Bethel South Sermon Notes – *"Legacy"*

Speaker: Ps Julie Gowans
Series: Open Hands
Scripture: 1 Chronicles 22, 1 Chronicles 29:1–20, 2 Kings 20:12–19, Isaiah 39:1–8, 2 Corinthians 8:9

Main Idea

A godly legacy is about far more than the wealth or possessions we leave behind. It is the intentional transfer of faith, character, covenant, values, and resources from one generation to the next for God's glory. How we steward our lives today determines what we are building for tomorrow. God calls us to live beyond ourselves, honor Him with everything He has entrusted to us, and invest in what will outlive us.

What Does It Mean to Leave a Legacy?

When we hear the word legacy, we often think of financial inheritance, possessions, or wealth passed down to future generations.

But the biblical understanding of legacy goes much deeper.

A godly legacy includes passing down:

- Faith — teaching the next generation to know and trust God.
- Character — modeling integrity, humility, and obedience.
- Covenant — remaining faithful to God and His promises.
- Values — establishing priorities that reflect God's Word.
- Resources — stewarding what God has given us to bless future generations.

Throughout Scripture, we see that God has a heart for the generations.

His faithfulness, His works, and His promises were never intended to be experienced by one generation and then forgotten.

This is why testimonies are so important.

When we remember and share what God has done, we help the next generation recognize His faithfulness and learn to trust Him for themselves.

Living Beyond Ourselves

When we truly walk in the fear of the Lord, our perspective begins to change.

Instead of living exclusively for our own comfort, success, or enjoyment, we begin asking a greater question:

What am I building that will outlive me?

A life marked by holy fear recognizes that our decisions today have implications for generations we may never meet.

Scripture gives us two powerful examples of kings whose attitudes toward legacy were dramatically different.

Two Kings, Two Legacies

1. King David: Sacrificing the Present for the Future

1 Chronicles 22; 1 Chronicles 29

King David had a deep desire to build a temple for the Lord.

He wanted to establish a permanent place dedicated to God's presence and worship.

But God told David that he would not be the one to build it because he had been a man of war.

Instead, God chose David's son, Solomon, to complete the assignment.

David could have responded with disappointment, bitterness, or resentment.

He could have decided that if he wasn't going to receive the recognition for building the temple, he wouldn't contribute to it.

But that wasn't David's heart.

Rather than focusing on what he wasn't allowed to do, David embraced what he could do to prepare the next generation.

David's Heart of Humility

David recognized that everything he had accomplished was the result of God's grace and faithfulness.

He responded with gratitude, asking:

“Who am I, O Lord God, and what is my house, that you have brought me thus far?” — 1 Chronicles 17:16

David understood that his position, influence, and resources were gifts from God.

He didn't see himself as the ultimate owner of anything.

He saw himself as a steward.

David Prepared for a Future He Wouldn't See

Although David wouldn't personally build the temple, he devoted himself to preparing for its construction.

He gathered materials, made plans, organized resources, and contributed from his own personal treasures.

He invested in something he knew another generation would complete.

David was willing to sacrifice his present for the sake of the future.

He understood that Solomon's assignment was connected to the foundation he was laying.

His faithfulness would help position the next generation to fulfill God's purposes.

Everything Belongs to God

In 1 Chronicles 29, David and the leaders of Israel gave willingly toward the temple.

David responded by worshiping God and acknowledging that everything they possessed had come from Him.

“Everything comes from you, and we have given you only what comes from your hand.” — 1 Chronicles 29:14

This is the foundation of biblical generosity.

We cannot truly give God something that doesn't already belong to Him.

Everything we possess has been entrusted to us.

Our responsibility is to steward it faithfully for His glory.

David's legacy wasn't simply the wealth he left Solomon.

It was the example of humility, generosity, obedience, and wholehearted devotion to God.

2. King Hezekiah: Choosing Present Comfort Over Future Generations

2 Kings 20:12–19; Isaiah 39:1–8

King Hezekiah began his reign with remarkable faithfulness.

He restored the temple, reinstituted the celebration of Passover, and led the people back toward worshiping God.

He had a strong beginning.

But later in life, his heart began to change.

After God healed him from a serious illness, Hezekiah received visitors from Babylon.

Instead of giving God the glory for His faithfulness, Hezekiah proudly displayed his wealth and possessions.

He showed the Babylonian envoys his treasures and resources.

His attention had shifted toward his own accomplishments and security.

The Danger of Pride

The prophet Isaiah confronted Hezekiah and warned him that a day would come when the wealth he had displayed would be carried away to Babylon.

Even his descendants would experience captivity.

This was a devastating warning about the future of his family and nation.

But Hezekiah's response revealed the condition of his heart.

Rather than grieving over what would happen to his children or interceding for future generations, he was satisfied that peace and security would remain during his own lifetime.

His concern was primarily for his immediate comfort.

Hezekiah was content with personal peace, even if future generations would suffer.

The Contrast Between David and Hezekiah

David looked toward the future and asked what he could do to prepare the next generation.

Hezekiah looked toward the future and was satisfied that he wouldn't personally experience the consequences.

David was willing to sacrifice for something he would never see completed.

Hezekiah was unwilling to contend for a future he wouldn't personally experience.

David sacrificed his present for the future. Hezekiah prioritized his present at the expense of the future.

Their stories challenge us to examine the kind of legacy our decisions are establishing.

Are we living only for what benefits us today?

