



“The Legacy”

-1 Kings 1-

by Pastor Tim Dodson
at JF Believers Church
in Menomonie, Wisc
on March 27, 2019

An ancient proverb says, “A bad workman always blames his tools.” William Bennett, a contemporary writer, said, “Responsible persons

are mature people who have taken charge of themselves and their conduct, who own their actions and own up to them—who answer for them.” Finding someone else to blame, denying responsibility, and hiding behind lies seem to be the order of the day. (Wiersbe)

Immediately in this book we will see a lot of people who will have to make a decision. Decisions that affect the day...the crisis at hand, as well as the legacy of their lives.

The book of 1 Kings “opens” at David’s “closing.” David was at this point around 70 years old, and was coming to the end of his life. What a wild and crazy ride it has been! Apparently, due to his age, David had a hard time getting warm. I guess it wasn’t just a matter of turning up the thermostat in those days! His servants thought that a young girl, a virgin, would help to keep him warm. One has to wonder where all of his wives are now. I guess they weren’t into the whole “for better or for worse” stuff. So his staff goes on the great cross-country hunt and comes up with a beautiful young woman, Abishag, and brought her to the king (v.2). She apparently did her job but the text tells us that she did not join sexually with David. His son Solomon lent his philosophy as to this subject in Eccl.4:11 *“if two lie down together, they will keep warm; But how can one be warm alone?”*

Now David had a son by his wife Haggith, by the name of Adonijah. Being an apparently bright young man, Adonijah realized his father's death was coming pretty quick, so he began to put in place the pieces that would eventually bring him to the throne as king in his daddy’s place. He prepared chariots and horsemen and 50 men to run before him (v.5). You would think that if Adonijah *was* indeed such a smart guy, he would have remembered what the pride of his brother Absalom had brought *him*, and would have maybe then toned down the bling and the attitude.

A real leader looks at a crisis and asks, “What can I do that will best help the people?” An opportunist looks at a crisis and asks, “How can I use this situation to promote myself and get what I want?” Opportunists usually show up uninvited, focus attention on themselves, and end up making the crisis worse. Adonijah was that kind of person.

Perhaps one of the biggest questions we wrestle with is one that has existed far longer than any of us. It’s a question that resonates on the pages of Genesis and Exodus. We see it echo in 1 Kings and Daniel. From Adam and Eve to Moses, Abraham and the prophets. It’s a question that lingers in the gospels with Peter, James and John. The question is simple yet profound: *What will your legacy be?*

As we near the end of the life story of this man David, we now are able to look back at just what his legacy would now be, for very little future awaits him, thus only “back” is now in the picture. All of us will come to such a point in our lives. Some will have time to ponder the issue...the “legacy” before they *“shuffle off this mortal coil.”* While others of us will be snatched quickly away from this life, having no time to ponder our intangible “estate.” But the fact remains that we will all leave some sort of legacy: *what will yours be?*

If we’re totally honest with ourselves, we all long to make an impact in this world. When it’s all said and done, we want to know that in some small way, our existence made a difference. What will people say about us? Did we leave a mark? These are the questions of legacy. The same is true for us as Christ’s church. What is going to be our eternal legacy? What will we leave behind?

David would indeed go down in history as a man *“after the heart of God.”* He did a lot of great things in his life but he made a lot of mistakes too. And now the final curtain is closing. How would he finish? What would be his “legacy?” It doesn’t really matter how we start the Christian race. Many explode out of the gate like racehorses, only to stumble along the way. We regularly hear of the failures of Christian leaders. Believers who get ensnared by pride, drugs, and sexual sin. 20-year believers sometimes wind up agnostics or atheists. I hope, by God’s grace, that I finish well.

One thing we DO know about David is that he left much to be desired when it came to raising his kids. We don’t know exactly why, we just see the results. Maybe he was too busy. Too busy playing or too busy working, but again, *it doesn’t really matter....the result was the same.* There apparently was little if any discipline or time devotion exercised when it came to his kids, and more than once that fact “bit him in the behind.” With the lack of discipline being the overriding attribute, it is no mystery that what occurred with Absalom, also now occurs with the second son Adonijah.

David did not restrain the pride of his son (v.6). Perhaps it was because of his handsome appearance (v.6), as was true of Absalom also. I have no reason to believe that David did not love his sons, but he neglected the discipline that love should have exercised, and our sinful flesh will always take advantage of lax restraints.

