

Daily Devotions for the "Let US Rise Up and Build" Campaign

Day#1 Offering: Tripp Jeffords

Scripture to Read: 2 Samuel 24:18-25

Focus Verse: "I will not give unto the Lord, that which cost me nothing" - 2 Samuel 24:24

Title: "On Sacrifice"

Point to Ponder: What Can I Sacrifice?

David had sinned. David dreaded that his sin might be visited upon the rest of God's people corporately. David considered that worship, contrition, and sacrifice to the Lord might cover his sin, and bring him and his people back into a right relationship with God.

So, David set out to find an appropriate venue for the Lord's worship. David found a high mountain owned by a Jebusite named "Araunah." Araunah owned a threshing floor there that was used to remove wheat kernels from the chaff. The threshing floor on this mount will later become the site where Solomon will build a temple for the Lord's glory to take residence. It would be the sacrificial site of many goats and lambs and doves through the years. Finally, it would be the hill upon which the Messiah, Jesus, would give His own life as a sacrifice for the sins of all who "call upon the name of the Lord."

Araunah, though, was a respecter of David's kingly status. He offered the land freely to David. After all, David was King! Araunah went further and offered the wood, the oxen, and all the instruments required for a proper sacrifice. What an offering! But David turned it down. Why? David said this: "I will not give unto the Lord that which **COST** me nothing." The meaning of this is: Worship always entails sacrifice. Worship is giving up something precious to us, that we might magnify God's goodness in our lives. Sacrifice is our way of stating that God is **THE MOST PRECIOUS** possession of all. In sacrificial giving, we deny ourselves something we love to show that we love God more. Sacrifice opens our hearts to the needs of others and breaks our own idolatry.

Twenty years ago, in a capital campaign in Conway, Leslie and I found ourselves barely making ends meet. We had three young children and were stretched far beyond our means. We prayed about our contribution. We prayed that God might show us something we owned that may be of some help in reaching our campaign goals. You all know I love to fish more than just about anything, so yes, you guessed it, we sold our boat! It was for a season. I have a boat now, but for three years during this campaign, I was reminded of what a sacrifice entailed. I remembered the sacrifice every day the boat was not in the garage, and every day I was limited only to fishing in small farm ponds from the bank. Ultimately though, it was spiritually satisfying to think that I had given unto the Lord something costly to me.

Point to Ponder: As you pray about giving to God's glory in worship during this campaign, consider thinking and praying outside the box some. You might find that you have something precious that you never thought about giving to the Lord. It doesn't necessarily have to be money; but whatever you give, it should represent a personal **SACRIFICE**, if it is to honor our Lord.

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Day #2 Offering: Mary Glace

Scripture to Read: 1 Chronicles 29:10-14

Focus Verse: "For all things come from You, and of Your own have we given You." – 1 Chronicles 29: 14

Title: "Transformed by Listening and Trust"

Point to Ponder: There is nothing you can give that is not already His.

There are some seasons in life that change your heart forever. Dean and I moved into one such season in the summer of 1996 with our move to Summerville. For the first three weeks, we attended the church of our chosen denomination, but there was no sense that God was calling us there. The next Sunday we came to St. Paul's. Upon entering the church, I felt the Lord say, "Where have you been? I've been waiting for you!" Following the service, the look between Dean and me on the front porch confirmed that we had found our church home. I remarked, "I know one thing, this church is going to be in a massive building program!" The movement of the Holy Spirit and the packed pews were evidence of what was to come.

