

5. With God and without God

May 31, 2012

As I mentioned in my last teaching of 1 Chronicles, there are two major sins of king David that we remember – the adultery with Bathsheba and the unauthorized census of Israel.

Though his life was deeply etched by these undeniable sins, David had lived the very godly life that all of us want to mimic. He was exceptionally close to the Lord and knew how to describe his love for Him in words.

At the twilight of his life, king David had one goal, one goal only. It was not about himself, nor leaving a fancy legacy for his descendants to say, “Wow” and “Ah”. Rather, his totally consumed interest was preparing everything possible he could for the construction of the temple for his God. He didn’t spare any of his wealth or effort. He wanted God to receive all the glory.

He could easily have said, “If I cannot build a temple for God, I will have nothing to do with it.” But he did everything, down to every little detail. David didn’t show his attitude by doing nothing. He gathered all the materials for its construction so that Solomon could build a glorious temple for God. He had God in the center of his mind.

This is something we should learn from David. If we cannot have what we hoped, let’s not sit down in despair and allow the energies of our life to run to waste. But let’s arise, and gird ourselves to help others to achieve. After all, the goal of our Christian life should be about the glory of God, not ours.

But one of his sons, Adonijah was the complete opposite of David. It was all about him. Even though he knew that God was not with him, it didn’t matter to him. We will talk more about this a little later.

A. DAVID’S LAST DESIRE

1 Chronicles 28:2-8 Then King David rose to his feet and said, “Hear me, my brethren and my people: I had it in my heart to build a house of rest for the ark of the covenant of the Lord, and for the footstool of our God, and had made preparations to build it. 3 But God said to me, ‘You shall not build a house for My name, because you have been a man of war and have shed blood.’ 4 However the Lord God of Israel chose me above all the house of my father to be king over Israel forever, for He has chosen Judah to be the ruler; and of the house of Judah, the house of my father, and among the sons of my father, He was pleased with me to make me king over all Israel. 5 And of all my sons (for the Lord has given me many sons) He has chosen my son Solomon to sit on the throne of the kingdom of the Lord over Israel. 6 Now He said to me, ‘It is your son Solomon who shall build My house and My courts; for I have chosen him to be My son, and I will be his Father. 7 Moreover I will establish his kingdom forever, if he is steadfast to observe My commandments and My judgments, as it is this day.’ 8 Now therefore, in the sight of all Israel, the assembly of the Lord, and in the hearing of our God, be careful to seek out all the commandments of the Lord your God, that you may possess this good land, and leave it as an inheritance for your children after you forever.

David called the temple “a house of rest.” God’s rest represents the completion of His work. The idea of rest was so significant for the temple that even though David’s role as a ‘man of war’ was a vital part of the temple preparations in creating the necessary conditions for the work, it disqualified him from building the temple himself. Only Solomon, the ‘man of rest’, was sufficiently fitted for the task.

His exhortation to Solomon began with the most important aspect – emphasizing a steadfast commitment to a real fellowship with the Living God.

If there was anyone who could ride on the spiritual coat tail of one’s father, it would have been Solomon. For not many people come close to king David’s heart for the Lord.

B. ADONIJAH’S LAST DESIRE

1 Kings 2:13-15 Now Adonijah the son of Haggith came to Bathsheba the mother of Solomon. So she said, “Do you come peaceably?” And he said, “Peaceably.” 14 Moreover he said, “I have something to say to you.” And she said, “Say it.” 15 Then he said, “You know that the kingdom was mine, and all Israel had set their expectations on me, that I should reign. However, the kingdom has been turned over, and has become my brother’s; for it was his from the Lord.

Here is one really stark contrast between Adonijah and his father godly king David. In chapter 1 of 1 Kings, Adonijah proclaimed himself as the new king of Israel while his daddy David was still alive. After the death of his elder brothers Amnon and Absalom, he became heir-apparent to the throne, but Solomon, a younger brother, was preferred to him by his father who knew the will of God for the next successor.

Just in time the prophet Nathan and Bathsheba informed David to give orders that Solomon should immediately be proclaimed and admitted to the throne. Adonijah fled and took refuge at the altar of the Tabernacle, receiving pardon for his conduct from Solomon on the condition that he showed himself “a worthy man.”

However, Adonijah couldn’t sit back, because his mind still wanted the throne. He afterwards made a second attempt to gain the throne, by trying to marry David’s last woman, Abishag from Shunem, but Solomon denied authorization for such a marriage, even though Bathsheba now pleaded on Adonijah’s behalf. In other words, Adonijah wanted to marry his father’s concubine. What a sicko!

You may wonder why Adonijah went to Bathsheba first? For a couple of reasons:

1) Adonijah understood a little bit of psychology of women.

Though they lived in the time of the family systems of multiple wives and concubines, women’s jealousy was still there. King David was cared for by this young woman Abishag as a nurse only, while Bathsheba was in the background. A great opportunity to get Abishag out of her sight.

2) Adonijah knew that Solomon would listen to his mother’s request much more than Adonijah’s.

