

February 12 — Gifted for a Purpose

READ

Exodus 35:1-36:38

Exodus 35:35, *“He has filled them with skill to do all kinds of work as engravers, designers, embroiderers in blue, purple and scarlet yarn and fine linen, and weavers — all of them skilled workers and designers.”*

THINK

We can imagine, for a moment, that Moses may have felt a bit overwhelmed when God gave him the instructions to build the Tabernacle. There was so much skill and technique required, and the tasks couldn't just be handed over to anyone. In God's infinite wisdom, though, He already had a plan behind the plan. He had gifted specific people to accomplish His design and teach their skills to others.

We each have God-given gifts and abilities. Some are more traditional talents such as art or music. Others are more easily taken for granted, such as administration, hospitality, or prayer. The purpose of our gifts is more than to help make our lives easier or more enjoyable. They are to be used to help further God's plan and draw others to Him — especially within the church. Are you using your gifts for His purposes? Because whether it's behind-the-scenes or in the limelight, it's all about Him, and there's no greater feeling than using your God-given talent in a God-driven way!

PRAY

Heavenly Father, Thank You for the gifts and abilities You have given me. Help me not take them for granted but to be more aware and appreciative of what You have put within me. Show me how to use what You have given me for Your glory and draw others to You. Amen.

February 13 — The Ark of the Covenant

READ

Exodus 37:1-39:31

Exodus 37:8-9, *"He molded the cherubim on each end of the atonement cover, making it all one piece of gold. The cherubim faced each other and looked down on the atonement cover. With their wings spread above it, they protected it."*

THINK

In Genesis, God told Noah to build an ark — a protective sanctuary for Noah's family and two of every animal during the great flood. Now, in Exodus, God gives instructions for a different ark, a structure to house the Ten Commandments, and mark where His presence would rest among His people. The ornate wooden box was overlaid with gold, and equipped with golden rings and poles for desert transport. The lid was called the mercy seat, a place of atonement for Israel's sin, on which two gold cherubim faced each other with wings spread upward, covering the seat. It wasn't a statue representing God, but it was an actual meeting place for God's presence to hover when He spoke to His priests. And as Israel trusted God and obeyed the law He gave Moses, He would remain in their presence.

Where is the ark today? We don't know. But the moment Jesus rose victoriously from the grave, it was no longer needed. When He defeated death, His forgiveness and mercy were seated at the foot of the cross — His blood was shed in one final act of atonement for our sins. The second we choose to accept His gift of sacrifice and salvation, our hearts become God's dwelling place — forever and ever — until we one day meet Him face-to-face! We don't have to go and find Him, He lives within us and is with us as we walk through each day, each situation, and each circumstance.

PRAY

Heavenly Father, Thank You for sending Jesus to die and rise again for my forgiveness. Your mercy and compassion are great, and Your presence is my greatest gift. Amen.

February 14 — God with Us

READ

Exodus 39:32-40:38

Exodus 40:34, 38, *“Then the cloud covered the Tabernacle, and the glory of the Lord filled the Tabernacle. ... The cloud of the Lord hovered over the Tabernacle during the day, and at night fire glowed inside the cloud so the whole family of Israel could see it. This continued throughout all their journeys.”*

THINK

Between one to two years after leaving Egyptian slavery, the Israelites were camped at the foot of Mount Sinai, where Moses had received the Ten Commandments, and the Tabernacle's work was complete. Moses inspected the final product, and God's glory descended upon it. What a sight to behold! But the Israelite's journey was far from over. God, Himself would lead His people toward the Promised Land with a cloud by day and a pillar of fire by night. Sometimes they would camp for one day, and other times they'd remain in one place for months at a time. No matter what, though, the glory of God dwelled among them.

You see, it was never God's intention to merely lead His people out of slavery; His purpose was to bring them into a relationship with Himself, to shine His glory upon them. Their real need — like ours — was to know Him personally.

Today's reading is a picture of the Christian life — but it's so much more than the physical manifestation of fire or cloud for us to follow. If we know Christ personally, His Spirit dwells inside us! He's leading, guiding, directing, and transforming our actions, thoughts, and desires according to His will. No matter where He takes us, it's for our good and His glory with the hope that the world around us may see a difference, and bow a knee to the Most High God!

PRAY

Heavenly Father, Your presence is my greatest gift. May Your glory shine through my life that others may see and find the hope that's only found in You. Thank You for Your guidance and transformational power at work in my life today. Amen.

February 15 — You Get to Give!

READ

Numbers 7:1-89

Numbers 7:11, "The Lord said to Moses, 'Let one leader bring his gift each day for the dedication of the altar.'"

