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Exodus: Delivered By God, For God / Exodus 35–39

Exodus 35–39 reveals the ordered life of God’s redeemed people. After reconciliation, the Lord restores His worship and reestablishes a pattern for faithful living: first, God calls His people to rest in Him, setting aside self and delighting in the Lord. From that rest flows the second marker, willing devotion, as hearts stirred by God bring freewill offerings with joy rather than coercion. Third, willing hearts become working hands, and service takes its proper place, not as fleshly striving, but as Spirit-enabled obedience done according to God’s Word and for God’s glory. Finally, the work is examined, found faithful, and Moses blesses the people, pointing forward to the greater Mediator, Jesus Christ, who will one day evaluate His servants and reward what was done in faith. The pressing question is this: will your life, inspected by Christ, display resting faith and obedient service?

Introduction

As I mentioned last week we are coming to the end of our study through the book of Exodus and I hope that you will agree that it has been a very fruitful study. This morning’s message will be a little different structure than what you are familiar with as we will do somewhat of a survey through chapters 35-39. As we walked through the instructions God gave Moses regarding the building of the Tabernacle and all of the implements needed for the priest to perform their service and the clothing of the priest themselves we talked in detail about purpose of each item, both for the Israelites then, what they foreshadowed, and how even then God was unveiling His plan of redemption. As we look at these chapters this morning, and as you go home and read them in full for yourselves, you will see that there is much information that is repeated. One of the questions that brings to the front of peoples minds is why, what is the purpose for the repetition, simply put, it is there for the purpose of demonstrating that all which God has planned will come to fruition. As you walk through these chapters, compare them backwards to that which was commanded of Moses in chapters 25-31 and you will see that there are no details missed, there are no extra efforts made, there are no deviances from those things, exactly those things, which the Lord had commanded. It never ceases to

amaze as you look out at what the “church” has become today, we have moved into a place where many believe that everything is permissible when it comes to “growing the kingdom” but as we shall see from our text this morning, that is simply not true.

What we are going to look at this morning comes from the overarching direction that the text takes between chapter 35 and 39 as Moses details out for us the events that occur after he has returned from Sinai and the people of God are obedient to the command of God. What we see clearly demonstrated for us in the text is that there is an order that our lives are to follow as we grow in faith and in Christ.

We have talked before, and will talk again, about how God is not a god of chaos, but one of order. As we look through scripture we see time and again that the way in which God works and moves is continually in a very orderly fashion so it should also come as no surprise to us that our lives must also follow a certain order and as we progress through this passage you will see that this order is once again clearly displayed, except this time is the order of our lives, not just our worship, that is at stake.

Our text for this morning comes from four groups of scripture. We will read first from chapter 35 verses 1-10 and then 29-35, then we will flip over to 36 and read verses 2-7 and finally we will conclude our main scripture reading by flipping once again, this time to chapter 39 where we will read verses 32-43. As we look at this passage we will find four steps or four markers that should be present in the ordered life of every believer. If you have not already, I invite you to turn with me in your bibles to Exodus chapter 35 where will pick up in verse one and as I move from section to section I will give you a moment to flip before continuing. As you find your place, I ask that you...

Text

Please stand in reverence for the reading of God’s Holy, Inerrant, Infallible, Authoritative, Sufficient, Complete and Certain Word

Exodus 35:1–10 LSB

Then Moses assembled all the congregation of the sons of Israel and said to them, “These are the things that Yahweh has commanded *you* to do:

“Six days work may be done, but on the seventh day you shall have a holy *day*, a sabbath of complete rest to Yahweh; whoever does any work on it shall be put to death.

“You shall not kindle a fire in any of your *places of habitation* on the sabbath day.”

And Moses spoke to all the congregation of the sons of Israel, saying, “This is the thing which Yahweh has commanded, saying,

‘Take from among you a contribution to Yahweh; whoever is of a willing heart, let him bring it as a contribution to Yahweh: gold, silver, and bronze,

and blue, purple, and scarlet *material*, fine linen, goats’ *hair*,

and rams’ skins dyed red, and porpoise skins, and acacia wood,

and oil for lighting, and spices for the anointing oil, and for the fragrant incense,

and onyx stones and setting stones for the ephod and for the breastpiece.

‘And let everyone wise at heart among you come and make all that Yahweh has commanded:

Exodus 35:29–35 LSB

The sons of Israel—all the men and women whose heart was willing to bring *material* for all the work, which Yahweh had commanded through the hand of Moses to do—brought a freewill offering to Yahweh.

