

ADRIAN ROGERS

LEGACY

C O L L E C T I O N



1 CHRONICLES

These transcripts are taken straight from live audio recordings of Adrian Rogers during his tenure as pastor of Bellevue Baptist Church in Memphis, Tennessee. As such some of the transcripts may contain stutters, stammers, transcription errors, and other authentic remarks as would be common in a live setting.

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1 Chronicles

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God's Formula for Greatness

By Adrian Rogers

Date Preached: June 20, 1982

Main Scripture Text: 1 Chronicles 4:7–10

“And Jabez called on the God of Israel saying, Oh that Thou wouldest bless me indeed, and enlarge my coast, and that thine hand might be with m, and that thou wouldest keep me from evil, that it may not grieve me! And God granted him that which he requested.”

1 CHRONICLES 4:10

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Introduction

Find 1 Chronicles chapter 4 and I want us to read together verses 9 and 10. We'll wait just a moment for you to find it. Let me encourage you always in these services to bring a Bible, and bring a notebook and pen; make notes. Carry them home. You'll always learn so much more and you'll keep it so much longer. Oh, you say, “I won't forget.” Friend, I want to tell you that the weakest ink is better than the strongest memory. You need to be jotting things down and so put them only in here, but put them on paper so that you can refer back to them

Now we're talking to you today about the formula for greatness. And I want to read now beginning in verse 9. “And Jabez was more honorable than his brethren. And his mother called his name Jabez saying, Because I bear him with sorrow. And Jabez called on the God of Israel saying, Oh that Thou wouldest bless me indeed and enlarge my coast and that thine hand might be with me and that thou wouldest keep me from evil that it may not grieve me. And God granted him that which he requested.”

Now as you read this passage of Scripture you are going to find that the name Jabez is listed with more than five hundred other names. Name after name after name after name is listed. More than five hundred and it's like reading a Hebrew telephone

directory. One name right after the other. Many of them hard to pronounce. But there's one name that just comes to the surface. One name that God inspired the writer of First Chronicles to stop and put a parenthetical statement about this man. He mentions all of his brethren, but says wait a minute; here's one man more honorable than all of the rest.

Now the question comes: What causes some people to rise to the top? Why was Jabez more honorable than all of the rest? What causes the cream to rise? What caused this man to stand out like a gardenia in a desert of mediocrity. What caused it?

Was he more intelligent? Was he more wealthy? Was he more gifted? Is that what it is? Or does God just simply have favorites? *God doesn't have favorites, but he does have intimates.* And Jabez learned the secret. Jabez somehow had discovered the formula for greatness and when God gave this tremendous list of names, here's one man more honorable than all of his brethren.

And my dear friend, just as Jabez was more honorable than the crowd around him, you also can obtain real greatness, real honor in the sight of God. For God said, "Them that honor me I will honor."

Now there are three things I want you to notice about this man Jabez as we study this scripture. The first thing I want you to notice about him is his sanctified ambition. The second thing I want you to notice about him is his specified petition. And the third thing I want you to notice about him is his satisfied condition.

I. Jabez' Sanctified Ambition

Okay, now let's look at his sanctified ambition. Because ambition is not necessarily bad. Ambition is not necessarily wrong. It is not wrong for a child of God to want to attain, for a lady, or a boy or a girl to have big ambitions and to want to be great for God. Jabez did. He said, "Oh Lord, that thou wouldest bless me indeed." He didn't just want an ordinary blessing. He wanted a king-sized blessing. Not just bless me, but bless me indeed. "And oh that thou wouldest enlarge my coast."

He was grateful for what he had, but he wanted more. He wanted bigger responsibilities. He wanted bigger opportunities. He had a sanctified ambition. Is it wrong for a child of God to want to be great?

Well if all you want is more power, if all you want is more influence, if all you want is more wealth, if all you want is more prestige, then of course it's wrong. Jeremiah said in Jeremiah chapter 45 and verse 5, "Seekest thou great things for thyself? Seek them not."

And oh how many people in the religious world and out of the religious world have ambitions that are carnal and ungodly and that God cannot bless. Let me show you what I'm talking about. Just put your bookmark there in 1 Chronicles, chapter 4, and turn to the New Testament, to Matthew chapter 20, and you'll see exactly what I'm

talking about. In Matthew chapter 20 we find the very ambitious mother of James and John who came to the Lord Jesus and tried to get the chief place for her sons. Look in Matthew chapter 20 and verse 20: *“Then came to him the mother of Zebedees children with her sons, worshipping Him, and desiring a certain thing of Him. And he said unto her, What wilt thou? She saith unto him, Grant that these my two sons may sit, the one on thy right hand, and the other on thy left, in thy kingdom.”*

Now she was a very ambitious person. She felt that Jesus was going to be king. When he comes to this high place of prominence she wanted one of her sons, James, on the one side, and John on the other side.

But now notice what Jesus said to her, *“But Jesus answered and said, Ye know not what ye ask. Are ye able to drink of the cup that I shall drink of, and to be baptized with the baptism that am baptized with? They say unto him, We are able. And he saith unto them, Ye shall drink indeed of my cup, and be baptized with the baptism that I am baptized with.”*

And what he is talking about there is the cup of his sorrow and the baptism of fire that would come upon them—of anguish and persecution. But then He goes on to say, *“But to sit on my right hand, and on my left, is not mine to give, but it shall be given to them for whom it is prepared of my Father. And when the ten heard it, they were moved with indignation against the two brethren.”*

Now the other ten disciples were really hacked off that the mother of James and John came and asked for chief seats. Now the reason they were so moved with indignation is they wanted the chief seats. It is very obvious.

Now look in verse 25, *“But Jesus called them unto him and said,”*—now watch this—*“Ye know that the princes of the Gentiles exercise dominion over them.”* By the word *gentiles*, he means the pagans. He says in a pagan world when a man is great he’s just got a lot of servants. He exercises dominion over them. But now notice verse 26, *“But it shall not be so among you, but whosoever will be great amount you...”*—now notice, here’s the formula for greatness, pay attention, don’t miss it. Jesus did not say not to be great. Jesus is teaching you how to be great. Now pay attention. If you don’t you’ll miss the whole point. Jesus said, *“You want to be great? All right, here is it—“but whosoever will be great among you let him be your minister.”* And the word *minister* means servant.

Now he said, *“There’s some people, they are great because they have servants. That’s the pagan way. Jesus said the Christian way to be great is by being a servant. *God does not judge a man by how many servants he has, but by how many men he serves.*”*

That’s the way to be great, but the point is, and don’t miss it friend; please don’t miss it. Jesus did not say, *“Don’t be great.”* Jesus said, *“Be great, but just make certain that it is real greatness that you get.”*

You ought to have a sanctified ambition. The apostle Paul had an ambition. Indeed he did. Let me give you Paul's ambition. Jot these scriptures down. Philippians chapter 3, verse 14, "I press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus."

How many of you want to win the prize? If you don't you're a sorry Christian. Paul said, "I don't want to fail. I'm like a runner; I'm like an athlete. I am straining with every inch, every ounce, every nerve, every part of my being that I might win that prize. You talk about ambition. Mister, he had one, but it was a holy ambition. Again, I Corinthians chapter 9, verse 24. Listen to what he wrote. "Know ye not that they which run in a race run all, but one receiveth the prize. So run that ye may obtain."

You talk about ambition. This man was motivated. He said, "I want that prize and I'm going to have it. And I'm going to run like, just as an athlete denies his own body, just like an athlete trains, I'm going to stay in shape for the Lord Jesus Christ. I'm going to do all that is necessary that I may win.

He said again in 2 Timothy chapter 2 and verse 15, "Study to show thyself approved unto God a workman that needeth not to be ashamed. Rightly dividing the word of truth." God deliver us from little dreams. God deliver us from small ambitions and small aspirations.

Dr. Lee one time preached a sermon entitled "Chasing Fleas." And he talked about King Saul who was out chasing David. And David turned around and said, "Who are you after? Why are you chasing a flea? Are you out after a dead dog?"

