

Sermon: "Legacy"

When we hear the word "legacy" we often think about what it is that we leave behind. We may think about money, property, job titles, and accomplishments. And for those of us who are parents, another thing comes to mind-our children as legacy. I've thought of my two adult children in the same light but the more I think about it, it's problematic. Their accomplishments don't get credited to me, as their parent. In truth, they are charged to create their own legacy.

Biblical legacy is not primarily about what we leave for people. It is what you leave in people.

- We can leave someone a house, which can be sold.

- We can leave money which can be spent; wisely or not.

But when we can leave some one examples lived of faith, wisdom, character, love; you have left something that can be generational.

Our friends, co-workers, children, family, have been watching.

- They watch how we handle pressure.

- They watch how we respond when disappointed.

- They watch if we pray when things go wrong.

- They watch if our faith survives difficult seasons.

- They watch to see the joys of simply living, our kindness, our generosity, our smiles, laughter, and expressed appreciation.

We are preaching a sermon with our life, even if we never stand behind a pulpit. The question is not whether we are living a legacy, it is what kind of legacy are we living, are we leaving? There is nothing wrong about succeeding. There is nothing wrong about our vocational achievements, earning money, owning a home, having possessions. Yet...

What good is a great career if we have not demonstrated compassion?

What good is financial wealth, if we never demonstrate generosity?

What good is a beautiful house if there is no peace in it?

Legacy poses an even deeper question, "When I am gone, what will still be alive, because I have lived?"

Will someone persevere because they watched us endure?

Will someone else forgive because we have shown grace?

Will someone serve because they saw us serve?

Will someone else trust in God, because our life demonstrated trust in God?

Legacy requires intentionality. Psalm 78 doesn't say "Hopefully the next generation figures it out." It says, "We will show the generation to come..." So, we see that legacy is not for retirees alone to consider, it is meant for all the junctures of life. Legacy begins with today's choices. Encourage someone today. Serve somebody today. Teach somebody today, by our example. Forgive somebody today. Show your consideration and love for somebody today.

One day each of us will leave this world. the question is not whether we will leave something behind, but what will be our legacy. My prayer, "May our lives

become seeds that produce positive impact in generations we will never live to see.”

I choose to conclude today’s sermon with a poem, I wrote. Poetry has been a part of my life on and off, throughout. I attend poetry readings, and I have participated.

I remember one in particular. At Springfield College, while attending in the 70’s they hosted notable, Pulitzer Prize winning poet Anne Sexton. Unique at the time to me, she brought musicians with her to accompany her readings. Different instruments, different music, depending on the theme. The music enhanced the reading’s impact.

So, I asked Walter if he would provide the same with the piano and he graciously agreed to do so. The sermon title and the poem title are the same; “The Sun Sets, The Sky Paints Itself; Legacy.

“The Sun Sets, The Sky Paints Itself; Legacy”

The world keeps a timely digest
Of everything brushed up against.
Fingerprints on frosted glass,
The space our body leaves
In an empty bed,
Recognition when our name is said.

We think we walk through unimpeded.
We’re only visible when seen.
Yet hallways learn our footsteps,
Welcomed words keep echo’s,
Faded charts, mapped our dreams.

When we leave, we perceive

That nothing has been altered.,
Yet everything is changed; more depth.
Chairs are warmer, moments matter,
Even air shifts by breath.

An impression is a footprint in wet sand,
Brief, shallow, shaped by who passed by.
Impermanent, it fades away.
An imprint asks a harder task
To last, endure, forever stay.

And so it is, we may remain,
Not as monuments or names,
But faith-filled marks of having been.
And having mattered again, again.
It is left to sundry others, to see, to speak, to be,
They are charged to keep our shards, of legacy.