

OUR LEGACY

Int.

1. Aim: To show that the legacy we leave behind is very important and will determine our eternal destiny.
2. Heb. 11:4b "...he being dead yet speaketh." ESV "though he died, he still speaks"
 - a. Abel offered a better sacrifice than Cain and pleased God
 - b. He is still mentioned as an example of righteousness.
 - c. This is His Legacy
 - d. After we live this brief life on earth what will people say about us.
3. What is our legacy that we leave behind
 - a. Definition of Legacy : "something transmitted by or received from an ancestor or predecessor or from the past" "anything handed down from the past, as from an ancestor or predecessor:"
 - b. Many are concerned about their wealth, real estate holdings, stocks and bonds and other securities they will leave behind
 - c. Some families and/or heirs fight over "how much" they will get from their relative's estate. The hearts of the covetous and carnal minded usually emerge to the forefront during such occasions - I Tim. 6:10-11, Rom.8:6
4. Jesus tells us: "Lay not up for yourselves treasures upon the earth, where moth and rust doth corrupt, and thieves break through and steal. But lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth doth nor rust doth corrupt, and where thieves do not break through nor steal. For where your treasure is, there will be your heart also Matt. 6:19-21
5. What will be the legacy we leave behind to our loved ones? Heb. 9:27

Discussion

I. OUR LEGACY . . A GOOD NAME

- A. The single most significant possession we have is our good name.
1. The wise man Solomon said, "A good name is rather to be chosen than riches"
Proverbs 22:1 Eccl. 7:1 "A good name is better than precious ointment; and the day of death than the day of one's birth."
 2. Preserving and maintaining a good name so that it may be left for succeeding generations should be a top priority.
 3. We should be more careful to do that by which we may get and keep a good name than that by which we may raise and increase a great financial estate.
 4. A reputation for wisdom, piety, and integrity, is far more valuable than great riches; and the loving favor which it procures, renders a man more respected than wealth can do.
 5. Several years after our death what will our name represent and how important will it be in the church, community and in our family?
- B. Our name should symbolize honesty, integrity and devotion to the cause of Christ
1. What a true complement to the believers at Antioch when Luke writes, "And the disciples were called Christians first at Antioch" - Acts 11:26
 2. The name Christian represents living a life in word and deed that reflects the Savior. It means to be like Christ.
 3. The disciples at Antioch must have been humbled when Luke penned these inspired words.

4. How precious it is to leave a good name behind, after all that is one of the few things that will be preserved when life is no more.
- C. 4,000 years after Abel's death - his name still influences and motivates people by his faithfulness to God -
1. Heb 11:4 "By faith Abel offered unto God a more excellent sacrifice than Cain, by which he obtained witness that he was righteous, God testifying of his gifts: and by it he being dead yet speaketh."
 2. Abel followed the instructions of God in surrendering to the prescribed way of worship, while his brother Cain did as he pleased.
 3. Little wonder Abel's name will live forever as he is among the great faith heroes of all time - Heb. 11
 4. He left a legacy after his death - that was the legacy of obedience to God.
- D. The legacy of a good name will mean more than all the rubies, sapphires, diamonds and the millions of dollars that could be accumulated in one hundred life times
1. Mt. 16:26 "For what is a man profited, if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul? or what shall a man give in exchange for his soul?"
 2. Prov. 10:7 NKJV "The memory of the righteous is blessed, But the name of the wicked will rot."

