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Andrew M. Davis

Sermon Notes

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## **Sacrificial Giving and an Eternal Temple**

### **1 Chronicles 29:10-19**

This is the second of three sermons on stewardship, a call from the Elders to the people of First Baptist Church to consider giving sacrificially to our "More Than a Building Campaign"

This morning, I want to bring you back to a key moment in time, a key moment in redemptive history as King David challenged the people of his generation to give to the building of the Temple in Jerusalem

#### **I. David's Context... and Ours**

##### **A. David's Context**

King David, the greatest of Israel's kings, had it in his heart to build a permanent building where all the people could assemble and worship the living God. Up till that point, the Lord had been dwelling in a tabernacle, a moveable tent, where the Ark of the Covenant was kept. The centerpiece of Jewish worship in those days was the animal sacrificial system, and the Ark of the Covenant was a sacred golden box in which were kept the tablets of stone God gave Moses, the actual Ten Commandments God gave him on Mount Sinai. By David's time, the tabernacle was about 500 years old. Now that David had conquered the city of Jerusalem and set up his palace there, it seemed time for God no longer to dwell in a moveable tent but in a more permanent house, representative of the fact that God's people had permanently settled down in the Promised Land.

***1 Chronicles 17:1-2 After David was settled in his palace, he said to Nathan the prophet, "Here I am, living in a palace of cedar, while the ark of the covenant of the LORD is under a tent." 2 Nathan replied to David, "Whatever you have in mind, do it, for God is with you."***

But God sent Nathan the prophet back to David with a second message: YOU ARE NOT the one to build a permanent house!

***Vs. 10-14: "I declare to you that the LORD will build a house for you: 11 When your days are over and you go to be with your fathers, I will raise up your offspring to succeed you, one of your own sons, and I will establish his kingdom. 12 He is***

*the one who will build a house for me, and I will establish his throne forever. <sup>13</sup> I will be his father, and he will be my son. I will never take my love away from him, as I took it away from your predecessor. <sup>14</sup> I will set him over my house and my kingdom forever; his throne will be established forever.'"*

David's good desire was superseded by God's eternal plan. God's eternal plan involved HIM building a house for David and for all of us to dwell in ... an eternal temple built in the heavenly realms, where all the redeemed will dwell FOREVER

And the one who would dwell on the throne of that Kingdom would not be David but David's eternally greater son, Jesus Christ!

And that dwelling place we call the New Jerusalem, and it is presently being built by the spread of the gospel...

What David didn't realize is that Israel was not done with their journey... and neither was God. There were still centuries to go, including the grievous rebellion of the Jewish nation against the Ten Commandments so that God would have to evict them from the Promised Land and destroy the physical temple that Solomon, his son, would build.

Yet for all of that, God still wanted a physical temple to be built on solid ground in the city of Jerusalem, to symbolize the eternal temple Christ would build. David's task: assemble the BUILDING MATERIALS for Solomon's building project

God was greatly honored and glorified by this, and moved the people to give lavishly generously, despite the fact that the temple they were building was NOT ETERNAL, it was TEMPORARY.

Their Spirit-led generosity to build a TEMPORARY STRUCTURE for the work of God in their generation very closely parallels our present call to give sacrificially for our temporary building here in Durham

## B. Our Context

God has placed all of us here in Durham for this moment in time... none of us is here eternally, and everything we interact with physically is temporary. But we are here to glorify God in our physical lives by doing eternally significant work... especially the work of the gospel. God has blessed our region with a nationwide reputation as a desirable place to live and study and work, and people are pouring in here from all over the world. The overwhelming majority of the people moving here to live and study and work are LOST SPIRITUALLY, "without hope and without God in the world." (Ephesians 2:14).

And our privilege is to use our temporary resources – our time, energy, money – to do an eternally significant spiritual work: seeing people come to faith in Christ and seeing that faith protected, developed and nurtured by the steady ministry of the Word of God

We are beginning a financial campaign to upgrade our building and make it a better base of ministry to meet this eternal challenge.