Here was a king, with an army at his command chasing fleas. I look at some of you business men with your fine mind. I look at some of you financiers with your money. I look at some of you women with your wit and your charm and your ability and your intelligence, but what are you doing? What are the goals of your life? What motivates you? What are you striving for? Not that you might please Him. You want to be great, but you want to be great in the eyes of men rather than in the eyes of God. My dear friend, the Bible teaches that we ought to be ambitious, but for Jesus.

Here was Jabez who said, "Lord, I want you to enlarge my coasts." William Carey, the founder of modern missions said, "O God, O God, help me to be the man that you want me to be," and then he put something in words that has been in my heart ever since I first read it. "Attempt great things for God. Expect great things from God."

And oh, would to God that we had that sanctified ambition where we refuse to dream little dreams. The Bible says, "The people who know their God shall do exploits." (Daniel 11:32)

You remember there in Matthew chapter 25, the parable of the talents, remember that? Jesus told about a rich man who was going to take his journey into a far country, so he gathered his servants. To one man he gave five talents; to another man he gave

two talents; to another man he gave one talent.

The man that had the five talents invested the five talents and he gained five other talents. The man who had the two talents invested the two talents; he gained two other talents. The man that had the one talent took and hid his talent in the ground.

When the man came back from the journey he demanded an accounting of their stewardship. And the man that had the five talents said, "Here Lord, I've invested the five talents; I've gained five more." He said, "Well done, good and faithful servant." And then the man that had the two talents, he said, "Here Lord, I've invested the two talents; here are two talents more." And he had four talents. The Lord said, "Well done good and faithful servant." Then the man that had the one talent had to give an account of his stewardship. And he said, "Now I knew that you're a hard master and I didn't want to lose that one talent, so I took it and I hid it in the ground. Here is your talent back." Now do you think his master was pleased?

In the story that Jesus gave in the gospel of Matthew that master said to him, "Thou wicked and slothful servant. Take the one talent that he has and give it to him that has ten, for to him that hath shall be given and to him that hath not shall be taken away even that which he hath."

Ladies and gentlemen, God has given you ability, but God wants you to take those abilities and God wants you to invest those abilities for Him. And it is a sin, it is a shame for any man here to be less than he can be.

You may not be able to be Ronald Reagan, that's not the point. You may not be able to be Billy Graham, that's not the point. You may not be some great theologian like Carl Henry, that is not the point. The point is not that you might not be able to do what somebody else does. But the danger is that you will not do what you can do. What you can do.

I want to tell you there are three persons sitting in that seat this morning listening to me. There is the person that you are now. There is the person that you could be for evil if you allowed the devil to get hold of your life. And few of you dream how deep in sin you could go if take your eyes off of Jesus Christ. And there is the person you could be for God. Oh, if you were to let go of this world with both hands and take hold of Jesus Christ with both hands and say with Jabez, "Oh God that thou wouldest bless me indeed. Oh that thou wouldest enlarge my coast."

I was reading recently about a Palestinian refugee in Lebanon. His name was Amir Zcar. And Amir was won to Christ by the Navigators. They disciplined Amir. Made him a great Christian, Arab Christian. And then after he graduated from the university he applied for a job in Kuwait and was interviewed by a big industrial firm. And the man that interviewed this young Arab Christian said sir, "I want you to know that if you work for our company, we demand that this company be your god." Amir, without batting an

eyelash, looked straight in his eye and said, “Sorry about that, I already have a God.” But he said, “If you hire me, I promise you I will sell more of your material than any other man that you have who made this company his god.”

And that so took them back that they hired him and they found out that Amir with his list of priorities, putting God first and other things second, was able to do far more than all of these others that had made the company their god. And now this young man, according to the report that I read recently, is one of the highest executives in that company. Because here was a young man that had the ambition that all of you ought to have.

I want to tell you students who are members of Bellevue Baptist Church, when you get in that classroom, you better study, mister, because your testimony for Jesus depends upon it. You kids who have unsaved moms and dads, you ought to keep your bedroom clean and say Jesus is the one that causes me to keep my bedroom clean. I want to tell you businessmen, you are out here in the business world, I believe your business ought to be the best run, it ought to be the cleanest, it ought to be the most honest, it ought to be the most efficient. You ought to have ambitions, not for yourself, but for Jesus Christ.

The Bible says we’re not to be slothful in business, but fervent in spirit, serving the Lord. I look out here and look in the face of our baseball coach here at Memphis State, I thank God for him. I thank God that he’s a coach that wants a winning team. Not for himself, but that as a Christian he might do the best job that he can do for our Lord Jesus Christ.

There ought to be a sanctified ambition. And God forbid, God have mercy that we’ve taken the talent that He’s given us and that we hide it in the ground. One of these days God is going to say, “Oh wicked and slothful servant.”

You say, “But I just don’t have any possibilities.” Do you know what Jabez’ name means? His mother called him Jabez, according to verse 9, because she bare him with sorrow. The name *Jabez* means pain. I’ve known some people I’d like to give that name to. Pain. And I don’t know what kind of a dark background he had, but it’s highly significant. Here was a man who came from a background of suffering and pain. There’s nothing in this passage that says that he was witty, that he was charming, that he was wealthy, that he was healthy, that he was strong. That was not the secret of his success.

But here was a man who had a sanctified ambition. He wanted to be all he could be for Jesus Christ—every ounce, every inch, every nerve, every fiber, all of his being. “Oh, God, I want you to bless me and bless me indeed.”

II. Jabez' Specified Petition

Now I want you to see something else. I want you to see not only his sanctified ambition, but I want you to see his specified petition. I want you to see how he prayed. Just go back to that passage there in II Chronicles chapter 4 and look in verse 9. "And Jabez called on the God of Israel." Do you know the difference between this man and all these other men? It doesn't say anything about these other people praying. Five hundred of them. They were drawing their breath and drawing their salary, but here was a man who knew how to get in contact with God. Here was a man who prayed to the God of Israel. And his prayer was not a willy nilly prayer. It was a specified prayer. And I've chosen my words carefully. His specified petition. I want you to notice three things about that prayer. I want you to notice the purpose of it. I want you to notice the power of it. I want you to notice the protection of it.

A. The Purpose of Jabez' Prayer

Notice the purpose of it. We don't have to guess about it. Look at it in verse 10. "And Jabez called on the God of Israel saying, Oh that thou wouldest bless me indeed and enlarge my coasts."

Now it was a very specific prayer. The purpose of it was I want more responsibility. I want more influence. I want a blessing. And I want to be blessed indeed. And God wanted to bless him. Here was a man that wanted God's best and he got God's best. God delights in that kind of a prayer. Here was a man saying, "Lord, I want a big blessing. I want to be enlarged." You see dear friend, God can enlarge you. God wants to stretch you.

Sometimes it's painful to be stretched. Psalms 4, verse 1 says, "Hear me when I call O God," Psalms 4, verse 1, "O God of my righteousness. Thou hast enlarged me when I was in distress."

You know, God stretches you. Sometimes the distress and the pain that Jabez felt was just God's way of enlarging him and making him bigger. You see when God enlarges you then he can fill you with more of himself. And then you get bigger and then you can be filled more and more and more.

Don't be satisfied with filling a small place if God wants you to fill a bigger place. What some people call humility is just fear, or unbelief, or laziness. I'm not saying that you ought not to be content with where you are. If you are where God wants you to be that place is a big place and there can be no bigger place.

But a lot of people are not where God wants them to be and they are taking less than the best because they are not praying and saying, "God I want more. Lord, I want you to enlarge my coasts. I don't want just a blessing. I want a blessing indeed."

And again, the danger is not that you may not be able to do what others can do, but

that you do not do what you can do.

Do you know what this verse teaches me? Let me tell you what it teaches me. It teaches me that we ought to pray big prayers to a big God.

