

15–“A Life Responding to the Gospel,” 1 Chronicles 29:10–22//*The Search for a King*

When someone writes a mission statement for their company, they try to capture, concisely, what they are about. Most of them are atrocious, filled with clichés and buzzwords... and when you get done your head hurts. How many of you work for a company with a terrible mission statement?

Here’s the question, though: If you were going to choose one phrase to epitomize your life, what would it be? A “life philosophy.” Today, you’re going to see David’s.

I explained to you last week that the writers of 2 Sam and 1 Chronicles both chose a different event to conclude their account of David’s life that summarized what we learn from him.

- We looked at the ending in 2 Samuel last week, where David’s life ends with him failing 1 more time and showing us that he is not the king we are searching for;
- Well, 1 Chron, which we’re going to study today, is going to end by showing us David taking up an offering in response to God’s grace in his life.

Now, I want to point out, that even though both writers choose a different event to summarize David’s life, both of them have as David’s last act a response to the Gospel. In 2 Samuel, after God stopped the plague, David buys the field where God had shown mercy and he dedicates that piece of ground as the place for the building of the future Temple.

- What is interesting is that when David goes to Araunah, the guy who owned the field, to buy it, Araunah says, “Look, David, you can have it for free.” But David says, *“No, I will purchase it from you at full price, because I will not give to the Lord that which costs me nothing” (24:24)*. In other words, I don’t want to give to God something that costs me nothing. God has given so much to me and I want to show my love toward Him in response.

Well, 1 Chronicles, which we’re going to study today, shows David taking up of an offering for the building of that Temple, and then praying a prayer that is stunning in how well it epitomizes David’s life philosophy: a life that is so grateful for and amazed by God’s grace it wants to respond.

So, if you have your Bible, **1 Chronicles 29**... let me summarize the 1st part of the story: David takes up a huge offering for the Temple. Now, this Temple was not just going to be a cool piece of architecture or a big monument to God; this was going to be a place where Israel could meet with God and where future generations of Israelites could learn about the God who delivered Israel.

Well, as the leader, David starts off the offering by giving (vs. 4) 3000 talents of gold and 7000 talents of silver. A talent was about 75 lbs. That 225,000 lbs of gold and 525,000 lbs of silver (like to see the usher carrying that in the offering plate... or maybe David just put it on his AE and got a boatload of miles).

Here is what is significant.

- One talent was about 10 years’ wages for the average worker. David gave 3K of gold and 7K of silver. In today’s terms, that’s about 5 billion dollars.
- Some scholars say this was probably David’s entire personal treasury. In other words, he didn’t give out of his treasuries. He gave his treasuries. This was a sacrificial gift that would have led to a significant lifestyle change.

- Kings in the ancient world were considered to be gods. Everything flowed toward them. In this act, David here is giving all of himself to God, and saying, “It’s all *from* you and *for* you and *for your purposes*.”

Well, then, the people respond (vs. 8) and turn everything into “Jehiel the Gershonite,” who was like the Tim Jackson of David’s staff team, and by the time it’s all over, they have resources coming out the wazoo for the building of the Temple. This offering was huge; it represented a significant part of their national economy and livelihood being redirected into ministry. And so, Solomon, David’s son, would be able to build this Temple with all cash and no debt.

What is most important, however, is not how much money they took in, but what was going on in the hearts of the people, and David, in this offering. David expresses it in a prayer, and I want to walk you through it; it shows you the internal workings of a Gospel-driven, Gospel-saturated heart. So, let’s begin reading in **(1 Chronicles 29:9)**, “then the people rejoiced because they had given willingly, for with a whole heart (literally, in Hebrew, “shalom-heartedly;” a heart filled with peace; with a heart at peace...) they had offered freely to the Lord. David the king also greatly rejoiced.”

There was peace and joy in giving. For many people, the idea of giving money is scary and it feels like drudgery. The moment you come to church and the pastor starts to talk about money you are like, “*Oh no... why did I come this week? Will anyone notice if I slip out to the bathroom and stay gone for the next ½ hr?*”

But for these people, this is not their experience—and there’s a reason for that. Most people hang on to their money because it is their lifeblood. Money is the source of security and the good life so of course you hang on to it. “The blood that is in my veins, I’m kind of stingy with it.” But, for these people, as you’re about to see, their real security and their real delight is in God. So they are freer with their money, because God is their security; His kingdom is their delight; His promises their power. I often say this, but money is the one great competitor to God as the source of our lives.