We should be well aware that, if the Lord returns in our lifetime, he will destroy this building as part of the general cataclysm of the end of the world written about in the Book of Revelation:

***Revelation 6:12-14 I watched as he opened the sixth seal. There was a great earthquake. ...The sky receded like a scroll, rolling up, and every mountain and island was removed from its place.***

If Christ does not return in our lifetime, the shiny new things we buy with this money – the new walls and new carpets and new lighting and new furniture – will become gradually old and broken and rusty and in need itself of replacement

We must be under no illusions about this... actually, in 1962, when the educational wing of our building was first built, it was built to look beautiful and be functional for its time, and so it has been for 56 years. But time takes its toll on everything... and the time has come for us to step up and make similar sacrifices to refurbish the building that those who originally built it made so we could use it for a half-century.

## II. David's Challenge to the People... and their Lavish Response

### A. David's Charge to the People

***1 Chronicles 29:1 Then King David said to the whole assembly: The task is great, because this palatial structure is not for man but for the LORD God.***

***1 Chronicles 29:5 Now, who is willing to consecrate himself today to the LORD?"***

### B. David's Example of Sacrificial Generosity

***1 Chronicles 29:2-5 With all my resources I have provided for the temple of my God-- gold for the gold work, silver for the silver, bronze for the bronze, iron for the iron and wood for the wood, as well as onyx for the settings, turquoise, stones of various colors, and all kinds of fine stone and marble-- all of these in large quantities. <sup>3</sup> Besides, in my devotion to the temple of my God I now give my personal treasures of gold and silver for the temple of my God, over and above everything I have provided for this holy temple: <sup>4</sup> three thousand talents of gold (gold of Ophir) and seven thousand talents of refined silver, for the overlaying***

*of the walls of the buildings, <sup>5</sup> for the gold work and the silver work, and for all the work to be done by the craftsmen. Now, who is willing to consecrate himself today to the LORD?"*

1. The necessity of leaders leading out

Matthew Henry: "Those who would draw others to good, must lead the way themselves."

2. David had been made amazingly wealthy by the grace of God... God had taken him, the youngest of Jesse's eight sons, from following his father's sheep out in the pasture to being king over all of Israel... along with that had come lavish wealth so that he was able to give so generously to the building of the temple

3. David spoke out his gift plainly for all to hear... and it was incredible

- a. 3000 talents of gold: remember Jesus' parable of the servant that owed 10,000 talents? One talent is 75 pounds of gold!

- b. At today's market price, 3000 talents of gold = 4.3 billion dollars!

- c. And the silver... 7000 talents of silver = 126 million dollars

4. What about Jesus' statement about giving?

***Matthew 6:2-4 when you give to the needy, do not announce it with trumpets, as the hypocrites do in the synagogues and on the streets, to be honored by men. I tell you the truth, they have received their reward in full. <sup>3</sup> But when you give to the needy, do not let your left hand know what your right hand is doing, <sup>4</sup> so that your giving may be in secret. Then your Father, who sees what is done in secret, will reward you.***

- a. Jesus DOES want people to do acts of righteousness publicly for all to see... IF they are done exclusively for the glory of God

***Matthew 5:16 let your light shine before others, that they may see your good deeds and praise your Father in heaven.***

- b. But some people give in very SHOWY ways so that people will honor them for their lavish generosity

Randy Alcorn told a story about a fundraiser for a charity in New York city where people stood up and identified themselves and made pledges to their charitable cause; one man rose, gave his wife's name and his own, the name of his business and its location, and the kind of merchandise he sold; then he loudly announced, "We want to give \$5000 **anonymously!!**"

Many Christian agencies put their donors' gifts on plaques up on the walls, or on bricks in the wall of the building, or on pews in the sanctuary; or they will publish donor lists with various levels of giving: the platinum club, the gold club, the silver club, and the bronze club, based on the amounts that were given

Studies show that people give more when their gifts are publicized... but that is the very thing churches should avoid... for then we would be tempting people to lose their rewards

YET Alcorn argues that "Giving testimonies" should be part of church life as much as mission trip reports or testimonies about witnessing or successful parenting tips or other acts of Christian service... the whole thing comes down to what your motive is... is it to help the Body of Christ or to glorify yourself

