

God's Provision For The Beauty Of The Tabernacle

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[0 : 00] Please open your Bibles to Exodus chapter 35. Exodus 35, we're continuing our series in the book of Exodus.

Today, we're at the end of 35, going into the very beginning of chapter 36. So we're reading 35 verse 30 through 36 verse 7.

Read there with me, 35 verse 30. Then Moses said to the people of Israel, See, the Lord has called by name Bezalel, the son of Uri, son of Hur, of the tribe of Judah.

And he has filled him with the spirit of God, with skill, with intelligence, with knowledge, and with all craftsmanship.

To devise artistic designs, to work in gold and silver and bronze. In cutting stones for setting, and in carving wood for work in every skilled craft.

[1 : 28] And he has inspired him to teach, both him and Oholab, the son of Ahishamach, of the tribe of Dan.

He has filled them with skill to do every sort of work done by an engraver, or by a designer, or by an embroiderer, in blue and purple and scarlet yarns, and fine twine linen, or by a weaver, by any sort of workman or skilled designer.

Bezalel and Aholab, and every craftsman in whom the Lord has put skill and intelligence to know how to do any work in the construction of the sanctuary, shall work in accordance with all that the Lord has commanded.

And Moses called Bezalel and Aholab, and every craftsman in whose mind the Lord had put skill, everyone whose heart stirred him to come to do the work.

And they received from Moses all the contribution that the people of Israel had brought for doing the work on the sanctuary. They still kept bringing him freewill offerings every morning, so that all the craftsmen who were doing every sort of task on the sanctuary came each from the task that he was doing, and said to Moses, the people bring much more than enough for doing the work that the Lord has commanded us to do.

[2 : 55] So Moses gave command, and word was proclaimed throughout the camp, let no man or woman do anything more for the contribution for the sanctuary. So the people were restrained from bringing, for the material they had was sufficient to do all the work and more.

Let's pray together. Amen. Again, Lord, we thank you for your word, and we pray now that you would open your word to us, that your spirit would apply it to our hearts.

Lord, in some ways this may seem very abstract, this accounting of these craftsmen. Lord, we pray that you would help us to see Christ, that you would apply it to our hearts.

Lord, that we would respond in your worship. We ask this in Christ's name. Amen. Amen. Just a reminder of where we are in the book of Exodus.

We may remember God's people have sinned with the golden calf, and they fell under God's judgment, but now God has reestablished the relationship, and the covenant.

[4 : 00] Moses has intervened as an intercessor, a mediator. And so now that that relationship has been reestablished, the next step really is to build the tabernacle.

And we've seen the instructions for building the tabernacle back in earlier chapters. In fact, we even saw back in chapter 25, a description of these men who would be gifted as craftsmen.

Now we see the fulfillment of that coming to fruition. So last week we saw some of how God's people participated through their offering. And we touched a little bit on verses 6 and 7 here, that they were restrained from giving.

Verse 29, just before our text, we can see that. 35, 29, And so we talked about that last week and saw how God's heart had moved them to give toward the work.

And so last week was a giving toward the work. Today I want us to look at the participation in the building of the work, the beginning of that building and what it looks like. And without it up there, I don't know if you've seen this, but our title is God's Provision for the Beauty of the Tabernacle.

[5 : 21] God's Provision for the Beauty of the Tabernacle. And really our first point after that introduction is spirit-filled service. You'll notice there are two men mentioned here, one a little bit more than the other, but two men specifically who have been gifted to be craftsmen.

And first we can see that they're sovereignly chosen by God. God has chosen these men out of all the people that they would be the ones who would lead in the artistic craftsmanship of the tabernacle.

At the same time we see in chapter 36 verse 2 that this is voluntary labor. And Moses called Bezalel and Holab and every craftsman in whose mind the Lord had put skill, everyone whose heart stirred him up to come to do the work.

And so I think we see here the sovereignty of God in choosing them and getting them for the work and even working in their heart.

