

Our series, Reroute, is about times when we need to make a change. Maybe the need for change is our choice. Or perhaps life events lead us down a new path. As we finish the series today, we're going to read about the end of King David's life and what he gave to his son, Solomon. What David gave to his son can both teach and model for us how to navigate our reroutes today.

We all have received from our parents. You received habits, looks, and values from your parents. From the beginning of your life, your parents influenced you. Whether it's your parents, teachers, or friends, you have people that have given to you in ways that have shaped who you are.

I want to show you what David passed on to Solomon. Not looks, habits, or fashionable outfits, but David gave Solomon something more valuable. I want us to see what we can learn from David's advice, and how we can do the same thing that David did.

**"When the time drew near for David to die, he gave a charge to Solomon, his son. "I am about to go the way of all the earth," he said. "So be strong, act like a man..." I Kings 2: 1-2**

You can almost picture the scene as the aged David calls for his son, Solomon to come near and receive from him. You can imagine David looking in his son's eyes, and a smile spreading across his face. In this closing chapter of his life, David has something he wants to give to his son.

David begins by acknowledging that his life is about to end, just as is "the way of all the earth." In other words, David acknowledges a reality - we don't control life. We like to think that we control our life. We spend a lot of effort, time, and resources in an attempt to build an illusion of control. But we don't have control. Life for everyone and everything on earth ends. We can't stop that from happening. That can be deeply unsettling to consider, but for David, he leverages that reality as an opportunity to give to Solomon.

He starts by speaking confidence to Solomon. David says, "be strong" - don't step back, don't waver. And "act like a man" - step into what is coming, mature. I think these opening words were personally designed for Solomon. Solomon was about to be king, but he didn't deserve the throne; he wasn't the oldest son of David. Not only did he not deserve the throne, but perhaps he was also viewed as one who didn't belong on the throne. Solomon was the child of David's scandalous (and

sinful) relationship with Bathsheba. David speaks confidence to Solomon: "Don't step back, but step into what God has for you." David's giving is an act of grace.

### **What does David give to Solomon?**

**"...and observe what the Lord your God requires: Walk in obedience to him, and keep his decrees and commands, his laws and regulations, as written in the Law of Moses. Do this so that you may prosper in all you do and wherever you go and that the Lord may keep his promise to me: 'If your descendants watch how they live, and if they walk faithfully before me with all their heart and soul, you will never fail to have a successor on the throne of Israel.'" vv.3-4**

The English phrase, "observe what the Lord your God requires" is the phrase in Hebrew, "Keep the charge of the Lord your God." I like those terms - keep and charge. Keep implies that you have been given something. In our world of perceived scarcity - in our fear that we never have enough or that fear that we'll miss out - to keep means that you already have. Another way to put it is this: whatever has been given to you, keep it. Whatever has been denied to you, omit it.

Charge is a word that means duty, service, or post. For example, imagine a medieval scene in which you are to guard a portion of a walled city. Your corner of the wall would be your charge. It's the job or task that you've been given to do. That's why one Bible version translates this verse, "*Do the job the Lord your God has assigned to you*" (NET Bible).

What is this charge - duty, post - that Solomon has? What does David, at the end of his life, want his son to know? As we listen along with Solomon, what do we need to hear today? Here it is: Obey the decrees, commands laws, regulations of God. This is where it gets fascinating. The word for obedience is the same word used for a path or walkway. It refers to "path worn by constant walking" (TWOT). Imagine walking through the woods and seeing a grass worn down by the tread of regular travelers. David wants Solomon to wear down the path to God.

If he does this, Solomon will prosper. Prosper doesn't primarily mean acquiring resources. Rather, it means "to discern and gain insight" (Tyndale), or "to exercise skill in life" (Mounce). If Solomon wears down the path to God, he won't step back, but rather step into the good that God has for him. Not only that, but

he will see the promise of God - he will see God work in eternal ways in the present day.

Maybe you need to hear that today. Perhaps the path to God that you are invited to walk has become overgrown. Perhaps you've lost sight or lost your way. Maybe, like Solomon, you need to hear the words of grace, "Don't step back, but step into what God has for you." Maybe you're ready to give up, and you need to hear the words of grace say, "Keep the charge of the Lord your God." God has you where you are for something good. And when He wants you in another post, He will faithfully lead you.

But here's the other thing I want you to know today. This charge to Solomon happens because David saw that what mattered was that he gave his life away. As his life ends, his words will help someone else wear down the path to God. The legacy of his presence is found in giving his life away to his son.

What if your purpose is to give your life away? It's counter-intuitive. We want to preserve life, avoid cost or discomfort. But what if our striving to control and maintain means that we're missing the very thing we long for? That is what Jesus said to his followers. He said that if you want to find out what life is like, then give it away. You gain by losing (Mark 8.35). Think about people in your life who have given their life away for you - teachers, parents, friendships, or leaders who labored for you to wear down the path to what God has for you. A deep beauty of our humanity comes alive when we give our life away. As the 20th century spiritual leader, Henri Nouwen, put it, "Our humanity comes to its fullest bloom in giving."

This giving life away is part of the larger Biblical story. Humans are separated from God, and God's redemptive act is through His Son giving His life for us. Jesus described what He did this way, "Truly, truly, I say to you, unless a grain of wheat falls into the earth and dies, it remains alone; but if it dies, it bears much fruit." (John 12.24 NASB). Jesus gave His life away so that you could benefit. And He sets the stage for you to do the same.

What does it mean to give your life away? I think it's less about what you know (and the advice you provide), or what resources you supply. Certainly, there is a good time for both of those actions. But I want you to think about giving your life away from a different perspective: it's about who you are for others. It's about your presence.

I want to challenge you with this question: what is the legacy of your presence with others? As you show up with others, how does your presence help them wear down the path to God? Are

you more eager to give your advice, or are you content to show up with "you" and be present for others?

My mother-in-law suddenly passed away a few weeks ago. It's been a challenging time for family and her many friends. But we have also seen the beautiful legacy of her presence in our lives. As my wife and her sister were going through her desk, they found a variety of handwritten notes that my mother-in-law had written through the years. Written on various slips of paper or hotel stationary, they are reflections of Bible verses, lessons she gleaned from sermons, goal setting, and her reflections on her spiritual journey. Though she didn't leave them specifically for us, they are the legacy of her presence.

What is the legacy of your presence? I don't necessarily mean at the end of your life (though that's worth considering), but you leave a legacy now - in every conversation, meeting, and family vacation. When you show up to others, you bring "you."

My hope for you is that you would not step back, but step into the charge of the Lord. That your "you" would be shaped by His grace. Give away that presence of grace everywhere you are. There is nothing more attractive than grace. When you show up with that presence, you can help reroute someone else's life.

*This manuscript represents the bulk of what was preached at CPC South. For further detail, please refer to the audio recording of this sermon.*

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