

# Psalm 127 // “A Lasting Legacy”

Whats up Image Church? My name is Pastor Derrick DeLain and I have the honor of being the lead Pastor of Proclamation Church here in Nashville, TN. We are a new church that just landed here in the middle of a pandemic so I believe that the Lord will one day give us some extra blessings for being obedient in the midst of craziness.

Our church has had the opportunity to benefit from your generosity. We are able to plant PC because of your prayers, you sending your members, as well as your giving. Thank you so much!

I have the chance to continue in on your series called Moving Forward and I have been given the topic of parenting. How do we as parents move forward in our raising the next generation of disciple makers through this pandemic and even on the other side of it?

Before we answer that question, you know, I remember being young and praying “God don’t take me home until I get married.” Then I got married and prayed “ God dont take me home until I have children.” Now that I have children and I’m like Jesus whenever you ready, I’m good to come home.

Parents maybe you can relate to that in these covid streets. We love our children but being around them all the time in close proximity...BRUH... “daddy can I have this?” “Daddy watch this” “Dad so and so wont let me see such and such” ...Lord have mercy. Maybe thats not you and if it isnt...then pray for your boy!

I’ll be honest with you family, the Holy Spirit has convicted me in this season to begin to realize that God has given us as parents and opportunity to pour into our little ones that we may never have the chance to do again.

I look at my kids in this season and I can’t help but be proud of them because they, as tiring as they can be, are still my kids. My daughter will grow to be a smart, strong and beautiful woman and my son will grow to be a smart, strong, and respectful man. I see the DeLain legacy living on in them. However, if my legacy is being developed in them and God is not in the equation, they can be as successful as possible but it won’t amount to anything in eternity.

This is what I mean. What if we saw this season as an opportunity to shape and disciple our kids with the idea that God is raising them up to be the next generation of disciple makers? That’s what we are going to look at today.

Now, before we continue, let me say this, even though we are discussing parenting, for those of you who are single, or empty nesters or married and haven't had children yet, don't

check out. Because you will see that you have a part to play in this as well.

Turn with me to Psalm 127. As you turn there, to give you some background on this particular psalm, Psalm 127 is one of two psalms written by Solomon, along with Psalm 72. It is categorized as a Wisdom Psalm being that it reflects the wisdom of Solomon found in the book of Proverbs.

What we need to know though is that true wisdom is not what you know, but it's what you do. For us as the people of God, our doing should consist of obedience to God and who He is.

**Psalm 127 (ESV) — 1** Unless the Lord builds the house, those who build it labor in vain. Unless the Lord watches over the city, the watchman stays awake in vain. **2** It is in vain that you rise up early and go late to rest, eating the bread of anxious toil; for he gives to his beloved sleep. **3** Behold, children are a heritage from the Lord, the fruit of the womb a reward. **4** Like arrows in the hand of a warrior are the children of one's youth. **5** Blessed is the man who fills his quiver with them! He shall not be put to shame when he speaks with his enemies in the gate.

I love that Solomon is the one who penned this Psalm. Solomon is throwing haymakers in this Psalm because he singles out three of our most universal preoccupations, building, security, and raising a family and he makes us ask the question, what does it all amount to and to whom do we owe

them?

Spoiler alert, what has been three of the most rocked areas of our lives due to covid? What we own, our jobs, and how we raise our families.

I'm going to spend time on the last one because again, I'm talking about moving forward in our parenting, but I'm going to touch on the others as well. \*Sorry Pastor Mike...hope I'm not taking your thunder\*

If you are taking notes, write this down:

**Legacy's are important, without God they are a waste.**

Solomon begins by painting a picture for us of three occupations. A workman, a watchman, and a warrior. Each of these are all concerned with a legacy in their own right. Let's take a look at all three.

### **Workman**

There's this movie by Pixar called Wall-E. There isn't much talking going on in the movie but it's a really good movie. It paints this picture of this futuristic world where robots are working and doing all of this work for humans and humans sit around and lounge all day eating and drinking and living the life. Sounds attractive but what happened over time is that these humans became really unhealthy in their eating and

their overall lifestyle.

God never intended for us to be lazy individuals. The Bible speaks out against that often. God created us for work.

The first three chapters of Genesis shows us this. Adam had a job and part of that job was to 'cultivate' (labor) over the garden. Adam's cultivation and service were to be ordered in such a way to be given to God as worship and to bring God glory. So the idea of work is a good thing.

There's a reason why this season has been hard for us, we were created to be active.