THINK

You may be thinking that today's reading was far less than exciting. Why do we need to know what the leaders of each tribe brought as an offering for the dedication of the Tabernacle? It's to show that God is a God of order, that He wants us to worship Him not only by the way we *live* but with our heart to *give*. And, throughout the Bible, we see that God meant for us all to work together, through generosity, to carry out His plans. It's a reflection of the church — we are all to do our part to promote and advance God's house.

Why, then, is it often so easy to focus on what we *don't* have rather than on what we *do* have to give? We all need a shift in perspective. We need to remember that God has blessed us so we can bless others. And, it's when we look for ways to bless others — with whatever we have — that we have the chance to be a part of something great. God modeled this for us when He gave His only Son to secure us a place in eternity with Him. When we follow His example of generosity, then we can offer this life of hope, blessing, and purpose to others.

We all have something to give. Are you living out God's best with an attitude of gratitude and a heart of generosity? If not, take a page from today's reading and give to the only institution Jesus ever built — the local church!

PRAY

Heavenly Father, You are a God of generosity and purpose. You have blessed my life in countless ways, and I want to be a blessing to Your house, the local church. Open my heart to give generously to help advance Your kingdom. Amen.

February 16 — Do You Remember?

READ

Numbers 8:1-9:14

Leviticus 1:1-3:17

Numbers 9:1-5, *“The Lord spoke to Moses ... in the second year after they came out of Egypt. He said, ‘Have the Israelites celebrate the Passover at the appointed time ... in accordance with all its rules and regulations. So Moses told the Israelites to celebrate the Passover, and they did so in the Desert of Sinai at twilight on the fourteenth day of the first month. The Israelites did everything just as the Lord commanded Moses.’”*

THINK

The Israelites were forgetful people. Not long after being freed from Pharaoh’s grip, they forgot about many of the miracles God had done and how, over and over, God provided. Time and again, they forgot, complained, and turned away from God — even carving idols of their own to worship, instead of the Creator!

Although it’s easy to point fingers at their disobedience and lack of faith, we need to pause and take an inward look. Are we anxious about today while forgetting how God has faithfully provided in the past? Are we stuck in a mode of complaining rather than acknowledging His goodness?

God gave the Israelites the Passover celebration to remind them that God had spared them from the plague of death in Egypt. Holidays like Easter and Christmas remind Christians of our salvation and the HOPE we have in Christ. Reading the Bible daily, spending time in prayer, journaling, and actively gathering with other believers within the church gives us regular reminders of everything He has done for us.

Do you remember how much He has done for you? How far you’ve come? Remember and rejoice in Him today!

PRAY

Lord, I remember You today. As I think about how You drew me in when I was far from You, I rejoice. Let no complaints cross my lips, instead fill my heart with reminders of Your goodness. Amen.

February 17 — Good Enough

READ

Leviticus 4:1-6:30

Leviticus 5:17, *"If anyone sins and does what is forbidden in any of the LORD's commands, even though they do not know it, they are guilty and will be held responsible."*

THINK

God's standard is perfection. But no matter how hard we try to live a perfect life, it eludes us. We strive for goodness and spin the hamster wheel that leads nowhere. In our finite minds, we think we're good people, and we ask, "Isn't that good enough?"

In God's economy, our good isn't good enough. He holds us accountable for everything we've ever done, said, and thought. Even if we're ignorant of what is right and wrong, we're still responsible for our choices. And the payment for our sin is death.

The only thing that can pay for sin is the shedding of blood by a pure sacrifice. Jesus became our sin offering so we could be free from the penalty of death. By receiving His gift of salvation, He gives us eternal life and restores our relationship with God.

Through the blood of Christ, He makes us perfect. He declares us, "Good enough!" because He is God enough!

PRAY

Thank you, Jesus, for loving me so much that You paid the ultimate price. Because of You, I can live and be in a right relationship with my Heavenly Father. I surrender my life to You. Amen.

February 18 — Thanks Be to God

READ

Leviticus 7:1-8:36

Leviticus 7:30, *“With their own hands they are to present the food offering to the Lord...”*

THINK

How often do you communicate your gratitude to people? Or, do you leave it to others to thank those who have been helpful? What about God? Do you rely on those leading in worship on a Sunday morning to express your appreciation to God for you?

God desires a personal relationship with us. Even before He sent His Son, He wanted the Israelites to approach Him personally, making offerings with their own hands and out of their own desire. And just as He wanted the Israelites to eat the fellowship meal within three days, He desires our fellowship with Him to be fresh and not stale. To be both timely and genuine.

Take the time and initiative to express gratitude to God today!

PRAY

Dear God, Thank You for Your great grace and mercy. I'm truly grateful for how You have moved in my life, for Your blessings and provisions. In Jesus' name, Amen.