

THE VALUE OF LIFE'S UNREALIZED PURPOSES

Texts: II Samuel 7:1-3; I Kings 8:17-19

Anthony Ashley-Cooper, the 7th Earl of Shaftesbury, was fiercely committed to his Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ. Although well-connected to Britain's aristocracy, he rejected the opportunity for higher office, using his position as a Member of Parliament to fight for the poor children and mothers of England. It is hard to believe that children as young as four years of age were consigned to working in underground mines from 6:00 AM to 10:00 PM every day. Lord Shaftesbury's *Mines Act of 1842* banned girls and boys under 10 and all women from working underground. He fought for relief from cruel treatment of people who had been committed to lunatic asylums and was relentless in championing education and housing for the poor. Shaftesbury's 1851 *Lodging House Act* was deemed by Charles Dickens as "the best piece of legislation that ever proceeded from the English parliament." The common people grieved for the "People's Earl" when in 1885 he died at 84 years of age. When Lord Shaftesbury had come to die, he said to his physician, "I am not afraid to die; my peace is made with God. I am ready to go, but I have no one to look after these poor women and children. I want to live." There is a frustration that comes when a noble life goal doesn't appear to be coming to fruition. Now in truth, when Shaftesbury lay dying in the 19th century, he had no idea that the magnificent influence his Christianity in action would not only survive into the 21st century, but set a precedent that affected the world for a change for good.

David had a most noble goal of building a house for the only true and living God that would bring glory and honor to his Lord and capture the imagination of the world to see the beauty of holiness displayed in the best that mortal man could offer. But we see from our text, David's desire was denied. God did hear his plea for a house; he was just not going to be the one to build it. It takes humility and character to continue the course that the Lord has chosen for you when you come to the realization that in your final days, you are preparing for the success of the next generation.

I. THE DREAM OF DAVID'S HEART

II Samuel 7:1, 2; I Chronicles 28:2. Isaiah 66:1: "Thus saith the LORD, The heaven is my throne, and the earth is my footstool: where is the house that ye build unto me? and where is the place of my rest?"

II. THE DIRECTION OF DAVID'S FRIEND

II Samuel 7:2, 3. This is Nathan's first appearance in the Bible. He was a fearless prophet of God. He was just the kind of friend a king like David needed. Proverbs 27:17: "Iron sharpeneth iron; so a man sharpeneth the countenance of his friend." Friends often get their desire to see their friend's need of happiness confused with the plan of God that may include a word from the Lord that has the potentiality of disappointment.

May the Lord help all of us to pray for wisdom that our counsel would be aligned with God's will, even when the counsel may not be pleasant. Proverbs 27:6a: "Faithful are the wounds of a friend..." We discover later in David's life that Nathan became the friend that David needed, being forced to give David the saddest news he would ever hear.

III. THE DECISION OF THE LORD

II Samuel 7:4-17.

A. The Sovereign God--Free of Needs

II Samuel 7:4-7. God informs David of how He did all He did without the beautiful house the king desired to build for Him. Psalm 50:12: "If I were hungry, I would not tell thee: for the world is mine, and the fulness thereof."

B. The Commendation of David

II Samuel 7:8-11. God reminds David that He has raised him up from the sheepcote to the palace. God also tells David once again of the permanency of his own house. God is giving comfort and commendation before He gives David the sobering, rather bad news.

C. The Denial of God

II Samuel 7:12-17. The Lord tells David he is not permitted to build a house for God. The specifics as to the reason for David being deprived of his dream are revealed in I Chronicles 22:7-10. May I suggest the importance of a man of peace being the builder of the Temple: This is a house where peace is made.

