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2 Chronicles 21 & 35

Building a Legacy

Intro: Read passages about Jehoram's & Josiah's death. As I think about the lessons of this passage and the life of Jehoram the word **Legacy** stands out. What does that word mean...?

SLIDE Legacy = Long-lasting impact of a person's life...or as my son defined it, "How you will be remembered." That's right.

Legacy is not leaving something **FOR** people, but leaving something **IN** people. Jehoram built a legacy and he left it in people. You and I are building a legacy too. Right now. What will fill up that dash on our tombstone...?

Funerals often make great classrooms & obituaries can serve us well if we pay attention. I recently read a tragic obituary, written by a daughter for her father:

Leslie Ray "Popeye" Charping was born in Galveston, Texas, 1942 and passed away this month, which was 29 years longer than expected and much longer than he deserved. He leaves behind 2 relieved children; along with six grandchildren and countless other victims including an ex wife, relatives, friends, neighbors, doctors, nurses and random strangers.

At a young age, Leslie quickly became a model example of bad parenting combined with a complete commitment to drinking, drugs, womanizing and being generally offensive. Leslie enlisted to serve in the Navy, but not so much in a brave & patriotic way but more as part of a plea deal to escape criminal charges.

Leslie lacked ambition and motivation to do anything more than being reckless, wasteful, squandering the family savings and fantasizing about get rich quick schemes. Leslie's hobbies included being abusive to his family, expediting trips to heaven for the beloved family pets, and fishing. Leslie's life served no other obvious purpose, he did not contribute to society or serve his

community and he possessed no redeeming qualities besides quick whited sarcasm which was amusing during his sober days.

No services will be held, there will be no prayers for eternal peace and no apologizes to the family he tortured. Leslie's passing proves that evil does in fact die and hopefully marks a time of healing and safety for all.

What will your legacy be? You are building one right now...

That's not morbid to think about. It's biblical. The Bible tells us in James to consider our life, the brevity and trajectory of it.

Over this past Christmas break, my uncle passed away. My favorite uncle. He was amazing. Turns out, he wasn't just a favorite *uncle*. People loved him. He was wealthy but generous. He was intelligent but humble. He was strong but gentle. And he was selfless. In his late 60's, he adopted his step-grandson and raised him as his very own. JJ. Sweet young man. 17 now. He wept so hard at the casket... What a legacy he left in us all.

SLIDE At Jehoram's funeral, no tears were shed. Maybe tears of joy. I don't know how OT funerals went, but if the preacher had asked if anyone would like to share any fond memories or say anything about Jehoram, awkward silence. Good riddance!

You will die. It'll happen. One day people will refer to you in the past tense. You'll be a WAS, not an IS. Your name will be in the obituaries. And your legacy—good or bad—will be left behind.

Jehoram is the only king in the OT that the writer of 1st and 2nd Chronicles has nothing good to say—at all. And this is the most optimistic account of the Kings. The grandma version.

SLIDE His life stands as a cautionary tale. A sign-post warning. We can learn a lot from the examples in the OT. **Whatever was written in former days was written for our instruction-Rom 15:4**
Now these things took place as examples for us, that we might not desire evil as they did. Do not be idolaters as some of them were -1 Cor 10:6-7.

3 negatives stand out in Jehoram's obituary. No fires were made in his honor. No regret in his passing. No royal recognition in burial. Things missing in his life (honor, recognition, favor) continued. No "he rested with his fathers" Why? To show the author's contempt.

Like Scooge being shown his own corpse by the ghost of X-mas future "plundered and bereft, unwatched, unwept, uncared for..."

SLIDE Building a legacy that honors God and serves others. A life that serves as an inspiration to others—not a *warning*.

Pt. # 1: Take the Long Look: vv. 4-6, 11. Someone once said that discipleship is simply a long obedience in the same direction. Following Jesus in the everyday stuff of life. Not just when convenient. Not just when you agree with Him. It takes a short time to ruin your life. Jehoram's 8 yr. reign was a dumpster fire. A wasted life. Tragic in every sense of the word.

His emotions and impulses led him. He "felt" threatened by his brothers and princes, so he killed them as soon as he was established. You can see that reactionary mind-set throughout his short reign. He reacted, not responded. Invasions led to retaliations. He is an impulsive man, guided and governed by his feelings, emotions, and instinct—like an animal. Dangerous

The impulsive, instant gratification mind-set did not serve him well. It led him to murder his staff. It led him to set up high places in Judah. It led his nation into apostasy & whoredom. It led him into an 8-year covenant violating reign in Judah. It destroyed his family and tarnishes his memory forever.