So Adonijah plans a big celebration feast and invites all the important people and overtly leaves out those who are still yet in support of David. Such behavior is a clear sign as to what he is up to, and still is today in **our** generation! When we surround ourselves with only those who will tell us what we want to hear, then we are clearly avoiding hearing the alternative!

Now according to the account before us, we see that this whole “I-will-be-king” hoopla suddenly went sideways for Adonijah. It was not God’s plan for him to be king so any attempt on his part would be doomed to failure and would only serve to be a public humiliation for him.

It was David at this point that effectively stepped in to “save the day.” In his “final act” David would affect the future beyond his own physical departure. He would now finish what had been set in motion long before in his life and would therein define his legacy for all of time. Seems like a daunting task for any man, let alone a king. But as long as their remains breathe in our bodies we can change the course of history...we can change our legacy.

What does it mean to leave a legacy for Christ? It is not necessarily the length of our life that determines our legacy, it is more the length of the shadow of our influence that defines what legacy we leave behind. So if my life is encompassed and possessed by love for God and people, then I am positioned to build my life on an enduring platform with eternal significance. Leaving a legacy for Christ is about first becoming a contented

child of God, growing into a faithful follower of God, on into a diligent seeker of God's heart, and in time, an unmovable and loyal disciple who knows a oneness with God.

If we are to leave a Godly legacy, our pursuit of God must never plateau, only move forward in a passionate desire to know Him and be known *by* Him. David Livingstone, the missionary to Africa, said, "I will go anywhere, as long as it is forward." The truth is, we typically become what we pursue with earnest...what is the priority and motivation of our lives. So to be in constant pursuit of the Lord is to become more and more like the Lord: to love more extravagantly, to bear our burdens with patience, to extend kindness that leads to repentance, to forgive liberally and to give generously.

Ways to leave a Godly legacy:

1. *Fear the Lord and obey Him.* Your legacy begins in your heart, in your relationship with God. Psalm 112:1-2 reads: "How blessed is the man who fears the LORD, Who greatly delights in His commandments. His descendants will be mighty on earth; The generation of the upright will be blessed."
2. *Recognize the world's needs and respond with compassion and action.* In Matthew 9:36 we read: "And seeing the multitudes. He [Jesus] felt compassion for them." Make decisions and take action to leave a legacy of commitment to doing something about our world. Many believers today are walking in the middle of the road; they're so focused on what other people think that they are unwilling to take any risks in order to make an impact for Christ. In light of this, Pastor Jamie Buckingham once wrote, "The problem with Christians today is that no one wants to kill them anymore."
3. *Pray that God will use you to accomplish His purposes.* As recorded in 1 Chronicles 4:10, Jabez prayed, "Oh, that you would bless me and expand my territory! Please be with me in all that I do, and keep me from all trouble and pain!" And God granted him his request. What did Jabez ask God to do? Bless him, but further, to bless him for a kingdom reason! To "give him new turf and enlarge his sphere of influence." To keep him from temptation. To stay with him.
4. *Seek to be a better steward of his gifts and abilities.* Take time to recognize how God has enabled you with gifts, abilities, and opportunities...and allow such to speak into the trajectory of your life path and effect the decisions that you make. Are you taking care of the temporal blessings He has placed under your care for this life?
5. *Ask God to give you a sense of purpose, direction, and mission.* The challenge here is to leave a **heritage**, not just an **inheritance**. The decisions you make today will affect the legacy you leave behind.

SMALL GROUP QUESTIONS

- 1) It sounds like Adonijah's disobedience has been going on for awhile now. Why would David let Adonijah plot in this fashion? What do this tell us about David and his weaknesses?
- 2) Adonijah was an opportunist. What are some ways people are similarly opportunistic in today's greater church?
- 3) As you think back on your Christian life, there has probably been at least one person who has influenced your walk with Jesus.
 - a. Who has poured the life of Christ into you? How did that person invest in your Christian life?
 - b. What is the responsibility of one generation to share Christ with the next generation?
- 4) Is it important to you to leave a "legacy" ...a "heritage"? What do you desire such to be...?
- 5) What do you think promotes a more lasting legacy...being there in the routines of everyday, or for the big events?
- 6) Is there a gap between who God wants you to be...and whom you feel you are right now? What do you think are the greatest causes of that gap?