

Summit Church - Fathers Day 2020

Leaving a Legacy

Jason Gaston. 1 Kings 2:2-3

The year was 1937. A young, athletic man had just stepped onto the campus of a local junior college to play sports, with the dream of playing at a 4 year school. To say he was a good athlete would be an understatement. He was not a good athlete. He was exceptional. In fact, he was so good, he was awarded a scholarship to UCLA where he would compete in FOUR SPORTS (basketball, football, baseball, and track & field.)

For most of his collegiate career, he found success in 3 out of those 4 sports (football, basketball, and track.)

Baseball, however, was not as kind. His batting average was a whopping .097 (that's depressing folks. When you're batting well below the Mendoza line consistently, well, that dog won't hunt.)

Following his graduation at UCLA, he left to go play semi-pro football with the Honolulu Bears. His first game with the team was in Pearl Harbor on December 5, 1941. If you know you're history, you'll know that's 2 days before the attack on Pearl Harbor. His life was spared by 48 hours.

After a brief stint with the United States military where he would become a second lieutenant & a platoon leader of the 761st Tank Battalion, he comes back to civilian life and picks up the game that didn't treat him all that well at UCLA. **Baseball.** (God's favorite game.)

In 1945, he would sign a contract with a professional baseball team that was budding throughout the Midwest, but did not have any sort of national notoriety. That team was the Kansas City Monarchs of the Negro American League.

After one long and grueling season with the Monarchs, his life would be flipped upside down, and in turn, our entire country.

In the summer of 1945, he would sign another contract, this time with the Brooklyn Dodgers. After 2 years of grueling it out in minor league stadiums all over the country, on April 15th, 1947 this young man would break the color barrier of baseball by becoming the first black player to integrate into the Major League's, and thus change the dynamic of American culture through the game of baseball. That man, **Jackie Robinson**, would forever have his name etched in the very fabric of American history.

Today, he is rightly celebrated as a national hero. But life for Jackie, and many others just like him, was anything but easy. The road was hard. Painful.

He was asked repeatedly if he ever thought about quitting. "Every day," Jackie would say. "**Every day.**"

But with a **vision** for a better world ahead of him, and **resolve** in his heart to stay the course, he pressed on. Hoping that one day his efforts would open the door for young black men like himself to step between the lines. Without men like Jackie, we don't get Ken Griffey Jr., Roberto Clemente, Mookie Betts, Albert Pujols, Aaron Judge, Ronald Acuna, and many more.

Jackie Robinson's life offers us an answer to a question that every last one of us asks: **How do we leave a legacy worth passing along to the next generation?**

Resolve. Vision. A determination to move forward with conviction when the road is difficult.

What would it look like if God raised up a generation of men/fathers from the Summit Church with that same resolve. That same conviction. That same determination. What if God raised up a generation of BELIEVERS, all of us, with that kind of resolve, conviction and determination. I believe the world could be flipped upside down for the kingdom of God starting right here in RDU.

It's no secret that we're living in some pretty dark and difficult times. We're in desperate need of leadership in our homes and in our communities. The time is now. It's time to rise up. It's time to engage. It's time to LEAD.

1 Kings 2 is where we'll camp for the next few minutes together.

To set the context for you: We're jumping into the life of King David, Israel's most beloved king. The end is near for King David, and he knows it. His 40 year reign as King is coming to a close as he's about to see the eternal reward that awaits him. He's dying. And as he lays on death's bed, He's no doubt had time to reflect on all the seasons he's lived through. The ups and downs. His thoughts are clear, and perhaps for the last time, he calls his son Solomon to his side as he makes one final speech before he goes the way of the earth.

You can almost imagine the scene. Maybe you've been in one just like it. I envision it as a moment where a father pulls his son in closely, musters up all the strength he has left in his frail body, and begins to speak these words that will echo throughout history:

2 "I am about to go the way of all the earth. Be strong and courageous, and show yourself a man, 3 and keep the charge of the Lord your God, walking in his ways and keeping his statutes, his commandments, his rules, and his testimonies,

Solid words for a son that would need them in the days & years ahead. To continue the godly legacy being passed off to him on that day.

Legacy. Godly legacy. A Legacy worth leaving. That day will come. How have you cultivated one worth leaving?