And at the same time we see that responsibility, that response of man to God's calling. everyone whose heart stirred him up to come to do the work.

[6 : 38] And so their hearts are moving them. They want to do this. And at the same time, God has sovereignly chosen them and gifted them for the work. But they have a willing heart. They're desirous of serving God in this way.

We also see here that they're supernaturally gifted by the Holy Spirit. Beyond what would be normal, the Spirit has gifted them.

In fact, back in 25 and then again here, this is the first reference we have to someone being filled with the Holy Spirit. I know we've talked some about in the Old Testament that the Holy Spirit didn't fill every believer.

In the New Testament, that's part of the New Covenant. The Holy Spirit indwells believers. But in the Old Testament, God would send His Holy Spirit for specific purposes at specific times.

A prophet, sometimes a king. Saul, temporarily. David. We know, even Psalm 51 we read earlier, take not your Holy Spirit from me.

[7 : 40] It was a special anointing upon someone. And the first reference we have to that anointing is that of craftsmanship. God's given His Holy Spirit that they might be excellent in the work of building His tabernacle.

Look at verse 31 of chapter 35. He has filled Him with the Spirit of God, with skill, with intelligence, with knowledge, and with all craftsmanship. We might even imagine after that phrase, the Spirit of God, there being a colon there.

What does it mean to be filled with the Spirit of God? The Spirit of God isn't one thing amongst these others. The Spirit of God is what gives the skill, the intelligence, the knowledge, with all craftsmanship.

And so these men, both were master craftsmen at what they did. Now we think about God supernaturally getting them this by His Spirit, and yet, I want to say, that doesn't mean that the day before, maybe they were working as plumbers, and now, God calls them and says, you're going to be craftsmen.

They instantly have knowledge. Maybe you remember way back, the Matrix. They didn't just download craftsmanship into his brain, and all of a sudden, they're brilliant craftsmen. My guess is that God has gifted them all along with an ability, and probably even, remember, we're not that far removed from Egypt.

[9 : 03] They have spent years training for this in Egypt. God has been preparing them all along for this work, and at the same time, gifting them with ability by His Spirit.

And so these men are men who are specifically prepared for the work of building the tabernacle. Look at verse 34 of our passage. And He has inspired him to teach both him and Ohalab, the son of Ahissamach, I shouldn't have read that verse again because that's probably the hardest name, of the tribe of Dan.

And so we see here, not only has God gifted them to be master craftsmen, He's also given them the ability to teach others their skill, their craftsmanship.

And those aren't always the same thing. There can be people who are really gifted at something and have no clue how to explain it to another person. They're just not able to teach it.

Maybe it comes natural to them. But here, God's gifted these men with the ability to teach. I thought about a little application here, New Testament, 2 Timothy 2.2.

[10 : 15] Paul writes to Timothy and says, what you have heard from me in the presence of many witnesses entrust the faithful men who will be able to teach others also. And so, Paul's given this command to Timothy about the things that he has learned, the things he's been taught.

And it's not just craftsmanship, it's of God's word, of the truth, of the gospel. And so, Paul has taught Timothy, and what's Timothy to do? He's to find other men to teach it to.

And there's certain kinds of men. Entrust the faithful men who will be able to teach others also. So, Paul's entrusted this to Timothy, that Timothy might find men who are faithful, both to Christ, but I think also would be faithful to the truth.

They're not going to bend it, they're not going to twist it, and they're capable of teaching others. And Timothy's to invest in these men that they might go and do the same thing. And so, I think already we're seeing here, even with this issue of craftsmanship, God's gifted them with an ability, and it's not just for them.

It's to be used in the building of the tabernacle for the worship of all God's people to God, but also in the training of other men who likely would train others still down the road.

[11 : 33] So, God's gifted them both with craftsmanship and with the ability to teach others. I think this is really remarkable, especially you look at the list of the things they could do, even a whole lab was gifted in embroidery, so we're not talking about just stonework or work with jewels or gold or silver, but also with fabrics, weaving.