### C. The People's Lavish Response

***1 Chronicles 29:6-9 Then the leaders of families, the officers of the tribes of Israel, the commanders of thousands and commanders of hundreds, and the officials in charge of the king's work gave willingly. <sup>7</sup> They gave toward the work on the temple of God five thousand talents and ten thousand darics of gold, ten thousand talents of silver, eighteen thousand talents of bronze and a hundred thousand talents of iron. <sup>8</sup> Any who had precious stones gave them to the treasury of the temple of the LORD in the custody of Jehiel the Gershonite. <sup>9</sup> The people rejoiced at the willing response of their leaders, for they had given freely and wholeheartedly to the LORD. David the king also rejoiced greatly.***

1. Like David's example, the leaders led the way
2. God has blessed some more than others materially... but everyone gave lavishly and sacrificially... and WILLINGLY... they were DELIGHTED to give to this project (vs. 6... willingly)
3. "Equal sacrifice, not equal gifts"

***2 Corinthians 8:15 as it is written: "He who gathered much did not have too much, and he who gathered little did not have too little."***

4. The amount gathered was actually STAGGERING
  - a. Over 5000 talents of gold... 7.2 billion dollars in today's money
  - b. 10,000 talents of silver... an amazing 375 TONS of silver! Worth 180 million dollars
  - c. 100,000 talents of iron... 7.5 million POUNDS of iron!!

- d. People also gave precious gems... diamonds, rubies, emeralds, sapphires to beautify the temple
- e. These were the HIGHEST QUALITY building materials for the temple, for the temple was to be beautifully adorned to represent the greatness of God

***2 Chronicles 2:5 "The temple I am going to build will be great, because our God is greater than all other gods."***

Yet even when he said this, he acknowledged that no quality of earthly materials could equal what the living God who fills the universe deserves to honor him:

***2 Chronicles 2:6 But who is able to build a temple for him, since the heavens, even the highest heavens, cannot contain him? Who then am I to build a temple for him, except as a place to burn sacrifices before him?***

So the people gave huge quantities of the best building materials available to them,... WILLINGLY, cheerfully, by faith

D. The Attitude of the Leaders is the KEY!!

***1 Chronicles 29:9 The people rejoiced at the willing response of their leaders, for they had given freely and wholeheartedly to the LORD. David the king also rejoiced greatly.***

FREELY and WHOLEHEARTEDLY!!

***2 Corinthians 9:7 Each man should give what he has decided in his heart to give, not reluctantly or under compulsion, for God loves a cheerful giver.***

### III. David's Overwhelmed Praise to God for their Generosity

A. David is FILLED With Joy at the Lavish Generosity of these Leaders

***1 Chronicles 29:9 David the king also rejoiced greatly.***

David is giving credit to GOD that the people could be so lavish ... because 1) God had given them the wealth to begin with; 2) God had worked in their hearts a willing spirit to give so freely

B. He Launches into one of the Great Prayers of Praise in the Bible

***1 Chronicles 29:10-13 "Praise be to you, O LORD, God of our father Israel, from everlasting to everlasting. <sup>11</sup> Yours, O LORD, is the greatness and the power and the glory and the majesty and the splendor, for everything in heaven and earth is yours. Yours, O LORD, is the kingdom; you are exalted as head over all. <sup>12</sup> Wealth and honor come from you; you are the ruler of all things. In your***

***hands are strength and power to exalt and give strength to all. <sup>13</sup> Now, our God, we give you thanks, and praise your glorious name.***

1. David praises God as the ETERNAL God... “from everlasting to everlasting”... the great unchanging God
2. He ascribes to God all the greatness and power and glory and majesty in heaven and on earth... there is nothing in all creation that is close to God in these things... as great as the universe is, God is infinitely greater
3. He declares that everything in heaven and on earth belongs to him anyway... he owns it all!!

***Vs. 11 .... everything in heaven and earth is yours.***

- a. It is such a deception that we think our money and our possessions are really ours and that we are giving something to God as though he were some alien power
  - b. The only way any of us will give to this building campaign the amount God wants us to give is if we acknowledge in prayer and in detail that all our money, possessions, time, and energy are God’s to do with as he sees fit... then we humbly ask him what he wants us to give
4. David goes on to declare that the kingdom he is ruling, the very one whose throne he occupies is truly GOD’S kingdom...

