

King David *Death*

1 Kings 2:1-12

October 13, 2019 am

HDBC

Started this series on February 17. 27 sermons later we have come to the end of this series on King David. Marathon, not a sprint. My initial plans were for 10-12 sermons. There were too many passages that needed to be preached, too many lessons to be learned. But now, finally, we bring it to a conclusion.

As we do, we find the touching scene where David shared his final words with his son, Solomon. *Have you ever been by the side of one who slipped into eternity? I have done so on multiple occasions.* For the most part, I have been there after final words have been spoken. I simply watched as the life flowed from the body when the last breath had been taken. But, I've heard surviving loved ones share the last words spoken by the one who had died. Those words are often touching, emotional and powerful.

David knew he was dying and wanted to share a few things with Solomon. The scene is both touching and surprising. I imagine David thinking more about the regrets of his life than the successes. David surely had some.

So, let's look at this last scene of David's life, as if we are hidden spectators standing on the other side of the room, watching, listening and learning. 3 things.

1. **David accepted the reality of his own death (1-2)**

This is a simple but important statement that David made to Solomon. In it he does two things. **First**, he acknowledges the universal principle that all people die. No one lives forever. Everyone dies. **Second**, he accepted the fact that his time to die was imminent. It was his turn! **Here's** an important principle: *Death is the norm, not the exception.*

I encourage you to be willing to talk about your own death with those around you, and to talk about the death of your loved ones. It may not be an easy subject to discuss, but it is important.

Say the things that need to be said.

Plan the things that need to be planned.

Correct the things that need to be corrected. Just talk about it.

I love that David accepted his own death and faced it head on. I love that Solomon did not discourage David. He listened and learned.

We resist talking about things we fear. There is no reason to fear death. You can be prepared. I get that there is a bit of uneasiness about the unknown! **Like going to school for the first time. First day on a new job.** The unknown can make us nervous. Knowledge helps alleviate that. When we see what the Bible has to say about death, we can relax and face it.

2. **David challenged his son to live and serve well** (three things)

A. **Challenged Solomon be a courageous leader (2b)**

This is a challenge related to Solomon's personal life . . . his character. He challenged his son to rise to the occasion of being king. That required inner strength. Leaders are often attacked and challenged by others. They have to endure unlimited criticism. It can be very lonely to be a leader. Solomon would soon learn this.

Strong – Power, hardness of muscles that have worked out.

Resolute. Ability to work through a difficult situation.

Show yourself a man – Courageous.

On the cobblestones on Broad street in Oxford, England there are 24 white stones which stand out among the dark stones of that street. They are placed in such a way that they form a cross. Simple stones marking a key event in that place's history. Cool October day in 1555.

Two men who refused to recant their faith in Jesus, were lead through the doors of the dreary Bocardo prison to witness the last few moments of sunlight before their execution. They were die a horrible death, being burned at the stake. We know little of what they said and nothing of what they thought. But we do have a few words that were spoken between them as they made their way to the stake.

As they approached the stake, Hugh Latimer turned to Nicholas Ridley,

Be of good cheer, Ridley. Play the man. We shall this day light a candle, by God's grace, . . . as I trust shall never be put out.'

Play the man. That's what David has in mind for Solomon.

B. Challenged Solomon to stay spiritually focused

He was a political leader over a nation, but more importantly he was a servant of the sovereign creator. He may not have anyone to be accountable to in the nation, but he was accountable to the God who put him in office. Summarize this challenge in three statements:

1) Remember, you are called by God to live a certain way (3)

Keep the charge of the Lord your God, to walk in His ways. The pattern of his life was to be God's, not his own. Life as God called. **That could** only be achieved by being obedient to God's Word. David makes this clear. That leads to statement # two.

2) Obey his word and you will succeed (3)

David implores Solomon to obey God's revealed word. Where God has spoken, Solomon was to obey. This, David said, would be the key to success. Some of God's blessings are offered as part of His unconditional grace. Others are conditioned upon our obedience.

In Solomon's case, his success would be greatly tied to his willingness to hear from God and live his life by what he hears. The closer the obedience the greater the blessing.

3) Your actions will determine future blessings (4)

Finally, David points out to Solomon that the family dynasty would be greatly dependent upon his actions. If he will live his life as God has called him to live, obeying God's word God will fulfill his promise to extend the family line on the throne of Israel.

The impact of what we do is seldom restricted to the here & now. The ripples of our decisions generally bleed over into future generations.