Side note: I know that for many of you, talking about legacy is not easy. You don't like the one handed off to you. You aren't sure that the one you're leaving is worth leaving. When I close, I'll get back to that, I promise. Because I believe that today, God doesn't just want to give good advice to fathers; he wants to give good news.

Legacy is so attractive to talk about, but it is not guaranteed. It's fought for. It's time to fight.

Two things I want you to see from David to Solomon as he passed the baton on in hopes of leaving a legacy.

1. Legacy is cultivated through courage, not cowardice.

Now, what you hear in David's charge to Solomon is something that sounds familiar to the ear of those God placed in leadership in the Old Testament.

"Be strong and courageous, and show yourself a man."

Who else received that same command? Moses. And more famously, Joshua. Just after Moses went the way of the earth, God looked at Joshua and said....

"Moses my servant is dead. Now then, you and all these people, get ready to cross the Jordan River into the land I am about to give to them—to the Israelites...."Be strong and very courageous - Joshua 1:1,7

Trust. Unwavering confidence that what I have said to be true will be. The road ahead for Solomon would not be easy, but he would need the courage to do what was required. Trust in the heart of God.

Think back to David's life. His kingship did not start the same way that Solomon's would. And he knew that Solomon had not been tested like he was as he looked to lead his people. Solomon grew up in downtown. The palace. He probably sipped pour over coffee on the front porch each morning. David grew up in the country. Drank coffee from a drip coffee maker. Heaven forbid.

David's life was shaped in the pasture. He was a shepherd. He faced dangers in those fields. And it was in those fields where God prepared him to lead. With courage.

He had to face dangers when lions/bears would attack his sheep. Those moments shaped him. He would later show up to the battle field with lunch for his brothers only to find out

they're being taunted by Goliath. Fearful and afraid. David reached deep into his toolbelt and found something Israel could not.

COURAGE.

One of my favorite leaders, Dr. Jay Strack often says **"At some point in your life, the little boy has to sit down, and the man has to stand up."** - Jay Strack

Solomon would need that spoken over him frequently.

Courage leads to *faithful action*. Fear leads to *cowardice*. Courage is a mark of a Jesus follower. Cowardice is not.

Jesus himself would exude courage in order to face and finish the task that he knew was in front of him. He got a glimpse of it in the Garden of Gethsemane, it wasn't pretty. Yet. He went.

Following Jesus will take courage. Unwavering trust.

Can I just tell you something here? Courage isn't found on the keypad of your phone on social media. It's found in action. In life. In relationships with people.

Paul would said it this was in 1 Corinthians

Be on your guard; stand firm in the faith; be courageous; be strong. (1 Corinthians 16:13)

You do realize that there are times where you, or those around you, will lack courage, right? You know what we're called to do in those moments? ENCOURAGE. Encourage means to 'impart courage' to another.

Build each other up. You find your courage in the goodness of God. In the ways of God. **in the promises of God.**

Your courage is not found in **your** strength. David knew where his flesh got him. David needed reminders often that his courage was found in remembering the PROMISES of GOD. Jonathan, David's best friend would remind him of that when he's running for his life from King Saul. His courage tank was empty. Jonathan, the OT tells us, went to David when his courage was low to "Strengthen his hand in God."

All the promises of God are yes and amen in Christ.

He is who he says he is. You can trust him. Walk with Jesus and lead with courage.

In fact right now, here's what we're going to do. We're going to take just a moment and pray. If you're sitting in a room somewhere with your father (or your husband), let's spend some time praying over him. Ask that God would

- strengthen him as a leader in your home
- Cultivate a heart of courage as he follows Jesus and leads your family

If you are hanging out with family, friends, maybe by yourself, ...let's pray those same things for yourself or each other:

- That God would strengthen you as a leader
- Cultivate a heart of courage as you cling to the promises of God.

2. The vision of legacy is achieved in virtuosity

I often tell my kids that the battle of life isn't won with Top 10 plays on ESPN type moments. It's won in doing that which is required of you, consistently, uncommonly well.

That's the charge in front of Solomon.

