

Exodus 31:1-18

“Looking for a few good men”

Outline:

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II.) Vs. 1-11 Called, filled and equipped

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Intro.

One of the greatest mysteries in all the world is the fact that God uses humans to accomplish His work. It does not matter what the work is He still will call, equip and put to work people to accomplish His will. But what exactly are the things necessary to ready one's self for God's work? That is what we shall look at this morning. You may not feel as though you have any part in God's plan or work. You may not be one of these two men mentioned in this passage. Let me remind you that only two men are mentioned in this passage but it is obvious that they were not going to be the only ones doing the construction. In fact, we read in chapter 35:10 that “*all who were skilled among them*” were to come and make all the Lord commanded. All had a part to play in God's plan.

II.) Vs. 1-11 Called, filled and equipped

Vs. 1-6 For 40 days Moses has been on top of the mountain receiving the instructions for the tabernacle. Material had been collected but there was one thing missing. Who are the ones to carry out God's plans? A look at these two characters will call us to see that **God does three things for the servant that He uses for His work:**

- 1.) Vs. 2 **He calls them by name:** Just as the plans were heavenly and not from Moses or committee so to were those that would be called to complete the work. Do you see

- those words, “*See, I have called by name?*” This tells us that **God Himself had personally selected** those fellows for the work. If you will they were hand picked! So what does that have to do with us? We have been hand picked to be here for this work! I look out at you all in amazement at the quality of people God has placed here. It is no accident that you are here at this time in this body of believers. God has called us here. Now the way He called us and what He called us to may be very different from one another but He still got you here.
- 2.) Vs. 3 **He fills them with His Spirit**: There was a supernatural enabling upon them to do the work which they were called to. It is interesting that God saw this work as just as spiritual as He did the priesthood. No matter what God has called you to, the greatest single need we all have is to be filled with His Spirit to do the work. We are even told specifically what God’s Spirit and power in their lives was for, “wisdom, understanding and knowledge.” That is “**how to use properly that which He has gifted you with!**” God not only gave them the skill to do the work He gave them the power to do so in wisdom, understanding and knowledge. There is no amount of learning that can substitute for the anointing of the Holy Spirit in the life of the believer. There is no way I can do what some of you do, I’m not called or empowered by the Spirit of God the way you are.
- 3.) Vs. 3b-5 **He equips them for the manor of work**: Listed here was six different areas these guys were to be equipped in. This is if you will **the training and experience to do the work of God**. Now don’t think for a minute that this has to do solely with going to Bible school. All of our lives experiences are training for the Lord’s work. Who knows what it is in life that is equipping you for the work that God has for you? Notice that this was for, “all manner of workmanship”. You may be stuck in some hole in the wall place learning something that you don’t think has to do with anything God could ever use, but the truth is that God’s equipping you through the situations and the circumstances you find yourself in now. So do yourself a favor and **stay in school!** I can not tell you all the stuff God has used to equip me for that which He has called and empowered me to do.

God never establishes a work that He does not first call, fill with His Spirit and equip to accomplish the task. So they were, “**personally selected, empowered to use properly that which He has gifted and trained to do the work of God.**”

We are given the two names of the men as:

1. Vs. 2-5 **Bez-a-lel**: His name means, “*In the shadow of God*”. When this phrase is used it always speaks of the intimacy and protection of God. We are further told that he was the son of Uri, which means “light”, so he was the *son of light*. His grandfather’s name is given as Hur, which means “free or liberty”. So he was the *son of liberty*. You will remember Hur is the guy that came along in Exodus 17 to help hold up Moses arms while Joshua fought the Amalekites. Lastly we are told that he was from the tribe of Judah which means, “praise”. It is an interesting fact that as the nation would break camp Judah would always lead them out. I make this observation of character based upon these names: The successful servant in one that:

- a. Has the greatest sense of security in the Lord.
 - b. Sees that who he is, is only realized in the light of God.
 - c. That what he does is only accomplished in his surrender of his will freely to the Lord.
 - d. And lastly that it is in the above that he will ultimately find the greatest joy & praise.
2. Vs. 6 **O-ho-lee-ab**: His name means, “*tent of his father*”. His father's name is A-his-a-mek, which means “my brother helps”. We are told that they are of the tribe of Dan which means judge. Another interesting side note is that the tribe of Dan always brought up the rear as the nation broke camp. So again the name of this fellow tells us about the character of the servant of the Lord.
- a. He needs to be found always in the tent of the Father.
 - b. He needs to have heart that always helps his brother.
 - c. Lastly, he needs to see that what he does comes about through the judgment of another in his place.

