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| Topic | A Prayerful Life |
| Reference  | 1 Chronicles 29:1-20 |
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| Speaker | Pastor Mark Tan |

This passage talks about the David’s prayer at death. If we look at the Bible as a whole 1-Chronicles chapter 29 is the last chapter of this book. It is the last time we hear David’s voice heard historically because much has been written about David and his life from the day that he managed to slay Goliath with one stone all the way through the wars and battles and now nearing to the end of his life 1-Chronicles 29 is his last words.

In comparison in the New Testament Jesus have four gospels, four whole books in the New Testament to narrate about his life, ministry, death and resurrection. If there was anyone else who was written as much as Jesus in the New Testament, I will have to say it is David. Half of 1-Samuel was written about David, the whole of 2-Samuel was about David. The whole 1-Chronicles was about David and to the very end just as we trends it over to King Solomon’s rule and reign I see quite fitting in so beautiful that the Chronicle of course with the help of God to inspire this moment, a great way to end the memory of King David by recording his prayer. So when we look at this passage here, we look at the last things that David did which was to dedicate the resources needed to build a temple and his last words was not a great speech at the United Nations. His last act as king was to dedicate resources for the temple and his last speech as per se before we transit over to King Solomon’s life is a prayer. I feel that speak volumes of King David’s life. King David if you take the time to read his life from 1-Samuel all the way to end of 1-Chronicles, it is true that he had a prayerful life. By virtue that half of all the Psalms in the Book of Psalms were written by King David. He wrote 75 of the 150 Psalms that we have in scripture. It tells us very-very frankly and tells very-very truthfully that David has a prayerful life. So what can we learn from David’s life, what can we learn from having a prayerful life?

1. A Prayerful Life prioritizes God.

We see in the text here from the very beginning when he became king of all of Israel he always had this burden in his heart to want to build a house of worship for the Lord. We see his lament.

2-Samuel 7:1-2

**1** When King David was settled in his palace and the Lord had given him rest from all the surrounding enemies, **2** the king summoned Nathan the prophet. “Look,” David said, “I am living in a beautiful cedar palace, but the Ark of God is out there in a tent!”

So he has always had this burden and always wanted to build a temple to praise the Lord. Unfortunately, as much as David would like to build a temple God did not want David to be the one to build the temple. Because his hands were tainted with so much blood from the wars that he had been through and also He feels that if King David was the one with that same hands built the temple of the Lord it will not give a good testimony to the Lord of which this temple is made for, but the Lord made a promise to David that he will begin a dynasty of kings with David and his family and that when he dies God will appoint his son, whom we later know to be Solomon to build the temple.

2-Samuel 7:11-13

“‘Furthermore, the Lord declares that he will make a house for you—a dynasty of kings! **12** For when you die and are buried with your ancestors, I will raise up one of your descendants, your own offspring, and I will make his kingdom strong. **13** He is the one who will build a house—a temple—for my name. And I will secure his royal throne forever.’”

So when David was about to leave his throne and of course then to pass away King David turned to the entire assembly and said, my son Solomon now whom God has appointed will build the temple and now I ask of you rally up together people. Let us come together and build the temple of the Lord. So we see David prioritizing even his very last strength as king. He says, with this last strength I will prioritize the Lord and so I will go and build and prepare all this and David did not just give a speech and hope the people will take up after him. No, he himself put his money where his mouth was. Not only that he had the palace treasury at his disposal, to which then he says,

1-Chronicles 29:

**2** Now there is enough gold, silver, bronze, iron, and wood, as well as great quantities of onyx, other precious stones, costly jewels, and all kinds of fine stone and marble.

This was prepared already from the palace treasury but we see in next verse

**3**“And now, because of my devotion to the Temple of my God, I am giving all of my own private treasures of gold and silver to help in the construction.

Here we see a large amount of wealth. David donated

**4** I am donating more than 112 tons of gold from Ophir and 262 tons of refined silver to be used for overlaying the walls of the buildings 5 and for the other gold and silver work to be done by the craftsmen.

If we will equate it to today’s wealth is equivalent to 16 billion dollars. Now it is not that King David is donating 16 billion dollars from his 1 trillion dollar empire. No, he said himself he emptied out his treasury and he came out to this much. So basically he was giving out everything he had and he is encouraging the people to do the same and by the grace of God the people responded and they gave. It took the whole community of Israel to put together 188 tons of gold, 10,000 gold coins, 375 tons of silver, 675 tons of bronze, and 3,750 tons of iron. If we compare that to what King David has given, the difference is not so much. By one person alone King David put his money where his mouth is and in his prayerful life he prioritize God and say, my whole life, my whole wealth, my whole household, I even surrender my son that he will be the contractor for the temple. A prayerful life prioritizes God.