We don't usually make bad decisions by taking the long look. There's a reason that old "Stop. Breathe. Count to 10" lives on.

Prisoners in an anger management class were asked by a psychologist how much time transpired between their anger and ensuing violent response that landed them in prison. Many answered "just a few seconds." She continued with a more pointed question: "And how long have you been in prison?" One man answered, "42 years." No need to explain the point.

When faced with a risky decision that will impact others for years to come, ask the right question: "Is this wise? Regret?" We're conditioned to live for the moment. Be true to ourselves (meaning...however we feel at any given moment). It's deemed immoral not to express yourself in our current culture!

Jordan Peterson sums up the spirit of our age: "Pursue pleasure. Follow your impulses. Live for the moment. Do what's expedient. Lie, cheat, steal, deceive, manipulate—but don't get caught. In an ultimately meaningless universe, what possible difference could it make?" He's contesting that idea, BTW, not advocating it. Chaos!

A recent book for graduates: *Do NOT be true to yourself: countercultural advice for the rest of your life.* —**Kevin DeYoung** Why countercultural? Because the opposite is what we see and hear and are pressured to conform to. "Follow your dreams. March to the beat of your own drum. Follow your heart. You be you."

Our world holds that way of live before us in commercials, movies, and songs. It's the best way to live, the only authentic way to live.

But Jesus says "Deny yourself!" & "He who loves his life loses it."

God will MORE than overcompensate every self-denying sacrifice made in His name, for His kingdom, and His glory. You can't out-give God. He keeps a record of all we give up for His name.

"There is a way that seems right to a man. But its end is death."

Esau and a bowl of porridge. He did not take the long look. "Let me eat some of that red stew," he said, "for I am exhausted. I am about to die; of what use is a birthright to me?" Esau was consumed with his impulsive moment of hunger. Desire inflamed.

Living IN the moment. Hasty. Impatient. Sudden. Reckless.

Self-denial is mocked and scoffed at. To thine own self be true was a Roman truism that has survived ages. Emotions and passions can be liabilities when they are put in the drivers seat.

Jehoram was a classic Narcissist. He was for himself, about himself, and into himself. He put himself before others, always.

He put himself first. Like Bernie Madoff. mastermind of the largest ponzi scheme in American history. 65 billion dollars.

In eight years Jehoram reversed the reforms that had been accomplished by Jehoshaphat; it just took eight years. It just took two terms (in American language), to undo everything good.

Jehoram was a deeply insecure man. Later, Elijah will confront him by letter and basically tell him what he already knew. All 6 of his brothers were better than him. But he was the firstborn. He was ambitious, ruthless, and narcissistic. He lived for the moment, not for the future. He lived for himself, not others.

He grew jealous, envious. And he grew paranoid. No doubt his murderous wife influenced him (we'll get to that in a moment). So rather than use his brothers to garner wisdom and use his princes to help him rule justly and wisely. Jehoram killed them.

Jehoram = "*Yahweh is exalted.*" He did NOT live up to that.

He had a head start. Good father. Good upbringing. Position. Wealth. Privilege. Top of the world! He fell hard.

[Young people tend to overestimate the good that they can do in 5 years and underestimate the good that they can do in 50 years...](#)

Sin is folly...A fool is right in his own eyes. Watch out for him. Like a mother bear robbed of her cubs. Cannot be deterred. Jehoram's life is a tragic example of the deceitfulness of sin, the folly of wickedness. Every promise sin made proved empty. As he was dying in agony, he was probably feeling sorry for himself, painting himself as the victim, asking, "What did I do to deserve this...?"

You can ruin your life and the lives of others in a short amount of time. **Take the long look.** How will this decision play out in a decade? Self denial is not selling yourself short. It's delayed pay-off. Thank God for grace to restrain our worst impulses. If not for God's grace, I would have already left the worst legacy.

That's often frightened me as a pastor...because it would only take moments to ruin my family, our church, my life—legacy.

The things you do for yourself will die with you. The things you do that touch others, you leave behind. That's your legacy.