A capital campaign did soon ensue and we wanted to be part of the exciting future we saw for St. Paul's. We were taking Crown Ministries, a course teaching biblical principles for being good stewards of God's generous gifts. We were strengthened in our understanding of our awesome God and our hearts were opening to His movement in our lives. We were also considering our gift to the capital campaign, believing we could not give a lot since eight continuous years of college lay ahead, but we wrote our first pledge amount in our study book. Several weeks later we doubled that amount, believing the Lord would provide if we trusted. Near the end of the course, I felt a strong tug from the Lord to reconsider and another amount surfaced which was "pie-in-the-sky" but we really wanted to say "thank you" to our God for the blessing St. Paul's had become to us. One day at the stoplight at Laurel Street, God spoke clearly that we were to be bold and step out in faith with that amount! We knew the sacrifices would be felt. It is the way of the true Christian life. It is Jesus' model. We were not yet committed to it, but we wrote that amount in our study book. Transformation had begun.

Time moved on and the day came for our visit from the Steering Committee. We were so eager to be a part of the great call to put St. Paul's on a solid path to the future ... for us and for generations to come. When we were asked for our gift, the amount suggested was exactly what the Lord had planted in my heart and spoken at the traffic light! We showed our book with the amount to the team. The look on their faces was amazing. We just smiled! And we said "Yes." Now God would have to bring it to fruition. Sacrifices? Of course. Regrets? No, not one. Did God come through? YES!!! When the second campaign came for the CY building, we again said "yes" to that same amount without hesitation. God had transformed our hearts, blessing us in our stewardship. We have never felt "shorted" as a result of sacrificial giving. To invest beyond our brief earthly life for kingdom purposes has brought us more joy than we ever expected and a contentment that is a true gift.

Points to Ponder: Can God be trusted to keep His promises? If you listen and trust, will He grow your heart, strengthen your walk, and change your desires into what He desires for you and from you? Will you feel closer to him? The answer is YES, always YES. Ask Him what He would have you do for this campaign. Listen and then trust enough to follow through. Our Lord is FOR you and is working for your good in all He asks of you. It's all His anyway.

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Day# 3 Offering: Rick Martier

Scripture to Read: II Corinthians 9: 1-9

Focus Verse: "The point is this: whoever sows sparingly will also reap sparingly, and whoever sows bountifully will also reap bountifully. Each one must give as he has decided in his heart, not reluctantly or under compulsion, for God loves a cheerful giver." - II Corinthians 9: 6&7

Title: "God Loves a Cheerful Giver"

Point to Ponder: What is the condition of my heart?

My ongoing sanctification story is replete with the process of surrender to the grace and mercy of God. Our sanctification process (the process by which the Holy Spirit leads us to reflect Christ more and more) includes several transformations, one of which is our personal finances. I, as I suspect some of you, failed to see that all I had was a gift, and that I in and of myself was feckless to provide for my family. In fact, my heart was prideful, selfish, and faithless. During this time I viewed tithing and gifting to the church as an onerous task, and would only give from my "left overs." Thanks be to God that he allowed Kim and me to make a hash of things, putting ourselves in untenable financial situations with little hope that we alone could resolve. Once rightly accepted in our minds that ALL good things come from God, our hearts were prepared to give to the body of Christ. Tithing and giving to the church is now a joyful act of obedience. God loves a cheerful giver.

Day #4 Devotional: Pastor Beverly Berry

Scriptures to read: Neh. 2:17-20 and all of chapter 3; 1 Thess. 5:16-18

Focus verse: "Rejoice always, pray without ceasing, give thanks in all circumstances; for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus for you." - 1 Thessalonians 5:16-18

Title: "Created to Live in Community"

Point to ponder: How are you called to serve God in St. Paul's community?

We recently celebrated the Feast of Pentecost and Trinity Sunday in our church calendar, both of which remind us of how our loving God created us to live in community with Him and with one another. God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit are an eternal community. We are called to worship and serve our Lord both individually and corporately. Together, we're called to discern God's will and seek the guidance of His Holy Spirit to be obedient that will.