I mean, they really were masters at all artistic endeavors there for the tabernacle, and so they become overseers in the work. They lead others. They teach them how to do it. They even teach them in the process of doing it, and so again, this all is God's gifting by a spirit that they're able to do that, and I thought about it as we look at that.

God also speaks of spiritual gifts today, doesn't he? 1 Corinthians 12, 4 through 7. Now there are varieties of gifts, but the same spirit, and there are varieties of service, but the same Lord, and there are varieties of activities, but it's the same God who empowers them all and everyone.

To each is given the manifestation of the spirit for the common good, and then looking a little further down, verse 11 of 1 Corinthians 12. All these are empowered by one and the same spirit who apportions to each one individually as he wills.

And so as we read this, we have to understand that wasn't just a one-time event. I would say there's a special anointing on these men for the purpose of building the tabernacle, a unique period in time.

[13 : 14] The place where God would dwell needs to be especially beautiful to reflect his beauty. And so God gifts them, but it's not as though the Holy Spirit doesn't continue to work in us and give us gifts.

Paul here, likely speaking in the context of the church, talks about that he gives a variety of gifts to his people. A variety of activities.

But, no matter what gifts we've been given, he says, it's the same God who empowers them all and every one. And so the gifts that you have are empowered by God. To each is given the manifestation of the spirit for the common good.

And so probably getting a little bit ahead of myself in terms of application, but what we see here is these men are gifted by God's spirit for the good of God's people. That the beauty of the tabernacle might be seen by them and that is a reflection of God's beauty might be communicated to his people.

That they might train others in the making of this. And then we're told in the New Testament, we too are given gifts of the spirit. I think this is helpful here because we see it's not just that God gives what we think of typically as spiritual gifts.

[14 : 31] God's spirit gifts us in the ordinary things of life. Whatever it is we're good at is because of God's mercy and his grace. He's the giver of every good gift.

And so we're to use those things for the good of his church and for his glory. And so the spirit equips us to do work that isn't necessarily spiritual.

In this instance we see God gives skill, intelligence, knowledge, and craftsmanship. In some way we can think of this as really all of our life is spiritual.

All of our life whatever gifts we've been given are to be used for God's glory. Or another way of saying this is that the gifts that God gives they're not just for ourselves.

Again, they're for God's glory and for others. And so we've seen how these men were spiritually gifted. Let's look now at the beauty of his house, the beauty of the tabernacle. We see that God's concerned with the beauty of the tabernacle.

[15 : 41] He's gifted men to be able to do it really well. He's also moved the hearts, stirred up the hearts of God's people to give abundantly that they might be able to proceed with this work.

And so God's concern with the beauty of his tabernacle. Why is that? Well I've said already there's a reflection of God's glory. That's true. But remember what we've seen before.

They're to make the tabernacle after the pattern that was given to them. And so they've been given almost a blueprint. And you may have even seen in this God skilled these craftsmen with the ability that they can go about the work.

Probably even with some freedom in how they make it look beautiful. In the same time Moses tells them do everything in accordance with what God's commanded. created. And so God has set some boundaries of it's to be made of this material.

It's to look like this. There's to be cherubim here. Right? He's explained what's to be where. But he's given them the intelligence the knowledge the skill to be able to go about that how they will for his glory and beauty.

[16 : 56] But when we think about the pattern that they were given the pattern that was given for the tabernacle was that of heaven itself the throne room of God.

In some way that's probably beyond our comprehension we're given a glimpse of what the heavenly throne room is like. God there is seated where the ark of the covenant is.

Where God's presence rests earthly is a representation of God's presence there on the throne. surrounded by angels. And even the layers of approach that we spoke of we have the holy of holies and then the holy place and then the outer courts and all these layers of getting closer and closer to God in his temple.

And so the tabernacle is a reflection of heaven itself. And so this tabernacle being built by these skilled spirit-filled craftsmen may have been the most beautiful work of human ingenuity ever done.