We face decisions like this every day, don't we? Should you send that email, or sit on it? Should you express that thought you have about that situation/person? Part of Jesus prayer "**Lead us not into temptation**" implies a slow, thoughtful consideration, a long look.

Pt. # 2: Forge Righteous Alliances : vv. 12-13. Forge is a good word. Smith term. Build Up. Establish. Put together. Pursue, develop, nurture. This is not a happy accident. You don't drift into these kinds of alliances. Don't have as your closest companions people who will encourage you into spiritual compromise.

This is more of an implied point in this passage but it's not hard to see. Jehoram surrounded himself with people who were just as intently set upon a course of idolatry and apostasy as he was. Among them was his wife, Athaliah. I know it was an arranged marriage, but he followed her leadership, not the other way around. She led him to his death.

Athaliah was the daughter of Ahab & Jezebel. Jezebel was the mother of Baal worship. She was a murderer. Ch. 22 is scary.

With her influence, Jehoram brought Judah to the brink of internal destruction. Only God's covenantal faithfulness held it together.

Think of it! In what universe was that alliance/union a good idea? She was the most devout follower of Baal. She was a monster. So Jehoram's father gave his son silver, gold, cities, a crown, and a kingdom. But he also gave him a wife who would destroy it all.

The New Testament church, when they thought of someone who would lead people astray, called her a "Jezebel."

Under her influence—and others—King Jehoram led Judah away from Yahweh. He led them down the path to death and judgment. Jehoram loved high places and ignored his blindspots. He was spiritually compromised.

Peterson "[Make friends with people who want the best for you.](#)"

Your closest companions will shape, mold, and influence you in ways you cannot see until much later in life. So choose your friends carefully. And choose your spouse even more carefully because that's your closest friend—for *life*. If you join yourself to an idolater, how in the world can that not affect you?

Mark it well: a bad marriage is one of the surest, fastest ways to ruin your spiritual life. Marry in the Lord. Marry someone who shares your passion and commitment to follow Jesus Christ.

Jehoram had no wife to encourage him in the Lord. He had no godly friends to challenge him. No advisors to tell him the truth. Enemies stab you in the back. Friends stab you in the front.

Pt. # 3: Stay Sensitive to God's Word: vv. 12-15. Elijah's letter said in no uncertain terms: God's judgment is coming.

Note Jehoram's response to Elijah's letter—a prophet who was virtually famous in all of Israel. What he said was always straight from God and his prophecies were reliable. Jehoram completely disregarded the letter. He was a proud man.

And he was a fool. Maybe Jehoram tore up Elijah's letter. Or ignored it like we would a scam call. Not a source he knows, trusts, loves, or a perspective he welcomes. He rejected it all.

He got served notice. Prophets issued warnings. Opportunity to repent and turn. Jonah in Nineveh. Grace straight from heaven.

Poetic Justice: Jehoram was closed to God's rebuke. He was not open to God's Word through the prophet Elijah's letter. So God—ever true to His Word—judged him. And that judgment was poetic justice. The punishment fit the crime. Think about it...

Jehoram made his nation sick. So he will be sick. Filthy and gross. In life...and in death. He took power from the people and from God. His power was taken from him. Seizing property and cities. He lost them. Rather than securing the success of his own children, he sees them suffer a similar fate as his brothers. Rather than securing life and happiness for himself, he suffers an agonizing and premature death. He dies without honor or regret.

He suffered some kind of disease, and the description of it is fairly gross. And it's a long and intractable and incurable disease and excruciatingly painful and yet Jehoram's heart is as hard as stone.

All Kings in Israel (Deut. 17) were to hand copy God's Law. **It shall be with him. He shall read it. He shall keep it. SO THAT. His heart is not lifted up above his brothers. So that he may learn to fear the Lord His God.** Imagine a King like that.

Can you imagine the impact a leader like that might have on a nation, a home, a child. The legacy? A genuine man or woman of God who loves the Lord. Honors God's Word. Devoted to others. No self-exaltation. Integrity. Honor. Nobility. Open to God's Word. Receptive. Sensitive. Humble. Repentant.

You say, "Well we don't have letters from prophets. That's different." With all due respect, we have the entire Bible. More than Jehoram or even the apostles had. We have all the words and teachings of Jesus. We have the whole counsel.

But Jehoram was unmoved by God's warning. He continued to do what was evil in the sight of the Lord. He forsook the God of his fathers. He made high places in Judah and enticed all of Jerusalem into whoredom and made Judah go astray.