The question we will then have is, “Do we pray that God becomes the helper of our heart’s desires, or do we make God THE DESIRE in our hearts that we pray for?”

I feel sometimes when we look at prayer I feel we have allowed a lot of secular and modern culture to influence the way we pray and therefore the way we see God. This is from The Secret, it was a very popular self help book in the 90s and it made such a big rockers because they were engaging spirituality and they basically sedated God to just be this cosmic power who then when we pray in Jesus name or whatever name, the author Rhonda Byrne does not really care. As long as you have this positive energy, claim that it will come to you and it will come to you. So Rhonda Byrne said,

*“Ask once, believe you have received, and all you have to do to receive is feel good.”*

I wonder sometimes have we made prayer to become something just like that. We are having a frustrating day, so we go on and bend the knees, “O Lord please help me from my frustrating day” and we pray somehow that God will somehow make the day better. We believe somehow that God will either by some sort of telepathic energy will either cause the person that is causing us trouble to also get trouble and then we will feel a little better because we have surrendered that anger over to God and we feel a little better. The way this is being portrayed out is pretty much we take God like Popeye takes his can of spinach. Whenever Popeye is in trouble opens up a can of spinach, suddenly he has the energy to do and he can overcome the day. Do we make God the helper of our desire of the desires of our heart or do we make God The DESIRE of our hearts in itself.

A lot of times and rightfully so we should go to God and ask God, “O Lord I don’t know what is the next step in my life in the future”. Of course we have to surrender to God but sometimes I wonder do we take God as a personal God speaking to us in our hearts just as David looked upon God as the Sovereign Lord in his heart and therefore he prioritize everything towards him not because somehow or another that God by some telepathic energy will make King David a successful king, by no means or measures was he entirely a successful king. But the difference is that, when David prioritized God is because he is God, not because that he is the wish granter. Do we take God to be this celestial power where in the mornings we wake up and we say our prayers, asking for blessing for the day. This is the promise of God truly but then do we just make God the promise maker or do we actually allow God to be the Sovereign Lord in our lives. Corrie Ten Boom gave this very interesting statement before. She asked, *“When you pray do you make God your steering wheel to guide you and direct you where to go or do you make God the spare tire”*. It is only when tire punctures then you call upon God and to place in your life. But we see David having a personal encounter with God. He regarded God as a person, a powerful almighty God, not for David to have him on his side to help him do what he wants, because if he wanted to he will build the temple himself. King Saul did something similar. There was one time when King Saul was supposed to wait for Samuel to give a sacrifice before they go to war. King Saul took it upon himself because he thought he is good enough and he gave the sacrifice instead and because of that rebellion in thinking that I am good enough, you do what I say. It is same like we go to God and say, “will you do what I say” but when we prioritize God truthfully we will realize that he is a person and is not he should follow our will but we should be in line with his.

C.S. Lewis portrays God in the form of Aslan in the Chronicles of Narnia, it is a very Christian fiction, and C.S. Lewis when he talks about God Aslan, he says

 *“He'll be coming and going" he had said. "One day you'll see him and another you won't. He doesn't like being tied down -- and of course he has other countries to attend to. It's quite all right. He'll often drop in. Only you mustn't press him. He's wild, you know. Not like a tame lion.”*

Often times we think God is like this tamed lion that we keep in nice aside, he is our best friend, very kind, very gentle and we only need to release him whenever we need help but no he is not a tamed lion, he has a will of his own and is up to us then to put him in our top priority, the center of our life, the center of our attention.

God is a person, he is not some sort of cosmic energy that you tap into every morning, he is not the spiritual patrol station where you try and fill up the empty gas tank in your heart just to be able to run the day, No, God is a person. So spend good time with him, quality time with him, focus on him, prioritize him. We see in King David’s life this. There are days we don’t see the whole of his life but I imagine there will be days where he just be way too busy to prioritize half an hour an day but there will be times in the entire day that his prayerful and mindful of what God want to do with his kingdom because Israel, although he is king of Israel, God is the Sovereign King of the whole world. Do we led God be able to steering wheel which will guide us in this journey or do we just make him our spare tire. So we have two choices to make

Lay aside your own crown, lay aside your own priorities. Yes there are pressing engagements that we need to have in our lives but rather than trying to figure that our by ourselves and only ask God, God help me when the worse have hit the fence and we had to clean up the mess. No even before going into the events of the day or your troubles in your lives, invite God from the very beginning God that your will be done in this.

