

Always Open: Don't Forget the Building. Reflecting the Beauty of our God

Exodus 25:1-8

¹ The LORD said to Moses, ² "Tell the Israelites to bring me an offering. You are to receive the offering for me from everyone whose heart prompts them to give. ³ These are the offerings you are to receive from them: gold, silver and bronze; ⁴ blue, purple and scarlet yarn and fine linen; goat hair; ⁵ ram skins dyed red and another type of durable leather; acacia wood; ⁶ olive oil for the light; spices for the anointing oil and for the fragrant incense; ⁷ and onyx stones and other gems to be mounted on the ephod and breast piece.

⁸ "Then have them make a sanctuary for me, and I will dwell among them. *Exodus 25:1-8 NIV*

1. How much were the Israelites required to give?
2. Where did the Israelites find all of these things since they are out in the wilderness?
3. How does God dwell among us?
4. Can you reconcile giving precious, expensive things or money to building a magnificent structure versus giving to the poor?

1 Thessalonians 1:1-10

¹ Paul, Silas and Timothy, To the church of the Thessalonians in God the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ: Grace and peace to you.

² We always thank God for all of you and continually mention you in our prayers. ³ We remember before our God and Father your work produced by faith, your labor prompted by love, and your endurance inspired by hope in our Lord Jesus Christ.

⁴ For we know, brothers and sisters loved by God, that he has chosen you, ⁵ because our gospel came to you not simply with words but also with power, with the Holy Spirit and deep conviction. You know how we lived among you for your sake. ⁶ You became imitators of us and of the Lord, for you welcomed the message in the midst of severe suffering with the joy given by the Holy Spirit. ⁷ And so you became a model to all the believers in Macedonia and Achaia. ⁸ The Lord's message rang out from you not only in Macedonia and Achaia—your faith in God has become known everywhere. Therefore, we do not need to say anything about it, ⁹ for they themselves report what kind of reception you gave us. They tell how you turned to God from idols to serve the living and true God, ¹⁰ and to wait for his Son from heaven, whom he raised from the dead —Jesus, who rescues us from the coming wrath. *1Thessalonians 1:1-10 NIV*

1. Verse 2 – Is this a practice we should follow? Why?
2. Verse 4 – How did Paul know they were chosen?
3. Verse 6 – How should we, as Christians, live our lives? Paul says that their faith and what they believed has travelled rapidly as news far and wide. Can that be said of us? What action isn't mentioned here?
4. Verse 7 – In what sense were the Thessalonian Christians models or examples?

Matthew 22:15-22

¹⁵ Then the Pharisees went out and laid plans to trap him in his words. ¹⁶ They sent their disciples to him along with the Herodians. "Teacher," they said, "we know that you are a man of integrity and that you teach the way of God in accordance with the truth. You aren't swayed by others, because you pay no attention to who they are. ¹⁷ Tell us then, what is your opinion? Is it right to pay the imperial tax to Caesar or not?"

¹⁸ But Jesus, knowing their evil intent, said, "You hypocrites, why are you trying to trap me? ¹⁹ Show me the coin used for paying the tax." They brought him a denarius, ²⁰ and he asked them, "Whose image is this? And whose inscription?" ²¹ "Caesar's," they replied. Then he said to them, "So give back to Caesar what is Caesar's, and to God what is God's."

²² When they heard this, they were amazed. So they left him and went away. *Matthew 22:15-22 NIV*

1. Who are the Herodians?
2. Is it okay to withhold our taxes when they are being used for evil purposes? Could this be applied to our giving?
3. Verse 21 – How does Romans 13:1-6 help us understand this verse?