Pride is such a powerful seduction for those in power. But the proud man or woman will not stand in God's presence.

"The Lord tears down the house of the proud" —Pr. 15:25

God now moved to punish Jehoram and the people. The Philistines attacked from the west and the Arabians and Ethiopians invaded Judah from the south and southeast. They saw weakness

Everything Jehoram does backfires. But this is what idolatry does. Anything you place at the center of your life other than God (especially yourself) will eat you alive. Tear you to pieces. God built that into our spiritual life. Just like our heliocentric universe. Put something other than the Sun at the center. And we'll all die. Laws = This is how life works best. Not depriving us. Flourish. If you could draft a list of 10 rules for a society. Would "Do not covet" be a throwaway? It's a victimless crime right? No! It hurts *us*!

Jehoram is losing power. He's losing control. His kingdom is crumbling right out from underneath him. No repentance. His time is up. Justice rains down from heaven. But we can learn from this!

There will come a time in your life. Mark it! When God will issue a warning to you. Maybe a verse of Scripture will flash in your mind, or a sermon will cut you to the heart. Or a friend will issue a loving warning or word of concern, or caution, or someone will send you a text, checking in on you and the wording is so providential. You know...this is from God. Will you heed it, or will you ignore it? Will you despise it, or will you invite and welcome God into your mess?

Sin makes messes—of Ahab's life, David's life, Jehoram's life, and humanity! Sin makes messes. But God works best in a mess!

SLIDE Josiah's character and reign as a king and leader were completely different than that of Jehoram. Early in his reign, we see the key. "For in the eighth year of his reign, while he was yet a boy, he began to seek the God of David his father..." **2 Ch 34:3.**

Josiah was everything Jehoram was not. He took the long look. He forged righteous alliances. He was ultra sensitive to God's Word. And his legacy is completely different. He also paid attention to 2 Chronicles 7:14 "If my people...humble themselves..." That verse was a banner over the whole OT Kings narrative he followed it.

But don't look to Josiah for salvation. He's a great example but a poor savior. Another king must save us. Check this out...

GOSPEL CLOSURE: vs. 7 "The Lord was not willing to destroy..."

In verse 7, the Lord was not willing to destroy the house of David, even in the sin, rebellion, and apostasy of Jehoram's reign. Jehoram withered under God's Wrath. But the line of David held. And through it, another King would one day arrive. Jesus.

Jesus. The only truly righteous King who never sinned in word, thought or deed. The king who looked at the joy set before him, saw the travail of his soul, and was satisfied. The king who went to the Cross and absorbed the wrath of God for guilty subjects like us. The only king was an unspotted legacy of righteousness. And it's offered to us. We can BE righteous and DO righteous. Which king are you following? What legacy are you building?

King Jesus leaves us a much better legacy than the best of fallen, sinful kings. A legacy of hope. forgiveness. security. Adoption. Love and redemption. He was the ruler who came to serve.

This King gives us so many second chances. He's full of grace and truth. he is gentle and lowly. He is long-suffering & patient.

He sends His Spirit to convict us and gently guide us back to green pastures and still waters. It's a messy trail isn't it? Redemption. God works in messes. Even if your life has been a mess, it's not too late. You are here, sitting under the Word of God. Hearing His gracious warning. He offers you a better legacy.

[Only one life, twil soon be past. Only what's done for Jesus will last.](#) C.T. Studd, missionary to China.

Let's pray and celebrate communion.

A Prayer for Receiving Christ

Almighty God, you sent your son Jesus, who was the only inherently righteous King. He was sinless in word, thought, and deed. He lived always in your presence, honoring you, giving himself for others, befriending sinners and sufferers, and dying in our place. He obeyed your word perfectly because He was the word incarnate. Cause us to put our trust in him alone, whose blood was shed for our forgiveness. Cause us to turn from our sins. Help us to place our trust in him as our Savior and follow him as our Lord. In Jesus name—amen.

A Prayer for Spiritual Renewal

Heavenly Father, remind me this day that I am accepted because of Jesus. I am free because you have liberated me from my guilt and broken sin's power over me. I am not alone because you have sent your Holy Spirit to fill me, guide me, convict me, and comfort me. I have been given authority and victory over the enemy because I am in Christ and have been given every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places in Him. Cause those truths to shape my response to temptation, apathy, and suffering. In Jesus's name—amen.