

Preparing to build  
1 Chronicles 21:17-22:18 (5/2/24)

We are in the last days of David's time as king. **The question is will he end well.** Not everyone who **begins well ends well.** He conquered the land, never took revenge on Saul, the first king, even when he was trying to kill him. He killed the giant Goliath. He brought the ark of the covenant back to Israel. **That's all-amazing stuff, but that doesn't mean he will end well.** That's a completely different animal.

If you remember, David sees that **he is living in a palace** with cedar wood, **probably crown molding**, while the ark of the covenant, that box that **contains symbols of God's provision** and power like the manna and the stone tablets of the law of Moses, is in a tent. It doesn't seem right to him. **His motivation is right**, to preserve the presence of God in Israel's midst and keep his worship as he has directed.

**In today's reading from May 2, we hear God's response again. I don't need a temple. I didn't ask for a temple, but I will have one, and you won't be the one to build it. You will be gone.**

**There is relative peace in the Kingdom, and I don't know if David was on board or his ADD kicked in, but he can't just sit and enjoy this pause. So, what does he do? He calls for a census. Joab, his top general, advises him against this course of action. It wasn't too much later that God speaks to David and calls this act sin!**

David is given **three choices** for punishment. **David choses a plague of three days of the Sword of the Lord.** Many people die. **David confesses his sin and goes to make this right with God.** Let's start reading at verse 18. If you want to read in your chronological Bible, this is the May 2 reading.

**<sup>18</sup> Then the angel of the Lord told Gad to instruct David to go up and build an altar to the Lord on the threshing floor of Araunah the Jebusite. <sup>19</sup> So David went up to do what the Lord had commanded him through Gad. <sup>20</sup> Araunah, who was busy threshing wheat at the time, turned and saw the angel there. His four sons, who were with him, ran away and hid. <sup>21</sup> When Araunah saw David approaching, he left his threshing floor and bowed before David with his face to the ground. <sup>22</sup> David said to Araunah, "Let me buy this threshing floor from you at its full price. Then I will build an altar to the Lord there, so that he will stop the plague."**

**<sup>23</sup> "Take it, my lord the king, and use it as you wish," Araunah said to David. "I will give the oxen for the burnt offerings, and the threshing boards for wood to build a fire on the altar, and the wheat for the grain offering. I will give it all to you."**

Here's how we know that David is truly repentant. <sup>24</sup> But King David replied to Araunah, "No, I insist on buying it for the full price. I will not take what is yours and give it to the Lord. I will not present burnt offerings that have cost me nothing!" <sup>25</sup> So David gave Araunah 600 pieces of gold in payment for the threshing floor. <sup>26</sup> David built an altar there to the Lord and sacrificed burnt offerings and peace offerings. And when David prayed, the Lord answered him by sending fire from heaven to burn up the offering on the altar. <sup>27</sup> Then the Lord spoke to the angel, who put the sword back into its sheath. <sup>28</sup> When David saw that the Lord had answered his prayer, he offered sacrifices there at Araunah's threshing floor. <sup>29</sup> At that time the Tabernacle of the Lord and the altar of burnt offering that Moses had made in the wilderness were located at the place of worship in Gibeon. <sup>30</sup> But David was not able to go there to inquire of God, because he was terrified by the drawn sword of the angel of the Lord. 1 Chronicles 21:18-30

This is a record of David's last days in office. **Is he a lame duck president, who commutes someone's sentence? Or is he someone who is really looking to set the next one up for success.** Or worse, is he going to end badly and leave a mess for his son Solomon.

This story is about building a legacy. **But a legacy is something that starts before you, but you are to continue it and build on it.** Let's, therefore, call this a...**Continuing Legacy.**

**Legacy is the long-lasting impact of particular events, actions, etc, that took place in the past, or of a person's life.**

**David wants to build on his legacy that God gave him when he was anointed king and when he was promised to have a dynasty of kings forever.**

**No wonder he wanted to build a temple for God. Yahweh had done so much for him and for this people, Israel, that he wanted this to continue past his own life.**

**In the Bible there are some great examples of leadership. Moses is the one most talked about, but David is no slouch. He is the gold standard for Kings and is referred to as a man after God's own heart, but that doesn't determine that he will end well.**

Here's the **starting point** for David's legacy. He must...**Confess personal kingdom building as sin.**