C. Challenged Solomon to execute justice (5-9)

What David shared next is a bit surprising. He mentioned two men whom we've seen before. The first is Joab. On the surface he had appeared to be a loyal servant of David, but he repeatedly disobeyed David and ultimately rebelled against him.

David sounds more like Don Corleone than a man after God's own heart when he tells Solomon, *do not let his gray hair go down to Sheol in peace*. Execute judgment on him. He is to be killed for his rebellion against the king and for his unwarranted bloodshed of others.

The second was **Shimei**. He was the man who cursed David and threw stones at him Absalom's rebellion. David had initially shown mercy by not having him executed. But now, it was payday. It was judgement time for him. Deal with him accordingly.

On the other hand, there were those who had been loyal to David. They were to be rewarded. The children of Barzillai were an example. For he had cared for David and demonstrated his loyalty during the dark days of Absalom's rebellion.

Actions matter. Judgment may not be immediate, but it will come. Both of these men thought they had escaped judgment. Not so. Solomon would begin his reign by demonstrating that rebellion against the Lord's anointed king would not be tolerated.

3. David died, was buried and is remembered

In a very simple and straightforward way, the text declares the death of David. He **slept with His fathers**. I like that phrase. It is rich with meaning and enlightenment.

David died but he says he *slept*. He really did die, but there was a sense in which he was only sleeping. This is a great reminder that even the body which was to be buried would be resurrected. It would be awakened.

With his fathers. Speaks of the continuity of the generations. **The continuity** of life to death for all people is seen. Those before him died.

But for David, and all who love the Lord there is a more precious meaning here. We not only follow all who precede us in death, by also dying. We follow all believers in God in going **through death into life, eternal**. *When I die, you can be assured I am not simply going the way of all people, by dying, but I'm going the way of all believers who preceded me in death, by going through death into life!*

With his death, a great era in Israel's history came to a close. It would never be the same. Solomon would take the nation to great heights, but it would never again be like it was under David's reign.

I used a number of resources that helped me understand the Biblical story of David's life. One of the books that I found fascinating was J.S. Parks book, ***The Life of King David***. Not a big book. A bit edgy at times. But fun. He closes his book with a fictional monologue by David. I want to read it.

My name is David. I was a king. I was a shepherd. I was the eighth son of Jesse, the fulfillment of an ancient prophecy for an everlasting throne. I have seen many hard things in my time on earth.

I have seen arrows pierce the sunbeams over the Forests of Keilah, and the blood of my soldiers carried by the Jordan River in ribbons of crimson and gold. I remember the sound of a thousand chariots over the Desert of Ziph, the hooves of white horses upon sand and wilderness as the earth trembled, trumpets declaring all that we had won, louder than the enemies we had conquered.

I remember the charred remains of my home in Ziklag, the fire burning across doorways and rooftops, when our wives and children were stolen, just as we had done to so many others. I have seen the end of many brave men, their eyes losing life, their armor too heavy as their swords fell before them.

I buried three of my sons.

I buried my best friend.

I married a woman whose husband I ordered to kill.

I have wrought many shameful sins in my seventy years.

It seems as a bad dream behind me.

Yet, I have seen many wonderful things. I have seen days of rain, my companions in battle laying down sword and spear to taste the fountain of heaven. I have seen the sun dipping below the horizon as the first stars emerged in a banner of purple, on the quiet hills of Mount Moriah.

I have seen a nation torn apart, united into a kingdom. I remember my friend Jonathan, when he came to me in a field at the risk of certain death, and we prayed for one another, the last I ever saw of him as he called me his king.

I have beheld beauty. I have beheld such wonders of God, even in a world as ours, steeped in sin and sorrow yet basking in a grace that I saw in a bare glimpse. I have seen light open up the dark and hold sway over evil.

I am here now, to behold the one above all beauty, from whom such beauty came.

I have seen many hard things, but our glory, such glory outweighs them all, and my heart had only begun to swell with new oceans of joy. The summit of our God is at once so high, yet so close, as I miss nothing, but there is ever more to see.

I have fulfilled my purpose, as much as a young child may please his father, with every effort so small and weak, yet every effort so loved and received.

I am here just a man in the stream of history, breathed into existence for a time, as but a torch shining briefly for God, for glory, for His people, for my Lord, who is to come as the Son of Man and bring you to Himself.

He is the King! He is the Shepherd!

May you meet Him, beloved, and live for Him.

I have known no greater honor in my time, and I will know nothing greater in eternity.