Then Moses said to the sons of Israel, “See, Yahweh has called by name Bezalel the son of Uri, the son of Hur, of the tribe of Judah.

“And He has filled him with the Spirit of God, in wisdom, in discernment, and in knowledge, and in all craftsmanship;

to devise designs for working in gold and in silver and in bronze,

and in the cutting of stones for settings and in the carving of wood, so as to

do *well* in every work of thoughtful design.

“He also has put in his heart to teach, both he and Oholiab, the son of Ahisamach, of the tribe of Dan.

“He has filled them with wisdom *in their* heart to do every work of an engraver and of a designer and of an embroiderer, in blue and in purple *and* in scarlet *material* and in fine linen, and of a weaver, as those who do every work and make designs.

Exodus 36:2–7 LSB

Then Moses called Bezalel and Oholiab and every person wise at heart to whom Yahweh had given wisdom, everyone whose heart stirred him, to come to the work to do it.

And they received from Moses the entire contribution which the sons of Israel had brought to do the work in the service of the sanctuary. And they still *continued* bringing to him freewill offerings every morning.

And all the wise men who were doing all the work of the sanctuary came, each from the work which he was doing,

and they said to Moses, “The people are bringing much more than enough for the service of the work which Yahweh commanded *us* to do.”

So Moses commanded and a proclamation was passed throughout the camp, saying, “Let no man or woman any longer do the work for the contributions of the sanctuary.” Thus the people were restrained from bringing *any more*.

Indeed, the material they had was sufficient and more than enough for all the work, to do it.

Exodus 39:32–43 LSB

Thus all the service of *constructing* the tabernacle of the tent of meeting was completed; and the sons of Israel did according to all that Yahweh had commanded Moses; so they did.

They brought the tabernacle to Moses, the tent and all its furnishings: its

clasps, its boards, its bars, and its pillars and its bases;

and the covering of rams' skins dyed red, and the covering of porpoise skins, and the screening veil;

the ark of the testimony and its poles and the mercy seat;

the table, all its utensils, and the bread of the Presence;

the pure *gold* lampstand, with its arrangement of lamps and all its utensils, and the oil for the light;

and the gold altar, and the anointing oil and the fragrant incense, and the veil for the doorway of the tent;

the bronze altar and its bronze grating, its poles and all its utensils, the laver and its stand;

the hangings for the court, its pillars and its bases, and the screen for the gate of the court, its cords and its pegs, and all the equipment for the service of the tabernacle, for the tent of meeting;

the woven garments for ministering in the holy place and the holy garments for Aaron the priest and the garments of his sons, to minister as priests.

Thus, according to all that Yahweh had commanded Moses, so the sons of Israel did in all their service.

And Moses saw all the work, and behold, they had done it; just as Yahweh had commanded, so they had done. Then Moses blessed them.

Our Almighty, Gracious and Most Holy Father, we are truly awed by You. Father we are most grateful for Your word, for these truths You have given us to guide and direct our lives. Lord as we study Your word together may we be guided by Your Spirit, that we would know and submit to Your word in all things. Father we are thankful for the opportunity to come together as Your people to glorify and honor You. Lord forgive us for our many shortcomings and draw us deeper into the sweetness of communion with

You. We commit this time to You and we ask all of these things in the name of our precious Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ, to Him be honor and glory forever, Amen.

Rest in Him

In theological circles there is an area of study that is called numerology. Numerology looks at the significance of numbers within the scriptures to determine what they mean. As with any area of study in scripture there is of course the potential to abuse this field, and there are those who do so and place theological significance on every number found in scripture. Although there are those who place way too much emphasis on this field and derive many false understandings and teachings from it, there are numbers in scripture that do have symbolic meaning. For example, as we look at structure in the writings we notice that there are things that are repeated in order to place significance on them, for example, we should all be familiar with the statement in Isaiah where he writes in Isaiah 6 regarding the antiphonal response of the seraphim back and forth as they are around the throne of God crying out to each other "Holy, Holy, Holy" in regards to God. We know from study and understanding of the language and the way that the people expressed things that this was a way to express something to the highest degree. Another symbolic number that we see in scripture is the number seven, which is associated with the concept of completeness, fullness or perfection. Here, we see in the beginning verses of verse 35, for the seventh, and final time, a command by God to the Jews regarding the sabbath.