2. A Prayerful Praises God.

We see in the text that was read earlier that this is what we call the doxology, a hymn of praise. This is kind of like a formal prayer; he starts off with the doxology. He praises God and we see how he portrays God in this way. He says,

1-Chronicles 29

“O Lord, the God of our ancestor Israel, may you be praised forever and ever! **11**Yours, O Lord, is the greatness, the power, the glory, the victory, and the majesty. Everything in the heavens and on earth is yours, O Lord, and this is your kingdom. We adore you as the one who is over all things. **12** Wealth and honor come from you alone, for you rule over everything. Power and might are in your hand, and at your discretion people are made great and given strength.

Notice how David positions God and notice how God David positions himself. King David unlike any other king that we can ever find in history did not elevate himself up in praising himself and all the good works that he has done. He gives praise to God, the one that has protected him that has empowered him with that one stone to kill Goliath all the way until now to be able to build this temple. So he gives praise unto God.

Of course David had moment in his life that prevented him from giving him praise. Before king David was king he was playing the harp for King Saul and lot of times King Saul will come into this fit of rage looking at David, the one that will potentially and did take over him, he wanted to kill David and in fact when Jonathan, King Saul’s own son, David’s friend went up to King Saul and said, you know God has gone away he will come back later, King Saul said “why did you lie to me” and he through the spear over to his own son. It shows how much hate that King Saul had for David and therefore how bad the situation was that David was in, how horrible were parts of David’s life and yet when he looked back at his life and what a life that he has had he was banished from the kingdom before he became king, he lost one of his own sons. In the 33 years that he was ruling as king over Israel, 30 of those years he was fighting in battles and wars and yet even all of those things, even when the darkness came over in his life, even though difficulties were over his life he praises God and he praised God even at the very end of his life.

Why is that? At the moment when we pray it is then an act of faith and because God is the living God we will encounter him. Every moment when we pray is an act of faith and by that we will encounter God. Now it is very different from when we say you know where we take that step of trending to tap into that celestial energy and hoping to be filled up, no, actually God encounters with us and is very full on person. The moment we pray is an act of faith to go up before this almighty God, the person that is God and he will encounter you. Now multiply that into the whole aspect of your life. Prayer therefore in life is a life of faith and therefore your life will be a life of encountering God and when we encounter God in such a powerful way in our lives we cannot help but praise Him.

3. Puts Us In Our Place – 29:13-17

King David was such a humble king in compared to others. When we read the other kings of this world and they give praise unto themselves, King David does the exact opposite. In his prayers he gives God all majesty and all praise and then he puts himself in such a small place. We read in the text, it says,

**13**“O our God, we thank you and praise your glorious name! **14**But who am I, and who are my people, that we could give anything to you? Everything we have has come from you, and we give you only what you first gave us! **15**We are here for only a moment, visitors and strangers in the land as our ancestors were before us. Our days on earth are like a passing shadow, gone so soon without a trace. **16**“O Lord our God, even this material we have gathered to build a Temple to honor your holy name comes from you! It all belongs to you! **17**I know, my God, that you examine our hearts and rejoice when you find integrity there. You know I have done all this with good motives, and I have watched your people offer their gifts willingly and joyously.

Notice how David puts himself in his place before God. The whole collection that they made just for that one temple was 30 billion US dollars in comparison to today’s market and David so humbly will say, O God all this was from you and I know O God you look into the hearts of man and you find great joy when there is integrity there. There have been times where David did not reflect that prayerful life in his days as king. There was that one time where instead of going before the battle and instead of praying and instead of giving praise to God as he normally would he was walking across the window and he saw a beautiful lady taking a bath on the roof and that is when he did not prioritize God, he prioritized his own desires. He did not praise God, he tells himself I deserve it and so he sat up so that this woman’s husband may be killed in battle and that gives him license to marry this woman. When David was vindicated when he was punished for this he lost one of his sons because of this. His life changed back again and thus he wrote Psalm 51. It says, *O God create in me a clean heart and renew in me a steadfast spirit. Purge me with hyssop, and I shall be clean; wash me, and I shall be whiter than snow. Help me O Lord, save me. I am nothing. I know my transgressions. I know the way to my sin against you and you alone have I sinned.*

A prayerful life puts us in our place. When we pray we realize how great God is and then we realize actually how small and how puny we are even in our own lives. Who are we to say that the number of zeros in our bank account was for our own sweat and blood, no, it is by God’s providence, why, because if we were God’s of our own lives we would have messed it up just like King David did. If King David did we most certainly would. So when we go before that Holy Almighty God we are then put in our place and realize we need help.