He doesn't stop there though. The second role listed is..

### **Watchman**

Picture this if you will. A watchman or a guard's purpose is to keep things safe. This watchman is overseeing the city, standing on guard to make sure nothing is coming in to harm the city. This person is a steward of what's been given to him.

Again, this is a good thing. You see, not only was Adam created to cultivate the garden, but he was also created to keep it or to put it a different way, to 'keep watch' over it.

From time to time, Rachel and I will go out of town and we will have a friend stay over and watch our house and take care of our dog. When we come back, our hope is that the house that

we left is in some order and our dog is still alive.

We have entrusted them to be stewards of our belongings. Their keeping it in order is out of love and honor for us. In the same way that Adam's work was to be worship, so was his keeping it up. God gave him the ability to work it and also the ability to steward it. Both of these were meant to be worship to God.

Finally, we see the role of a

### **Warrior**

You find this referred to in verse 4 of Psalm 127: "Like arrows in the hand of a warrior, so are the children of one's youth."

The picture here is of a battle, a battlefield. We see that our children, our young people, our sons and our daughters, are ammunition. They are arrows in that battle. They're not intended to stay in the quiver. Rather, they are to be released, to be sent out into the culture, to be sent out into our world to pierce and to penetrate the world around us.

Those arrows have to be prepared. They have to be carefully shaped and formed. And they have to be shot in the right direction toward the appropriate target.

We will go into much detail about this later but I hope you are seeing something in these three.

Solomon mentions the workman, the watchmen, and the warrior. All of these occupations in their context are good

things. Each can leave a lasting legacy.

However, Solomon lets us know that if the Lord is not involved in any of these occupations, we are doing it all in vain. To say that something is vain is simply a shorter word for empty or meaningless.

Why would he even mention that these good things could become meaningless? Because he knew that there is a natural tendency for our work, our watching, and our raising our children to be catered to ourselves as worship, and not worship to God.

It is no coincidence that the same author who penned this Psalm is the same one who wrote the book of Ecclesiastes stating how just about everything in life apart from the Lord is vanity.

In fact, in the opening of the book of Ecclesiastes Solomon writes **Ecclesiastes 1:2 (ESV) — 2 Vanity of vanities, says the Preacher, vanity of vanities! All is vanity.**

That's a lot of vanity right?

The Hebrew translated as 'vanity' literally means 'breeze, breath or vapour'. During the winter when you step outside and you can breathe and it just disappears. That's the picture in mind here when you think of the word vanity. It summarizes a life that is completely wasted.

Solomon wishes to deliver us from this rosy-coloured, self-confident life that will more than likely lead to cynicism and bitterness. He walks through Ecclesiastes telling us to avoid trusting in wisdom, pleasure, wealth, and human justice or integrity. Even though these are all good things, we can't rest in them. The reason why we can't rest in them is because they are part of the fallen creation and the Bible is clear that the fallen creation is futile and in bondage, and is screaming to be rescued.

In Genesis 3, we see that Adam and Eve disobeyed God which resulted in what is called *The Fall*. It was here that the original plan for work, watching, and raising children found in the original creation has been broken and distorted. It has become misdirected, mostly seeking to put ourselves in a position that does not belong to us. Sound familiar?

Ask yourself this question, "Where in your life are you currently seeking to build a legacy apart from God?" You see, building a legacy is a tricky thing. We think greatness is attainable so we work hard to attain it.

Many times what we think we are building are good things:

- We work long hours because it's what our supervisor has asked us to do and then we neglect the family God has called us to lead and love.
- God allows us to work and get a sizeable paycheck yet we hold on to our money and not think of the ministries that God is working in.

- God gives us talents and abilities and yet we never take time to use them to edify the body through serving.
- God blesses us with children but instead of allowing them to be part of ministries in the church we want them to focus on extracurricular activities or get into the best schools all the while they need to be growing in their faith.

These things aren't bad things, we've just taken God out of the picture.

It reminds me of Gen 11 and the story of the tower of Babel. The tower of Babel where God had told the people to go out and multiply and yet they ignored his command and decided to build their tower to make a great name for themselves until God intervened.

You see, God may let you build for a little while, but whatever you are trying to build for yourself will not last.

Jonathan Edwards puts it this way: "The ruin that the Fall brought upon the soul of man consists very much in his losing the nobler and more benevolent principles of his nature, and falling wholly under the power and government of self-love."- Jonathan Edwards

To put it another way, we grow small trying to be great.