***Yours, O LORD, is the kingdom; you are exalted as head over all.***

Mighty king David bows the knee and claims that God is the King over ALL kings and the Lord over all lords

5. Then David speaks clearly about the source of all wealth

***Vs. 12 Wealth and honor come from you; you are the ruler of all things. In your hands are strength and power to exalt and give strength to all.***

- a. God is the one who has given us the ability to generate wealth so that we even have something to give at all
- b. God puts people in advantageous positions, and their blessed circumstances means that their labors will not be in vain
- c. Remember that God cursed the earth because of Adam, to produce THORNS and THISTLES
- d. But sometimes God reduces the curse so that our land produces a rich harvest... the Promised Land was “a land flowing with milk and honey”

- e. So it has been for us here in America... rich in natural resources, rich soil for crops; proper climate and rainfall for maximum harvests; iron and other rich minerals in the hills; two oceans to protect us from invaders
- f. These and many other benefits have been how God has enriched America; certainly we have worked... but have we worked harder than the Ethiopian salt miners in the Afar triangle who cut bricks of salt from a dry lake bed in 140 degree temperatures and carry it on camelback over fifty miles to make less than ten dollars a day... they work harder than we do and are much poorer
- g. We have to acknowledge that it is in God's hands to produce wealth for a people, and we should not boast but use it wisely

***Vs. 12 Wealth and honor come from you; you are the ruler of all things. In your hands are strength and power to exalt and give strength to all***

6. So for all of these things, David praises God

***1 Chronicles 29:13 Now, our God, we give you thanks, and praise your glorious name.***

C. David then Emphasizes this Truth with the Most Intense Language

***1 Chronicles 29:14-16 "But who am I, and who are my people, that we should be able to give as generously as this? Everything comes from you, and we have given you only what comes from your hand. <sup>15</sup> We are aliens and strangers in your sight, as were all our forefathers. Our days on earth are like a shadow, without hope. <sup>16</sup> O LORD our God, as for all this abundance that we have provided for building you a temple for your Holy Name, it comes from your hand, and all of it belongs to you.***

1. WHO AM I? WHAT IS MY PEOPLE?
2. He speaks before God that we are insignificant, our lives are a mist that appears for a little while than vanishes;
3. David says we're like ALIENS and STRANGERS here... with no permanent place on earth
4. Our days are like a shadow, and we are all going to die
5. He says again and again that everything they have given only came from him to begin with

***Vs. 16 O LORD our God, as for all this abundance that we have provided for building you a temple for your Holy Name, it comes from your hand, and all of it belongs to you.***



D. He Finishes By Giving God the Credit for their HEART ATTITUDES of Generosity

***1 Chronicles 29:17-19 I know, my God, that you test the heart and are pleased with integrity. All these things have I given willingly and with honest intent. And now I have seen with joy how willingly your people who are here have given to you. <sup>18</sup> O LORD, God of our fathers Abraham, Isaac and Israel, keep this desire in the hearts of your people forever, and keep their hearts loyal to you. <sup>19</sup> And give my son Solomon the wholehearted devotion to keep your commands, requirements and decrees and to do everything to build the palatial structure for which I have provided."***

1. God is a God who tests the heart
2. Opportunities to give are a TEST of our hearts and our motives
3. At that time, his people passed the test... but it was only because God had worked it in them
4. He yearns for God to continue to work in their hearts so that they can FINISH the work they have now begun

IV. Our Time to Step Up and Give

A. So What About Us?

1. Like David said so long ago, everything we own really belongs to God
2. Like David and his generation who died almost three thousand years ago. We also are ALIENS and STRANGERS and soon we will be gone too; This is our time, this is our opportunity
3. Are we willing to stand up and be counted and give generously... not just to this physical building which someday will be ruined... but how much more to the REAL TEMPLE that Christ is building in the heavenly realms... the spiritual temple made up of PEOPLE

***Ephesians 2:19-22 You are ... members of God's household, <sup>20</sup> built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, with Christ Jesus himself as the chief cornerstone. <sup>21</sup> In him the whole building is joined together and rises to become a holy temple in the Lord. <sup>22</sup> And in him you too are being built together to become a dwelling in which God lives by his Spirit.***