**Why was taking a census sin?** Because there are only two reasons a king takes a census. It's either to raise a bigger army or to levy more taxes. The context makes it sound like it is so that he can build a bigger army. **He put Joab in charge, who is his top general for the army.**

**Why does David need to conscript or draft an army?** They are at peace, which God has provided for them. **If they need an army, he will tell them, and he hasn't.** This is a time of peace. God has already said that **the reason David cannot build the temple** is because he is a man of war, too much blood on his hands. His son is described as a man of peace. **Solomon doesn't need for Daddy to draft him an army.**

**<sup>7</sup> God was very displeased with the census, and he punished Israel for it. <sup>8</sup> Then David said to God, "I have sinned greatly by taking this census. Please forgive my guilt for doing this foolish thing." 1 Chronicles 21:7-8**

**David said very clearly, "I have sinned greatly."** He didn't make **excuses or try to wordsmith** this so that it doesn't sound so bad. It wasn't a poor strategy. **"A bad decision that doesn't make you a bad person."** No, it was sin.

**<sup>16</sup> David looked up and saw the angel of the Lord standing between heaven and earth with his sword drawn, reaching out over Jerusalem. So David and the leaders of Israel put on burlap to show their deep distress and fell face down on the ground. <sup>17</sup> And David said to God, "I am the one who called for the census! I am the one who has sinned and done wrong! But these people are as innocent as sheep—what have they done? O Lord my God, let your anger fall against me and my family, but do not destroy your people." 1 Chronicles 21:16-17**

**Putting on burlap** was a way of demonstrating how wrong they are to mourn the disobedience that has caused this plague. **Talk about not worrying about the optics** or looking presidential or kingly. Our king is not in a **silk robe or shiny armor** with an impressive helmet on top. **This is weakness and humility.** This is submission.

**David owned it.** He didn't blame it on the **circumstances or bad advice.** He wants God to punish him, not the people of Israel. **This is a real leader.** He didn't try to **deflect.** That's when you **get people looking in a different direction than you.** That's when we say, **"Well, everybody is doing it."** Or the ever popular, **"Look at what Saul did, that's so much worse."** That is deflecting blame. **David said, "No, look at me, I'm the guilty one."**

**Everything good with God starts with confession and repentance. This is about David's relationship with God and, therefore, Israel's relationship with God.** David needed to not only own his sin of taking a census, **but the attitude behind it.** David was trying to build something for David, what he wanted. This is why I used the phrase "personal Kingdom building." This decision was about ego, this was about self-aggrandizement. **He wanted a big, impressive army for his legacy,** but God said no. **It was his desire to build his own kingdom that was heart sin**

behind the act of sin. It was the poison, the census was just the symptom. And that's what happens when great men get bored.

**The owning of his sin is what happens first to get everything back to level, but where does David start in continuing to build a godly legacy for Solomon and those after him?**

The leadership principle is...**Know your starting point, your center.**

**Go to the very center, the heart, and build from there.** What really makes a group of people go. **What makes them who they are, or who they should be.** Go back to that and build.

**Adolf Hitler believed that the German people were special, they had a destiny to be great. The problem is, they were economically crippled by the Versailles Treaty.** This was when they surrendered to the French, British, and US. This treaty forced them to **take the full blame** and responsibility for WW1. This treaty caused **poverty, inflation, and incredible unemployment.** It humiliated **Germany.** They even lost some land.

**The heart of how the German people felt about themselves, the center of it was this treaty.** Hitler built upon that. He found **scapegoats, the Jews, and others.** He told the **German people that this humiliation would not last because they were the master race, destined to rule over others.**

When **Germany defeated France,** Hitler brought the same train car where the Versailles Treaty was signed, and the actual desk it was signed on and took it to the same place and forced France to sign an unconditional surrender. **Now he could get away with almost anything because he went to the center, the heart of who Germany was and build something from there.**

**Obviously, this failed because what he wanted the people to believe was at the heart of their pain and suffering, wasn't true.** They weren't a master race destined for greatness. **They were a country like others who had gotten a bad deal after losing a war.**

**What is the very center of what God wants for David and Israel?** It's to be his special people who will be a nation of priests, who will be a shining light on a hill, **who will be an example** of how to know and please the one true God.

