

Truth for Today

The Bible Explained

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Last Words: The Last Words of David

Good morning, and welcome to *Truth for Today* on Premier Christian Radio. Thank you for choosing to listen to this broadcast. I trust that the Lord will richly bless you as we turn to His word. This is the third talk in the current series entitled "Last Words". During this series we have been looking at people in the Bible whose last words are carefully recorded for us before they die. The subject today is "The last words of David". David was a great king of Israel; he ruled for forty years and he was about 70 years old when he died.

Sadly, death is something that someone, somewhere, is facing every day. The death of a loved one, or someone you respect, is particularly hard. When death comes, the last words of a loved one are often remembered, thought about, and treasured in our hearts. Sometimes the loved one knows that they are going to die and they gather all their family together and they pass on a few words of instruction, wisdom or concern. Jacob is an example of this. In Genesis 49:1-28 we read that Jacob gathers all his sons around him, and he speaks to them one by one, telling them exactly what they are like, both good and bad. I don't think Jacob's sons would ever forget what their father said to them that day. King David was a mighty man, one who was blessed by God with honour, glory, wealth and family. David before his death was able to speak to his son Solomon and also address the people. As we look at David's last words, we learn the thoughts and the desires of his heart. It is also good to note that David, as he gathers his family and all his people together, gives thanksgiving and praise to God.

If you are interested, you can find the last words of David in the following passages: Psalm 72, 1 Chronicles 29, 2 Samuel 23 and 1 Kings 2. When I was considering this talk, and after reading all David's last words, I decided that I would concentrate on 1 Chronicles 29. I trust that with God's help I may be able to speak simply so that you are able to understand, and so that the Lord may touch your heart this morning as we look at His word.

Please turn in your Bibles to 1 Chronicles 29. I am not going to read the chapter as we don't have time, but please read it later. Now please keep your Bible open so we can refer to verses as we go down the chapter. Firstly we need to think about the background which you will find in 1 Chronicles 28.

David is told by the LORD that because he was a man of war, and because he had shed blood, he would not build the house of God (1 Chronicles 28:3). The LORD told David that his son Solomon would build His house (1 Chronicles 28:6). The house of God was also known as the temple. David without any sign of jealousy, tells Solomon that the LORD had chosen him to build His house (1 Chronicles 28:9-10). David gives the plans to Solomon, plans that David had received directly from the LORD Himself (1 Chronicles 28:11-20). The details of the plans were to be carried out exactly. 1 Chronicles 28:20 is a lovely verse as David encourages Solomon: *"Be strong and of good courage, and do it: fear not, nor be dismayed: for the LORD God, even my God, will be with thee; he will not fail thee, nor forsake thee, until thou hast finished all the work for the service of the house of the LORD"*. Solomon was young and needed encouragement. You too can be encouraged by this verse, God promises to be with us in everything we do for Him. God also gives us many other promises throughout the Bible.

In 1 Chronicles 29, David addresses the people. In fact, he exhorts the people, and what he says affects their hearts. David tells the people that his son Solomon, whom God had chosen, is young and tender, inexperienced and that the task before him was great. The palatial structure was to be made for the LORD God and not man. Although David was not given the task of building the temple, he got on with preparing with *"all [his] might"* (1 Chronicles 29:2) the materials required for building such an amazing structure.

David was a very rich man; he was the king of Israel, and he had wealth in abundance. David was prepared to use all the resources that God had given him in service for Him. In 1 Chronicles 29:16, David acknowledges that everything that he and the people had prepared came from God's hand. It all belonged to God in the first place. God had blessed David and the people of Israel in many ways and they, in turn, were willing to give everything back to God.

There is a lesson for us here:

1. We need to remember that everything we have has been given to us by God, our lives, our families and our goods; and

2. If God gives us a task to do we should do it well, put our hearts into it and be willing to use everything we have.

In 1 Chronicles 29:3 we read about David's heart. David's heart was devoted to the LORD and to the task of preparing all the materials required. David said; *"I have set my affection to the house of my God."* David in his final years was absolutely determined to complete what God had asked him to do. Dear friend! Can I ask you if your heart and your affections are always right when you serve the Lord? Can you say that you are devoted to the work of the Lord? David had the right attitude of heart. He did not boast to the people about what he had given, but in telling them what he had given, he was also exhorting them to give willingly.

In 1 Chronicles 29:5, David asks the people a question: *"Who then is willing to consecrate his service this day unto the LORD?"* In 1 Chronicles 29:6 we read of the response to the challenge: first from those who were in authority, the chiefs, the princes, the captains and the rulers. They all offered willingly by giving their treasures to the treasury of the temple of the LORD.