Interestingly, the name Adonijah is a combination of a couple of Hebrew terms: ‘Adoni’, meaning “my Master” – Adonai. And ‘Jah’ or ‘YAH’ short form of “YAHWEH”. Thus the name can be rendered “My Master is YAHWEH” or “YAHWEH is my Master”. Although Hebrew names usually relate to the child’s character and tend to be prophetic, Adonijah’s name certainly did not show his con artist’s mentality.

Please note what he said in v15. He knew exactly that God wanted Solomon to have the kingdom. Obviously, Adonijah didn't care what the Lord had in His mind. It was all about himself, no one else, not even God.

If we do the will of God, then we will invest "the rest of our time" in that which is lasting and satisfying. But if we give in to the world around us, we will waste "the rest of our time" and regret it when we stand before Jesus. The will of God comes from the heart of God and it is an expression of the love of God.

We may not always understand what He is doing, but we know that He is doing what is best for us. We do not live on explanations, but we live on His promises.

I like what Hudson Taylor, the great missionary of the Inland China said, "God reserves His best to those who leave the choices to Him."

C. GOD'S HOUSE DESIGNED BY GOD

1 Chronicles 28:9-12 "As for you, my son Solomon, know the God of your father, and serve Him with a loyal heart and with a willing mind; for the Lord searches all hearts and understands all the intent of the thoughts. If you seek Him, He will be found by you; but if you forsake Him, He will cast you off forever. 10 Consider now, for the Lord has chosen you to build a house for the sanctuary; be strong, and do it." 11 Then David gave his son Solomon the plans for the vestibule, its houses, its treasuries, its upper chambers, its inner chambers, and the place of the mercy seat; 12 and the plans for all that he had by the Spirit, of the courts of the house of the Lord, of all the chambers all around, of the treasuries of the house of God, and of the treasuries for the dedicated things;

When I was in my junior high school, I learned how to use the various symbols of architectural plan as a part of the school curriculums. Ever since then I enjoy designing architectural plans. I believe that the Lord God enjoyed telling His servant David how the temple should be built. After all, it was His house.

From the dimension of the temple to the last detail of the temple furnishings, everything was inspired by the Holy Spirit. That is why David reminded Solomon that these plans were not suggestions from the Lord, rather a divine commission.

Moses had to make everything according to the pattern God gave him on the Mount Sinai, and so did Solomon. The plans for the temple even spelled out how much material should go into each piece of furniture and each part of the building and nothing was to be altered.

In describing David's plans for building the temple, Chronicles has paid special attention to portray David as a second Moses and Solomon as a second Joshua.

In spite of many achievements by both Moses and David, neither one finished the task. Moses did not lead the people into the Promised Land, nor did David build the temple. Furthermore in both cases it was God who prohibited them from completing the work.

Since the task fell on their successors, Chronicles depicts Solomon as a second Joshua by noting several resemblances between the two:

- 1) Both were chosen privately and declared the support of all the people.**
- 2) Both received the support of the people without resistance or opposition.**

- 3) Both were magnified by God.
- 4) Both led God's people into "rest."
- 5) Both were told, "Be strong and courageous; The LORD your God goes with you"; and "He will never leave you nor forsake you".

These similarities show Joshua and Solomon as the ones chosen by God to finish the great work of their predecessors.

D. DAVID'S FINAL RECORDED PRAISE TO GOD

1 Chronicles 29:10-15 Therefore David blessed the Lord before all the assembly; and David said: "Blessed are You, Lord God of Israel, our Father, forever and ever. 11 Yours, O Lord, is the greatness, The power and the glory, The victory and the majesty; For all that is in heaven and in earth is Yours; Yours is the kingdom, O Lord, And You are exalted as head over all. 12 Both riches and honor come from You, And You reign over all. In Your hand is power and might; In Your hand it is to make great And to give strength to all. 13 "Now therefore, our God, We thank You And praise Your glorious name. 14 But who am I, and who are my people, That we should be able to offer so willingly as this? For all things come from You, And of Your own we have given You. 15 For we are aliens and pilgrims before You, As were all our fathers; Our days on earth are as a shadow, And without hope.

This magnificent prayer begins, as every prayer should, with praise and adoration to the Lord. God had blessed David richly, so he blesses God thankfully! In my opinion, his words are a short course in theology. He blessed the God of Israel and acknowledges His greatness, power, glory, victory, and majesty.

In contrast to the eternal God, David declares that though he is a king, is like any other human, an alien and a stranger on the earth. God is eternal, but human life is brief and nobody can prevent the inevitable hour of death. Since all things come from God, and life is brief, the wisest thing we can do is give back to God what He gives to us and make an investment in the eternal.

If you struggle with words of praise for the Lord like me, may I suggest that you read this everyday and put it in your heart? That is what I am going to do.

E. APPLICATIONS

- 1) The will of God comes from the heart of God and it is an expression of the love of God.
- 2) Since all things come from God, and life is brief, the wisest thing we can do is give back to God what He gives to us and make an investment in the eternal.