

What Legacy Are You Leaving Behind?

Text: Joshua 4:1–18

Introduction

According to *Webster's*, legacy can be:

- money or property bequeathed to another by will.
- something handed down from an ancestor, a predecessor, or from the past: (example, a legacy of religious freedom).
- to appoint by a last will, a gift, or property.
- a business with which one is entrusted by another or commissioned.

A legacy is what a person is remembered for. Many graduate from high school or college believing they will impact the world, but then real life sets in.

There is much to be said about the kind of legacy we are making and leaving behind. If you have not made your mark in the world, you can still make a difference. It is never too late to start a legacy.

In Joshua 3, the Children of Israel were preparing to cross the Jordan River. Forty years previous their parents had complained, but now no one did. In Joshua 4, we see what took place after they crossed the Jordan.

Message

1. Twelve men are chosen to collect a stone (Joshua 4:2).

- a. Twelve stones are chosen, one for each tribe (verse 2).
 - (1) The stones were to come out of the Jordan River (verse 3).
 - (2) The stones were collected while the priests were still in the Jordan with the ark (verse 3).
 - (3) The stones were to be placed in the area where they camped (verse 3).
 - (4) The people obeyed the Lord's command (verse 8).
- b. Why the stones were needed (Joshua 4:6,7).
 - (1) To serve as a sign for the present as well as the future.
 - (2) To serve as an object lesson for teaching their children. Through such teaching they would learn to always fear (reverence) the Lord.
 - (3) To serve as a means of strengthening their faith. God wanted them to be concerned about the faith of their children. God also wants us to be concerned about the faith of our children.
 - (4) To serve as a remembrance of God's power and faithfulness.
 - (5) To serve as a memorial for future generations.

2. Heroes of faith (Hebrews 11).

- a. Each hero was part of God's plan.
- b. Many heroes never saw God's full promise come to pass in their lifetime.
- c. Yet God's plan was great, for God orchestrated it.

3. Christians today.

- a. What legacy are we leaving our children and the people who know us?
 - (1) The stones served as a reminder of the power and faithfulness of God.
 - (2) We do not see the whole picture. We see only a part of what God is doing around us. God sees the bigger picture.
- b. We may believe we know what our legacy is, but we may not.
 - (1) We may not know what God is doing in and through His faithful followers.
 - (a) We may not know how our faithfulness as a teacher or worker has changed someone's life.
 - (b) We may not know how many people one person will change.
 - (c) We may not know how an act of kindness might impact someone. Perhaps we turned someone away from despair, lifted a heart that was discouraged, or inspired someone who will make an impact on others.
 - (d) We may not know whom God has changed because of our example.
 - (e) We may not know the difference our prayers are making.
 - (2) Is our legacy positive or negative?
 - (a) If our Christian life is borderline, we are leaving a negative legacy.
 - (b) God needs people like Joshua and Caleb in this present age.
 - (c) The world needs to see Christian commitment that reaches into the heart. When we set our mind and heart to follow Christ, we become an example for everyone to see and emulate.
- c. What legacy are we leaving? Are we leaving a legacy that serves as a lasting example that people, relatives, and friends can follow or one that is shameful?

Conclusion

1. Share a testimony about the legacy someone left behind.
2. Many have been changed because of a legacy that was being built into their lives.
3. Are we contagious?
4. What legacy are you leaving behind?

—S. Frank Sarvabui, Lincoln, Nebraska