- Greed is the one sin no one thinks they’re guilty of. People admit to struggling with lust, lying, laziness, even pride, but no one admits to greed, because whatever you hang on to you feel like you need and you have a right to.¹

Here, the power of money is broken so the people could give freely and joyfully, and that power is broken because the people have found God to be a better source of security and delight than money.

Then, vs. 10: **[10] Therefore David blessed the LORD in the presence of all the assembly.** (You say, “Why is he blessing ‘the Lord’? The people are the ones who gave.” Because what they gave was a response to what they’d seen about God. Gospel-driven generosity is never guilt- or really obligation-driven; it’s always a response to the greatness and generosity of God) **And David said: “Blessed are you, O LORD, the God of Israel our father, forever and ever. [11] Yours, O LORD, is the greatness and the power and the glory and the victory and the majesty,** (all the battles that have ever been won; all the progress we have made; the fact that we are your people who know you and walk in your ways; that’s all owing to you; it’s because of your gracious work in us. You took us from nothing and you have given us everything.) **for all that is in the heavens and in the earth is yours. Yours is the kingdom, O LORD, and you are exalted as head above all. [12] Both riches and honor come from you, and you rule over all. In your hand are power and might, and in your hand it is to make great and to give strength to all...**

- David is looking around at all that God has given them and saying, “You, God, you gave us all this. It’s all been a gift of grace.”

¹ Tim Keller, sermon at Redeemer on 1 Chronicles 29:6–20.

[14] “But who am I, and what is my people, that we should be able thus to offer willingly? (There was no reason for you to show us this much grace. This is not what we deserved.) For all things come from you, and of your own have (of the things you have given to us we’re giving back to you) we given you. [15] For we are strangers before you and sojourners, as all our fathers were. Our days on the earth are like a shadow, and there is no abiding. (In other words, there is nothing permanent about this world. We didn’t bring anything into it, and when we die, we can’t take anything out. Were it not for what God is doing in us and for us in eternity, our lives would have no point) [16] O LORD our God, all this abundance that we have provided for building you a house for your holy name comes from your hand and is all your own.

[17] ...And now I have seen your people, who are present here, offering freely and joyously to you. [18] O LORD, the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Israel, our fathers, keep forever such purposes and thoughts in the hearts of your people, (in other words, keep us forever in this attitude of realizing that we’re here because of God’s grace, all things come from You, and You and Your Kingdom are the only thing that matters for eternity; that is the greatest thing you could ever give to any of us and the greatest thing you could leave to our children) and direct their hearts toward you.

[19] Grant to Solomon my son a whole heart that he may keep your commandments, your testimonies, and your statutes, performing all, and that he may build the palace for which I have made provision.”

[20] Then David said to all the assembly, “Bless the LORD your God.” And all the assembly blessed the LORD, the God of their fathers, and bowed their heads and paid homage to the LORD... [22] And they ate and drank before the LORD on that day with great gladness.

And, now, here’s the end of our story of David, the official passing of the baton: (22) And they made Solomon the son of David king... and they anointed him as prince for the LORD. And David quietly passes off the scene.

4 things from the prayer that undergird David’s life philosophy; which should also undergird yours:

1. **Everything we have comes from God (vs. 14)**
2. *We are the recipients of great grace (vs. 12)*
3. *This life is temporary; eternity is forever. (vs. 15) (we came into this world with nothing, we take nothing away)*
4. *The most valuable thing on earth is the next generation coming to know Jesus (vs. 18-19)*

1. **Everything we have comes from God (vs. 14)**

- Everything we have comes from Him; everything we have has been given to us as a trust.
- That’s a revolutionary truth: nothing you have belongs to you.
 - That house you live in; it’s not yours. The 2nd house is not yours (I have nothing against 2nd houses; I hope you have 1, and I hope you invite me to stay at it sometime), but it’s not really yours.
 - Those talents are not yours.
 - Nothing you have belongs to you.
 - You say, “I worked for all this stuff.” Great. The skills and talents you used to earn that money, where did you get them? The air you breathed; the health you enjoyed; where did you get that? Do you really feel like if you’d born a homeless kid on the streets of Ethiopia with AIDS that life would have turned out the same for you?
- All you have comes from God, and it all belongs to God. All of it. Not a penny you have; not a thing you own truly belongs to you.