We have looked at this particular command before but this one contains a few nuances. First, God reminds them that this Sabbath is to be a day of complete rest to Him. Not just a day of rest, not just a day to catch your breath and give the animals a much needed break, but a day of rest to God. This day was not just about them being able to catch up on their chores around the house, or read that book that we have been wanting to get our hands on all week, or stretching out in a nice hammock in the shade on a beautiful spring day, but a day that was set aside from the rest of life TO GOD. Dedicated, given, returned, to Him.

Often times when we hear the Sabbath talked about we move quickly to discussions around what day it should be observed on, what activities are

and are not proper for that day, etc. However, if we take a step back from all of that and we look at the big picture concept, we should see that first and foremost this is a statement of where our center, our focus is supposed to be and our lives grounded.

The Lord begins the whole sequence in Exodus 35 not with contributions, not with craftsmanship, not with productivity, not with "get to work." He begins with rest. And not a rest defined merely as the absence of labor, but a rest defined as devotion: "a sabbath of complete rest to Yahweh." That means the point of the day is not simply stopping; the point is turning. Turning away from our own ways, turning away from our own pleasures, turning away from our own words, and turning toward the Lord Himself.

And then the Lord adds something that seems so small and yet reaches deep into the human heart: "You shall not kindle a fire throughout your habitations on the sabbath day." AW Pink is right to say there is something here about the refusal to be ruled by "natural consideration" for comfort, the refusal to make self the center of the day. We are not free to take the Lord's day and simply rename it "my day." We are not free to take holy time and make it common time.

If you want to see how near this lands to us, just ask yourself: what is it that most people are really chasing when they want "rest"? Most of the world does not want rest as God defines it. They want relief. They want escape. They want a break from pressure so they can go right back to living for themselves with more energy. That is not Sabbath. That is not worship. That is not delight in God. That is not the ordered life of a believer.

The Sabbath command sits at the head of this entire movement for a reason. Pink draws it out plainly: before we are fitted to work for Him, we must rest in Him; before we can bring to Him, we must receive from Him. That order is not a suggestion. It is not an optional "advanced discipleship track." It is the pattern God lays down in the life of His redeemed people.

This is where so many professing Christians get twisted up. We talk about serving God, giving to God, building God's kingdom, doing great things for God, and we skip right over the necessary first step: resting in God. That is why so much of modern "church work" feels frantic. It feels like endless motion, endless urgency, endless programs, endless pressure. But hear me: restlessness is not the fruit of faith. The flesh can be busy. Pride can be

busy. Fear can be busy. Competition can be busy. Guilt can be busy. But only the Spirit of God produces peaceful obedience that flows from communion with God.

Brothers and sisters, the Lord is not impressed by our motion if our hearts are far from Him. The Lord is not honored by activity that springs from self. And He is certainly not pleased with worship that is built on human invention and human energy while ignoring His Word. That is why Exodus 35 begins where it begins: the people of God must learn again that the Lord is their portion.

And notice something else: this Sabbath command comes right on the heels of Exodus 34, where Moses has been with God, where covenant mercy has been declared, where the glory of the Lord shines. That matters. Because this is not "rest" as bare law. This is rest as the proper response to grace. As Pink says, the privileges of the covenant and the enjoyment of God's glory call for the setting aside of the flesh. Only as we rest in God, only as we heed the Word that says, "Mortify therefore your members which are upon the earth," are we free to enter the enjoyments of the new-creation realm.

So let me say it plainly.

If your Christianity is mostly *striving* but not much *resting*, you are out of order.

If your Christianity is mostly *busy* but not much *delighting*, you are out of order.

If your Christianity is mostly *doing* but not much *receiving*, you are out of order.

The ordered life of a believer begins here: rest in Him.

And that rest is not laziness. It is not indifference. It is not spiritual sleep. It is not treating the Lord lightly. It is faith. It is worship. It is the heart coming home to God and saying, "You are my good. You are my life. You are my peace. You are my portion." It is the soul saying with the psalmist, "Whom have I in heaven but You? And besides You, I desire nothing on earth."

And when that is true, something happens. When the soul rests in God, the heart begins to move. And when the heart begins to move, the hands soon

follow.

That brings us to the second marker in the ordered life of a believer.

Willing service as the result of God's work in us

Immediately after the Sabbath command, Moses turns to the call for the contribution: "Take from among you a contribution to Yahweh; whoever is of a willing heart, let him bring it..."