And yet we're to understand that this is a mere shadow of the beauty of heaven. This isn't the reality. This is a type. It's a pattern.

[18 : 13] It's a copy. And probably not a very good one in comparison to the beauties of heaven. The true heavenly tabernacle. As we think about this, God's concerned with the beauty of the tabernacle because heaven is a place of unending beauty.

It's a place where God's beauty is manifest. Listen to Revelation 21, verses 18 through 21. The wall was built of jasper while the city was pure gold like clear glass.

The foundations of the wall of the city were adorned with every kind of jewel. The first was jasper, the second sapphire, the third agate, the fourth emerald, the fifth onnitzt, the sixth chernelion, the seventh chrysolite, the eighth burl, the ninth topaz, the tenth chrysopras, the eleventh jacketh, the twelfth amethyst.

And the twelve gates were twelve pearls, each of the gates made of a single pearl. And the streets of the city were pure gold, light, transparent glass.

Now, this isn't even the throne room. This is, we might think of the city surrounding. We're outside the outer gates, and we see the beauty of heaven communicated to us here, and we begin to understand why God is concerned with the beauty of the tabernacle.

[19 : 41] A little earlier in Revelation 21, verse 3 says, And I heard a loud voice from the throne saying, Behold, the dwelling place of God is with man. He will dwell with them, and they will be his people, and God himself will be with them as their God.

That's the covenant promise. That's what we've been looking at in the book of Exodus. And so, what's the greatest beauty of heaven? heaven? The dwelling place of God is with man.

He will dwell with them, and they will be his people, and God himself will be with them as their God. So the greatest beauty communicating to heaven is not the jewels, it's not the gates of pearl, it's not a street of gold, transparent in all its beauty.

What is the greatest beauty? God is dwelling with them. They can see God, they're in his presence, he's among them. And so now, what we have happening here is because of God's covenant relationship with his people, he's going to dwell amongst them.

The tabernacle will sit in the middle of the camp, three tribes on all four sides, surrounding them in their tents, and in the middle of God's tent, and his presence will dwell there, and God in all his beauty, the tabernacle reflects a portion of, a little bit of that, just as heaven itself is reflecting the beauty of God, but God himself is that which is beautiful.

[21 : 16] He's the source. He's the author of all that we see that's beautiful. Think about that as we look at the world around us. God's invisible attributes, even his power, have been made manifest in the creation.

we see in God's works that there is a God, and that he is powerful, but when we look upon things that are beautiful, they're meant not to be worshipped in and of themselves, they're meant to point us to the giver of all beauty.

Now you think about that maybe when you get home, when you look upon your wife or husband, praise God. that's how we ought to do when we see beauty.

I think that's also part of the problem with things like pornography. It's a perversion of beauty. It's using it for the wrong means. It's twisting it in bad ways. God's given us beauty that we might worship him, that we might go to that which is infinitely beautiful, that we would not be content with lesser beauty, that we'd say, if this is beautiful, how much more beautiful must God be, the giver, the creator of this.

And so the tabernacle reflects God's beauty. The people cannot look upon God in his glory at this point. I say this point because one day we will be glorified and see it.

[22 : 43] But in their sin they cannot look upon God's glory. And so the tabernacle in its beauty is meant to reflect, remind them that there is a holy God behind that curtain who's even more beautiful.

I think of Psalm 27, speaking of the temple, which would be a more permanent version of the tabernacle, but Psalm 27, verse four, one thing have I asked of the Lord, that which I seek after, that will I seek after, that I may dwell in the house of the Lord all the days of my life to gaze upon the beauty of the Lord and to inquire in his temple.

One thing I've desired, can I just live in the temple, that I may always gaze upon his beauty.

That's the desire of the Christian. May I be there where God's presence is. My prayer is that this church, and we, I mean no offense, but we purposely make an effort not to focus on the beauty of our building, but that our minds might be directed to the beauty of God and God alone.