Did you know that our prayers, our small prayers, our penny-ante prayers are an insult to God. Let me give you a verse that blessed me as I meditated on it this week. Psalm 81 and verse 10, "I am the Lord thy God which brought thee out of the land of Egypt, open thy mouth wide and I will fill it." "I am the Lord thy God which brought thee up out of the land of Egypt, open thy mouth wide and I will fill it."

Now when a contractor wants a job and he's negotiating a contract, the person who wants the new building built or the new bridge built or whatever it is, says, "What other jobs have you done?" And he might say, "Well, I've built thus-and-such a bank, and I've built thus-and-such a bridge. These are my credentials; this is what I've done, so therefore you can trust me with this job."

You know what God is saying? "You want to know my credentials? I am the Lord thy God which brought thee out of Egypt. Those are my credentials. Now," He says, "open thy mouth wide and I will fill it."

Have you ever looked in a bird's nest and seen a little baby bird in there—all mouth and a few feathers? I mean, just that little yellow mouth open. How many of you have done it? Just nod your head. You see that little mouth and it's so wide open. That's the way we ought to be before God.

Are you that way before God right now? God says, "Open thy mouth wide and I will fill it!" You see, if you don't get any more it's because you don't open any more. You just mumble, "God bless me." No, listen, God's a big God. Don't be afraid to ask Him for big things. He says, "Call upon me and I will answer thee and show thee," what? "Great and mighty things which thou knowest not." (Jeremiah 33:3) The Bible says, "The people that know their God shall do," what? "Exploits!" It's no credit to God when we go around failing.

The Bible says "God takes pleasure in the prosperity of his people." (Psalm 35:27) God wants to bless you. And you see, dear friend, we need to understand that we can pray big prayers to a big God.

And so here was a specified petition. He says, "Oh Lord, that you would enlarge my coast. God that you would bless me, bless me indeed." The apostle Paul said in Ephesians chapter 3, verse 20, "Now unto him that is able," able to do what? "Able to do exceedingly, abundantly above all that we can ask or think." (Ephesians 3:20) That's the kind of a God we have.

B. **The Power of Jabez' Prayer**

So notice the purpose of his prayer. That he would be blessed indeed. Notice the power of his prayer. Look again. "And that thine hand might be with me."

Let me tell you why Jabez was so honorable. He did not want the blessing without the blesser. He wanted God's hand to be upon him in power. He realized that, dear friend, if you have the blessing and you don't have the blesser, you really don't have anything at all. And so he says, "Lord, I want you to be with me." Now God's hand represents God's mighty power. If you're asking for more responsibility, friend, you've got to have more power.

What he was saying is, that Lord, when your hand is with me, I want to be controlled by You. When God's hand is with him, I want to be guided by you. When God's hand is with him, he is saying, "I want to be empowered by you."

Do you remember John the Baptist? The Bible says the hand of God was upon him. And then it says, many people, many of the children of Israel he turned to the Lord their God. Jabez was wise enough not to want the blessing without the blesser.

C. **The Protection of Jabez' Prayer**

But now I want you to notice, not only the purpose of the prayer, enlarge me. Not only the power of the prayer, and that your hand might be upon me. But I want you to notice the protection of the prayer.

Look at it again in verse 9, "And that thou wouldest keep me from evil that it might not grieve me." You see how honorable this man was? He knew there was a devil. He knew there is sin in the world. And he knew that the more you do for God and the more you achieve for God and the higher your spiritual ambitions are, the more the devil is going to turn the artillery of hell upon you.

I told you before when God opens the windows of heaven to bless you, the devil is going to open the doors of hell to blast you. Sometimes people get the idea, "Oh boy, I wish I were a preacher. You preachers, you just sing hymns all the time and read the Bible all the time, and just stay around good people all the time. It would be so easy to be a Christian if you were a preacher. Boy if you had to be out there in the world like I'm out there in the world, Mr. Rogers, you'd know just how hard it is to live for God."

Friend, let me tell you something. The devil aims his biggest guns at God's preachers. Don't you know that? Don't you know that anybody who tries to do something for God, be it preacher or layman, is going to get the attention of the devil? *The way to escape the devil's attention is just say nothing, do nothing, be nothing for God.*

But when you have a sanctified ambition, when you say, "Oh God, that you would bless me. That you would bless me indeed. Lord, that you would enlarge my coast. God, that your hand would be upon me," then don't forget to pray, "God keep me from evil."

That's the reason the Lord Jesus Christ taught us to pray in the Lord's prayer, "Give us this day our daily bread and forgive our trespasses as we forgive those who trespass

against us,” and then he said, “And lead us not into temptation but deliver us from evil.”

I want to ask you a question. You’ll be honest with me won’t you? Nod your head. Oh, thank you. Now that man over there he didn’t nod his head, but that’s all right. I’ve got my eye on him. Now listen—you be honest with me okay? How many of you have ever committed a sin and you confessed it to God and God forgave you of that sin, let me see your hand. Most of us, all of us, okay. Put them down. How many of you after you committed that sin, committed another sin just like it and had to come to God the second time and ask Him to forgive you, let me see your hand, and he forgave you. Fine. How many of you have committed that same kind of sin as many as ten times and had to ask God to forgive you the same thing. Let me see your hand. I’m raising mine. Come on. Five hundred times, let me see your hand. Come on. Same sin. It’s me again God. I did it again God. I’m sorry God. Forgive me God. And He does forgive you and He will forgive you.

But why was it that we have to keep coming back and saying, “Forgive me my trespasses, forgive me my trespasses”? It is because we remember that part that Jesus taught us to pray, “And forgive me my trespasses as I forgive those who trespass against us.” But we fail to pray, “And Lord lead me lest I fall into temptation and deliver me from the evil one.”

What we do is, we just wake up in the morning, everything’s going fine. We’re hitting on all eights. We slept well and got a good night’s sleep. And everything is fine. We eat our breakfast and we rush off to work. Just zipping along. And then about that time the devil comes and he attacks us and we fall. Then we come to the end of the day and just before we go to bed we say, “O God, I blew it. O God, I made a mess. God I’m so sorry, O God, forgive me.”

And He does. For the Bible says, “If we confess our sin He’s faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.” Hallelujah He does. But isn’t it such a shame that you keep failing in the same area?

Do you know why you fail? You’re learning how to pray, “Lord forgive me,” but you’re not praying, “Lord, protect me.” Jesus taught us to pray daily, not at the end of the day, but at the beginning of the day. I mean you wouldn’t come to the end of the day and say, “Lord, give me today my daily bread,” would you? Huh? I mean the day’s over. This is not a pray for the end of the day, it’s a pray for the beginning of the day. And as you pray for daily provision, you must pray for daily protection.

The reason that Jabez was so honorable is that he understood, dear friend, that he needed to be protected from the devil. Do you know what the best defense is? It’s a good offense, right. Every old football player knows that.

Mike Kolen, who played linebacker for the Miami Dolphins, told me, he said, “When I graduated from Auburn University, coach Sug Jurdan said to me, ‘Mike will you do

some scouting for me.” He said, “Sure coach.”

Now ladies, scouting means to find high school players that know how to play football. He said, “Sure coach, what kind of a man do you need?” He said, “Well Mike, you know there’s a guy you knock him down and he just stays there.” Mike said, “We don’t want him, do we coach?” He said, “No sir.” But he said, “You know Mike, there’s a guy you knock him down and then he gets up and then you knock him down and he stays there.” Mike said, “Well I don’t think we want him either, do we coach?” He said, “No sir.” But he said, “Mike, there’s a kind of guy, you knock him down, he gets up, you knock him down, he gets up.” Mike said, “Boy, that’s the one we want, isn’t it coach?” He said, “No, sir, don’t want him either.” He said, “I want you to find that guy that’s knocking everybody down. That’s the guy I want.”

Now listen, I am grateful, I am so very grateful that when we get knocked down Jesus picks us up. But wouldn’t you like to do a little knocking for a change? I mean wouldn’t you like to see the devil flee from you?