1 Chronicles 29:9 is a great verse which gives the reaction of the ordinary working people of David's kingdom. Yes, people like you and me. They all rejoiced at the willingness of their leaders to give and then they too offered willingly with a perfect heart. A perfect heart does not mean they were sinless; it means that the attitude in which they gave was without grudging. Because of their attitude the people rejoiced. Dear friends, there is joy in willingly giving yourself and what you have to God. I was reminded recently of Romans 12:1-2: *"I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service."* In another translation it reads *"...this is your spiritual act of worship."* God demands your life and your substance; remember He has given us all things. One of the verses of the famous hymn "When I survey the wondrous cross" reads,

*"Were the whole realm of nature mine,
That were an offering far too small;
Love so amazing, so divine,
Demands my soul, my life, my all."*

(Isaac Watts 1674-1748)

Are you willing to devote yourself and everything you have to the Lord who died for you?

David the king also rejoiced when he saw his people's willingness to give. Dear friends, God knows the thoughts and intents of our hearts (see Jeremiah 17:9-10). His heart will also rejoice if He sees that our attitude and desires are pure. What does God see in your heart? Only you can answer that question.

In 1 Chronicles 29:10-19 we read of David's thanksgiving and prayer. David's heart was moved, and he began to praise the LORD in the presence of all his people. I want you to notice the order of the way that David's heart was turned to the LORD.

- In 1 Chronicles 29:3-8 we have giving;
- In 1 Chronicles 29:9, joy;
- In 1 Chronicles 29:10, blessing;
- In 1 Chronicles 29:11-19, prayer; and
- In 1 Chronicles 29:20 we have worship.

David's heart being perfect before the LORD moved from willingly giving himself and his substance to overflowing with joy. David blessed the LORD. To bless is an act of adoration; David adored the LORD. David prayed, and as he considered the greatness, the power, the glory, the victory and the majesty of the LORD, he bowed down and worshipped Him. If your heart is like David's, you will also be moved at times when you consider the LORD. There will come an outburst of praise from your lips. You just can't help it; you feel you just want to give God the glory, the honour and the praise.

David sees the LORD exalted high above and head over all things; the whole universe is His kingdom. David is fully aware that any riches and honour he had were given by God. David said to the LORD, *"You are the ruler of all things."* Even although he was the king of Israel, he acknowledged that the LORD was much greater than he was. David had great power in his hand but nothing like the power and might of the LORD. David was a great man but he is fully aware that it was the LORD who made him great. In Daniel's day, King Nebuchadnezzar never had that same attitude. As he walked through his palace, he boasted of the great Babylon that he had built! Before the words had even dropped from his lips, God swiftly removes the kingdom from him! (See Daniel 4:31). 1 Chronicles 29:13 is another lovely verse

which shows David's attitude of thanksgiving to God: *"Now therefore, our God, we thank thee, and praise thy glorious name."*

David, in 1 Chronicles 29:14, is so moved by the greatness and the glory of God that he becomes aware of his insignificance and smallness. David says to God, *"But who am I, and what is my people that we should be able to offer so willingly after this sort? For all things come of thee, and of thine own hand have we given thee."* As you and I consider the greatness of God, well might we say, But who are we? God is not only a mighty God, He is a loving God. In 1 John 4:9 we read of how God showed His love to us: *"He sent His only begotten Son into the world that we might live through Him."* The Lord Jesus, the Son of God, was sent into the world to be the Saviour of the world. When you consider the greatness of God and then you consider His love for you, you cannot help but feel humble in His presence. On a Lord's Day morning, as we gather to remember the Lord Jesus in His death we often sing a hymn. Let me quote the words of the last verse to you:

*"Father, this mystery of love
Must all our praise excel:
No human, no angelic tongue
Its wondrous depths can tell;
For what were we that Thou on us
Such love shouldst ever pour?
We bow, and filled with joy and awe,
Father and Son adore."*

Miss Catherine Helene von Poseck (1859-1953)

Often my heart responds in worship to God when singing and contemplating these words.