- So the question then, is, what did He give those things to you for, and what would He have you do with them?
- The Bible teaches that there are several purposes for our money:
 - **To provide for our needs.**
 - **To bless us.** 1 Timothy 6:16. He gave it to us to enjoy life, like rays of the sunshine
 - 2 Cor 8 says he gave some of it to us **to share with the poor.** He says that he gave to some of us more than we need because there are others who don't have enough.
 - Imagine for a minute that my wife is packing Kharis' lunch, and puts in 2 sandwiches... gets to school and realizes that she has 2 sandwiches, but the poor kid beside her has none. Imagine we are watching her through a pair of binoculars and we see her share her 2nd sandwich with the poor kid. We don't say, "Ahh... foolish child. She should hide that sandwich in case tomorrow we choose not to give her another." Of course not. We know that tomorrow we'll give her another sandwich. We give her 2 today to share with the kids who have none.
- All things come from God. The Bible gives you a test to see if you understand that.
 - It's called the tithe: At every point in the Bible, God has prescribed that we return a tithe of what He has given to us back to Him.
 - It wasn't just an OT thing; it was pre-law, with Abraham; it was taught in the law by Moses; it was affirmed by Jesus after the law...
 - 10% of all that God gave to us was to be returned to Him.
 - People say, "I can't afford it." That's not the issue. God tells you to give to Him even when you can't afford it, because He uses that to show you how He can take care of you...
 - God has this way of taking what we give to Him and multiplying it back to us. I have seen it way too many times, both in my own life and for some of you.
 - David Jeremiah illustration
- Every time I preach on this I get 2 things:
 - People who send me letters because they confuse what I am doing as an attempt to beef up our offerings; that's not what this is about
 - People who tell me that they trust God and obey Him and experience His provision in their lives

2. **As recipients of great grace, we respond with lavish generosity (vs. 11, 12)**

- David who insisted on paying full price for the field, and would not give to God that which cost him nothing.
- What is being shown to you is that God doesn't need anything; but people touched by God's grace want to give back to Him.
- A couple of times Jesus had a woman come in and wash his feet. Once it included a woman breaking open a very expensive bottle of perfume over his feet. Both times others objected. One time they said, 'Do you not realize what kind of woman this is?' The other time someone said, 'What a waste of money!' Jesus said both times, "Let her alone." And then He said, "Those who have been forgiven of much, love much in response." In other words, if you have any concept of how gracious God has been to you, pouring yourself out for Him is the natural response.
- **One time I was with a couple of guys from our church I was getting to know ... R&R**
 - We all act like we're getting out our wallets.
 - Hey, I'm your pastor.
 - What I love about this illustration is that he ended up paying for all of our lunch.
- *What is our response to a God has been so incredibly generous back to us?*

- Where would you be without Jesus? When you don't live with generosity, the question is how we could possibly have any concept of the grace of God?
- In one sense, guys, the tithe, that's not even really generosity. That's more a statement of trust. Generosity is when you begin to do what David did and deprive yourself of certain things for others.

3. **This life is temporary; eternity is forever (vs. 15)**

4. **The most valuable thing on earth is the next generation coming to know Jesus (vs. 18-19)**

- David says, "Our days are like a shadow. There is no abiding for us."
- Seeing things from an eternal perspective changes everything
 - 9/11 Towers. It's all an illusion.
 - Falling out of an airplane...
- What are you doing and investing your life in that will last forever?
- And #4: Most valuable thing on earth is the next generation coming to know Jesus.
 - David, as he approaches death, calls up before them their children.
 - **PIC OF MY CHILDREN**
 - Something about being a dad... Hopefully, it will be a long time before I pass on... but there is nothing I want to invest in more than them coming to know the Gospel.
 - "I don't have any children." Great... there's some you can invest in.
 - Eternity is forever. There's a little narrow time we call life and then we stand before God. The most important thing for every person at that moment will be what they did with Jesus.
- I want you to start thinking about your life from the perspective of eternity.
 - For the most part, I don't give to things not Kingdom oriented.
 - Why? This world is passing away; eternity matters. Every person stands before God... I want to relieve suffering, but eternal suffering is the greatest suffering.