Or are we intentionally building something that will bless those who come after us?

Generosity Is Part of Our Legacy

One of the most significant ways we establish a godly legacy is through generosity.

But generosity requires more than simply giving money.

It requires a transformation in how we view ownership, provision, and security.

Breaking Free from a Scarcity Mindset

Ps Julie shared how her family's experiences during the Great Depression influenced her understanding of money and possessions.

Growing up around people who had experienced severe financial hardship contributed to a mindset of scarcity.

There was a tendency to hold tightly to possessions out of fear that there might not be enough.

This mindset can become deeply ingrained.

We begin to believe that our security depends on what we can accumulate, preserve, or control.

But a scarcity mindset is rooted in fear rather than confidence in God's provision.

Over time, through marriage and walking with Jesus, God began exposing this way of thinking in Ps Julie's life.

She recognized the need to repent and allow God's Word to renew her mind.

As her perspective changed, so did her relationship with generosity.

What once felt difficult began to become a source of joy.

Generosity Begins with Renewed Thinking

Freedom from fear and scarcity requires us to embrace a biblical understanding of stewardship.

Everything belongs to God.

He is our provider.

We are entrusted with resources to use for His purposes.

When we truly believe these things, generosity becomes an opportunity rather than a burden.

We no longer have to cling to everything out of fear.

Instead, we can give freely because we trust the One who provides.

Generosity becomes joyful when we understand that everything we have belongs to God.

And when we model this kind of generosity, we establish a legacy that teaches future generations to trust God rather than possessions.

Jesus: Our Ultimate Example of Generosity

2 Corinthians 8:9

The greatest example of generosity is Jesus Christ.

Paul reminds believers that although Jesus was rich, He became poor for our sake so that through His poverty we might become rich.

Jesus willingly gave Himself for our redemption.

He didn't live to preserve His own comfort or pursue personal gain.

He gave everything so that others could receive eternal life.

His sacrifice demonstrates the heart of true generosity.

Jesus gave what was most precious so that generations could experience the riches of His grace.

As followers of Christ, we are called to reflect that same heart.

Our generosity should extend beyond what benefits us personally.

It should contribute to God's purposes and help establish a spiritual inheritance for those who come after us.

We Have One Lifetime to Steward

Every one of us has been entrusted with a limited amount of time on earth.

We have one lifetime to steward what God has placed in our hands.

Our opportunities, relationships, influence, finances, and spiritual gifts all carry responsibility.

The question is not simply what we will accomplish while we're alive.

It is what will remain after we're gone.

Will future generations inherit an example of faithfulness?

Will they know the testimonies of God's goodness?

Will they have a foundation of biblical truth?

Will our lives have helped prepare them to walk in God's purposes?

A godly legacy is built through intentional faithfulness today.

We cannot wait until the end of our lives to begin thinking about what we will leave behind.

The decisions we make now are already shaping our legacy.

Building a Legacy Through God's Word

One of Ps Julie's strongest challenges was the importance of developing a consistent relationship with Scripture.

If we want to pass down biblical faith, we must first allow God's Word to shape our own lives.

We cannot establish a godly legacy while neglecting the truth that is meant to guide us.

Develop a Hunger for Scripture

Make opening your Bible a daily priority.

Don't rely solely on hearing Scripture during a Sunday service.

Develop a personal relationship with God's Word.

If you don't currently have a strong desire to read the Bible, begin by asking God to give you that hunger.

A hunger for God's Word is something we can intentionally cultivate and ask Him to increase.

Make God's Word Central to Your Life

Bring your Bible to church.

Follow along with the Scriptures being taught.

Spend time reading, studying, and applying God's Word throughout the week.

The goal isn't simply to gain more information.

It is to allow Scripture to transform the way we think, live, and make decisions.

When God's Word becomes the foundation of our lives, we are better equipped to pass that foundation to the next generation.

We cannot faithfully pass down what we have not first allowed God to establish within us.

Final Challenge

What kind of legacy are you building?

Are you living primarily for your own comfort, security, and success?

Or are you intentionally investing in what will outlive you?

King David understood that his faithfulness could prepare the way for future generations.

King Hezekiah became so focused on his own comfort that he lost sight of what would happen after him.

We have the opportunity to choose which example our lives will follow.

Recognize that everything you have belongs to God.

Repent of any scarcity mindset that keeps you from living generously.

Allow God's Word to renew your thinking and shape your priorities.

And begin building a legacy of faithfulness through your daily relationship with Scripture.

We have one lifetime to honor God with what He has entrusted to us.

Live beyond yourself. Steward what God has given you. And build a legacy that will glorify Him for generations to come.

Discussion Questions:

1. When you think about the legacy you're currently building, what do you believe the next generation will inherit from your life beyond material possessions?

2. David willingly invested in a temple he would never personally build or see completed. What does his example teach us about humility, generosity, and sacrificing for God's purposes beyond our own lifetime?

3. Hezekiah was satisfied knowing there would be peace during his lifetime, even though future generations would suffer. In what ways can we unintentionally prioritize our present comfort over the spiritual well-being of those who come after us?

4. Ps Julie shared how a scarcity mindset affected her relationship with generosity. How can fear of not having enough influence the way we steward our resources, and how does recognizing God's ownership change that perspective?

5. If a godly legacy is built through intentional faithfulness, particularly through our relationship with God's Word, what practical changes can you make today to establish a stronger spiritual foundation for future generations?