

Leading Well

Fairview Missionary Church | Angola, IN

Scripture: 1 Kings 12:1-17, Proverbs 9:10

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April 16, 2023

Today we're going to begin a new series and we're going to be in the books of kings and chronicles just for the next couple of weeks and we're going to be discussing what it looks like to lead well. And in this series, we're going to see the importance of good leadership, but we're also going to see the consequences of bad leadership. We're going to see the relationship between cause and effect when it comes to the decisions that leaders make. END 00:27 END

Now, before we even get started, when we talk about leading, some of you just tune me out because you say to yourself, I'm not a leader. This message is for somebody else, and I'm here to tell you nothing could be further from the truth. Everyone is a leader. You are a leader in some shape or form, whether it's to your kids at home or to your grandkids. Maybe you're not married, but you have nieces and nephews that look up to you. Maybe you lead your family for some of you, you do lead in the workplace. END 00:58 END

You lead in the lunchroom at school or on your sports team, maybe you're here today and you don't lead now, but one day you will, and it's important for you in this moment to recognize that the decisions that you and I make have consequences as leaders, my decisions have consequences for others, both good and bad. You see, we learn about cause and effect at a very young age. END 01:26 END

You and I have all witnessed a toddler, whether it's your own child, a grandchild, nieces, or nephews, learning this idea of cause and effects. Maybe you were sitting around as a family and the child had this little toy that has a box that has all these shapes in it that are cut out. And then there's all these parts that match those shapes. And you watch as this toddler picks up the square shaped object and he puts it in the square shaped hole and everybody claps for him as he does this. END 01:57 END

And he looks up and he looks around and everybody clapping and he's trying to make sense of the cause and effect. And so he picks up another square shaped object and he puts it in a square shaped hole and everybody claps again for him. He's learning about cause and effect, and he believes that every time he puts that square shaped object in the square shaped hole that causes everyone around him to clap. This is a simple analogy that helps you and I understand that my choices have effects on those around me. END 02:27 END

And it is true that the more people I lead, the more people my decisions affect. The more people I lead, the more my choices have an impact on their life. And so to prove this point, I want to spend some time today in first kings, specifically. We're going to be in this series in kings and chronicles. And these books in the Bible don't get a lot of attention in church services today, but there is so much that we can learn from them. END 02:56 END

I believe that these books are filled in rich with wisdom and insights. Because these books give us a spiritual history on a nation, specifically the nation of Israel and Judah. You see, if you went to a school like my school, often, when we study history, we are studying recorded history from political perspectives or social perspectives or military perspectives. END 03:24 END

But here in the Bible, we have this amazing gift that has been given to us that we get to glimpse history through the eyes of God. Why did nations rise and fall? What was taking place behind the scenes? We get the view of history from a spiritual perspective. And let me share with you the claim that kings and chronicles is going to make. And it is a strong claim the claim is this. END 03:51 END

The welfare of Israel and Judah and their kings depended on their submission to and reliance on Israel's covenant with God. More specifically, these books are going to claim that Israel as a nation would either rise or fall. Depending on

their obedience to the covenant that they made with God at Mount Sinai through Moses. The question that's going to be asked in kings and chronicles is this. END 04:21 END

Would the kings and the people be faithful to God? And listen to his prophets or would they turn away? This claim is extremely important and interesting in our world today because if it is true, the claim that the Bible is making about the rise and fall of nations, then this is true. The rise and fall of our nations and our kings, our leaders, our dependent on their obedience to God, and not on political, social, or economic factors. END 04:54 END

Can I tell you that as I believe this to be true? Because I believe this is what scripture teaches to be true. This belief in teaching is not widely accepted in our world today, and people will call you crazy if you claim it. Not many people believe that this is what is behind the rise and fall of nations because most people believe the rise and fall of nation is dependent on some of those other outside factors that I've already mentioned. END 05:21 END

Our entire understanding as we read kings and chronicles of the cause and effect of nations rising and falling might need to change. What it means to actually be a good leader. What it looks like to be a good leader might need to change what it looks like to lead your family, lead your sports team, lead at your job, might need to change. END 05:46 END

Is it true that the most important attribute of any leader is their ability to be obedient and to submit to God or is there something else? That is the question that we are going to answer today. So if you have your bibles, I encourage you to open up to first kings chapter 12. First kings chapter 12, it's in the beginning of your Bible. Many of you have probably not read first kings chapter 12. While you are turning there, let me pray and then we'll jump in. END 06:16 END

