

Dying Words

1 Chronicles 22:9-10

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When I die, notice that I didn't say if I die, when I die, I'd love to leave behind some words of wisdom for my children.

Even if they're no wiser than any of my other words, there's a certain gravity to someone's dying words, but even with that in mind, I'd probably keep it light.

Conrad Hilton was born in 1887 and, over the next 92 years of his life, he built a dynasty of hotels around the world.

On his deathbed, just before he died, Hilton was asked if he had any last words of wisdom.

These were the words that Hilton allegedly said, "*Leave the shower curtain on the inside of the tub.*"

Then there's the story of Samuel Upham. Samuel Upham had been a professor at Drew Theological Seminary for years and, as he lay dying, his friends gathered about.

As he was laying real still, the question arose as to whether he was still living or not. Someone said, "*Feel his feet. No one ever died with warm feet.*" Dr. Upham opened an eye and said, "*Joan of Arc did.*"

Now I probably won't be able to do something like that because I need time to think of a cute remark, and so, when I die and get to heaven, I'll say, "*Darn I should have said such and such,*" and Peter will look at me and say, "*Sorry, it's too late.*"

This morning we're going to look at some words, though not dying words, which came at the end of a full and productive life.

As David came to the end of his reign and his life; as he prepared to meet his God, he began to put his earthly house in order.

In so doing, he assembled the leaders of Israel together for them to witness the transfer of leadership to his son, Solomon.

Now, not only was David giving his son the responsibility to rule Israel, but more importantly David voiced his dreams for his son to embrace.

Isn't that the way of fathers? Don't each one of us hope that our sons or daughters will do what we couldn't do, achieve what we couldn't achieve, and be what we couldn't be?

Therefore, on this Father's Day, we may not be able to transfer our kingdoms, thrones, and riches, but we can give our children a taste of our dreams.

David dreamed of building a temple for God and, for various reasons, that didn't happen, but more importantly he gave his son a vision for his kingdom along with a challenge.

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So, who was Solomon? Why did he get the kingdom and the dream.

The who is easy, perhaps you remember the story of David and Bathsheba. That incident wasn't the high point in David's life.

Remember, he had lusted after another man's wife and committed adultery with her. After which, she became pregnant. Because of that he had her husband murdered; then he married her.

When confronted with his sin, David confessed and repented but the child of that union died. Now listen to what happened afterwards, it's recorded in 2 Samuel 12.

2 Samuel 12:24, *“Then David comforted his wife Bathsheba, and he went to her and made love to her. She gave birth to a son, and they named him Solomon. The LORD loved him.”*

But why was Solomon crowned King? Why not one of David’s older sons?

I believe it was between verses 23 and 24, that God came to David and told him who the next King was to be. David related this event in 1 Chronicles 22.

1 Chronicles 22:9-10, *“But you will have a son who will be a man of peace and rest, and I will give him rest from all his enemies on every side. His name will be Solomon, and I will grant Israel peace and quiet during his reign. He is the one who will build a house for my Name. He will be my son, and I will be his father. And I will establish the throne of his kingdom over Israel forever.”*

Then, in 1 Kings 3:3, we’re told that *“Solomon loved the Lord.”* Think about that. The Lord loved Solomon and Solomon loved the Lord. That sounds like a good combination to me.

Because of this relationship, the Lord appeared to Solomon in a dream and told him that He would grant him whatever he desired.

1 King 3:5, *“At Gibeon the LORD appeared to Solomon during the night in a dream, and God said, “Ask for whatever you want me to give you.”*

What a great offer, I heard a story about a Pastor and his staff who were out one day when an Angel appeared to them and made the same offer.

Well, what he actually said was, *“You can have anything you want. You can be the most famous pastor in the world, your church can have incredible wealth, or you can have immense wisdom and be the smartest man in the world.”*

Well, the pastor thought back to what happened with Solomon and said, *“I’ll take the wisdom.”* The angel replied, *“Okay, it’s as you asked,”* and disappeared.

After that encounter, the associate pastors gathered around to hear this new found wisdom of their leader.

One of them finally asked, *“Well, what are you thinking.”* The pastor looked up and said, *“I should have taken the money.”*

But that wasn’t what happened to Solomon, instead, in 1 Kings 3:9, Solomon says, *“So give your servant a discerning heart to govern your people and to distinguish between right and wrong. For who is able to govern this great people of yours?”*

That was the right answer because, along with that wisdom, God gave Solomon incredible riches and fame, as well as a long life. That’s what I call a pretty good deal.

So, to this son who would become the wisest man in the world, who would, through peace, eclipse what his father had done through conquest.

To this son, David gives advice that every one of us, as fathers, should give to our sons and daughters.

1 Chronicles 28:9, *“And you, my son Solomon, acknowledge the God of your father, and serve him with wholehearted devotion and with a willing mind, for the LORD searches every heart and understands every desire and every thought. If you seek him, he will be found by you; but if you forsake him, he will reject you forever.”*

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“And you, my son Solomon, acknowledge the God of your father.”

Notice, David tells his son *“to acknowledge the God of your father.”* In today’s language, David was telling Solomon to “know” God, not to simply know about God but to “know” God.

There’s a world of difference in knowing someone and knowing about someone.

I know of the King of England, and if I wanted to, I could research him and become intimately acquainted with his life and habits.

I could know his favorite foods, his favorite color, what time he gets up in the morning and what time he goes to bed at night.

As much as I knew about him, I still wouldn’t know him. I’d really just know about him.

But David had a special relationship with God. As a matter of fact, in 1 Samuel 13:14, David was described as a man after God’s own heart.