But that when we gather, may it be pointing to God's beauty in such a way that we say, can I stay there forever and gaze upon God's beauty? And the reality is that God answers this prayer of Psalm 27.

[24 : 09] That will I seek after, I may dwell in the house of the Lord all the days of my life to gaze upon the beauty of the Lord and to inquire in his temple. That is eternity. eternity. We've talked about heaven, I'm not saying that there wouldn't be work that we might go about to God's glory, that it might not be in many ways like this life, but the reality is that we will be dwelling in God's temple, in his presence.

We will be holding his beauty forever. And so as we look at this, this is a mere shadow of a heavenly reality that we need to be longing for.

May that be our prayer. One thing that we ask. One thing that we seek from the Lord, that we may gaze upon the beauty of the Lord, not only all the days of my life, but eternally gazing upon that beauty.

So we've seen the spirit-filled skill that was given to the craftsman. We've seen the beauty of God's house. Thirdly, I want us to consider that everyone has a role. And in God's sovereignty, that's kind of worked through different things to pray for in pastoral prayer, but we prayed this morning for many of you who are serving in the church.

But as we see this, we see everyone has a role to play, a way to participate in the building of the tabernacle. They all have a role.

[25 : 31] So we see that some gave donations, and it mentions men and women bringing donations. God has gifted some of them with possessions. Maybe some of that is even things we saw, it talked about them weaving to make thread.

So they have abilities, they have stuff that's been given to them, and the things that they have, they are using for God's glory. So some gave donations, others were craftsmen.

God had given them skill. And perhaps even in place of possessions, they had ability to serve. And so they came and they served as craftsmen.

I mentioned we had, some were builders, some were weavers, but whatever God gifted them with, they used for his kingdom, for his glory, for the building of the tabernacle.

And together they gave more than enough. We saw this last week, but more than enough, they had to be restrained from giving. I mentioned last week, we specifically spoke of giving, but if we take this further to also the role of the service and the building of this, as we relate that to the service of the church even, I long for a day when I have to restrain people from serving too much God.

[26 : 51] Whoa, whoa, whoa, we got enough, that's enough, you know, you can go home, get some sleep. There's this desire because of a love for God to serve him in his tabernacle.

And that reminds us really that every one of us, every believer is needed in the life of the church. This is from Joel Beakey. He says, the motivation to build God's dwelling place comes from a willing heart.

The church is built through cheerful giving and voluntary service of the people. The best of pastors can do little without a people willing to serve the Lord.

He references Romans 12, 11. How are you using your abilities to serve in the church? What motivates you and how motivated are you? I mentioned he referenced Romans 12, 11 that says, do not be slothful in zeal.

Be fervent in spirit. Serve the Lord. And so there's a command for us. I wonder as you think about your own heart and maybe even as you think about GFC, would you say that we're a zealous people?

[28 : 06] That you're a zealous person in serving the Lord? Are you fervent in spirit? And again, the command is serve the Lord.

And so God's commanded us in that. How are we doing and going about that work to which we've been commanded? Again, I haven't yet seen the point where we have to restrain you too much.

So application. How does this apply to us? What might we learn from this? some of this I've touched on already, but just a reminder. If the creation can be this beautiful as the tabernacle is described here, how much more beautiful is our God, the creator, the source of all beauty?

It's not wrong to say infinitely more. God is not lacking in beauty. He's the fullness of beauty. In our family devotions, we've been trying to communicate this idea that God created man because of God's inner Trinitarian love overflowing in such a way, not that God was needy, God wasn't lacking something, that he made man that he might be complete now, you complete me.

God made man because there's so much love in the Trinity, God desired to share that with the creation. And so God created. And so too, as we look at this, God didn't make things to be beautiful so that somehow his beauty might be filled up.

[29 : 51] God is over abundantly beautiful. He overflows in beauty to such that everything he makes is good and for his glory. glory. And think about that even in light of we live in a fallen world.