You can. If you learn how to pray as Jabez prayed. Not only Lord forgive me. That is, pick me up when I get knocked down. But Lord lead me and keep me from the evil one. You see, Jabez was a very wise man. He had a sanctified ambition. And therefore he had a specified petition. What was it. What was the purpose of it? Lord, I want to be enlarged. What was the power of it? Lord, that your hand would be upon me. I don’t want the blessing without the blessing. What was the protection of it? And Lord, that thou wouldst keep me from the evil one.

Ladies and gentlemen, the devil is real. And he wants you and you and he wants to harm your family. And he will unless you learn to get up every morning and bathe yourselves in the presence of Jesus Christ. “And put on the whole armor of God that ye may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil.”

Don’t get so puffed up about it. The devil is not after you because you’re all that important. Oh no. The devil’s real war is with God. But evil persons have always known that if you can’t harm someone, harm someone that someone loves, and you’ve harmed that someone anyway. And the devil wants to get at God by harming you.

And so Jabez, no wonder he was so honorable. Because he knew how to pray a prayer that had in it a divine purpose. That had in it a divine power. That had in it a divine protection.

III. Jabez’ Satisfied Condition

But the third and final thing I want you to notice, not only his sanctified ambition. He wanted to be great in the true sense of the word. And not only his specified petitions. But I want you to notice his satisfied condition.

Notice how it ends in verse 10. And the Bible says, “And God granted him that which he requested.” Isn’t that beautiful. That’s the way I know his prayer was in the will of God. His prayer was not some falsely motivated prayer. He was praying exactly what God had put in his heart to pray, for the Bible says, “God gave him what he asked for.”

I told you in the beginning of this thing that the Bible says, “Them that honor me I will honor.” That’s what God says. Jabez honored God. He wasn’t afraid to ask God for something big.

*“Thou art coming to a king.
Big petitions with thee bring.
His power and grace are such,
Thou canst not ask too much.”*

—JOHN NEWTON

And so he honored God by his request. He served a big God. And he opened his mouth wide and God filled it. And he was heard and he was blessed indeed. And God gave him exactly what he asked for in this Spirit-led, Spirit-impelled prayer.

Do you know what satisfaction is? Friend, satisfaction is just finding the will of God and getting in on it. *Do you know what success is? It is just finding which way God is going and joining him.* It is the progressive realization of the will of God is? That’s what success is.

You don’t spell success, f—a—m—e. You don’t spell success m—o—n—e—y. You don’t spell success, happiness. Success is just praying to God and getting your prayers answered and being exactly where God wants you to be, doing God’s work in God’s way.

You know some people have gotten the crazy idea out that if you decide you’re going with God that God’s going to make you suffer all the way. They have the idea, you know, if you say, “Now God I want to do your work. I’ll do whatever you want me to do. You just speak Lord and I’ll do it.” They have the idea that, oh boy, I wouldn’t say that for anything. God’s liable to kill one of my children. God’s liable to make me a missionary in the heart of Africa and I’ll have to eat monkey arms. Oh, no, I wouldn’t say that for anything in the world.

Do you know why? The devil has gotten you to thinking negatively about God. Let me give you a verse, my dear friends, in Psalm 37, verse 4: “Delight yourself in the Lord, He will give you the desires of your heart.” Whatever you want, God will give you, if you delight yourself in the Lord.

Don’t be afraid to trust God. Suppose one of my children were to come to me and say, “Well daddy, you’re so much wiser than I am. You’re so much more studied and learned than I am.” This obviously is a big supposition, but suppose they were to come to me and say, “Now dad, I just made up my mind, whatever it is you want me to do

dad, I'll do it. Your wish is my command."

Now suppose one of them said that when they were ten, eleven, twelve years of age. Do you think I would go to Joyce and say, "Joyce, did you hear what he just said? Ha, ha, ha, boy, he'll be sorry he ever said that. Now let's see just what can we do to make him suffer. That was a stupid thing for him to say. He's going to do whatever we want. Let's make him walk on broken glass. Let's make him go for a week without eating. He's going to do anything we want. Ha, ha, ha."

No, no my dear friend. When a child comes to that place and says, "Dad, I want to do what you want me to do," chances are if we had been thinking about getting him a new bicycle, that would tip the scales. Do you understand what I'm talking about?

Don't be afraid to do the will of God. You just so fall in love with God. Delight yourself in the Lord; He will give you the desires of your heart. And I want to tell you of all of the list of more than five hundred people, do you know who the happiest man was? Who? Jabez. Jabez.

Conclusion

Oh, here was a man with a sanctified ambition. Here was a man with a specified petition. Here was a man with a satisfied condition. He was heard and God blessed him. And the God that blessed Jabez is the God that wants to bless you.

Oh He loves you. And God delights to answer the prayers of His people when they get their ambitions right, when they get their desires right, that in all of their lives God would be glorified.

Oh so many people have such small ambitions. I heard about a wise man who was speaking one day to a very young man. He said, "Son, what do you want to do in life?" He said, "Oh, I want to go to college." He said, "Wonderful." Then he said, "Then what do you want to do?" He said, "I want to go to law school." He said, "Well then what do you want to do?" Oh he said, "I want to graduate." "Well, yes," he said, "And then what?" "Well," he said, "I want to start a law practice. I want to open my office and hang out my shingle. And I want to be successful in law." "Fine," he said, "What then?" "Oh," he said, "I want to get married; I want a wife and I want children and I'd like to have a nice home." The man said, "Fine, and what then?" "Well," he said, "I'd like to have some grandchildren who love me. And," he said, "I'd like to retire from my law practice." "Oh," he said, "fine, and what then?" "Well," he said, "I'd like to have a serene old age, surrounded by my loved ones." He said, "And fine, and what then?" "Well," he said, "I guess I'll die." He said, "And fine, and what then?"

Amen? Amen? You see what I'm talking about? "For what should it profit a man if he gain the whole world and lose his soul." Friend, when God made you, God breathed into your nostrils the breathe of life and you became a living soul and you could no more

cease to exist than God Himself could cease to exist. And your soul is going to go on somewhere endless, dateless, measureless. Your soul will be in existence when the moon and the stars have grown cold.

And I want to ask you Mister, What about your ambitions. What then? What then? What then?

Father, we're just so grateful for your Word today that tells us about this man, Jabez, so long ago. A man who saw the things that really matter, a man who became more honorable than the rest. And I pray God today that there will be many—men, women, boys, and girls—who will say yes to Jesus Christ and trust him as their Lord and Savior. O God, bring the lost. Bring the lost to Jesus, in whose name we pray. Amen.

Let's Just Praise the Lord

By Adrian Rogers

Date Preached: August 27, 2000

Main Scripture Text: 1 Chronicles 16

“Give unto the LORD the glory due unto his name: bring an offering, and come before him: worship the LORD in the beauty of holiness”

1 CHRONICLES 16:29

Outline

Introduction

- I. We Are to Worship Him Constantly
- II. We Are to Worship Him Creatively
- III. We Are to Worship Him Celebratively
- IV. We Are to Praise Him Confidently

Conclusion

Introduction

Find 1 Chronicles chapter 16, if you will. First Chronicles chapter 16 and verse 29: *“Give unto the LORD the glory due unto his name: bring an offering, and come before him: worship the LORD in the beauty of holiness”* (1 Chronicles 16:29). *“Worship the LORD in the beauty of holiness.”* I’m going to borrow the title of the message from Bill Gaither: *“Let’s Just Praise the Lord.”*

Now the passage of Scripture that you have before you is a part of a longer passage of Scripture that tells about David bringing the ark into Jerusalem. And there was praise, and glory, and music. It was absolutely, indescribably glorious. And in the 15th chapter of Acts, when James was talking about the latter-day glory that would come to the Church, James said, the Apostle James said, *“It’s going to be like the tabernacle of David that has fallen down. It’s going to be set up again, and there’s going to be glory in the last days, even greater than the glory when the Ark of the Covenant came into Jerusalem”* (Acts 15:16).