Heavenly Father, as always, I thank you for your word. I thank you that it can be trusted. I thank you that it is filled with wisdom and insight as your spirit speaks truth to us and so my prayer today is that you would continue to speak truth to us. As we think about the world in which we live, and what actually it is that controls the world in which we live, that you would give us wisdom as we make our decisions. END 06:49 END

And as we lead in the places that you have given us to lead, we ask this in Jesus name. Amen. In first kings chapter 12, we're actually jumping into the history of Israel at a critical point. In first kings chapter 12, something is going to happen that's going to change the trajectory of Israel as a nation from that point going forward. END 07:13 END

You see, up to this point, Israel has been living under the rule of their first king, king Saul, and then we have David, who takes charge, and David's son Solomon, who takes charge, and under the rules of these three kings, more specifically David and Solomon, we enter into what are really known as the golden years of Israel as a nation. They've conquered lands. They've become the most powerful nation on earth. Things seem to be going well. They all feel blessed by God. END 07:42 END

Solomon's life now in first kings chapter 12 has come to an end. He's ruled for 40 years. He has built the temple so that they can worship God. He's built a palace for the kings. And now this kingdom is going to be given to his son, rehoam. I wish that I could tell you that Solomon ruled well and never made any mistakes, but he left quite a bit to be desired. Scripture tells us that he married foreign women just a few a thousand to be exact. END 08:13 END

He worshiped other gods that these wives drew him into. He became a disobedient to the covenant that God had made with the Israelites on numerous occasions that you shouldn't worship any other gods. And so it shouldn't surprise us as we jump into first kings chapter 12 that we see how his son rehoam turns out. First kings chapter 12 versus one through four. END 08:39 END

The son of Solomon went to shechem for all Israel had gone there to make him king. When jeroboam, son of, heard this, he was still in Egypt, where he had fled from King Solomon. So he returned from Egypt, so they sent for jeroboam, and he and the whole assembly of Israel went to rehab home and said to him, your father Solomon put a heavy yolk on us. END 09:08 END

But now lighten the harsh labor and the heavy yolk he put on us and we will serve you. You are going to want to remember the name jeroboam's son of Nat. If you're going to take time to read through first kings and second kings and first chronicles and second chronicles, jeroboam, son of nebot, is going to be the example that is constantly referred back to as the man that didn't follow God. And so if a king was evil, he was compared to jeroboam, son of nebot. END 09:38 END

So here is young Rehoboam. The son of King Solomon faced with his first large decision as a king. What is he going to do? He has been confronted by Jeroboam that his father was too difficult on them. And if you will take it a little more easy, we will continue to serve you. So how is Rehoboam going to respond to this request? Where will young Rehoboam turn to for advice and for wisdom? END 10:09 END

This will turn out to be a make or break moment for the nation of Israel. Now, of course, doesn't know that. But we will find it to be true. In verse 5. Rehoboam answered him. Go away for three days and then come back to me. So the people went away. Young Rehoboam needs time to think. What decision is he going to make in this leads to one of our first truth statements that we come to in 1st Kings chapter 12? And that is this. END 10:39 END

Being a leader requires you to make difficult decisions that no one else wants to make. Anybody that has ever led people. Whether it be a company, an organization, a city, maybe your own family, when you are the leader, people look to you to make decisions and to answer questions that nobody else wants to make or wants to answer. Often, these decisions will have huge consequences, which makes it even more difficult. END 11:06 END

And so the question we need to ask of ourselves before we continue in scripture is this. Where do you turn when you have to make these decisions? Where do you get advice from? In order to make the best decision you can as a leader, we're going to find out where Rehoboam turned, starting in verse 6. Then King Rehoboam consulted the elders who had served his father Solomon during his lifetime. How would you advise me to answer these people, he asked? END 11:38 END

They replied. If today, you will be a servant to these people, and you will serve them and give them a favorable answer. They will always be your servants. That's some good advice. Servant leadership. If you will serve these people today, they will serve you for the rest of your lives. If you will be a humble king, they will continue to serve you. But rejected the advice that the elders gave him. END 12:06 END

And he instead consulted with the young men who had grown up with him and were serving him, how often do we see teenagers do this? Sorry, teens. I was there so I can talk about this, right? We get advice from those that are older than us. Those that have experience in life maybe could give us a more wise answer and we don't like it. And so we instead go to our friends that are the same age and have the same amount of wisdom we have. And we follow their advice. END 12:33 END