Vs. 7-11 We have already gone through this list of items that was found in the tabernacle, but

what does it have to do with these two fellows? I suggest:

- 1.) Notice that their calling, empowering and equipping was all centered around God's plan, not theirs. What if Bez-a-lul and O-ho-lee-ab did not want to do what they had been gifted to do? What if they wanted to dress in the robes of a high priest instead? They would not have been following what God had gifted them to do. It is God's decision on who and how He gifts His people. The only question is what are we going to do with the gifts He has blessed you with? What ever God has equipped us to do that is what we ought to be doing but you should be doing so to glorify Him not your self. The bottom line is that since the gift is from the Lord then it ought to be used for the Lord! Obedience to what God had already called them empowered them and equipped them to was their only responsible response. Some folks want to do something that God has not gifted them for. And no amount of schooling will make them what God has not called them too. So how do you know if you are called, well it will probably will not be your evaluation that determines that but rather you will see God creating the opportunities for you. Don't despise the days of small things, instead allow the Lord to raise you up!
- 2.) God had a clear vision and plan for these guys. Now the timing of this in comparison to when they actually started the work we are not told. Perhaps they felt the leading of the Lord months or years before and they had to wait for the Lord to bring it to pass. A lot of times we feel as though the Lord has no sense of timing. But the truth is His way is perfect. I shudder to think what would have happened if twelve years ago I would have tried to do what we are now. I was not ready no matter how much I thought I was. No I was being equipped for the work. What I'm going through now is further equipping me for what He has for me next. You can not skip grades in God's plan for you it is right on target!

III.) Vs. 12-17 At rest in the presence of God

Vs. 12-17 At first glance this section does not seem to belong with what we have just studied.

Now in keeping with the context that of the calling of the man or woman of God for the work of God, we have just seen that the man of God must be called, anointed and equipped for the work. Here we shall see that he is also to be a person who is at rest in the Lord. God has already spoken at length on the subject of the Sabbath in chapter 16. It is clear here that just like circumcision was a sign of God's covenant with Abraham the keeping of the Sabbath was to be a sign for the nation of Israel of the covenant they were making now along with Moses. Notice that it says very plainly that this sign was, "to the children of Israel." No where does it say that it was for the Church. Still there are those who seek to put all under this law today. I think it is a good thing if you wish to observe a day of rest on Saturday, but you can not make it a law. Those that do need to read this section here carefully as verse 14 says that if they do not do so then they are to be put to death. Any orthodox Jew will tell you that there are certain things you just can not do such as use electricity or have a fire. What does this have to do with the calling of the servant to the work of God? The Sabbath we read in the N.T. was only a shadow and the substance is Christ.

Hebrews 4:9-11 tells that "*There remains, then, a Sabbath-rest for the people of God; for anyone who enters God's rest also rests from his own work, just as God did from his.*

Let us, therefore, make every effort to enter that rest," Those that are called, empowered and equipped will accomplish their work for the Lord as they rest in His work through them.

There is another point to this as well. The servant of the Lord won't be found striving to make things happen. **It is interesting to me to see that right after God tells Moses He has a few good men in mind for the work, He goes right back and reminds them that the work is never to be bigger than their relationship to them!** They are to rest in their relationship to the

Lord, they are not work in **ORDER** to have a relationship with the Lord, no, they are to work **BECAUSE** they have a relationship with the Lord.

I caution all of us never to allow the work of God to supersede our relationship with Him. God forbid we start saying things by our actions like, *“I don’t have time to read your word and pray today Lord I have to go down and work!”* One last thought here as well, just because we may be doing the work of the Lord does not mean that we can disobey the will of the Lord. These guys were still expected to do the work of the Lord in away that pleased Him. Simply put the ends does not justify the means!

Look at the words of verse 12, *“And the Lord spoke to Moses”*. Then in verse 17 it says, *“in six days the LORD made the heavens and the earth, and on the seventh day He rested and was refreshed.”* It is the Lord telling Moses of the story of the first Sabbath back in Gen. 2:2-3 but here God adds some intriguing insight that is not found in Gen. 2:2-3. You will not find the words, *“and was refreshed”* in the account in Genesis. God says that the resting brought refreshment! The word means a “breath of fresh air”. I believe that the Lord is showing that resting in Him while we work will bring us refreshment and joy! I don’t believe that words like, *“I’m so tired wore out because I’ve working for the Lord have any merit!”* If we are working as we are at rest in Him then it’s pure refreshment! When we get burned out it is because we are making the work bigger then His work on our behalf or we are doing in our own strength!

IV.) Vs. 18 Obedient to the Word of God

Vs. 18 the last thing necessary to accomplish God’s work is found right here in the last verse. God, writes down His words by His own hand. If we are going to accomplish the work of God, it will come about as we obey the Word of God. We often say that something is not written in stone, well this is! Notice that we are told that the finger of God wrote these stone. In chapter

32:15-16 we are told that they were written on both sides at any rate when ever you read that God wrote something down with His finger the response is always the same, silence! If you want to be a servant of the Lord, then obey the Word of the Lord. There can be no arguing with Him and His ways, just silence.