“Now Pastor, what is the Ark of the Covenant?” Well, it was a little piece of furniture about the size of this pulpit. I call it a treasure chest of blessing. It represented—in the Old Testament it was a type, a picture, an illustration of Jesus Christ. It was a treasure

chest of blessing, and it had been in captivity. David wanted it to give God glory. He retrieved the ark. He brought it back into Jerusalem, and he set it up in a tabernacle, or a tent, there on Mount Moriah called the Tabernacle of David.

Well, that's the background for the passage of Scripture, and it is surrounded by praise. Again, look, if you will, in verse 29. David said, "*Give unto the LORD the glory due unto his name...*"—and the last part of that—"*...worship the LORD in the beauty of holiness*" (1 Chronicles 16:29).

I. We Are to Worship Him Constantly

Now I had a lot that I might have said by way of introduction, but we're going to cut to the chase and get right down to it. How are we, therefore, to worship the Lord? At Bellevue Baptist Church in these last days, how are we to worship the Lord? May I say, first of all, we are to worship Him constantly. Look, if you will, in verse 6: "*And Benaiah and Jahaziel, and the priests, with trumpets continually before the ark of the covenant of God*" (1 Chronicles 16:6). Underscore the word *continually*. Look down at verse 11: "*Seek the LORD and his strength, seek his face continually*" (1 Chronicles 16:11). Look over, if you will; just turn the page, and go to verse 37: "*So he left there before the ark of the covenant of the LORD Asaph and his brethren, to minister before the ark continually, as every day's work required*" (1 Chronicles 16:37). Skip on down to verse 39: "*And Zadok the priest, and his brethren the priests, before the tabernacle of the LORD in the high place...*"—he goes on to say in the last part of verse 40—"*...offering continually morning and evening*" (1 Chronicles 16:39–40).

Now all of these verses tell us that there is to be constant and regular worship. You are to worship God continually. It needs to be the habit of your life. And David wrote, in Psalm 34, verse 1: "*I will bless the Lord at all times: his praise shall*"—what?—"*continually be in my mouth*" (Psalm 34:1).

You need to learn the power of perpetual praise. Praise God when you feel like it. Praise Him when you don't feel like it. Praise the Lord. Did you know, as I've studied the Bible, I have discovered an incredible thing? There is more emphasis in the Bible on praise than there is on prayer. That's an interesting thing. And really praise and prayer are so inextricably interwoven that you cannot really do one without the other. Learn to praise God. Make it a holy habit. Pull some of the groans out of your prayers and shove in some *hallelujahs* and see what happens.

All right, now. That's a whole lot shorter than what I'd intended to say on that point, but let me just collapse it. We're to praise Him. Have you got it? Say it: continually, continually, continually. Now get that in your heart.

II. We Are to Worship Him Creatively

Now here's the second thing. Here's why we have a ministry of praise here in our church. We are to praise Him. We are to worship Him creatively. We are to worship creatively. In David's day, as in our day, there were skilled musicians. And did you know they had a Jim Whitmire back in those days? Now his name was Chenaniah, but look, if you will, in 1 Chronicles 15, verse 22. Just go back to the chapter before: *"And Chenaniah, chief of the Levites, was for song: he instructed about the song, because he was skilful"* (1 Chronicles 15:22).

Now here was a man who was gifted. He—this is the Jim Whitmire of the Old Testament right now—he instructed about the song. Why? Because, he was skillful. And not only did they have a Jim Whitmire, they had a Carter Threlkeld way back there. Go back to 1 Chronicles 13, just go left a little bit, and notice in verse 8: *"And David and all Israel played before God with all their might, and with singing,"—now watch this—"and with harps, and with psalteries, and with timbrels, and with cymbals, and with trumpets"* (1 Chronicles 13:8). As a matter of fact, there were some 4,000 special worshipers—about the number we have in our music ministry here—who were Levites, and 288 of them, the Bible says, were specially skilled.

Go to—well, it's fun to turn. Turn to 1 Chronicles chapter 25, and look, if you will, in verse 7: *"So the number of them, with their brethren that were instructed in the songs of the LORD, even all that were cunning, was two hundred fourscore and eight"* (1 Chronicles 25:7). That is, there were 288 out of these 4,000 who were specially skilled. Now what does that mean? Well, listen. We are to worship God continually, we are to praise Him continually, we are to learn the power of perpetual praise, and we are to do it creatively. Now not everybody has the same musical gift.

I thank God for the gifted people in this choir. I thank God for the gifted people in this orchestra. I thank God for people like Ken, and Margaret, and others who play these instruments. I thank God for Carter Threlkeld, people like Jim Whitmire. I don't have those gifts. God made us different that He might make us one. God has given me the ability to preach the Word, for which I am grateful. But thank God for those who lead us creatively to praise the Lord. And I thank God for a church, Brother Whitmire, that is crammed full of creativity that is given for the glory of God. Do you know God made us in His image? And what is one thing that God is specialized in—and that's creation. God is a creative God. And when we do creative things, we are reflecting His glory.

III. We Are to Worship Him Celebratively

Well, I wish I had more time to talk about that, but I don't, so let's move to the next point. You're liking this, aren't you? I can tell. All right. We are to worship God, thirdly, celebratively—celebratively. What do I mean by that? Worship, in this passage that was

a prophecy of last day worship, according to Acts chapter 15, was exuberant. It was full of passion. Go back to where we started. Go back to 1 Chronicles 16, and look in verse 29. I love this verse: *“Give unto the LORD the glory due unto his name: bring an offering, and come before him: worship the LORD in the beauty of holiness”* (1 Chronicles 16:29). No wonder G. Campbell Morgan said, “Lukewarmness is the worst form of blasphemy.” I mean, it’s saying, “God, You just don’t excite me.” Listen. If God is God—and He is—then we cannot turn the church into a mausoleum. We serve a mighty God, a great God, and we’re to serve Him exuberantly.

When David brought the ark into Jerusalem, his wife, Michal, she was filled with gold-plated sarcasm. She said, “Well, didn’t the king behave himself gloriously today?” (2 Samuel 6:20). Do you know why she looked down upon David? Because David was so full of God he was leaping and dancing and praising God, with all of his heart and with all of his might; and, there was a great ensemble of musicians—instrumental musicians and singers—and Michal didn’t like it. That was David’s wife. By the way, she became barren because of that. You know, there’s nothing more deadening, nothing more deadening than refusing to worship. Let me tell you something. If you get happy in Jesus, you’ll make some people mad. Did you know that? They say, “Well, well, I believe in dignity.” Dr. Havner said, “They don’t know the difference between dignity and rigor mortis.”

Dr. Seuss, who wrote the children’s book, told about the Grinch. One thing about the Grinch, when he saw anybody happy, he always bit himself. It made him unhappy to see anybody else happy. Let me tell you something, folks. We need to celebrate Jesus. Amen? We need to celebrate Jesus.

And as I said when I was welcoming the television audience, we’re hearing so much about mental health among believers today, and so many Christians are nervous and neurotic. I believe that if people would learn how to praise, if nothing else, if they would just learn how to praise—mentally, psychologically, spiritually, physically—it would change them. Most of our mental and nervous disorders are due to one thing: it is an over-occupation with personal ego. And this ego causes people to become extremely self-centered. And when you become self-centered, then you become defensive. And when you become defensive, you become hostile, and you may become aggressive. You say, “Oh, don’t give me all that psychological stuff.” It’s not psychological stuff. It is Jesus.

Listen to this. Luke chapter 9, verse 24: *“For whosoever will save his life shall lose it: but whosoever will lose his life for my sake, the same shall save it”* (Luke 9:24). And the word *life* is soul—the ego, the self. When you lose yourself in the Lord Jesus Christ—listen—you cannot truly celebrate Jesus without losing preoccupation with yourself. And you focus your life upon the infinitely, lovely Jesus and the magnificently, all-powerful

God, and it's going to change you. You cannot praise and sulk at the same time. You cannot praise and be irritated at the same time. You cannot praise and be filled with fear at the same time. We should praise Him celebratively.