So he goes to his friends that grew up with him, and he asked them, what is your advice? How should we answer these people who say to me, lighten the yoke that your father put on us? How am I supposed to respond? The young men who had grown up with them replied. These people have said to you, your father put a heavy yolk on us, but make our yolk lighter. Now you should tell them, my little finger is thicker than my father's waist. My father laid a heavy yolk on you. END 13:02 END

I will make it even heavier. My father scored you with whips, but I will score you with scorpions. So three days later, Jeroboam and all the people returned to Rayah-boam as the king had said, come back to me in three days. The young king has a choice to make. Is he going to listen to the advice of the elders or is he going to take the advice of his friends who give him the advice to tell these people you think my father was hard? END 13:32 END

You just wait. My father was weak compared to me. These two options that he has are completely different. But I want you to notice what young Rehoboam didn't do in his leadership. He didn't seek the Lord to ask for his advice. If you remember the stories about King Solomon, when he came to his position of power, he had a meeting with God and God said if I would give you anything you want, what would you ask? END 14:02 END

And Solomon asked for wisdom. He sought the Lord's direction. He sought his leading. And here we have young Rehoboam, his son, who didn't spend any time in prayer. He didn't care what God thought about the matter. Instead, young Rehoboam relied on his own intuition. He relied on the advice of his young friends, why? END 14:28 END

Because he saw himself as king and as the one who had the final word in the final authority, he finally had become king over Israel, this leads us to our second truth. A leader who sees himself or herself as the final authority on all matters will fail. A leader who sees himself or herself as the final authority on all matters will fail. END 14:55 END

And so I asked the question of you, just as I asked the question of me, who has the final authority in your decisions? Is it God? Or is it you? I want to remind you just as I want to remind myself that as a follower of Jesus Christ, he asks that I

give up control of my life and that I would proclaim him as lord, which simply means he has the final word, not me. END 15:23 END

So how will rehoboam respond? So the king answered the people harshly, rejecting the advice that were given to him by the elders. Instead, he followed the advice of the young men and he said, my father made your yoke heavy. I will make it even heavier. My father scored you with whips, but I will score you with scorpions. END 15:47 END

So the king did not listen to the people for this turn of events was from the lord to fulfill the word of the lord, that he had spoken to jeroboam's son of Napa through a hygiene, the Shiloh knight. Again, we get a glimpse behind the curtain of history. Jeroboam responded this way because the lord had determined that he was available and responded that way because the lord had determined that he was going to respond that way. He listens to his buddies. END 16:16 END

He responds harshly to his people. And this decision would alter the direction and the landscape of Israel as a people moving forward, never to go back to the same again. And 16 and 17, we read that when all Israel saw that the king refused to listen to them, they answered the king. What share do we have in David? What part in Jesse's son? To your tents, Israel. Look after your own house, David. END 16:45 END

So the Israelites went home. But as for the Israelites who were living in the towns of Judah, where Rekha bohms was reigning, he still ruled over them. Israel as a nation as we read for the rest of the story in first kings and in second kings, we find that the nation of Israel has been split apart into two kingdoms, two nations, the northern kingdom, which would keep the name Israel in the southern kingdom, which now would become known as Judah. END 17:13 END

And so now is when we get into the northern kings and the southern kings of these nations. One decision, one choice as a leader, and it would affect tens of thousands, hundreds of thousands, if not millions of lives. The nation of Israel fell because they and their leader disobeyed God. So now we come back to us. How will you decide to lead where God has placed you? END 17:43 END

In your family, at church, at your job, remember, you're a leader in some capacity. And some people are depending on you. I want to remind you just as I want to remind myself that we all must submit to the higher authority of Jesus Christ. If you have proclaimed Jesus as your lord and savior, then he is your ruler, but please don't worry. He is an amazing ruler. Scripture is very clear that he is kind. END 18:13 END

He is compassionate. He is humble. He will give you wisdom as you lead. He will guide you and direct you oftentimes people will say pastor. How can we pray for you? And my answer has always been the same, pray that God would give me wisdom. So that I could make choices and decisions that will honor and glorify him and be a blessing to all of the people. That God has given me the privilege to lead. Now let's quickly zoom out a little bit before we end today. END 18:43 END