If you were to read through the Psalms, it doesn’t take very long to discover that David knew God. He was on speaking terms and more than that they were friends.

But David doesn’t assume that just because he knew God that his son would automatically know God.

Some people think that just because they raise their kids in a Christian home that they'll grow up to be Christians.

That somehow, they'll absorb God's grace through osmosis, or that their kid's will make it to heaven riding their coat tails.

You may be going to heaven, and if you are it's because you're one of God's children. But you must understand, your relationship will only save you, because God doesn't have any grand-children just children.

Every generation that accepts the Lord has the possibility of being the last generation of Christians if they don't pass it on.

We need to show our kids our God, and we need to introduce them to our God, and we need to encourage them to know our God.

Have you given your kids the opportunity to accept Christ as savior? You may say, *"No, that's your job as pastor,"* or *"That's Frankie's job in Sunday School,"* or *"That's Becky's job in Vacation Bible School."*

No! Parents, it's your job, and if you wait for someone else to do it then there's a pretty good chance that you'll lose your children.

So, not only does David tell Solomon to know God, but he adds: *"Serve him with wholehearted devotion and with a willing mind."*

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David's taking it a step further by saying, *"Son, knowing God is not enough, you must also worship and serve Him."*

So, your child asks you, *"How do I go about serving God?"* *"Good question,"* you say.

The answer is, *“You must give up your career, sell your home, and go to Bible College. Then God will lead you into the deepest darkest jungles or into the pastorate, sometimes they’re hard to tell apart.”*

You tell your children this because you can’t serve God unless you’re in full time Christian service. Right? Wrong! You see nobody can tell you what God expects of you, except God.

But there are basics that God requires of all His children, i.e. Read His Word, talk to Him in prayer, attend services at His house, support His work with your finances, and tell others about Him.

Some of these “how tos” need to be worked out between you and God, but regardless of what you do, there are certain conditions that are set on your service.

The first is that you must serve Him with your whole heart. Judas Iscariot served Jesus, but not necessarily with his whole heart.

To use Jesus as a fire escape from hell, while still worshipping at the shrine of self is a tragic mistake. The old adage still holds true, *“If He isn’t Lord of all, He isn’t Lord at all.”*

So, why are you here today? Are you here to serve God by worshipping Him and praising Him, or are you here because it’s the thing to do, or because of what people think.

Are you here worshipping and serving God with your whole heart or because going to church once a week never hurt anyone and it keeps your wife happy or your parents off your back. Is your primary loyalty today to Jesus Christ or to yourself?

But it goes on, speaking not only of your whole heart but also with a willing mind.

You don't serve God because your parents want you to or your spouse wants you to, you do it because you want to, not reluctantly or with a forced heart but with a willing mind.

David could've ordered Solomon to serve God. He could've put a condition upon the throne that stipulated that if he didn't serve God, he'd lose the kingdom.

I've met people who're in the ministry because aunt so and so told them they were called, or their mother wanted a pastor in the family.

Now they're just plodding along because they can't do anything else. *"I do it because it's what I've been called to do." "I do it because this is part of how I serve God and I do it willingly."*

I don't do it because I have to, as a matter of fact I don't think I could do it just because I had to. I couldn't be a Christian just to keep from going to hell.

You can make a person go to church, but you can't make them know and love God. They have to do that themselves. The Lord sees every heart and understands and knows every plan and thought.

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Conclusion

A while ago I asked why are you here today? Why are you in this worship service at Grace Fellowship Baptist Church this morning?

If I were to wander up the pews asking that question of each individual, *"Excuse me sir or mam, why are you here today?"* I'd probably get all kinds of noble answers.

I'd never know if those were real reasons or not, but the Bible says that God knows why you're here. So, regardless of the reason you'd give me for being here today, God knows the truth.

He'd know that some of you men would prefer listening to me preach to you in church than listen to your wife preach to you about going to church.

He'd know that some of you are here out of habit, that you got up this morning and knew that it was Sunday. You got dressed and here you are without much conscience effort or thought.

He'd know that some of you are here because you figure people would talk about you if you weren't here.

He'd know that the majority of you are here because you wanted to be with the people of Jesus, and you wanted to worship His name.

Isn't it refreshing to know that regardless of how we rationalize, justify, or explain our actions, whether good or bad, that God always knows why we do it.

1 Chronicles 28:9b warns us, *"If you forsake him, he will reject you forever."* These are pretty harsh words, listen to them again, *"If you forsake him, he will reject you forever."*

Not for a day or two, not a week or two, or a month or two, or a year or two, if you forsake Him then He'll reject you forever, and forever is a very long time.

When the Bible says that God will reject you that means that you'll go to hell, and contrary to popular opinion hell is not going to be a picnic.

It's not going to be "party time" with your friends. The Bible vividly describes hell as a place of torment, a place of despair, a place of loneliness.

Regardless of your reasoning there is a hell, and it's not going to be a fun time and there's no way to avoid hell without God.

You see everything in this life that's good, everything thing in this life that's beautiful, all the kindness and all the love is tied to God. If you seek him, you'll find him.

Remove God from the equation and you remove beauty and goodness, kindness and love.

If you forsake God, He'll reject you. That's not good news, the good news is that if you seek God, you'll find Him.

This isn't a game of hide and seek, God's not trying to stay hidden. This is the promise of the Word of God, if you seek Him, you'll find Him. That's a powerful statement.

Whenever you start looking for God, wherever you start looking for God, why every you start looking for God, He'll be found by you.

So, the question today, June 18, 2023, is this, "*Are you seeking God today?*" Are you looking for Him, because if you are, you will find Him.