***1 Peter 2:5 you also, like living stones, are being built into a spiritual house to be a holy priesthood, offering spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ.***

4. Both the tabernacle and the temple were TYPES and SHADOWS of the heavenly reality; and the animal sacrifices were also just SYMBOLS of the blood redemption that Christ would one day offer for sinners

***Hebrews 9:11-12 When Christ came as high priest of the good things that are already here, he went through the greater and more perfect tabernacle that is not man-made, that is to say, not a part of this creation. <sup>12</sup> He did not enter by means of the blood of goats and calves; but he entered the Most Holy Place once for all by his own blood, having obtained eternal redemption.***

5. Christ's sacrifice on the cross once for all atones for sinners all over the world; as sinners repent and trust Christ, they become part of the spiritual temple, living stones set in a spiritual wall
6. THAT is the TRUE BUILDING PROJECT
7. The money we are raising... \$3.5 million... to refurbish our elderly building is JUST A TOOL in that true spiritual project

Its obvious aging, its dated architecture, its peeling paint, its dim lighting, the whole feel of the space can be a distraction to the ministry of the Word

When we updated the Betsy Cheek Chapel space and made it the Welcome Center, we found that the fresh architecture and the attractive updated lighting and the whole look has made it one of the most popular places for people to meet and do Bible studies, or have Deacon or Elder meetings, or to have showers or to gather for prayer...

The attractiveness of the space means that really the building recedes in their estimation and is not a distraction like a dingy, dank, or ugly space would be

People come into our building and are surprised to see how beautiful and comfortable it is; they like the attractive architecture and the comfortable seating and good lighting... but the building continues to AGE before our eyes... and just as previous generations sacrificed to leave us this building for the Lord's use, so we must step up and sacrifice to leave it for the next generations

#### B. Main Message: Come to Christ

1. I cannot finish this message without appealing to you who are not yet Christians
2. I do not ask you to make any financial sacrifices at all... I am not appealing to you to help the members of FBC renew the building

3. My desire is that you will know the forgiveness of sins that only comes by faith in Christ

#### C. Final Word to FBC

1. The time is drawing near for each of you to prayerfully consider what God would have you do
2. Financial sacrifice in this is a much smaller issue than the overall sacrifice God is commanding from all of us

***Romans 12:1 Therefore, I urge you, brothers, in view of God's mercy, to offer your bodies as living sacrifices, holy and pleasing to God-- this is your spiritual act of worship.***

***Acts 20:24 I consider my life worth nothing to me, if only I may finish the race and complete the task the Lord Jesus has given me-- the task of testifying to the gospel of God's grace.***

- Commitments
  - The elders are giving to each one a “commitment card” to express how you think God is leading after prayerful reflection
  - The commitment is extended over the next three years
  - This is not a strict or binding number; it’s merely a tool to assist the elders in making stewardship decisions as we move further in the process.
  - A phrase we’ve been using is “your best guess is better than our best guess.”
- Amount
  - The tool that we’re using to assist people in evaluating their giving is called the “gift guide”, located on the last page of the Guide Book. **Wes will have a slide of this information ready if you’d like it to appear on the screens.**
  - There are many ways we could raise 3.5 million, but the chart essentially describes what a likely path to the number would be for our congregation.
  - We’re asking people to start at the top of the chart and prayerfully move their way down. They’ll likely get to a number that’s “comfortable”; as our campaign consultant, Don Linscott, has said, “That’s a great place to start... but it’s not necessarily a great place to finish.”
  - We’re looking for everyone to give SACRIFICIALLY... “Equal sacrifice, but not equal gifts”... people are at different places financially
  - It will take all of us setting aside some good things so we can join together to do something we feel God is calling us to do

- Dates
  - We will be asking for the whole church to turn in their commitment cards on September 30<sup>th</sup>, which we're calling "Commitment Sunday".
  - We want *all* members of the church to submit a card, no matter the value. We want them to put a zero if it's zero, and any amount above zero.

Between now and that time, please feel free to get a card, and use it and the guidebook to prayerfully consider what you may be able to give over the next three years; we look forward to our whole congregation expressing our commitment together on the 30<sup>th</sup>.