**What's the very center of Israel's relationship with God?** It's their true obedience and worship of Yahweh. That's where it starts. **I will be your God** and you will be my people. **This is the starting point and always has been.** In this case, **an actual location relates to Israel's center** where David must begin. Particularly because **this location connects them with who God wants them to be** and how they will relate to him.

Then David said, "This will be the location for the Temple of the Lord God and the place of the altar for Israel's burnt offerings!" 1 Chronicles 22:1

David chose a threshing floor on the top of a mountain that was at the heart of who Israel was to put the temple which was the heart of their worship. The temple was the point where heaven meets earth. This is where God's presence lives amongst his people at the heart of their worship.

What was important about this mountain? This is where...

This is where Abraham nearly sacrificed Isaac. And that day God provided a ram caught in the thicket instead of Isaac.

God brought fire down on what David sacrificed as a sign that this is the place where my temple will be where you will bring sacrifices to me.

This is putting God and the worship of him at the center of who they are. The temple is now the point where heaven meets earth, and it is where God historically showed up and demonstrated his power.

Don't build a bigger army or try to get more territory or fame for yourself or for Israel. It's not like this fledgling country, surrounded by enemies, didn't need other things. What about making Jerusalem the ancient center of power and culture like Egypt?

No, get to the heart of the matter, the center, and build from there.

Continuing to build legacy begins with confession and repentance. Then you must go to the center, the very heart of the matter. But you also can't forget that...Preparation for building matters.

<sup>5</sup> David said, "My son Solomon is still young and inexperienced. And since the Temple to be built for the Lord must be a magnificent structure, famous and glorious throughout the world, I will begin making preparations for it now." So David collected vast amounts of building materials before his death. 1 Chronicles 21:5

Is this code for wanting to keep his hand in the game or to meddle because he doesn't trust God and he doesn't trust Solomon as God's choice. Or maybe it's just ego, he wants to continue to be the hero, the center of attention.

Jesus explains this clearly when he asks people to follow him. <sup>27</sup> And if you do not carry your own cross and follow me, you cannot be my disciple. <sup>28</sup> "But don't begin until you count the cost. For who would begin construction of a building without first calculating the cost to see if there is enough money to finish it? <sup>29</sup> Otherwise, you might complete only the foundation before running out of money, and then everyone would laugh at you. Luke 14:27-29

**Count the cost and prepare.** David knew what it would cost, and he wanted to set the table for his son to do the actual building of God's temple.

**To continue a godly legacy, there is a price to be paid in preparation.** We must set things right at a foundational level by owning our sin of selfishness and self-promotion. We must figure out what the heart of this legacy is and go back to it if we are going to build any kind of real legacy. And then we must do the work of preparing, getting what we need, planning so that what is built will last.

**Are we willing to prepare for someone else to do what comes next?**

Then once we are ready to build the next part, we must...**Pass the baton and step away.**

**This is what David did.** He set Solomon up for success so that he would be famous, not David. He put Solomon in a position to build the next part of this godly legacy. David didn't want to be a dead end, therefore, much of what he did had to be about the next person in line.

**When a runner in a relay ends his or her leg, he doesn't keep running.** The runner must give up the baton and give up the lane. His responsibility is how well does he run and does he make a clean hand off.

**This is when David gives up control.** It is no longer productive for him to try to move anything forward. He must step away, out of the limelight and trust both God and Solomon.

**This demands trusting God and realizing that it doesn't all depend on me.** Trust his choice for the future.

**Trying to hang on to control and the ability to build something beyond when you should, always stunts the growth of others.** Solomon was going to defer to his father, the greatest king of them all, who God promised to give an everlasting dynasty. **This never ends well for either party.**

**When I knew I was leaving Alma** as youth pastor, I had a big plan of what I was going to do as I headed out the door to have the youth ministry flourish after I left. **The reality was that I did a few of those things** and then I had a clear sense from the Holy Spirit that I was to **take my hands off the reins.** It was no longer right for me to set direction for the Alma Church of God youth ministry. **I had done what I was commissioned to do and to do more would have been wrong and counterproductive.**

**It was going to be a search committee,** the Alma leadership and eventually **Ben Krieder** the next youth pastor who would build any legacy from there. **And yes, there was a legacy of great youth ministry way before me.** Me and the team of great leaders and student leaders did our part.