Søren Kierkegaard says, *“The function of prayer is not to influence God, but rather to change the nature of the one who prays.”*

The more you pray will not more the circumstances around you will change but the more also you will change. You begin to look at your life and say, I did not know what I was doing in that part of my life. I don’t know what I would have done if I was in that position without God and some of us may even pray, “O God if only I had let you been into my life earlier”. These things will come up because we realized our place. We are not the king of our lives where God is our helper. No, God is the king of our whole lives and we surrender it on to him. The prayerful life puts us in our place, we realize how much of a sinner, how much of a wrongful person we are and even in the midst of going and becoming a good person we will have bad days.

4. Points Us To The Gospel – 29:18-19

In the text we see

**18**“O Lord, the God of our ancestors Abraham, Isaac, and Israel, make your people always want to obey you. See to it that their love for you never changes. **19**Give my son Solomon the wholehearted desire to obey all your commands, laws, and decrees, and to do everything necessary to build this Temple, for which I have made these preparations.”

Of course David is saying a prayer on behalf of Solomon, his son who will take over as king and his first agenda is to build the temple. So of course King David is praying that his son will do a good job.

Generally speaking when someone prays in this way, a prophet, a priest or a king prays in this way, he is declaring God the God who fulfills all promises. He will fulfill his promise and what was the promise that God gave to King David

2-Samuel 7:11-13,

“‘Furthermore, the Lord declares that he will make a house for you—a dynasty of kings! **12**For when you die and are buried with your ancestors***,*** I will raise up one of your descendants, your own offspring, and I will make his kingdom strong. **13**He is the one who will build a house—a temple—for my name. ***And I will secure his royal throne forever.’”***

The interesting part here, if we say that God is a God of promise we can agree that there was a dynasty of King; King David, King Solomon, Rehoboam and a couple of others. King Solomon’s kingdom was quite strong, he built the house but his throne was not a royal throne forever. Has God not fulfilled his promise? This royal throne is secured in Jesus and when Jesus was clearing the temple, “my house should be a house of prayer, you made it a den of thieves”, the Pharisees come out and say, who are you to do such things. If you are truly sent by God, give us a sign, show us a miracle and Jesus says alright

John 2:19

“Destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise it up.”

Jesus then put himself as the temple from which then we can go before God and pray. Jesus becomes the high priest of which then he will mediate the prayers before God and God’s will into our lives. Jesus then becomes the ultimate sacrifice. The purpose of the temple is twofold, one is to have the presence of God but also the function of the temple is to give sacrifices onto God so that his wrath upon the Israelites will be appeased. So without the temple they couldn’t offer sacrifices and therefore the fear the wrath of God will be upon them but Jesus then becomes the ultimate sacrifice to which then we don’t need to slaughter animals for our own sake because Christ have forgiven us. Christ has paid for the wrath which we deserved.

Every time we end a prayer we end it in Jesus name, because only the name of Jesus is the one that last forever. So King David did not see it at first but now we can truly say that God is a God who fulfill all promises including the securement of a dynasty of kings through David, Solomon and finally Christ who now rules and reigns forever.

David never saw Jesus when he was alive but he already know that this God is the savior is on the way.

5. Is a Life Lived Out – 29:20

It is interesting to see that the last thing that David did after he secured the resources and after he give this speech of praise and pray he then encouraged the people in the assembly,

**20**Then David said to the whole assembly, “Give praise to the Lord your God!” And the entire assembly praised the Lord, the God of their ancestors, and they bowed low and knelt before the Lord and the king.

We have this king now, King Jesus, the high priest that will reign forever, the ultimate sacrifice and through him we don’t need a physical temple anymore, we can go before God in Jesus name and he will hear us. So Jesus empowers us in this prayerful life. A prayerful life therefore is a life lived out.