That is not a tax. That is not coercion. That is not manipulation. That is not Moses working the crowd, stirring emotion, playing the right music, crafting the right pitch, and finding the right pressure point. It is simply God speaking through His servant: the Lord is willing to receive. And the response of the people is beautiful: "all the men and women whose heart was willing... brought a freewill offering to Yahweh."

Matthew Henry is so helpful here. He makes the point that what makes these gifts acceptable is not merely their value, but their principle: "their spirits made them willing... their hearts." God is not merely interested in what is placed in the hand; He is interested in what is happening in the heart.

And this is exactly where we must stop and learn in our own day, because we have inherited something ugly in much of modern evangelical culture: the assumption that the work of God must be funded and driven by the same tactics the world uses.

Hear me: the church is not a marketplace. The church is not a business. The church is not a fundraising machine. The church is the people of God redeemed by Christ, indwelt by the Spirit, governed by the Word. That means the way we give, and the way we serve, must be shaped by God's order, not man's schemes.

Pink quotes Dennett with a needed rebuke: what has wrought more ruin than worldly schemes of raising money? And what more humbling than the fact that solicitations and pressure tactics are used to induce the Lord's people to offer their gifts?

Now I know when you say things like that, someone will immediately say, "But pastor, if we don't pressure people, nothing will get done." And the answer is: if the work depends on pressure, it is not God's work being done God's way. God does not need our manipulation. God does not need our theatrics. God does not need our fleshly wisdom.

God is able to lay a burden on His people. God is able to stir hearts. God is able to provide exactly what He commands. And Exodus 36 shows it: "The people are bringing much more than enough... Thus the people were restrained from bringing any more."

Wouldn't it be something if the church in our day had to publish a proclamation: "No more. Enough. The need is met." That sounds almost unbelievable to us because we have grown accustomed to scarcity thinking, pressure thinking, and panic-driven ministry. But Scripture shows us the pattern: when the Spirit of God stirs hearts, God's work is not starved. And when the Spirit of God stirs hearts, giving is not a burden; it is a joy.

And I need to press this into us in the most practical way.

If giving to God's work feels mainly like resentment, that is a warning light.

If serving in the church feels mainly like pressure, that is a warning light.

If obedience feels mainly like being cornered, that is a warning light.

Because what we see here is the fruit of hearts that have been restored to God: "every one whose heart stirred him up... every one whom his spirit made willing." That is the language of grace at work inside the human will. God does not crush the will; He renews it. God does not merely demand from the outside; He transforms from the inside.

And this matters because willing service is not merely "cheerful." It is theological. It is evidence that the order is right: rest first, then response. Rest in Him, then give to Him. Rest in Him, then the heart is drawn out toward Him.

And let's be clear: the willingness described here is not merely enthusiasm. It is devotion. It is worship expressed through material obedience. They brought gold and silver and bronze. They brought linens and skins and wood and oil and spices. Some brought much, some brought little, but the point is not equal amounts. The point is equal devotion. The Lord is not

measuring the size of the gift as men measure. He is measuring the heart.

Matthew Henry reminds us of something we forget: many of these offerings were ornaments. Things they could have kept. Things they enjoyed. Things that made them feel secure and beautiful and put-together. And yet they laid them down for the worship of God. In other words, they were willing to part with what they valued for something they valued more: the presence of the Lord in their midst.

So here is the second marker: the ordered life of a believer is a life where service and giving are not driven by guilt, but by grace. Not driven by the whip, but by love. Not driven by fear, but by faith.

Paul says it this way: "the love of Christ controls us." If Christ has loved you, if Christ has given Himself for you, if Christ has rescued you from judgment, if Christ has brought you near, then giving is not first "what do I have to do?" Giving becomes, "How can I honor the One who loved me first?"

And that willingness, when it is real, does not stop at giving. It moves into labor.

That brings us to the third marker.

Work for His glory according to His Word

Exodus 35 does not only mention willing hearts that give. It also highlights those "wise at heart" who come and make all that Yahweh commanded. Bezaleel and Oholiab are called by name, filled with the Spirit of God, and equipped with wisdom and discernment and knowledge and craftsmanship. And then Exodus 36 says, "Then Moses called... everyone whose heart stirred him, to come to the work to do it."

Notice how Scripture keeps saying it: the heart is stirred, the person comes, the work is done. Again, not frantic labor, but Spirit-driven obedience.

And this is where we must be careful, because it is possible to say all the right things about giving and still misunderstand the nature of service. Biblical service is not merely "doing religious things." Biblical service is doing what God commands the way God commands for the glory of God.

