



## “Dynasty – The Next Generation”

Thirteenth Sunday after Pentecost  
Saturday and Sunday, August 18 - 19, 2018

All Services

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1 Kings 2:10-12; 3:3-14; John 6:51-58

Grace and peace be to you from our Father and our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.  
Amen.

This past weekend, a week ago, I had an opportunity to take some time off and to go visit some friends as well as my sons who now live in the same neighborhood that I pastored almost, well at least 20 years ago. And it was wonderful to see them and to go out to dinner with them, but I have to admit, as I see the changes that happen in a neighborhood over time especially an urban neighborhood and then just sitting there with my sons that I've watched grow up over the years, I think the older I get the more concerned I get about what I will be leaving behind. What will the world look like for the next generation that comes after me? I wonder whether or not it will be improved, will it be a place that is more loving, more caring, will it be safer? I find myself thinking about the next generation, the generation after all has been entrusted to me and also to many of you. And, as a pastor, I think, how will the church be able to respond to the needs and concerns of that next generation, especially that millennial generation, those that are in their 20s and 30s.

So sometimes I'll read articles or books about that generation, and this week I read an article about millennials and their expectations and their kind of mind set of how they view the world especially as it relates to religious matters or the church. In this article, one of the things they said was that this generation coming up, the millennials are inspired by things that they really care about. They are a passionate group. And they are spiritual, they see themselves as spiritual, but not necessarily connected to the church. They are inquisitive, they want to learn and to know more about Jesus. They desire the things of God especially as it relates to the stories of faith. They also want to see movement, they want to see growth. They are not afraid to change. This is the generation that expects that there is going to be a new i-Phone every year. My wife still wonders what was wrong with that old flip-phone that she had. They're willing to risk instead of being comfortable with certainty, and they're generous, they give of their time and talents and their treasures especially to those things that I said before that they are inspired by, those ministries and the mission. This is the group that goes on mission trips so that they can connect with people who are suffering.

What are your hopes for the next generation? The generation of your family or of your church, the generation that will come after you and after me?

As Pastor Liz said, this is the final sermon of the dynasty series on the life of King David, and here we see the transition from David to Solomon the greatest dynasty in the Bible. Solomon is the successor to what has been called the greatest king of Israel. And Solomon has big shoes to fill, that of his father David. He was the king that captured the people's enthusiasm and loyalty. He was the warrior king who expanded and united the kingdom of Israel who defeated their enemies. David reigned for forty years, you might say that's a generation. People said when he died, "There will never be another like David." And here comes Solomon, the least of the sons of David, the youngest, the son of Bathsheba, yes that very same Bathsheba that we heard a couple weeks ago. He is the least of the sons, he's not even David's favorite. We heard the story from Pastor Brock's sermon last week that he described as NC17. I think a great description.

But Solomon did have a quality above his brothers, like his father David, Solomon was responsive to seeking God and to walking in his ways. And because of that God's gracious hand was upon him. Solomon was chosen to lead the chosen, the chosen people like his father before him.

In our story he goes to Gibeon one of the high places. Now the Israelites worshiped in many high sanctuaries before finally the temple is established in Jerusalem which will not happen for another four or five years in the Solomon's reign.

Gibeon was the place that formerly housed the Ark of the Covenant before David moved it to Jerusalem and so it was the highest of the high places. And there Solomon offers worship, he offers sacrifice. We hear that it's an extravagant sacrifice over a thousand burnt offerings, that's a pretty big barbecue. And he asks for thanksgiving, he offers thanksgiving for David and for what God has done for his father, but then also for God's blessing on his reign.

Solomon understood with great blessing came great responsibility. After all we all know that we expect more from those given responsibility, from politicians, religious leaders, cultural icons, even our sports figures. And we are disappointed when they fail. I don't know about you but my heart breaks for our Roman Catholic brothers and sisters as they struggle with the priest pedophile scandal, and it's not just that religious denomination, but many others who have also failed their people, people in responsibility and trust.

In our story the Lord appears in a dream to Solomon. Now for modern people when we think of dreams, usually we think there's not too much to them. We even have a phrase, "Well it's only a dream." But for the people of the Old Testament dreams were one of the ways in which God spoke to God's people and so they see it as a revelation from God. And in the dream God asks Solomon, "What should I give you?" Now this is the same as finding a genie in a bottle and it's saying – Make a Wish!!

And Solomon certainly could say. . . Well I'd like a thousand more wishes or a billion dollars, or whatever. But instead Solomon responds with gratitude and thankfulness to God. And instead of asking for those things that I just said, instead he asks for what he needs the most in order to be an effective king and leader for his people. He asks for the wisdom that only God can give. He asks for understanding and a discerning heart.

Solomon knows that spiritual discernment relies on consistently seeking God's direction, rather than his direction. Having a discerning mind is submitting to God's way of thinking, rather than human's way of thinking. Figuring out what is good and what is evil, what is right and what is wrong. What is important and what is not.

A couple thousand years Luther will describe the same idea when he talks about adiaphora. Adiaphora are those things that are not essential for salvation. Luther is talking to the church and saying it is important for us to focus on the things that are important and not on the things that aren't important. The things that are important to salvation and not the adiaphora that too often congregations get all mixed up in. We get all excited about the things that in the scope of things really don't matter all that much. They don't matter to your salvation.

God's response to Solomon is to give him what he asks for. But notice he also gives him what he didn't ask for. He gives him the victories, the expanding of his kingdom, he gives him money and influence. God blesses him abundantly due to his humility. And we have in this picture of Solomon a vision of what a king and a leader should be. And it will be a model for the messiah that is to come, Jesus, who walks in the ways of God humbly.

Ask "What should I give you?" What would you dare ask God for? Patience? Hope? Justice? Perhaps love, or just being free from pain? Peace for your soul? Blessing for understanding? What would you ask both for yourself as well as for the next generation that will come after you?

When my kids were smaller, and they were going to elementary school and high school, I would drop them off for school and I would leave them with this Latin phrase – *Carpe diem pro Deo*. *Carpe diem* some of you may recognize as seize the day, *pro Deo* for God, seize the day for God. What I wanted to leave them was that I wanted them to be open to listening to God, to seeking to understand his ways in their life, but then I also wanted them to seize upon it, I wanted them to act upon the ways of God. I wanted them as they grew older and as they became the next generation to make the world, our country, our community, our family and our church better. Abiding in God to be a blessing to the world focusing on the things that really matter, understanding and discerning God's will so that we may pass on to the next generation a world, a country, a community, a family, and a church that humbly walks in the ways of God. Amen.

In the name of the Father, and of the + Son, and of the Holy Spirit. Amen

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