When our lives consist of trying to develop a legacy for

ourselves, Solomon says that we are eating the bread of anxious toil.

This is what that looks like. We live in a society, where we often celebrate the visible fruits of our labor: raises, promotions, raising successful children, you name it! And so those are the things we strive for. We wake up and check our stocks. We spend the day worrying about our children. We work hard on projects at work so we can get that pat on the back. On top of that, we live in fear of losing these things and what people would think of us without them. Then you sprinkle covid on it and now all that we have worked for may end up lost. These thoughts rule our emotions and actions. These are the ingredients to the bread of anxious toil.

I don't know about you, but that bread doesn't really sound all that attractive to me.

Family listen, we were never created to build a legacy for ourselves. It was for God and God alone.

**Whatever you try to build your life on other than that is ultimately meaningless.**

We must structure our lives in such a way that we live with God, because of God, and for God.

Which leads me to my second point...

## God will build the only legacy that will last.

So how do we transition from work that is in vain to work that refocuses us on building God's legacy?

Solomon begins by letting us know at the end of verse 2...  
for he gives to his beloved sleep.

What Solomon is trying to communicate is that God is completely in control, and for that reason, we can rest easy. In fact, God gives us the ability to rest. We can't even get that right, so He gives it to us. Why? Because He loves us. He gives us rest, but our ultimate rest is found in Jesus.

What is beautiful about this psalm is that it shows us our natural tendency to want to perform, we want to seek the approval of man, we want to earn the things that we get so we can say "look at me!"

But when it lets us know that our efforts are in vain, we can be reminded that the efforts of Jesus were not.

The good news of the gospel is not only that we do not have to work for our salvation, but also that we do not have to work to get God's acceptance and approval in our work. All of that has been accomplished in Christ.

the best way I can put this is this way. If you work a 9-5 after a long day of work you want to go home and rest. Many of our

lives consist of working all day to tire ourselves out so we can sleep later at night. However, in Christ, He changes that narrative. We don't have to work to get rest, we get to rest knowing the work has been done already.

That is why in Matthew 11:28 Jesus says

**Matthew 11:28–29 (ESV) — 28** Come to me, all who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. **29** Take my yoke upon you, and learn from me, for I am gentle and lowly in heart, and you will find rest for your souls.

Jesus says you tired, trade with me. I'll take the labor you take the rest. That is a legacy worth living for because that is the legacy that Christ died for. His work for our rest.

And by God's grace, He uses us to see this legacy spread out. How? Through our children. I know Mike was just WAITING for me to get here because if I spoke about work anymore I just know I was creeping into another sermon. I digress...

**3** Behold, children are a heritage from the Lord, the fruit of the womb a reward. **4** Like arrows in the hand of a warrior are the children of one's youth. **5** Blessed is the man who fills his quiver with them! He shall not be put to shame when he speaks with his enemies in the gate.

This passage tells us children are a heritage. They are a gift from God. Children are literally to be viewed as a gift from God. There's a bigger way to take this and that's the direction I

want us to leave here with, but before we do that we have to address some things here.

God's word is good, God's word is true. So in verse five when it says that you are blessed if your quiver is filled with arrows...then by God's grace you are blessed. Let me clear, in Jesus, you are still blessed if you only have one or two arrows. In Jesus, you are still blessed if you have no arrows in your quiver at all.

This section of this psalm has probably been the hardest for me to wrestle with. I have friends who have had miscarriages. I have friends who are going through infertility. I have cried with many of you here. It breaks my heart and if I'm honest, it makes me so frustrated that I have been praying and praying and praying alongside them and many of you and it seems as if God doesn't hear me.

As I was wrestling with this however, the Holy Spirit in His goodness reminded me and I want to remind you that real satisfaction can never come from having a child, but from being a child.

To know and find rest in the fact that you are a child of God is of greater worth than being a parent. How can I say that?

**Isaiah 54:1 (ESV) — 1** “Sing, O barren one, who did not bear; break forth into singing and cry aloud, you who have not been in labor! For the children of the desolate one will be more

than the children of her who is married,” says the Lord.

This passage teaches us that because of the work of God through his servant king, the Lord Jesus, there will be a time of joy and singing, even for the barren woman, for God will raise up a great family with many descendants, of which the childless person can be a part.

Not only that, in Mark 10, Jesus lets his disciples know of the new family of brothers and sisters and children that the believer gains in this life, and especially in the next.