The Passover and the Day of Atonement were high ceremonies requiring blood to be shed by the innocent animals to show us the one and only Passover, i.e., Christ. 1 Corinthians 5:7b: "...For even Christ our passover is sacrificed for us." The Temple, like the Tabernacle, would reveal, that Christ alone makes Atonement: Romans 5: 10, 11: "For if, when we were enemies, we were reconciled to God by the death of his Son, much more, being reconciled, we shall be saved by his life. And not only so, but we also joy in God through our Lord Jesus Christ, by Whom we have now received the atonement." The result is told us in Ephesians 2:14: "For He is our peace, who hath made both one, and hath broken down the middle wall of partition between us." David spent much of his life saving Israel from her enemies by shedding blood. The Son of David would save all in the world who would believe on Him by the shedding of His own blood. Colossians 1:20: "And, having made peace through the blood of His cross, by Him to reconcile all things unto Himself; by Him, I say, whether they be things in earth, or things in heaven."

IV. THE DELINEATION BY THE LORD

II Chronicles 6:7-9; I Kings 8:17-19.

II Samuel 7 does not reveal what II Chronicles and I Kings reveals of this event. II Chronicles 6:8: "But the LORD said to David my father, Forasmuch as it was in thine heart to build an house for my name, thou didst well in that it was in thine heart."

Not many can say with Simeon in Luke 2:29 and 30, "Lord, now lettest thou thy servant depart in peace, according to thy word: For mine eyes have seen thy salvation." Hebrews 11:10: "For he [Abraham] looked for a city which hath foundations, whose builder and maker is God." Abraham left the Ur of the Chaldees but never found the city on this side of eternity. Jacob went out on a great quest, but died a stranger in strange land. Moses, the most famous man of the Old Testament led the entire nation from Egypt, through the wilderness and to the very brink of the the Promised Land, but never got to enjoy it himself. The saddest thing in life is not the brevity of life, but the seemingly incompleteness of it.

It is most touching that God is refusing David his dream of building a house for Him, but God declared David's desire was good even though he was deprived the privilege. David does the right thing; he sets his heart to get things ready for Solomon to do the job. I Chronicles 22:5: "And David said, Solomon my son is young and tender, and the house that is to be builded for the LORD must be exceeding magnifical, of fame and of glory throughout all countries: I will therefore now make preparation for it. So David prepared abundantly before his death."

The Bridge Builder
An old man going a lone highway,
Came, at the evening cold and gray,
To a chasm vast and deep and wide.
Through which was flowing a sullen tide

The old man crossed in the twilight dim,
The sullen stream had no fear for him;
But he turned when safe on the other side
And built a bridge to span the tide.

“Old man,” said a fellow pilgrim near,
“You are wasting your strength with building here;
Your journey will end with the ending day,
You never again will pass this way;
You’ve crossed the chasm, deep and wide,
Why build this bridge at evening tide?”

The builder lifted his old gray head;
“Good friend, in the path I have come,” he said,
“There followed after me to-day
A youth whose feet must pass this way.
This chasm that has been as naught to me
To that fair-haired youth may a pitfall be;
He, too, must cross in the twilight dim;
Good friend, I am building this bridge for him!”

-by Will Allen Dromgoole

V. THE DEVOTION OF DAVID

II Samuel 7:18-29

- A. David sat down and gave God thanks. II Samuel 7:18, 19
- B. David acknowledged God knows best. II Samuel 7:20
- C. David declared the Lord has the final Word. II Samuel 7:21
- D. David said in essence, “Thy will be done.” II Samuel 7:25
- E. David confesses God is good in all that He does. II Samuel 7:28, 29.
Psalm 119:68: “Thou art good, and doest good; teach me thy statutes.”

Conclusion: One day I would like to go to Northampton, MA. I have read that the tall stately elms that were planted there by the great Gospel minister Jonathan Edwards over 264 years ago still stand in majesty. Today there are youths that enjoy the wide-spread shade of these elms that even Edwards was not fully able to appreciate. And today we still enjoy the shade of the pure Gospel planted in the fertile ground of the Great Awakening by the esteemed Jonathan Edwards.

-Pastor Pope-