

## **The Work of God's Spirit      Exodus 31, 35 – 39**

### **The Work of God's Spirit: Introduction**

- *Stomp!* has been continuously performing for decades in NY, London, Las Vegas – and around the world.
- The show uses no A-list celebrities, expensive costumes or special effects
- Its genius is its use of everyday items – brooms, buckets, basketballs and the like – to create art, excitement and energy.
  
- Similarly, the ordinary becomes something extraordinary when God is involved.
- The work of the Holy Spirit does not have to look supernatural.
- He works through our work, using earthly materials and very human capabilities.
  
- “The work of a Beethoven, and the work of a charwoman, become spiritual on precisely the same condition, that of being offered to God, of being done humbly ‘as to the Lord.’”  
– C. S. Lewis
  
- Dorothy Sayers (a friend of C.S. Lewis) once said,
- “It is the business of the Church to recognize that the secular vocation is, as such, sacred ... It is not right for Her to acquiesce in the notion that a man’s life is divided into the time he spends on his work and the time he spends in serving God. He must be able to serve God in his work ...”
  
- She said further,
- “... that it should be looked upon, not as a necessary drudgery to be undergone for the purpose of making money, but as a way of life in which the nature of man should ... delight and so fulfill itself to the glory of God ... for the sake of doing well a thing that is worth doing.”
  
- Beginning in Exodus 31, let’s look at some passages that describe the work on the Tabernacle.

### **The Work of God's Spirit: Exploration**

- The work of these men was supernatural work.
- The Holy Spirit called and empowered them to do it.
- Work done for God is spiritual work, whether working with fabric, with metal, with wood, or teaching others to do the same.
  
- God gave us the very idea of work.
- See the following:
  - Genesis 1:1
  - Genesis 1:31 – 2:2
  - Genesis 2:15
  - Isaiah 28:23-29
  - Colossians 3:23-24

- Luther was the first to use the term “vocation” to refer to traditionally secular occupations – in fact, to all worldly duties.
- He saw every role in society as a setting for expressing our love for our neighbor.
- He raised daily activity to the level of worship by emphasizing the heart behind it.
  
- A vocation may include:
  - Any reasonable occupation, regardless of social standing
  - The fulfillment of all responsibilities that benefit others
  - Any role that requires God-given gifts, skills or abilities
  - Any task that requires a willingness to serve others
  
- To anyone desiring to enter full-time ministry, Luther wrote,
  - “I advise no one to enter any religious order ... unless he is forearmed with this knowledge ... that the works of monks and priests, however holy ... do not differ one whit in the sight of God from the works of the rustic laborer in the field or the woman going about her household tasks, but that all works are measured before God by faith alone ...”
  
- Martin Luther knew something.
  - He was already a monk before he had an authentic conversion experience.
  - He was supposedly doing Christ’s work before he was ever “in Christ.”
  
- To use one of Luther’s examples:
  - We may rightly pray that the God would “Give us this day our daily bread.”
  - Yet God does not provide it directly, as with the manna in the wilderness.
  
- For us to receive bread we need:
  - Farmers
  - Bakers
  - Truck drivers
  - Grocers
  - Those who manufacture equipment for all of these
  - Those who maintain that equipment
  - Construction workers to build the stores and factories
  
- Another example: We pray for healing.
  - In the Bible, we see examples of God healing people miraculously.
  - Yet, this happened with relative infrequency over the course of the Bible’s 1600 years.

- In any given “healing” event we usually need:
  - Doctors and nurses
  - Other assorted hospital employees
  - Pharmacists and pharmaceutical companies
  - Researchers to study health and disease
  - Information specialists
  - Medical equipment manufacturers
  - Educators and publishers for training all of the above
  
- You get the idea.
- God uses various means to provide for our needs.
- That requires all kinds of people.
- People like us.
- We need to see our everyday roles as part of a divine calling.
  
- God has so ordered human society to make us an interlocking, interdependent community.
- He puts us in a variety of relationships that should all be bound together by love.
- Our place in the puzzle is the essence of our vocation.

### **Two Big Questions:**

1. How do we discover our God-given calling or vocation?
2. How do we carry it out in a way that makes it precisely Christian?

#### **1. How do we discover our God-given calling or vocation?**

- Start where you are.
- Meet real needs.
- If there’s a way, then do what you love.
- Set long-term and short-term goals. (the whole tabernacle project vs. work on a particular item for it)

#### **2. How do we carry it out in a way that makes it precisely Christian?**

- How do we carry it out in a way that makes it precisely Christian?
- You may not get the opportunity to share the gospel with every customer or coworker.
- You can still do what you do as an offering to God.
- Remember C. S. Lewis’s perspective?
  - “The work of a Beethoven, and the work of a charwoman, become spiritual on precisely the same condition, that of being offered to God, of being done humbly ‘as to the Lord.’
    - C. S. Lewis
- We can work as an act of worship.

**Conclusion: Work “as to the Lord**

- Capability – using God-given gifts and opportunities
  - Dependability – so that others can count on you
  - Quality – because God’s work was all very good
  - Humility – because this is like Jesus
  - Integrity – with good character in public and private
  - Piety – not giving in to greed, selfishness or idolatry
  - Charity – so God will use us to meet others’ needs
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- Let’s do all of our work this week as an act of worship.
  - Let it be an offering to God,
  - May the Holy Spirit empower us to do it well.
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- Final verses (from before):
  - Exodus 39:42-43
  - Colossians 3:23-24