IV. We Are to Praise Him Confidently

Now here's the fourth and final point of this abbreviated message. We should praise Him confidently—confidently. If you begin in chapter 16 of this book, and begin at about verse 7, you're going to find out what this is: a song. Notice in verse 7: *"Then on that day David delivered first this psalm"—that is, this song— to thank the LORD into the hand of Asaph and his brethren.*" He said, "Here, Asaph, take this song now, and I want it sung." And then, it begins: *"Give thanks unto the LORD, call upon his name, make known his deeds among the people"* (1 Chronicles 16:7–8).

And then, he talks about the worldwide ministry of praise. And in these short verses—30 verses—at least 8 times he mentions praise impacting all of the earth. Look, if you will, in verse 14: *"He is the LORD our God; his judgments are in all the earth"* (1 Chronicles 16:14). Look, if you will, in verse 24: *"Declare his glory among the heathen; his marvellous works among all nations"* (1 Chronicles 16:24). Look, if you will, in verse 31 of this same chapter: *"Let the sea roar, and the fulness thereof: let the fields rejoice, and all that is therein"* (1 Chronicles 16:32). Well, that's 32—now 31: *"Let the heavens be glad, and let the earth rejoice: and let men say among the nations, The LORD reigneth"* (1 Chronicles 16:31).

Now what is this? David said, "Praise is to circle the globe and the earth shall be filled with the knowledge of the glory of the Lord as waters that cover the sea." And I thank God, from this choir, and from this pulpit—did you know, now, the Word of God is circling the globe? Did you know that? That people all over the world are hearing you praise the Lord.

That's the reason you ought to sing on Sunday morning, folks. Let the earth hear His voice. Do it confidently, because, you see, what He's talking about here is aggressive evangelism. With confidence, you praise the Lord, and you can change this world by praise. I believe that with all of my heart.

Psalm 22, verse 3, says that God inhabits the praise of His people (Psalm 22:3). God's address is praise. You want to know where God lives? Where people are praising. And so God is especially near when we praise Him. You want God to be near in our services? Then don't sit there like a wooden Indian when we praise. You know, I look out there, and I see some folks like that. I say, "Why don't they sing? Why don't they praise the Lord? What's the matter with them?" Let those refuse to sing who never knew our God, but children of the heavenly king will make His praise glorious. Praise the Lord. As Jim says, "If you can't sing, make a joyful noise unto the Lord," because

God occupies the praise of His people.

I'm going to tell you something else. When you take the precious name of Jesus Christ in vain, do you know what you're doing? You're opening the door to the devil. Satan is allergic to praise. He is allergic to praise, but he gathers to profanity. And when you use profanity, you're making a foul mess for Satan to come and inhabit wherever you are. Let His praise be continually upon your lips. Praise Him confidently.

The Bible says, "He's taught my fingers to war, but He's taught my mouth to praise" (Psalm 144:1; 145:21). You want to have victory? You want to really be used of God? Learn to praise the Lord. Praise Him. Praise Him continually. Praise Him celebratively. Praise Him, friend, confidently. Oh, God is such a great God! Some people don't understand what real worship is.

Conclusion

I think I've used this illustration before, but here's a woman. She's in an apartment building, and the apartment is on fire, and she's at the window. There's no way out. And she's saying, "Please, somebody help me! Please save me!" They put a long ladder up there and a brave fireman goes up that ladder at the risk of his life. He takes that beautiful girl in his arms and brings her down the ladder to safety, and she is saved.

Well, later on, she realizes that she has been rescued by a man who laid his life on the line for her. She goes by the firehouse to give him thanks. And they have a cup of coffee together and find out they have an affinity for one another. And after a while, they go out on a date. And after a while, they fall in love. And after a while, they get married. And she gives all there is of her to all there is of him, and they become one.

Now let me tell you what worship is—what real worship is. Prayer is saying, "O God, save me," and that's wonderful. If you haven't done that, you need to do that. You know, call upon Him and He'll answer you, and saying, "Lord, I have a need," whatever that need is. That's prayer, and that's wonderful. And then, when she went to the firehouse to thank him and to say, "You're so strong," that is thanksgiving and praise, and that is wonderful. But when they got married, and they became one, that's worship.

I used that illustration one time and a lady wrote me a letter. She said, "Now Pastor, that's wrong. You're using an analogy that's too human." No, no. It's not wrong. The Church is the Bride of Christ. The Church is the Bride of Christ, and we become one with our Lord, when we give all there is of us to all there is of Him. What is worship? Worship is all that I am responding to all that God is.

Jim Whitmire, I thank you, my man, for helping us to just praise the Lord.

Would you bow your heads in prayer? Heads are bowed, and eyes are closed. And you can't praise the Lord without being saved. If you do, it's kind of religious pornography. You have no right—no right—to try to get intimate with a God that you're

not committed to, that you're not surrendered to. You, first of all, need to be saved.

Would you like to be saved? Here's some wonderful news. God loves you incredibly. He sent His Son, the Lord Jesus, to take your sin—my sin, our sin—to the cross, and with His precious, crimson blood, to pay the sin debt—which Jesus did. Jesus paid in full our sin debt on the cross. Did God receive that payment? Yes, because God raised Him from the dead. And that He's shown to be the Son of God with power by the resurrection from the dead. He walked out of that grave, triumphant and all-powerful.

Now all that is necessary for you to be saved has been done, except for one thing. You must receive that gift. The Bible says, concerning Jesus, *"He came unto his own, and his own received him not. But as many as received him, to them gave he power to become the [children] of God"* (John 1:11–12).

Would you receive Him right now? "Pastor, how can I receive Him?" By faith. The Bible says, *"Therefore being justified by faith, we have peace with God"* (Romans 5:1). You put your faith where God put your sin—on Jesus. Pray and ask Him into your heart right now. Pray this prayer: "Dear God, I'm a sinner. I'm lost. I deserve judgment. But I need to be saved. I want not to go to Hell, but to Heaven. And I want You in my heart, and in my life, right now. I believe, Jesus, that You died to save me, and You promised to save me. Now I open my heart. I receive You this moment." Pray that. "I receive You this moment." Pray it from your heart. "I receive You, Jesus, as my Lord and Savior. Save me, Lord Jesus." Did you pray that?

Then, by faith, pray this way. "Thank You for doing it. I receive it by faith. You cannot lie. I stand on Your Word. You're now my Lord. Now Lord, I'm weak, but You're strong. You're now in my life. Begin now to make me the person You want me to be, and help me never to be ashamed of You. Lord, I'll make this public. I'll not be ashamed of You. I'll make it public because You died for me. In Your name I pray. Amen."

What to Do When Your Dreams Are Put on Hold

By Adrian Rogers

Date Preached: June 8, 1994

Main Scripture Text: 1 Chronicles 17:1

“Now it came to pass, as David sat in his house, that David said to Nathan the prophet, Lo, I dwell in an house of cedars, but the ark of the covenant of the Lord remaineth under curtains.”

1 CHRONICLES 17:1

Outline

Introduction

- I. The Dream Conceived
- II. The Dream Confirmed
- III. The Dream Confounded
- IV. The Dream Conformed
- V. The Dream Committed
- VI. The Dream Completed

Conclusion

Introduction

Take God’s Word tonight and find 1 Chronicles chapter 17. I want to talk to you a little bit about dreams, tonight. And I’m talking about God-given dreams. Sometimes God will put a dream in our heart. Sometimes God will lay something on us, give us a vision. As the Bible says, “Your old men shall dream dreams; your young men shall see visions.” Again, the Bible says, “Where there is no vision, the people perish.” Where there is no open revelation.

Go speaks; God leads. God will plant things down deep in your heart. I don’t know whether He’s given you a vision or not, but He gives me visions. I don’t mean that I see movies in my mind. But I mean that God lays things on my heart. And I’m not talking about human schemes. I’m not talking about carnal ambition. I’m talking about things that God lays on me that I believe from my heart of hearts are from Him.

And God may give you a dream. I believe He gives to everyone, if they’ll listen, a dream. God didn’t just put us here to waste time and idle away. God made us for something very wonderful, and the Bible says, “we are his workmanship, created in

Christ Jesus unto good works which God hat before ordained that we should walk in them.” And the word *workmanship* is actually *poema*—we are His work of art.