Throughout the Bible we are reminded that the future glories that are ours as children of God are far greater than anything this life has to offer, and far outweigh the sufferings we must endure for a little while in this life.

While there are times of suffering, be reminded of Hebrews 4:15, we have a great high priest who sympathizes with us in our sufferings.

My hope for the universal church is that we can be a foretaste of heaven, where the single person who desires to be married, doesn't feel lonely; for the childless couple that they can rejoice in the children that surround them.

What we need to realize is that some arrows have been dropped from other quivers, we as the family of God have an opportunity to pick those arrows up, mend those broken

parts, sharpen that edge, and send them on the mission of God.

Hebrews 13:14 says it this way “For here we do not have a lasting city, but we are seeking the city which is to come.”

Which leads me to the bigger picture that we all have the privilege to be apart of. The church has been given this gift of children. What does that mean for those of you who are single? What does that mean for those of you who are married and don't have children yet or married and can't have children? It means you have a role to play among this good gift also.

You see the church isn't like a family, the church is a family. It means inside of the church we have a lot of uncles and aunts and grandpa's and grandma's. It means as a parent, I need the family of God to come alongside me and help me disciple my children because I can not and should not do it alone.

It means having more people in my life like my dear sister who took our children last weekend after church to just spend the day with them. I know she desires to be married and has a desire to have children but in the meanwhile, her ultimate desire is to invest in the lives of those who will grow to, Lord willing, contribute to the kingdom of God.

It means that some of you need to step into roles of service in the church primarily with kids ministry and Student Ministry,

and College Ministry.

Some of you have kids that you have yet to put in student ministry or kids ministry. You need to get them in there immediately. The reason why is because the church wants to serve you, we want to come alongside you in partnering with you in raising the next generation of disciple makers whose focus is building the legacy of God and not their own legacy.

Are you struggling with leading family devotions, let the church come alongside you and resource you. You have a teenager who you just can't seem to wrangle in, let the church resource you. Let the body, be the body and let us work together in this.

I love the way Dhati Lewis says it “Arrows aren't meant to be protected, they are meant to be shaped and prepared.” Dhati Lewis

Our effectiveness as warriors, in many senses, determines the effectiveness of those arrows. If they're crooked, if they're not shaped correctly, if they're sent in the wrong direction, then they're not going to fulfill their purpose.

We're talking about the kingdom of Christ. He is building His kingdom. His kingdom will prevail, and we are workmen with Him. We are watchmen with Him. We are warriors with Him.

This is his legacy church and what's beautiful is that He invites us to take part in it! He invites us into his rest so that his rest



becomes our rest. He invites us into the work of sharing the truth of who He is to the world. His legacy becomes our legacy. The legacy of people coming from death to life! The legacy of people joining an everlasting unending family. This the church, the body of Christ!

Solomon ends his psalm with an interesting line: The blessed man "will not be put to shame when he speaks with his enemies in the gate." The gate is the area of town where they would settle judicial disputes. And Solomon is saying, "I know that because I've got a lot of sons, when it comes down to it, I'll have allies to help me out. I'll be acquitted and my enemies won't win."

Can we have that same confidence? Most of us know what it's like to have enemies. But I doubt we have the same confidence Solomon did. We look ahead to the difficulties of life—overworking ourselves, not having a job at all, the inability to have kids, the loss of a loved one, or some other tragedy—and we just aren't sure. The very idea that there are still "enemies in the gate" waiting for us is enough to crush us.

But we can have that confidence. Not like Solomon—not by having such a big family that we know we'll be protected. You see, we follow a God who did something Solomon never did. He let his enemies overcome him. When Jesus faced the cross, he told his disciples that he could have called 12 legions of angels to save him. He knew he had allies that would save him from his enemies in the gate. But instead of using that power

to save himself, he let the arrow pierce him. Instead of using his hands to fire arrows at the enemy, he let the enemy put nails in his hands. He was put to shame in the public place, so that you and I could be raised to honor. He was crushed by his enemies, so that you and I could face our enemies and know that they no longer have any power. You see, the only way you'll have the confidence to face your "enemies in the gate" is not by filling your quiver, but by following the God who emptied his quiver of His one and only Son who was crushed for you.

And it is this confidence that we raise our children in. It is this confidence that we pray would become our children's confidence. But it is up to us raise them in this way. Salvation belongs to the Lord and so do our children. I pray that we parent our children in such a way that represents that as truth. That's what I'm praying for myself and my wife and that is what I'm praying for you as well.