Our sin has distorted the world around us and yet we still look and we see beauty. I think it was, I don't know if it's earlier this week or last week, many of you saw that sunset and the sky was inflamed, there's still snow on the ground.

Beauty. So much beauty we couldn't mess it up completely. But if that's what we see in a fallen world, how much more glorious and beautiful is our God.

We need to pray that our eyes would be opened to his beauty, that we would know him to be supreme in beauty. And there's a reason for that because we desire that which is beautiful.

We want beautiful things. Even if we know we're not beautiful, we still like having beautiful things. We sometimes even imagine beautiful things can make us more beautiful. beautiful. And if we understand that God is the source and he's infinitely more beautiful, that desire for beauty should point us to him.

[31 : 06] We need to desire God above all. If we really love beauty, we should be lovers of God. How about if I said this the other way? God's called us to love beauty, but that also means on the other side of that, we should hate that which is ugly.

Now don't take that out on me, okay? But we should hate that which is ugly. And what's supremely ugly is our sin. I prayed earlier that God by spirit would enable us to put that sin in us.

That we would get rid of that which is ugly. That we would despise ugliness. That we would desire that which is truly beautiful. Jesus taught something very similar in his parables about the kingdom.

The kingdom of God is like a great pearl. That this guy who's been collecting pearls his whole life, when he finds that pearl, he gets rid of all the others that he might have that pearl.

The kingdom of heaven is like a treasure hidden in a field. That when a man found that treasure, he sold all that he could that he may buy that field and have that treasure for himself. And so, as we look at beauty around us, realize the pale reflections of the beauty of our God.

[32 : 19] God, don't settle for the creation. Worship the creator of that beauty. And so, God really is the fullness of all desirable qualities.

Everything that we might find attractive or beautiful. And as we think about, again, the ugliness of sin, the best way, I think, to expel sin, to get rid of sin, is to focus upon something more lovely, something more joyful.

And when you realize I'm giving that up, that which is supremely joyful and beautiful, to have this, which is maybe a twisted reflection of that beauty, then it changes our perspective on sin.

And so, my desire is that God would work in you an appreciation of love for the beauty of our Savior, that you might see him for who he is, and therefore might hate that around us.

And I said the beauty of our Savior, specifically as we think of the beauty of Christ. Hebrews 1.3 says that Jesus is the radiance of the glory of God and the exact imprint of his nature.

[33 : 32] And he upholds the universe by the word of his power. After making purifications for sin, he's set down at the right hand of the majesty on high. So as we think about even that glory, and we've seen just recently, Moses seeing a glimpse of the backside glory of God, his face, it was shining so brightly that the people had him cover his face.

And now we have here Christ is the radiance of God's glory. The exact imprint of his nature. That's saying he's not a copy. He's fully God.

God. Not like the tabernacle is like heaven. Jesus is like God. He is all the beauty, all the glory that is God's. We've seen as well the beauty of heaven.

I won't go back over that, but our desire ought to be that we one day may dwell in the beauty of our God. We've looked at how every one of them had a role to play in how God sovereignly gifted people for service by spirit.

And so we too need to be reminded that God is the giver of all good gifts. Everything that we have, all the ability, the skill we have is a gift from God. So God enables the workmen.

[34 : 55] And as God by spirit enables the workmen, who gets the glory? I think of these two men. Imagine them signing their name on every block that's built.

Every artistic design they work their name into. The tabernacle wasn't about them. God gifted them with an incredible amount of skill so that God would be glorified.

That it would be known that this is not just a normal work of man. This is something that God has worked in them. And so we too should be encouraged to use whatever gifts we've been given for God's glory.

And honestly, how often do we want to stamp our name on whatever gifts we have? Whatever skill we may have? Do we understand that it's been given to us by God? James 1.17 Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above.

Coming down from the father of lights with whom there is no variation or shadow due to change. So there's nothing good that you will enjoy in this life that did not come to you from God.

[36 : 03] And he deserves the glory for that. So we might ask, what abilities has God given you? If we've seen even the idea of spiritual gifts are given to all Christians and every one of us in some way has been given some gift from God, what are the gifts that God has given to you?