God laid a dream on David’s heart and David got all excited about it. And then his dream seemed to dissolve. The title of our study tonight; “What to Do When Your Dreams Are Put on Hold.”

Now look, if you will, in 1 Chronicles chapter 17, verse 1: “Now it came to pass, as David sat in his house, that David said to Nathan the prophet, Lo, I dwell in an house of cedars, but the ark of the covenant of the Lord remaineth under curtains.”

Now David must have had a beautiful house. I mean, he was a king and he had at his fingertips all that he needed to build a spacious house. And he called it a house of cedars. And as he looked around at the opulence and the comfort of his house, he got to thinking of the ark of God that represented the presence of God.

You know, the ark was that piece of furniture—about the size of this pulpit—that led the children of Israel out of barrenness; it led them into blessedness, and it led them into battle, and it went before them and so forth. And finally the ark found its resting place there in Jerusalem, and David was glad that it was there, but it was there is a tabernacle. He calls it here “under curtains.”

And David said, “I want to build a house.” Actually, David had a dream, a vision. It was laid on his heart by God Almighty. “I want a house for the ark. I want to build a house for my God. It’s not fit that I should live in a spacious, beautiful house and the ark not be housed in a beautiful place.”

And, you know, I really believe that those of us who live in fine houses ought to want the house of God to be as fine or better than the place we live, don’t you? I certainly thank God for the beauty of this place. And I would be ashamed of myself if I wanted to live in a better place than the place where I want to worship almighty God.

I. The Dream Conceived

And so, David had in his heart a dream to build a house for God. So, just put by verse 1: the dream conceived. And it was a dream of God. God said to David later on, “You did well, that you dreamed this.”

II. The Dream Confirmed

So there was a dream conceived in verse 1. And then look in verse 2. There was the dream confirmed. “Then Nathan...”—now who was Nathan? Well, he was David’s pastor in a way; he was a prophet, his spiritual leader; he was his guide, his mentor in the things of the Lord—then Nathan said unto David, Do all that is in thine heart, for God is with thee.”

It sounds good, doesn’t it? A dream conceived, a dream confirmed. And here’s

David's counselor, the man of God saying, God is with you; go to it, David and build a house for your God."

III. The Dream Confounded

Ah, but let's move on. Thirdly, a dream confounded. Look in verses 3 and 4 of this chapter: "And it came to pass the same night, that the word of God came to Nathan, saying, Go and tell David my servant, Thus saith the Lord, Thou shalt not build me an house to dwell in:"

Now David's getting frustrated right now. Here David feels he has a dream from God. The man of God confirms it, says, "God is with you," and then comes back the same night and says, "It's off; you cannot do it." The dream is confounded. David wants to honor God; he wanted to please God, but God says, "David, we're putting this dream on hold."

Now there was nothing wrong with the dream because we're going to find out later on that the house was built, and it was God's plan that the temple be built. But, you see, sometimes God will lay something on our heart, but we don't understand the method that God wants to use and we don't understand God's timing. And so it's not only that we must do the right thing, we must do the right thing in the right way at the right time.

IV. The Dream Conformed

And so, here is a dream conceived, a dream confirmed, and a dream confounded. But now, I want you to see a dream conformed. God takes the dream and God begins to massage the dream after He puts it on hold. Now begin in verse 4, and we're going to read an extended passage here; *"Go and tell David my servant, Thus saith the Lord, Thou shalt not build me an house to dwell in: For I have not dwelt in an house since the day that I brought up Israel unto this day; but have gone from tent to tent, and from one tabernacle to another. Wheresoever I have walked with all Israel, spake I a word to any of the judges of Israel, whom I commanded to feed my people, saying, Why have ye not built me an house of cedars? Now therefore thus shalt thou say unto my servant David, Thus saith the Lord of hosts, I took thee from the sheepcote, even from following the sheep, that thou shouldest be ruler over my people Israel: And I have been with thee whithersoever thou hast walked, and have cut off all thine enemies from before thee, and have made thee a name like the name of the great men that are in the earth. Also I will ordain a place for my people Israel, and will plant them, and they shall dwell in their place, and shall be moved no more; neither shall the children of wickedness waste them any more, as at the beginning, And since the time that I commanded judges to be over my people Israel. Moreover I will subdue all thine enemies. Furthermore I tell thee that the Lord will build thee an house."*

Now what He is saying here is this: “I’m going to make you some promises. The house, the temple that you want is going to be built. And furthermore, not only that, but I’m going to build your house.” Now He didn’t mean a house for you to live in, David, but he meant I’m going to build a household, a dynasty for you, David. I am going to give you successors; I am going to give you a progeny; I’m going to give you a fruitfulness.” And what God revealed to David here and in another places was that the temple was going to be built, but David’s son was going to build the temple and not David himself.

You might want to put this cross reference in the margin of your Bible: 1 Chronicles 22—well you can just fast forward to it if you want to and look in verse 9 and see what God’s plan is. God says, “*Behold, a son shall be born to thee, who shall be a man of rest;*”—that is, “He’s not a warfaring man like you, David”—“*and I will give him rest from all his enemies round about: for his name shall be Solomon, and I will give peace and quietness unto Israel in his days. He shall build an house for my name; and he shall be my son, and I will be his father; and I will establish the throne of his kingdom over Israel for ever.*”

Now this is a wonderful thing. Here was a dream conceived, a dream confirmed, then a dream confounded, and now a dream conformed. It’s the dream but it’s not the dream. God says, “Yes, David, there’s going to be a house and you’re not going to build it’ your son is going to build it.” The important thing was not that David built it with his own hands or with his own people or even in his own time. The important thing was that the dream was God’s dream and God was going to carry it out.

Now the incredible thing is this, that God gave David far more than he ever wished. I can tell you beyond the shadow of any doubt or peradventure, if God would do more for my son than he would do for me, I would be deliriously happy. And I can tell you something else. If God were to say to me, “Adrian, I want you to build me a house of worship,” that would make me happy. But if God were to say to me, “Adrian, I’m going to do something else. I’m going to make you a spiritual father. I’m going to bless your son, and your son’s son. As a matter of fact, I’m going to give you a spiritual kingdom that will never end,” then I would say, “Praise God, hallelujah.”

What God did for David was to take his original dream, which he thought was a big dream, and God just exploded that dream and made it something bigger than he could ever dream. And I’ve put down in my notes here Ephesians 3, verse 20: “Now unto him that is able to do exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think, according to the power that worketh in us.”

Look in verse 12 of 1 Chronicles chapter 17. God says here, concerning Solomon: “*He shall build me an house, and I will stablish his throne for ever.*” Now David wasn’t thinking about that when he had the dream.

I remember when I used to pastor down in Florida, when I was a very young

preacher, there was an older man there whose name was Solomon, just like the Solomon of the Bible, that was his last name—Dr. Ed Solomon. And he had a lisp; he was a little tongue-tied, but he was a brilliant man and a mighty preacher. Anybody loved to hear him preach because you never knew what he was going to say. And one time Dr. Ed Solomon was preaching in the chapel of the school where he graduated. And he said, “God never did give me anything I ever wanted.” Well that was interesting; here’s a man of God in his later years. He said, “God didn’t let me go to the school I wanted to go to.” Well, he graduated from that school. People were getting a little nervous. He said, “God never did let me pastor the church I wanted to pastor.” Some of his church members were out there. They felt a little embarrassed. Then he said, “God didn’t even let me marry the woman I wanted to marry.” His wife was right there. And he said, “God never has given me anything I wanted.” Then he said, “But you know what? God has always given me something better than I wanted. I went to a better school, pastored a better church, and married a better woman.”

And that’s the way God does things. You know, sometimes we get a dream. We see something; we think we want it, and it’s of God, but it’s not of God just the way we see it. It’s strange how God works. There’s the dream. There’s the dream conceived. And then the dream confirmed. And then the dream confounded. And then the dream conformed till it’s God’s will and it’s God’s dream, no longer ours.