"keep the charge of the Lord your God, walking in his ways and keeping his statutes, his commandments, his rules, and his testimonies,

The Vision of that charge to Solomon is two fold, i believe:

- (1) *that his son would walk, cling, hold fast to the word of God. It's there, in his final moments, he pleads with his son to keep the commands of God close to his heart.*
 - *David wrote often in the Psalms of the necessity, life giving, life directing word of God*
- (2) *That by living a life of uncommon obedience to God's word, he would ensure the legacy and kingship would be established.*
- *Look at what he says in verse 4:*
 - **"If your sons pay close attention to their way, to walk before me in faithfulness with all their heart and with all their soul, you shall not lack[a] a man on the throne of Israel."**

That is ultimately fulfilled through the true king that David was pointing to.....not an earthly throne, but an eternal one.

Jesus. He would fulfill it. Establish it. And sit on it for eternity.

Why? The answer couldn't be found in David alone, nor Solomon, and it can't be found in you and me either. Gospel legacy HAS to point to something greater. Someone greater. David failed miserably. I mean, the dude hit rock bottom. Need

I talk about his assault on Bathsheba? The Mafia-esque elimination of her husband. He needed a better king.

But by God's grace, he repented. And his repentance brought about a renewed spirit in him. He went from Rock Bottom to Standing on the Rock of the promises of God. He would now walk in an uncommon way, declaring that the commands of God, the word of God would be his lifeline. He could not be like the rest, neglecting the statutes of God, he would need a better way.

Virtuosity - defined in many athletic circles, is simply doing the common things in an uncommon way. It's how you achieve success. Mastery. Victory.

Virtuosity is the separator. It's not (as Winston Churchill stated) "just giving your best, it's doing what's required" to be the best.

David pleads with Solomon to have something others do not. There has to be something that separates him from the rest.

An UNCOMMON OBEDIENCE to the commands of God.

Remember back on David's life.. On the run, fearing for his life from Saul. Yet, he was the king in waiting. If Saul would be removed, David could claim the throne. He had two opportunities to take Saul out. It's almost like there was a shortcut to the throne. But he refused to take it. Why? Because you can't shortcut obedience to the commands of God. You gotta take the long road.

UNCOMMON OBEDIENCE.

Listen closely. You're not going to find a life hack to godliness.

You can't. There's no *magic 10 day sin-free diet* you can go on. You have COMMIT to doing the common things in an uncommon way.

I'll say it again: There is no shortcut or lifehack for godliness.

Where is virtuosity missing from your life? Where are you not doing the common thing required of you in the gospel in an uncommon way?

- Prayer life? Bible reading? Serving? Encouraging others?

Uncommon obedience has a source. Jesus. If you long for godly legacy to be passed on, you have to keep your eyes on Jesus. EOJ. EOJ. At all times. Eyes on Jesus.

You want to leave a *godly legacy* in your family? Get your tail out of the bed and get in the word. **Put your eyes on Jesus.** Daily. Not once a week. Daily. Put the plow to the ground and get to work.

You want your kids to change the world? Prepare their heart, not their path. Show them what it looks like to serve by being a servant. DO THE DISHES for crying out loud.

SHOW UP. AGAIN. AND AGAIN. AND AGAIN.

But, Jason...I've totally blown it? Welcome to team Jesus. Aren't you glad that Jesus is full of grace and mercy? That he doesn't look at your record, just Jesus'. And that each day, he offers you that record, over and over again. That no matter how far you've fallen, God's grace is constant. His tank never empties. And he does not withhold it from you. He extends it to

you daily. Take hold of it. Get back up and get in the game. Have a ‘from this day forward mentality.’ Today. This day.

*The steadfast love of the lord never ceases, his mercies are new every morning, great is his faithfulness towards you.
Lamentations 3:22-23*

TODAY!

Brothers and sisters, I do not consider myself yet to have taken hold of it. But one thing I do: Forgetting what is behind and straining toward what is ahead, I press on toward the goal to win the prize for which God has called me heavenward in Christ Jesus.” Philippians 3:13-14

You want to leave a godly legacy? You’ve got to fight for it. Forget what is behind. Press ahead. There’s a prize awaiting you. His name is Jesus. Cultivate courage as you walk here on this earth. Do the hard things. And keep doing them, over and over and over again.