And maybe the first question we should ask after answering that what our skills or gifts or abilities are is to say, are we thankful for them? Have we stopped to praise God that we've been given that?

Does that gift lead to God's worship or my worship? And then secondly, do we use them after we've understood, after we've worshiped God, do we use them for God's glory?

glory, that God may receive the glory for that? And then I imagine there's probably going to be a few of you, maybe you're even going to say it to me after the service, I just know it's coming, who are going to say, well, God didn't really give me any gifts, or I'm not very talented or I don't have much ability.

Well, first, you're wrong. And secondly, James 1.5, so this is a little bit before James 1.17 that I just read. So, if you feel yourself lacking, where do we go?

[37 : 29] To God, to the giver. He gives wisdom to those who are lacking, he gives generously to all without reproach. You ever been afraid to ask somebody for something because they might make fun of you?

Could you teach me how to do that? Would you give me that because I don't have one? He gives to all generously without reproach. And so, let's go to God asking that he might gift us, not for our own benefit, but for the use of the worship of God in his kingdom.

We also see that the Holy Spirit is needed to build God's house. If this tabernacle is going to be built, it's going to be built by, through the working of the Spirit.

It's really no different than the church today. We don't depend upon ourselves to build up the church, even when God calls us to serve in the church. We need his Spirit.

We've talked about God giving spiritual gifts. Listen to just a few passages of the Word of God. This is Ephesians 4. But grace was given to each one of us according to the measure of Christ's gift to equip the saints for the work of ministry, for building up the body of Christ until we all attain to the unity of faith and to the knowledge of the Son of God, to mature manhood, to the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ.

[38 : 53] That's really the verse that we use for our idea of equipping. Right? I'm not talking about just making the building beautiful, although that may be a gift you have. I'm talking about God's people, the church.

That we've been gifted to build up, to equip the church for God's worship. 1 Corinthians 14, 12. So with yourself, since you are eager for manifestations of the Spirit, strive to excel in building up the church.

Paul's speaking to the church in Corinth, and there's a lot of talk in the church in Corinth about all those spiritual gifts that they've been given. He's saying you desire spiritual gifts, strive for, desire the ones that build up God's people, that are useful for the building up of the church.

But I really want to close with this encouragement. That one day, as ugly as you are, and as weak as your gifts may be, one day we all, all of us who have trusted in Christ will share in his beauty.

Ephesians 5, 27. So that he might present the church to himself in splendor, without spot or wrinkle or any such thing, that she might be holy and without blemish.

[40 : 12] That's the work God's doing in us. God is sanctifying us. One day, he will glorify us and we'll be presented as without spot or blemish. And in that day, that will be the day in which we will dwell in God's presence, that we will behold his beauty for all eternity.

Let's pray together. Amen. Dear Heavenly Father, we thank you that you are beautiful, glorious, and that Lord, you are not stingy with your gifts.

You do not withhold from us your beauty. You have manifested that beauty in the creation around us. Lord, you manifested it in your word and supremely in the person of the word, Jesus Christ.

Lord, we thank you for that beauty. Lord, we pray that we would use what gifts you've given us for your kingdom, for your glory, for the magnification, not the adding to, but the seeing, the magnification of your glory and beauty in this world around us.

And Lord, we pray that if there are any here who don't know you, that they would trust in Christ. Lord, that they would see you, you, Jesus, your spirit, as supremely beautiful, and that they would desire that.

[41 : 33] And Lord, we know that just as the people here willingly chose to serve, yet you worked in their hearts to stir them to the work.

Lord, we pray, work in the hearts of the unbelievers here today. Soften the heart. Give them a heart of flesh that they might truly desire that which is beautiful. Lord, break us of our attachment, our fixation upon that which is twisted, corrupted beauty that does not compare to you.

Lord, may you be glorified among us, we pray in Christ's name. Amen. Amen.