Over and over in Exodus 39 we read, "as Yahweh had commanded Moses." Eight times. Then again: "Thus, according to all that Yahweh had commanded Moses, so the sons of Israel did." That repetition is not filler. It is God driving the point into us: obedience is not approximate.

There was no room for "close enough." There was no room for "this is more efficient." There was no room for "this will appeal to the culture." There was no margin left for human invention. The tabernacle was not Moses' project. It was God's dwelling place. That means God alone sets the terms.

And here is the lesson for the church: God is the Lord of worship, the Lord of ministry, the Lord of His house. We do not get to "help" Him by adding what He did not command. We do not get to improve His wisdom with our creativity. We do not get to substitute His power with our techniques.

Now, I want to balance something. Some people hear that and think, "Then the Christian life is joyless. It is rigid. It is cold. It is all rules." No. That is not what we see here. We see joy. We see abundance. We see zeal. We see freewill offerings. We see hearts stirred. We see the whole community engaged. And we also see careful obedience.

So which is it? Is it joyful or orderly? Is it free or obedient?

It is both, because the Spirit of God produces both.

The flesh produces either chaos dressed up as freedom, or legalism dressed up as holiness. But the Spirit produces joy and order together, because the Spirit is the Spirit of truth, and God is not a God of confusion.

And notice how this service is connected to the first two markers. Pink makes a crucial point: service comes third. It is not first. It is the fruit, not the root.

If you put service first, you will either become proud when you think you're doing well, or crushed when you realize you're failing, or bitter when others don't notice, or angry when you're not appreciated, or exhausted because you're trying to run on flesh.

But if you rest in God first, and then your heart is stirred by grace into willing devotion, then your service becomes what it is meant to be: worship expressed through work.

Now let's press into the "for His glory" part, because this is where our age

needs clarity.

The question is not: *Did it get results?*

The question is: *Was it faithful?*

The question is not: *Did it impress people?*

The question is: *Did it honor God?*

The question is not: *Was it innovative?*

The question is: *Was it obedient?*

The question is not: *Did it draw a crowd?*

The question is: *Did it conform to the Word?*

That is what Pink is getting at when he says, "Faithfulness, not success, is what our Master requires." We have a deep temptation to measure ministry the way the world measures: attendance, dollars, influence, visibility, applause. But God measures something else: conformity to His Word, sincerity of heart, and the glory of Christ.

And that is why Pink includes that "searching" word about Moses inspecting the work. The tabernacle is brought before the mediator. It is examined. And only then does the blessing come.

That points us forward. Because one day, all of our work will be brought before Christ. Not for our justification, because that is settled by His blood and righteousness alone. But for evaluation of our service. Scripture says it plainly: "We must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ."

Now, many believers try to push that out of their minds because it feels uncomfortable. But it is meant to be a sober mercy. It is meant to purify us now so that we are not ashamed then. It is meant to steady our hands and correct our motives and keep us from wasting our lives building with "wood, hay, stubble."

So let me put it in everyday language: there is a way to do a lot of church activity and still build something that will not last.

You can teach a class with pride.

You can preach with self-love.

You can give money for recognition.

You can serve to be seen.

You can volunteer because you crave control.

You can lead because you want power.
You can sing because you want a platform.
You can work because you want to be needed.

And if that is what drives it, then even if it looks impressive, it is not “gold.”
It is straw painted gold.

But there is also a way to do simple, quiet, unseen service that is more precious in the sight of God than the loudest work on the biggest stage.

A mother teaching the Word to her children.

A father leading prayer in the home.

A saint folding chairs without complaint.

A brother visiting the sick.

A sister encouraging the weary.

A member giving faithfully though no one knows.

A believer resisting sin and choosing holiness when no one is watching.

That is the kind of work that lasts, because it is produced by the Spirit and aimed at Christ.

And if you want to know what this looks like as a whole-life pattern, it is this: the ordered life of a believer is a life where the rest of faith produces willing devotion, which produces obedient labor, which aims at God’s glory.

And then comes the fourth marker, which is both sobering and sweet.

The blessing: “Well done” from the greater Moses

Exodus 39 ends with this simple line: “Then Moses blessed them.”

It is easy to read right past that, but you shouldn’t. That blessing is the public recognition that their work was acceptable because it was faithful. They had done it as Yahweh commanded. They had not deviated. They had not substituted. They had not added inventions. They had done what God said, God’s way. And the mediator blesses them.