David, in 1 Chronicles 29:15, takes his place with his people. Although he is the king, he classes himself with them as strangers and sojourners. He humbly acknowledges how insignificant he and his people are in relation to an eternal God. Their comparative short lives on this earth are just like a shadow passing in time. This thought really struck me as often we think our lives are really important and we feel indispensable at times. How short our lives are in comparison to eternity! Remember the next time the sun is going down and watch your shadow lengthen, then disappear. James 4:14 says: *"For what is your life? It is even a vapour that appeareth for a little time, and then vanisheth away."* As we consider this, it is important that we spend our time wisely. It is also important to recognise God's greatness and His sovereignty. Another thing to note is that although we feel very insignificant, God has a plan for our lives. He has work for you and me to do. God needs you! You represent Him here in this world. You are His servant; His work is done in this world through you and me. The feeding of the five thousand is a good example of this. Someone, possibly the little boy's mother, made up the lunch box; the little boy willingly gives his lunch to the Lord; the Lord does the miracle and the disciples have the joy as they serve out the food and collect all the leftovers! So although you feel insignificant, don't make that an excuse. Get on with what service God has given you the privilege to do!

David continues to acknowledge to God in his prayer that He knows everything that David and the people prepared for the temple is His. It all came from the abundance of His hand. He goes on to speak again about the upright heart (1 Chronicles 29:17). Having an upright heart is really important as we serve the Lord. Our motives must be right and we must have no unconfessed sin in our lives. God sometimes tests our hearts to see just how willing we actually are. The Christian pathway is a continual battle with self, sin and righteousness. David prays that the people in future generations will also have hearts that have the right attitude before God. Unfortunately we see by looking through the history of Israel that this was not always the case. But God's love never changes toward them, although He is disappointed, He always forgives them when they repented. Thankfully the same applies to us today.

1 Chronicles 29:19 is a key verse in relation to the subject before us today. David did not ask God for greatness for his son Solomon. David's only desire was that Solomon would have a pure heart, keep the commandments of the LORD, and build the house of the LORD with the materials that David had provided. Every parent listening should be challenged by this! What are our desires for our children?

In 1 Chronicles 29:20-25 we read that Solomon is crowned king and ascends to the throne of his father David. The people respond to David's call to bless the LORD and they bow their heads and worship the LORD and the king. The people sacrificed sacrifices unto the LORD and offered burnt offerings. Solomon prospered as king and all of Israel obeyed him. The princes, the mighty men and all of David's other sons also submitted themselves to Solomon. The LORD made Solomon a great king with real royal majesty which had never been seen of any king before.

In 1 Chronicles 29:26-30 we read of David's death and obituary. David reigned over Israel for forty years and he died at a good old age, full of years, riches and honour. He had left his mark on history. When David was anointed king by

Samuel all those years ago, Israel was in a poor state. Israel was weak; they were a push over for their enemies and they were far away from God. David was chosen by God to lead Israel back to Himself and to greatness. David loved the LORD and his example to the people led them to be obedient to God's commandments and to worship God. David was not perfect himself. He failed on many occasions, but David had a repentant heart (see 2 Samuel 12:13, 19:20, 24:10, 24:17 and 1 Chronicles 21:8) and he always had the desire to please God and keep His commandments. David continued even in his old age to try to please God. David always accepted and acknowledged that all he had came from the mighty hand of God. In some of the other occasions when we read of David's last words, his heart overflows as he gives thanksgiving, praise and worship to God.

In 1 Chronicles 28:9, David said to his son Solomon, *"And thou, Solomon my son, know thou the God of thy father, and serve him with a perfect heart and with a willing mind: for the LORD searcheth all hearts, and understandeth all the imaginations of the thoughts: if thou seek him, he will be found of thee; but if thou forsake him, he will cast thee off forever."* In 1 Chronicles 28:5, David makes it clear to the people that God chose his son Solomon to be king and to build the temple. David wanted his son to continue in the work he had started for the LORD. The work was building God's house.

Can I ask you what you desire for your family? Do you want them to be rich? Do you want them to be great in this world? I pray that you share David's heart. Our desire should be that our children continue to go on for the Lord, that they will be obedient to the Bible and serve the Lord with willing hearts. But you can't wait until your death bed to give a great speech and tell them what your desire for them is. You must begin being an example to them daily. Your life must show them that you love the Lord and your desire is to serve Him.

Solomon did continue in his father's footsteps, though, sadly, only for a little while. In 2 Chronicles 1:9-11 Solomon asks God for wisdom and knowledge, something he would need to lead and govern such a great people. God gives him what he asks for as he did not ask for riches, honour or long life. Because of this God actually gives him more riches, wealth and honour than any king before him or after him would have.

Just as a warning to us all, remember Eli in 1 Samuel 2:30. God accuses Eli of honouring his sons above God, and in tragic circumstances we read what God said to Eli, *"For them that honour me I will honour, and they that despise me shall be lightly esteemed."* May God give us grace to honour Him in all our ways!

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