate God in our hearts and consecrate ourselves to God, using His blessings to accomplish His work, He has promised to take care of us and to accomplish His work through us (**Matthew 6:33**).
- VI. *“Since I know, O my God, that You try the heart and delight in uprightness, I...have willingly offered all of these things...”*—**I Chronicles 29:17**
- A. We must understand that giving is not just about the pocketbook. It is about the heart. First, what we give is an indication of our heart. Whether we like it or not, where we spend our money says something about our heart. As **Matthew 6:21** said, what we treasure is where our heart will be. What we are willing to spend money on and give money to demonstrates what we value and where our heart is.
 - B. Additionally, how we give is a matter of the heart. David gave willingly, not grudgingly or out of necessity. He gave because He wanted to be a part of God's work. Additionally, he rejoiced because the entire multitude gave willingly. We must remember God tests the heart and give accordingly. Do we really want to be part of God's work?
- VII. *“...a perfect heart to keep Your commandments, Your testimonies and Your statutes, and to do them all, and to build the temple, for which I have made provision.”*—**I Chronicles 29:19**
- A. After we have given, we must follow through on the work. Obviously, in this particular situation, David was not going to build the temple. The Lord had forbidden that. However, he was concerned that all of this preparation would be for naught. Therefore, he prayed God lead Solomon to actually do the work.
 - B. If we are going to give properly, we must understand we are not done working when the plate has passed. We have provided for the building of the temple, we must get busy and build it. We must do our part and encourage others to do theirs, praying God's hand will be with us.

Conclusion:

This is the time of the year when so many are trying to show how much they love each other by giving and giving and giving. The question for us is how much do we love God and His work? We have to ask ourselves the same question David asked of the Israelites. “Who then is willing to consecrate himself this day to the Lord?”