<sup>6</sup> Then David sent for his son Solomon and instructed him to build a Temple for the Lord, the God of Israel. <sup>7</sup> "My son, I wanted to build a Temple to honor the name of the Lord my God," David told him. <sup>8</sup> "But the Lord said to me, 'You have killed many men in the battles you have fought. And since you have shed so much blood in my sight, you will not be the one to build a Temple to honor my name.' <sup>9</sup> But you will have a son who will be a man of peace. I will give him peace with his enemies in all the surrounding lands. His name will be Solomon, and I will give peace and quiet to Israel during his reign. <sup>10</sup> He is the one who will build a Temple to honor my name. He will be my son, and I will be his father. And I will secure the throne of his kingdom over Israel forever.' <sup>11</sup> "Now, my son, may the Lord be with you and give you success as you follow **his directions** in building the Temple of the Lord your God. <sup>12</sup> And may the Lord give you **wisdom and understanding**, that you may obey the Law of the Lord your God as you rule over Israel. <sup>13</sup> For you will be successful if you **carefully obey the decrees and regulations** that the Lord gave to Israel through Moses. **Be strong and courageous; do not be afraid or lose heart!** 1 Chronicles 22:6-13

David is giving Solomon the most important advice as he passes him the baton. He's telling him how to run the next part of the race. He is telling him how to continue to build this godly legacy that has been passed on to him.

First, he blesses him "may the Lord be with you and give you success." This means I hope you surpass me in what I did. Then, he tells him to follow God's directions in building the temple."

Third, he asks God to give Solomon wisdom and understanding, but for the purpose of "carefully obeying the decrees and regulations that the Lord gave to Israel through Moses."

Finally, because he knows there will be setbacks and struggles and frustrations he says, "Be strong and courageous; do not be afraid or lose heart!" He now has become the encourager, the cheerleader, not the one on the field.

Does that last phrase sound familiar? Yes, it is familiar. Like Moses passing the baton to Joshua, David uses the same phrase of challenge and encouragement, "Be strong and courageous; do not be afraid or lose heart!" Moses wasn't going to be the one to bring the people into the promised land. He had done his job now it was Joshua's responsibility.

<sup>17</sup> Then David ordered all the leaders of Israel to assist Solomon in this project. <sup>18</sup> "The Lord your God is with you," he declared. "He has given you peace with the surrounding nations. He has handed them over to me, and they are now subject to the Lord and his people. <sup>19</sup> Now seek the Lord your God with all your heart and soul. Build the sanctuary of the Lord God so that you can bring the Ark

of the Lord's Covenant and the holy vessels of God into the Temple built to honor the Lord's name." 1 Chronicles 22:17-19

**Are you building a godly legacy for your kids, grandkids? Are you building a godly legacy that will ensure that Eagle Ridge is the kind of church that God uses to change lives, make disciples and make the kingdom present for others in the future?**

The problem is, we will only realize that we don't have someone to pass it on to after it's too late.

How can you start today? Not fretting about the past, but starting today. Think about someone in your family, in the church who poured into you. What did they pass on to you? Now build on that.

What if you pictured legacy as a bridge to the future for others. Our challenge to align our lives to this story is to do that very thing.

**My Bridge to the future.**

You can probably guess what the first move is because it's always the first move. **1. My Confession.** I've personalized this on purpose.

**2. Make my way back to the center.** Where do you need to begin with your relationship with God? It's always about growth and that comes by abiding or remaining in him. All spiritual disciplines, like reading God's word, corporate worship, prayer, fasting, telling God's story, service, real fellowship around God's word...are always ways of abiding in Jesus so that his spirit can make us new. What is the center for you?

**3. Be a hero maker now.** David was a hero maker. Yes, he had been a hero first, but that isn't necessary to be a hero maker. That's when you want your fruit to grow on someone else's tree. You don't need the credit, it's about someone else being the famous one or at least the one who everyone associates with a move of God.

Do you know who Harriet Meers is? I bet you know the men who she disciplined. Among her protégés were Billy Graham, Young Life founder Jim Rayburn, and Campus Crusade for Christ founder, Bill Bright. Nearly 400 others went into full-time ministry after attending her Sunday school class at Hollywood Presbyterian Church. No, that's because she wasn't a hero, she was a hero maker. She was a Sunday school teacher who taught, influenced and disciplined three men who are famous in the growth of the Kingdom in America.

**I really want to end well?** I want to be a part of something that continues. That's legacy.