The problem: most people in here don't tithe.

- **Trust issue:** 10% & my story
 - Not about the budget; it's about your heart. Some of you don't trust God even in this area where he has been so clear.
 - I'll come back to this, but you can't outgive God.
 - John 6... 12 baskets left over
- **Kingdom issue:** Where is your kingdom? All of us have to give an account for what we did with our money
 - Jesus said that to follow Him meant we no longer leveraged our kingdom for ourselves, but for Him.
 - You say, "J.D., I'm not rich. I don't have much of a kingdom here."
 - I've met very few people who would consider themselves really rich. Most of us think we're what class? Middle. Middle compared to what?
 - *"If you made only \$1500/yr, that's more than 80% of the people on earth. Statistically, if you have sufficient food, decent clothes, live in a house or apartment, and have a reasonably reliable means of transportation, you are among the top 15% of the world's wealthy. If you have any money saved, a hobby that requires some equipment or supplies, a variety of clothes in your closet, 2 cars in any condition, and live in your own home, you are in the top 5% of the world's wealthy."*²

² Randy Alcorn, *Money, Possessions, and Eternity*, p. 291.

- You ever go see a movie? Go to Starbucks? Garbage disposal?
- Where are you building your kingdom?
- Leveraging ourselves radically for God's Kingdom not just for a special few. It's the role of every disciple. "I don't feel called to missions or called to be generous." Sometimes I think we invented this whole language of calling to hide the fact that most of us are not living as disciples of Jesus.
- Each of us will give an account for what we did with what God gave to you for this mission, whether we leveraged it mostly for heaven or for earth. Do you want to stand before God and say, "I enjoyed life. I ate richly. I went on some cool vacations. And I have very little to show for how I invested in your kingdom."
- I have a challenge for you: Some of you think you are much more generous than you actually are! Look at your W-2 and compare.
- **Gospel issue**
 - How could you know the grace of God and do nothing for those? I ask you this a lot: Where would you be without Jesus? Same place millions are without you.
 - People treat calling like it's something special we reserve for a few specially motivated super-Christians? Let me make this as plain as possible: If you are not generous; if you are not sharing your stuff with the poor; if you are not leveraging your life and resources and talents for the Kingdom of God, you are not a disciple of Christ. You might call yourself a Christian, but you are not a disciple.
 - **William Booth, who started the Salvation Army, says, "Not called!"** did you say? "Not heard the call," I think you should say. Put your ear down to the Bible, and hear him bid you go and pull sinners out of the fire of sin. Put your ear down to the burdened, agonized heart of humanity, and listen to its pitiful wail for help. Go stand by the gates of hell, and hear the perishing entreat you to go to their father's house and bid their brothers and sisters, and servants and masters not to come there. And then look Christ in the face, whose mercy you have professed to (receive), and tell him whether you will join heart and soul and body and circumstances in the march to publish his mercy to the world. - William Booth, founder of the Salvation Army
 - We read verses in the Bible like, "*Cast your cares on Me.*" (1 Peter 5:7) and we say, "That's a promise for me." Then we read, "Go into all the world and preach the Gospel" (Matthew 28:19) and say, "I'm not called to that." "Come unto me and I will give you rest." (Matthew 11:28) "That's for me." "If anyone comes after me, let Him deny Himself, take up His cross, and follow Me." (Luke 9:23) And we say, "Not for me; for someone else." Here's the question: **By what right do we appropriate the comforts of Christ but not the commands?**

Those are my concern... here's what I asked myself this week: What if I had a promise from God that He would supply everything He needed in the church, and He didn't "need" you at all... would I still care deeply about this?

- The answer from the bottom of my heart is "yes," because this is not an offering, this is about what are probably the 3 most important spiritual questions of your life: Who do you trust? What kingdom are you living for? And, do you understand the Gospel?

And here's the tragedy... you are missing out on real joy. There is a joy and freedom in giving that you're missing out on... Some of you are getting it... in fact, let me make sure I properly affirm you:

- At a time (because of the recession) when other churches are cutting back ministries, we have been able to go forward; we sent out more ministries and gave away more money than we ever have."

Some of you are getting it; I really want the rest of you to. There is a joy and freedom which accompanies Gospel-centered giving you can't replicate in anything else.

