

## Get It dOne with Generosity

1 Chronicles 29:10-20

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Jeff Marian

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For the last six weeks we've been on a journey that has explored our past and how faithful God has been. We've considered God's call in the present to "Get It dONE", to finish what we started in our campus transformation, bringing all ministry under one roof. And we've dreamt about the future of God's ministry at Prince of Peace and the generations to come that will carry this ministry forward.

Last week we talked about following the biblical pattern of leaders giving first. Just as King David led the way, giving generously to build the temple, many of our leaders here at Prince of Peace stepped into generosity to inspire and encourage the rest of us to respond to God's call to give as we are able. And many of you responded to that call throughout the week, making your financial commitments as you are uniquely able. These are exciting times as we continue to see the transformation of our campus.

Today, we gather to celebrate. The question, however, is what exactly are we celebrating? But the heart of what we're celebrating today might surprise you, and getting it right matters. It reminds me of a new business that was opening and one of the owner's friends wanted to send him flowers for the occasion. They arrived at the new business site and the owner read the card which said, "Rest in Peace."

The owner was angry and called the florist to complain. After he told the florist of the obvious mistake and how angry he was the florist replied, "Sir, I'm really sorry for the mistake, but rather than getting angry you should imagine this...somewhere there is a funeral taking place, and they have flowers with a note saying, "Congratulations on your new location."

To make sure that we're celebrating the right thing today, we're going to turn again to King David in a continuation of the Scripture that we looked at last week. Just in case you weren't with us, let me get you up to speed.

King David loved God and wanted to build a temple in God's honor, a permanent place where God's people could gather and worship. But God gave that task to David's son, Solomon, who followed David as King. As Solomon was preparing to break ground, David offered an extraordinary amount of wealth to help with the construction. David gave first to inspire and encourage God's people to give. And the people did...generously. And as David watched that generosity pour in, it moved him to prayer and praise. That prayer is our Scripture reading today from 1 Chronicles 29:10-20.

*Then David praised the LORD in the presence of the whole assembly:*

*"O LORD, the God of our ancestor Israel, may you be praised forever and ever! Yours, O LORD, is the greatness, the power, the glory, the victory, and the majesty. Everything in the heavens and on earth is yours, O LORD, and this is your kingdom. We adore you as the one who is over all things. Wealth and honor come from you alone, for you rule over everything. Power and might are in your hand, and at your discretion people are made great and given strength.*

*"O our God, we thank you and praise your glorious name! But who am I, and who are my people, that we could give anything to you? Everything we have has come from you, and we give you only what you first gave us! We are here for only a moment, visitors and strangers in the land as our ancestors were before us. Our days on earth are like a passing shadow, gone so soon without a trace.*

*"O LORD our God, even this material we have gathered to build a Temple to honor your holy name comes from you! It all belongs to you! I know, my God, that you examine our hearts and rejoice when you find integrity there. You know I have done all this with good motives, and I have watched your people offer their gifts willingly and joyously.*

*"O LORD, the God of our ancestors Abraham, Isaac, and Israel, make your people always want to obey you. See to it that their love for you never changes. Give my son Solomon the wholehearted desire to obey all your commands, laws, and decrees, and to do everything necessary to build this Temple, for which I have made these preparations."*

*Then David said to the whole assembly, "Give praise to the LORD your God!" And the entire assembly praised the LORD, the God of their ancestors, and they bowed*

*low and knelt before the LORD and the king.* This is the Word of God for the people of God. Thanks be to God!

There are so many things that David could have celebrated in that moment. He could have celebrated that the temple he longed to see built would finally get underway. He could have celebrated that he had lived long enough to witness this moment. He could have celebrated that his son would have the honor of building God a house. He could have celebrated the incredible generosity of God's people. But those aren't the things that David celebrated. Rather than celebrating that a house was being built for God, David celebrated that a people were being built for God. David didn't focus on a physical building, but on the building of a spiritual community.

I remember an interview with a well-known college football coach after his team had won the national championship. The interviewer asked, "Coach, it's been a great season. What is it about this season makes you proudest?" That coach could have responded by pointing to the tenacity of their defensive line, the incredible accuracy of their quarterback or the consistency of their special teams unit. But he didn't. Without hesitation the coach said, "It's been a great season, and it sure feels good to win the national championship, but what I'm most proud of is the way these young men have developed as human beings and men of integrity. That'll last longer than any victory and will impact the world far more profoundly."

That's not unlike what David is saying in his prayer and his praise. Certainly he's excited about the temple that would be built. Certainly he's thrilled at the resources that would make that dream a reality. And certainly he gives all the praise and thanks to God. But David knew that what mattered more was the building up of a people, a spiritual community that would bear witness to God and carry out God's work in the world.

David celebrates the people's obedience to God expressed through their generosity, and he prays, "make your people always want to obey you." And then David prays that the love that the people have for God will never change. David knows first-hand the joy of a loving relationship with the Lord, and he longs for every member of the nation of Israel to experience that. And so he prays that their love for God will never change.

This is the prayer of a pastor for his people or her people. And it's also my prayer for you. I am so grateful

for your generosity in this Get It dONE campaign. I'm excited about the transformation of our campus and the many ways in which it has already profoundly impacted our mission as the Connecting Church. But more than anything, I thank God for you, and I thank God that together we are being built into a spiritual community where our obedience and love is expressed through sacrificial generosity, vibrant worship, caring community and loving service to our neighbors around the corner and around the globe.

That's what we're celebrating today. Not just the transformation of our physical campus, but the transformation of a spiritual community. We're celebrating the truth of these words from 1 Peter:

*So keep coming to [Christ] who is the Living Stone... Come and be his "living stones" who are continually being assembled into a sanctuary for God. For now you serve as holy priests, offering up spiritual sacrifices that he readily accepts through Jesus Christ. (1 Peter 2:4-5, TPT)*

This is the work that God has been doing in our lives and continues to do. To be a people who reflect the love and grace and hope of Jesus into a world that so desperately needs it. And so today we join David in celebrating God's faithfulness.

And we join David and the people of Israel in being faithful, by giving to build God's house. And just as the ancient temple blessed generations of Israelites as a place where God was worshipped and people were nurtured in faith, it's our dream that this transformed campus will be a place where generations will worship and praise God and be nurtured in faith. We are participating in something that will far outlast us, which means that we are building a legacy. The world needs the Church to be vibrant and strong. To reveal to the world by our words and our deeds the priorities of love, justice, mercy, grace and hope that stand at the center of God's dream for this world. And our world needs more love, justice, mercy, grace and hope, doesn't it?

That's something that we've seen more clearly than ever in the last year. And when each of us gives sacrificially as we are able, the vision of this transformed campus, and a transformed people who go out to transform the world in the power of the Spirit, becomes a reality.

If you've made your commitment already, thank you. If you haven't, please do. The world needs us to do what we can. Future generations are counting on us.

Today we celebrate the generosity of a community that loves the Lord and is committed to doing everything we can to fulfill our calling to be the connecting church. But most of all we're celebrating that while we are transforming our campus, God is transforming us, so that we, in the power of the Spirit, might go out and transform the world with love, justice, mercy, grace and hope. Let's pray.

*Question for reflection: How do you sense God transforming you as together we seek to complete our campus transformation?*