Another scripture I put down as I thought about this is Proverbs 13 verse 12, which says, “Hope deferred maketh the heart sick”—boy we hate to wait for something—“but when the desire cometh, it is a tree of life.”

V. The Dream Committed

Now, here’s the next thing I want you to see. Not only was the dream conformed, but I want you to see the dream committed. When God showed David what His better plan was, then David began to pray that dream in. David did not become bitter; he didn’t pout; he prayed. And even before the temple was built, he began to offer the sweet incense of prayer.

And I want you to see something of the heart of David. David was a man after God’s own heart, and I want you to notice—I’m going to pick out some excerpts from this prayer. Look in verse 16: *“And David the king came and sat before the Lord, and said, Who am I, O Lord God, and what is mine house, that thou hast brought me hitherto?”* And I tell you, I feel that way a lot. I hope you do. I mean, who are we that God should bless us? Certainly not because of anything we have or have done. Not because of any good in us. It is the sovereign grace of God, and David, as he saw what God was going to do, he felt so unworthy. It didn’t make him haughty; it made him humble.

And then also, notice how he was a man who saw just the greatness of Almighty

God. Look in verses 20 and 21: *“O Lord, there is none like thee, neither is there any God beside thee, according to all that we have heard with our ears. And what one nation in the earth is like thy people Israel, whom God went to redeem to be his own people, to make thee a name of greatness and terribleness, by driving out nations from before thy people whom thou hast redeemed out of Egypt?”* He just talks about how good and how great God is.

And that’s the way we pray. We see how unworthy we are; how good, how great, how marvelous God is.

And then he talks about the goodness of God. Look in verse 26: *“And now, Lord, thou art God, and hast promised this goodness unto thy servant:”* God is a good God. And if God has put your dreams on hold or stymied your dreams or things don’t work just the way you think they ought to, I hope you’ll have something of the spirit of David. Don’t panic if things are not happening just right as you think they ought to right now. Just simply stand on the Word of God. God will keep his word.

Go back to verse 23: *“Therefore now, Lord, let the thing that thou hast spoken concerning thy servant and concerning his house be established for ever, and do as thou hast said.”*

VI. The Dream Completed

I want to say one last thing. Not only do we see a dream that was conceived and a dream that was confirmed, a dream that was confounded, then a dream that was conformed, and a dream then that was committed—he just begins to pray it to God—but I want you to see a dream that was completed; how God in His own timing and His own way allowed this marvelous house to be built. And then, God gave David a son, and God gave David a progeny, and when Jesus came into this world, He was called the Son of David. He’s in David’s lineage, from the humanity of David.

And when Jesus comes again, He’s going to sit upon the throne of David. That’s something. I mean, David was blessed. And so, here was the dream completed. That temple was built. The historian, Josephus, said, “It looked, from a distance, like a mountain of snow.” The most incredible building, I suppose, that has ever, ever been built. You would see it, as the sun would come up over the Mount of Olives and gleam on that beautiful, beautiful, incredibly magnificent building. And it was a dream completed.

Sometimes God does put our dreams on hold and we don’t understand what God is doing. I was with Jim Whitmire down in Merritt Island, Florida. I got to know Jim when he was even more of a boy than he is now. And Jim was in his very early twenties, and I was called to be the pastor of the First Baptist Church of Merritt Island, in 1964. And that’s the moonport, the center of the space industry for America. That’s where we sent

a man to the moon, actually not from Cape Canaveral—to be exact, from Merritt Island. That's the base where the rockets went up. We would step into our back yard and watch those mighty missiles ascend into the air.

I came to that church as a young man, and what a challenge it was. And it was a small church at that time, but it was nothing but a great opportunity to preach Jesus. We had a lot of young engineers and people with scientific minds moving into that community, and God began to bless and bless and bless. The first Sunday I preached there and gave an invitation, we had forty-two people come down the aisle to give their heart to Christ. I thought I was Billy Graham. It was incredible and God just kept on blessing. And Brother Jim Whitmire came to me and said, "Pastor, I'm getting frightened; I've never been around anything like this." Down at the altar it was just wet with tears and we were running out of Kleenex, and he said, "I don't want to do anything to mess it up." You remember telling me that? And he said, "It's beyond me; I don't know what's happening, but God touched down there. And we were in halcyon days of revival. And I began to pray about Merritt Island and what God wanted there. And I would drive around the island and pray for it, drive up and down the streets and pray for it, late at night and pray for it, and just dream about taking that place for Jesus. And I really believe that God put a dream in my heart. I believe it was a God-given dream, that what God wanted to do in that church and in that area was of God.

And then, in 1972 the pulpit committee of Bellevue Baptist Church interdicted me from a vacation and began to speak with me about coming here. And there's nothing negative concerning Bellevue or Memphis, but I did not want to come. I did not want to come because I felt that I was right square in the middle of a dream. And the newspaper had just interviewed me and done a big article; it was a Sunday supplement; my picture was on the front page in full color, and underneath it it said "Reverend Rogers and His Island in the Sun." That was the title of the article. And in that article they said, "When do you expect to leave Merritt Island?" I said, "I expect to go to heaven from Merritt Island." And I meant it; that wasn't rhetoric. I said, "This is my dream; this is where God has put me; this is what God wants me to do."

And I was there in that situation, in that church, and God was blessing in an incredible way. We had a wonderful minister of music, Brother Jim Whitmire, and God was blessing; God was incredibly good to us.

And this pulpit committee came and began to talk with Joyce and myself, and in the mysterious ways that God works, God began to dwell in our hearts and work in our hearts, and God would not let us go and would not let you go until His will was done. And I believe with all of my heart that God's will was done, that we would come up here and leave Florida. But it was agonizing. I mean, it was agony, absolute agony because I had such a heart for that place and such a dream for that place and such prayers that I

felt that God had laid on my heart for that place, for that city. And I felt like I was, in a sense, betraying the people and betraying God. Yet, on the other hand, I knew that I was obeying God. It was like God gave a dream, and he gave a dream to David, and then He said, “No, you can’t have your dream.” And I said, “What are you doing, Lord? How can I feel one thing one way and another thing another way,” very much like the first two verses in this chapter.

But, you know, God is so wise. God is so wise. Do you know what my rotten ego and pride were saying? My rotten ego and pride were saying, “What will they do without me? I mean, how can this succeed without me? I mean, after all, I’m the leader; I’m the one who has dreamed this. I’ve got dreams for a building; I’ve got dreams for property; I’ve got dreams for this; I’ve got dreams for a program.”

What about the dream? Well, God has a real sense of humor. Here in this very church was a little tow-headed teenage boy, David McKinley, when I came to this church, who is now the mighty pastor of the First Baptist Church of Merritt Island and doing far more than I had ever dreamed of doing. Incredible building, incredible program, incredible man of God, deeply loved. And God said, “Adrian, I gave you a dream, but you’re not the one who’s going to do it. There’s a little boy in that church that you don’t know anything about right now, but I know him.”

God knew Solomon before he was born, and God said, “David, you let me take care of the dream.

Conclusion

So folks, sometimes God will give you a dream, and God will confirm it, and then God will confound it, and then God will conform it; you commit it, and God will complete it. You know, we just have to learn to let God be God, don’t we? But I want to say this: Let God give you a dream. Let God give you a dream for your grandchildren. I don’t mean a scheme, a dream! I don’t mean carnal ambition. The Bible says, “The people who know their God shall do exploits.” But let God do it in God’s way. And he may give you “exceedingly abundantly above all that you can even ask or think.”

Let’s bow in prayer. Father, thank you for your Word. It’s just been refreshing tonight to look into it and to see, Lord, your sovereignty and the mystery of your ways. And, Lord, help us to get our eyes on you and to hear you speak, and then to obey you when you say go, to stop when you say stop. And, Lord, to be aware of the fact that when it is totally and ultimately done, it will be you Lord that “work in us both to will and to do of your good pleasure.” In Jesus’ name, amen.