- Some of you, I have no idea how much you give, but I can tell how generous you are... (Campus Outreach)
- If you're mad... Why? Do you think I'm being manipulative, or is it because I am challenging what you trust? Two guys in a hole...

Well, in 1 Chronicles, What they were able to build is a Temple beyond any of their imaginations. Do you know what we could do if God's people were possessed by the same Gospel-saturated spirit that possessed these people were? By the way, these were not perfect people. Both David and the people had a pretty ugly record. David had made a number of mistakes and failures we have been studying. The people had participated in 2 rebellions. But at this point they get the Gospel.

If the Gospel would saturate this church, there is no telling what we could do. I wouldn't have to preach sermons on generosity; generosity would flow out of you as natural as breathing. HELIUM BALLOON?

John Piper says this in *Desiring God*:

- Three billion people today are outside Jesus Christ. Two-thirds of them have no viable Christian witness in their culture. If they are to hear – and Christ commands that they hear – then cross-cultural missionaries will have to be sent and paid for. All the wealth needed to send this new army of good news ambassadors is already in the church. If we, like Paul, are content with the simple necessities of life, hundreds of millions of dollars in the church would be released to take the gospel to the frontiers. The revolution of joy and freedom it would cause at home would be the best local witness imaginable.³

Conclusion: David's mission statement is simple: respond to God's grace; prioritize God's kingdom.

Write this down: A Gospel-centered life is a life that responds to the generosity of the Gospel and a life that prioritizes the message of the Gospel

Let me tell you the great irony of how all this ends. This Temple they were building was a shadow of the real Temple that was coming. This was not a Temple, however, that would be made with gold and silver. Jesus said He was the real Temple. At the Temple that Solomon built there was a place where sacrifices were offered and people could be reunited to God's presence. Jesus was Himself the presence of God in human flesh, and He was Himself the sacrifice. He was the real Temple, and that Temple was built entirely because of God's generosity, not ours.

David ends his life by giving generously to build the Temple. He gave so generously that he altered his lifestyle to build a place where sacrifices were offered for sin. Jesus, who was the real Temple, gave up His life and offered Himself as the one great sacrifice for sins.

If the people were moved to sacrifice greatly by the example of David their king; how much more should we moved by the sacrifice of Jesus, our King.

If we see what God gave to us so that we could have life, we will naturally want to give generously of ourselves so that others can have life.

³ John Piper, *Desiring God*, 157. Quoted in Randy Alcorn; *Money, Possessions, and Eternity*, 296

Bullpen:

- This is the mission for which the church was created. Your church can be involved in a lot of good things, but if it is not a part of that global expansion of the message, it is not fulfilling the purpose for which God formed it.
 - - Imagine if Jesus multiplied the 5 loaves and 2 fishes for the Apostles and they sat around passing it among themselves until they were buried under piles of it while the multitudes go hungry.
 - To acknowledge Him with by giving back into His work
-
- I want you to understand that in all our talk about giving, God doesn't need anything from us. He doesn't need our money. Anything you give to Him came from Him first. God is always the giver; we are the receiver.
 - Ultimately, God has told us to look to Him to meet our needs. He gives you the resources to you're your needs. All that you have comes from Him, and He can supply all that you need.

David said, "We are strangers in this land and everything has been given to us by you." The irony is that when Jesus came, He was the one who owned the land; He was the one who was not really a stranger; yet, we treated him like a stranger and an outcast, killing Him. If God gave up Jesus for us like that, do you not think He will also provide freely for all of our needs?

- You called us out of this land to build an eternal kingdom, and then you supplied all the means for it.

[13] And now we thank you, our God, and praise your glorious name.

and to the king. [21] And they offered sacrifices to the LORD, and on the next day offered burnt offerings to the LORD, 1,000 bulls, 1,000 rams, and 1,000 lambs, with their drink offerings, and sacrifices in abundance for all Israel.

Famous last words

- He is no fool...
- Mission statements

William Borden

- We're under the illusion that we need more money than we do and that we are far more generous than we actually are.
- Your money is given to you to make the Gospel known to this generation and the next generation. What greater purpose would God have for your money besides that?
- All of you have to answer to God for what you did with the money God gave to invest in the Kingdom! It's why you gave it.

Everything you say yes to you must also say "no" to something else.

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