Now we know Moses is a type, a shadow. There is a greater Mediator. There is a greater Moses. There is One who does not merely inspect an earthly tabernacle but who will evaluate the lives of His people.

And here is the promise that Christ Himself gives: "Well done, good and faithful servant."

And I want you to feel the weight of that, because we live in a world starving for approval. People chase approval from bosses, approval from spouses, approval from parents, approval from friends, approval from social media. And it never satisfies. Even when you get it, it fades. You need the next hit. The next compliment. The next "like." The next achievement.

But the blessing of Christ is not like that. When Christ speaks His approval, it is final, it is true, it is eternal, and it is given not because you earned salvation, but because His grace produced real fruit in you.

This is where the ordered life becomes not merely a pattern but a hope.

Because the Christian life is not simply: "work harder." The Christian life is: Christ has redeemed you, Christ is sanctifying you, Christ is training you, Christ is using you, and Christ will one day reward faithful service that He Himself empowered.

Do you see the beauty?

The rest you enjoy is His gift.

The willingness you have is His work.

The service you do is His strength.

The reward you receive is His generosity.

That means the whole ordered life of a believer is grace from beginning to end.

And yet, that does not make it casual. If anything, it makes it more serious. Because now your life is not your own. You belong to Another. You were bought with a price. So you glorify God in your body.

And this is why the doctrine of judgment and reward matters. Not because we fear condemnation, but because we fear wasting the life we have been given. Not because we doubt Christ, but because we want to honor Him.

So let me take these four markers and draw them together:

1. Rest in Him: faith, delight, devotion, communion.
2. Willing service: the heart stirred by grace to give and to serve.

3. Work for His glory: obedience according to His Word, not ours.
4. The blessing: the approval of the Mediator, ultimately Christ Himself.

That is order.

And it is exactly the opposite of the disordered religion of our age. Our age says: *Do more, achieve more, build more, hustle more, prove yourself.* God says: *Come to Me and rest.* Our age says: *Use whatever works.* God says: *Do as I have commanded.* Our age says: *Get your reward now.* God says: *Labor in hope, and I will reward in My time.*

Conclusion

Now, as we bring this to a close, I want to ask you something that is not theoretical.

We have seen in Exodus 35–39 that God brings His people back into ordered worship and ordered life after the chaos of the golden calf. Matthew Henry said it plainly: what should have happened the first time now happens at last when reconciliation is made, and the setting up of God's worship goes back into its proper channel.

Each of us faces disorder. Not merely in our schedules, but in our souls. Disorder of priorities. Disorder of desires. Disorder of worship. Disorder of conscience. Some have tried to build a life while ignoring God, or to serve God while refusing to rest in Him, or to work for Him while doing it in your own strength, or to pursue reward while skipping faithfulness.

And the Lord, in mercy, is calling us back to order.

Not order as mere routine. Order as repentance. Order as faith. Order as worship.

So here is the question that this text presses into every heart:

When your life is finally brought before Christ Himself, will what He sees be the fruit of resting faith and willing obedience, or will it be the smoke of a life built for yourself?

That is not a question you can avoid forever.

Come to Christ Rest in Him, in His finished work, and then rise and serve,

willingly, joyfully, obediently, for His glory, until the day you hear Him say, "Well done."

Closing Prayer

Our Father and our God, You are holy, and You are good, and You are faithful in all Your ways. We confess that so often our lives fall into disorder because our hearts drift from You. We have tried to rest in lesser things, and we have found that they cannot hold the weight of our souls. We have chased comfort, approval, and control, and in doing so we have kindled fires of our own making, seeking warmth where only You can truly satisfy.

Lord, bring us back to Yourself. Teach us what it is to rest in You, not merely to stop our labor, but to delight in You, to trust You, to receive from You with humble faith. Stir our hearts by Your Spirit that our service would not be forced, not manipulated, not performed for men, but offered freely as worship to You. Make us a people who give and labor with joy because Christ has first given Himself for us.

Guard us, Father, from building Your work with the tools of the flesh. Forgive us where we have leaned on expediency, convenience, or human invention. Conform us to Your Word. Make us faithful in the small things, consistent in the hidden places, obedient when no one sees, and steadfast when results seem slow. Fix our hope on the coming day when we will stand before Christ.

And Lord Jesus, we long to hear Your voice: not the praise of men, but Your approval. Keep us abiding in You, that when You appear we may have confidence and not be ashamed at Your coming. We ask these things in Your precious name, Amen.