And think a bigger picture. If the statements are true that we have made earlier, and if indeed, nations do rise and fall because of their obedience or lack thereof of its leaders and its people to God, then we need to start praying for our leaders. And our nation, it is undeniable that the morals and values of our nation have been in a steep decline. END 19:11 END

As a nation, we have moved further and further away from God and what he has asked us to do. And if you are like me and you watch the news, or you have conversations, I hear the rumbling. This is troubling for most of you. It's troubling for me as well. You see, as you read in kings and chronicles, you see that sometimes God decides to judge them as a people immediately. When the king is evil, the people are judged for that evilness and their disobedience right in that moment. END 19:45 END

But at other times, that judgment is held off for a generation or two. And so as I look at the place in which we live today, our country, our leaders, going down a path of immorality, disbelief in God, our morals declining our values declining, calling those things which are wrong right, and those things that are right as if they are wrong. END 20:15 END

I can boldly tell you with 100% confidence that unless things change, there is judgment coming. There is. And that's troubling, and it should be troubling for us. So I want to give you three things that you can do. Practical things that you can do because you might sit here and say, well, that's great. Pastor, very encouraging message, but I'm not in charge. I

don't get to change what is happening. Let me give you three practical things that you can do. The first thing you can do is pray. END 20:46 END

Pray for our leaders, pray for our nation, pray for the leaders of the world in which we live. And let me give you a specific prayer. Pray that our leaders would repent and turn to God. Pray that they would come to the realization that there is somebody that has higher authority than they do. Pray that whatever position you are in that God is placed you, that you would lead well proclaiming God as your authority. END 21:18 END

The second thing that I believe we are asked to do according to scripture is to call people back to God. If you look through the Old Testament, we get to a section of the Old Testament called the prophets, and we have the major prophets and the minor prophets. And God called up these individuals. So that they would call people back to God. As these evil kings would rise to power, they would be the voice of truth to that generation. END 21:48 END

Calling people back to God, and I believe that God has given us as the church that task. To call people back to God. And here's my prayer. It's a selfish prayer. But my prayer is that we would not be like the prophet Jeremiah and be known as the weeping prophet. Some of you know from reading scripture that he was called the weeping prophet because even when Jeremiah was called. END 22:18 END

And he was told that you are to preach the message that people would turn back to me. He knew from the very beginning of his ministry that they wouldn't listen. And it's my prayer that we would not be like the prophet Jeremiah and that as God tells us to call people back to him. And as we remain faithful to him, that he would also tell us, they're not going to listen. I pray that they would listen. Call people back to God. Be like the elders who gave rehoboam good advice. END 22:49 END

That was based on truth. And the third thing that we need to do is keep our hope in the correct place. Keep our hope in the correct place. We need to be reminded that God's plan is going to be accomplished and there's nothing we're going to do to stop it. God has a plan. It's going to happen. We had the elders who gave good advice to rehoboam, but then we read because we have the curtain pulled back that it was because of the lord's will because of his direction that Raya bohm wasn't going to listen. END 23:23 END

And so as you and I are trying to call people back to God as we are praying for our leaders that they would repent and that they would turn back to God, we need to recognize that our hope is not placed. In any nation or any leader, I told you before in any political party, our hope is to be placed in Jesus. END 23:51 END

And in him alone, we just sang the song, I know how the story ends. I know how the story ends. My hope is not in the here and now. We need to remember that our decisions are important. We never know which decisions we are making will have lasting consequences. END 24:18 END

Again, I doubt that ray bohm knew that how he responded to the people that day was going to cause the division of his nation. But every decision we make has lasting impact, so I encourage you just as I encourage myself today, decide now to trust in Jesus, seek his counsel and his wisdom, and remember the words of proverbs, chapter 9 ten. The fear of the lord is the beginning of wisdom, and knowledge of the holy one is understanding. END 24:49 END

Let me close in prayer. So Laura, we do take a moment right now to lift up our leaders to lift up our nation to lift up the leaders in our world. That they would turn and repent that they would turn towards you that they would submit their leadership to your ultimate leadership. Father, we asked for forgiveness for the times that we have believed that we were the final authority. END 25:22 END

May we turn back to you, give us the boldness of the Old Testament prophets, to proclaim the truth. In love. We repent for our declining morals and ethics and values. We repent for calling things right that you call wrong. And calling things wrong that you call right. END 25:52 END

May we stand in your truth. We ask this in Jesus name. Amen. END 26:00 END