In Nehemiah, we read the story of God's people rebuilding the wall around Jerusalem, following their return from exile. We hear Nehemiah exhorting the people, "Come, **let us** build the wall of Jerusalem" (Neh. 2:17), and the response of the people, "**Let us** rise up and build" (Neh. 2:18). As we continue reading in chapter three, we find recorded the names of many of God's people, men and women, who joined together in community to rebuild the wall, and by so doing, served the Lord and cared for one another. One of the lessons Nehemiah teaches us is that each of us is called to be part of God's community. Each of us is needed in some way. Let us seek to be of one mind and heart as we pray for God's guidance about the ministry opportunities our involvement in the capital campaign will provide.

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Three of my favorite verses in all God's Word are found in 1 Thess. 5:16-18 – "Rejoice always, pray without ceasing, give thanks in all circumstances; for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus for you." These verses give us the pattern for how God is calling us to join together, as His community, in the campaign.

Rejoice always – Let us be joy-filled as we acknowledge daily the many blessings God has given us through the years at St. Paul's. Those blessings include the beautiful campus of which we're called to be good stewards.

Pray without ceasing – Jesus gives us the perfect model for approaching our Father in intentional prayer about every decision in our individual and church lives, decisions both small and great.

Give thanks in all circumstances -- Whatever our blessings and challenges, we give thanks because we have the assurance that Jesus is with us in everything. We honor God by doing this. I am blessed and grateful to be a part of God's community that is St. Paul's Church. My prayer is that each of us will continue to draw closer to God, and to one another, as we move forward to rise up and build.

Day#5 Offering: Foster Smith

Scripture to Read: Ecclesiastes 10

Focus Verse: "Through sloth the roof sinks in, and through indolence the house leaks." -- Ecclesiastes 10:18

Title: "If It Breaks, Fix It"

Point to Ponder: Time to catch up

Twenty-one years ago I decided to get into the residential rental business. While standing at the Sherwin-Williams paint store, I recognized a big player in the apartment rental market. Mr. Weathers owned 350 apartments in town .

" Mr. Weathers, I'm thinking about getting into the rental business. What advice would you give me? "

"If it breaks, fix it," he replied.

"That's it, anything else?"

"If it breaks, fix it. It keeps your tenant happy and keeps your place from falling down."

That wisdom has served me well for the last two decades. I could have found that wisdom in the Bible as well, in Ecclesiastes 10: 18: "By much slothfulness the building decayeth, and through idleness of hands the house leaks."

Now that the lawsuit threatening to take away the sacred property of Saint Paul's Summerville has been successfully and finally settled, we must play "catch up" for the ten years of uncertainty. We must now aggressively repair the deferred maintenance to keep the decaying and

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the leaking of the property from ruination. Indeed we need to heed the wisdom of Ecclesiastes and Mr. Weathers: "IF IT BREAKS, FIX IT!"

Let us with great faith and conviction do our part to put the special property we call St Paul's back into the glory that comes from the Lord. Truly, many hands make light work I look forward to contributing to this wonderful work together with you.

Other Scriptures that May Be Helpful

Matthew 25:14-30 – The Parable of the Talents

Malachi 3:10 – "Bring the full tithes into the storehouse, that there may be food in my house. And thereby put me to the test," says the LORD of hosts, "if I will not open the windows of heaven for you and pour down for you a blessing until there is no more need."

Luke 21 – The Widow's Mite: "3 And he said, 'Truly, I tell you, this poor widow has put in more than all of them. 4 For they all contributed out of their abundance, but she out of her poverty put in all she had to live on.'"

Matthew 6:19-24 -- Lay Up Treasures in Heaven

¹⁹ "Do not lay up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moth and rust^[a] destroy and where thieves break in and steal, ²⁰ but lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust destroys and where thieves do not break in and steal. ²¹ For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also."

²⁴ "No one can serve two masters, for either he will hate the one and love the other, or he will be devoted to the one and despise the other. You cannot serve God and money."

I Chronicles 29:14 -- "But who am I, and what is my people, that we should be able thus to offer willingly? For all things come from you, and of your own have we given you."