

## VISION AND A WILLING HEART

### A Devotional Meditation on Vayakhel (And He Assembled) & Pekudei (Accounts)

Exodus 30:11-34:35; 1 Kings 18:1-39

Proverbs 29:18; 1 Corinthians 12:12-30; 1 Peter 5:1-11

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My mother must have been relieved when the draft of military aged men ended in 1973. She had watched men being drafted into the military in World War II and the wars in Korea and Vietnam. She had also known the mothers, wives, and sisters of those men, and had seen them endure anguish until their men came home safely, and more anguish when they did not. Those realities informed her own concerns for my brother and me, even though we were too young for the draft.



*Photo by Angelica Lasala, March 27, 2010, [via Flickr](#).*

We never talked about it, but I surmise she regarded the end of the draft as an answer to prayer. Even so, my dream from childhood was to be a warrior, and her prayers in that regard were never answered to her satisfaction. There was no need of a draft to take me into the service; when I was of age, I entered of my free will. That grieved my mother, as she told me years later. I can't say I understand completely. My mother was a woman of faith, and she trusted God to watch over me, yet she did not want me to be a soldier. Perhaps she could not understand that my willingness to serve was in response to a call our God had placed on me – a call that grew into a vision of my role in His Kingdom that continues to expand as I walk it out. All I could say at the time was that my heart was willing to give my all to this holy invitation, but my mother was not willing to let me go. She was, however, willing to raise three children to be godly adults, to support and partner with our father in keeping our family together, and to manage our household with the wisdom and experience she had gained over the years. She gave her all to her family, and that is no small thing.

It's not fair to compare the hopes and dreams of a young man with the hopes and concerns of his mother. We were both right in what we perceived and pursued, but our perspectives were so different that we had difficulty understanding one another. Sometimes that brought conflict, but we found ways to keep peace in the family thanks to the love we shared. It's not so important that we had different callings from our Creator, nor that we walked them out differently. What's important is that we found ways to respect one another as we willingly pursued our Creator according to the ways He had made us.

It might have been easier on our relationship if Mother and I had the same vision of our place and manner of service to our Messiah. However, that would have undermined the purposes for which our Creator had made and called us. This is true throughout the Body of God's people. He wants independent creatures who choose of their free will to

do His bidding, but by creating us with independence of thought and will, His whole plan is at risk because we can always choose something other than what He desires. Even if we do choose as He prefers, we then have the choice to get along with others whose purposes are different from ours, or compel them to do what we are doing in the way we are doing it, or bend to the will of others who want us to do things their way.

This is how we create divisions among ourselves. It seems that each part of the Body has a difficult time understanding that their mission and vision is but a small part of the overall Kingdom vision our Messiah has called us collectively to walk out. Thinking that our part is the most important, or perhaps even the only part, we argue, insult, accuse, disrupt, and break fellowship with those who see things differently because they are called to fulfill a different part of the Kingdom vision. This has long been a problem, as we learn from Paul:

For just as the body is one and has many parts, and all the parts of the body—though many—are one body, so also is Messiah. For in one *Ruach* [Spirit] we were all immersed into one body—whether Jewish or Greek, slave or free—and all were made to drink of one *Ruach*.

For the body is not one part, but many. If the foot says, “Since I’m not a hand, I’m not part of the body,” is it therefore not part of the body? And if the ear says, “Since I’m not an eye, I’m not part of the body,” is it for this reason any less part of the body? If the whole body were an eye, where would the hearing be? If the whole were hearing, where would the sense of smell be? But now God has placed the parts—each one of them—in the body just as He desired. If they were all one part, where would the body be? But now there are many parts, yet one body.

1 Corinthians 12:12-20 TLV

God’s people have always had trouble getting along, which is why Israel split into two kingdoms, each pursuing its distinct part of the Creator’s calling to carry the blessings of Abraham to the world. In fact, there seems to be only one shining example of complete cooperation among the redeemed. We read about it at the end of Exodus:

Then Moses called Bezalel, Oholiab and all the wise-hearted men in whose minds *ADONAI* had set wisdom, along with everyone whose heart stirred him up to come do the work. They received from Moses the entire offering that *Bnei-Yisrael* [the Children of Israel] had brought for the work of the service of the Sanctuary, to build it. They brought freewill offerings to him morning after morning. Then all the skilled men who were doing all the work of the Sanctuary came, one by one from the work he was doing, and said to Moses, “The people are bringing much more than enough for the work of this construction that *ADONAI* has commanded to be done.”

Exodus 36:2-5 TLV

Wouldn’t it be nice if our pastors and ministry leaders had this kind of problem? Instead, they struggle with small budgets and an even smaller pool of willing laborers because only a fraction of their congregations and those blessed by their ministries give of their wealth, time, and talents. The multitudes who could be joining in the work sit back and soak in the blessings as they complain about how things are done – and sometimes explain how they could do it better (if they had the time, of course). Meanwhile, the true shepherds take seriously Peter’s admonition:

Therefore I appeal to the elders among you—as a fellow elder and witness of Messiah’s sufferings, and a partaker also of the glory about to be revealed—shepherd God’s flock among you. Watch over it not under compulsion but willingly before God, not for dishonest gain but eagerly. Don’t lord it over those apportioned to you, but become examples to the flock. When the Chief Shepherd appears, you will receive the unfading crown of glory. Likewise, you younger ones, submit yourselves to the elders. And all of you, clothe yourselves with humility toward one another, for “God opposes the proud, but gives grace to the humble.”

1 Peter 5:1-5 TLV

This is the ideal. Even Israel under Moses could not attain that ideal. It may be that only a fraction of the congregation gave willingly of their wealth, time, and talents to build the Tabernacle, but those who did more than fulfilled the calling of the nation. They had caught the vision of making and being the place where the Creator would dwell among humanity, and they walked it out in the diverse ways the Creator had equipped them to do.

We know from the story that conflict and controversy afflicted the Hebrews again and again. Those unpleasant divisions multiplied whenever the vision of having the Creator in their midst grew dim. It’s the same with us. Willing hearts are necessary, but even willing hearts fail when there is no vision of the Kingdom to unify them and point them in the right direction.