II. OUR LEGACY . . . BEING GOOD STEWARDS OF OUR MATERIAL GOODS.

- A. The legacy we leave behind should show that the riches of this world were not the preoccupation of our time and energy.
- B. A.M. Burton, founder of the Life & Causality Insurance Company, Nashville, TN., was a talented and gifted Christian man.
1. This well-known man was able to make great sums of money and yet was a recognized philanthropist. = [a person who seeks to help others, especially by donating money to good causes.]
 2. Brother Burton did not allow money, power, or business to become his god.
 3. Over the last few generations it is doubtful that anyone could match either the wealth, or his generosity in helping with many great causes in the church.
 4. Many who are blessed beyond measure and become all consumed with their carnal appetite will blindly fail to see the true importance of life.
- C. What is truly important?
1. Paul tells us that, "Covetousness, which is idolatry" - Col. 3:5
 2. Jesus being tried by a Pharisee showed the difficulty of making a god out of our money. - Matt. 19:23-24 "Then said Jesus unto his disciples, Verily I say unto you, That a rich man shall hardly enter into the kingdom of heaven. 24 And again I say unto you, It is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle, than for a rich man to enter into the kingdom of God."
 3. Jesus described the rich man as "foolish" Luke 12:20 V. 13-21

4. Jesus further amplifies and pinpoints the real problem when he said, "Take heed and beware of covetousness: for a man's life consisteth not in the abundance of the things which he possesseth" - Luke 12:15
 5. A true steward of God is dependent on how we make use of the possessions that have been imparted upon us.
- D. As good stewards we must show our offspring the value of a dollar and to make sure it does not become our god -
1. Luke 16:19-31 - rich man and Lazarus
 2. We live in a welfare state of "free hand outs" with state and federal governments actually encouraging those to live a life of idleness and encourage subsequent generations to continue having children out of wedlock and never understand the value and importance of work.
 3. Such a life is not conducive to building self-esteem or healthy living.
 4. Paul saw some new Christians that felt the church at Thessalonica owed them a hand out and the apostle quickly put things in the right perspective.
 5. Paul writes, "For even when we were with you, this we commanded you, if a man will not work, neither let him eat" - 2 Thess 3:10
 6. It is clear from verse 11 that such lazy individuals were identified as disorderly and if they continued to live in such a disorderly way that fellowship would be withdrawn - 2 Thess. 3.6
 7. A days work for a day's pay should be the formula for right living.
 8. Being good stewards of our material wealth will have much to do by enhancing our daily lives.

III. OUR LEGACY. . . A LIFE GUIDED BY THE GOLDEN RULE

- A. Matt.7: 12 NKJV "Therefore, whatever you want men to do to you, do also to them, for this is the Law and the Prophets."
- B. Practicing this rule would literally change the world if all would live by this rule
1. We would have better employees, employers, husbands, wives, elders/ preachers and membership
 2. To live by the iron rule suggests, "might makes right," which is to get what you can regardless if it hurts others and should be repudiated.
 3. Criminals and thieves live by this rule and reject the will of others -
Luke 10:30-37
- C. Golden Rule
1. Treat others as you would want them to treat you - I Pet. 2:21-24
 2. Turn the other cheek was part and parcel with Jesus -Matt. 5:39
 3. Paul teaches that evil should be substituted with good (Rom. 12:20-21), and by so doing we will "heap coals of fire upon their head."
 4. Those who practice the golden rule are mandated that we be honest and genuine with our fellow man
 5. Matt. 5:37 NKJV "But let your 'Yes' be 'Yes,' and your 'No,' 'No.' For whatever is more than these is from the evil one."
 6. Col. 3:23 NKJV "And whatever you do, do it heartily, as to the Lord and not to men,"

IV. OUR LEGACY . . . A LIFE OF FAITHFULNESS

- A. Rev. 2:10b NKJV "Be faithful until death, and I will give you the crown of life."
- B. Perhaps the best treasure we can leave behind is "a life of faithfulness."
 - 1. We look at men like: Abraham, Abel, Noah, Moses, Joshua, Peter and Paul, etc. as men of faithfulness - Heb. 11:3
 - 2. Though dead, yet they speak volumes about a faithful life to almighty God.
 - 3. A faithful life begins with our fundamental obedience to the gospel.
 - a. Hearing the gospel preached (Rom. 10:17); Believing in the message that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God (John 8:24); Repent of all past sins (Acts 17:30); Confess Christ as God's only begotten son (Rom. 10:10); These acts will proceed baptism "for remission of sins" (Acts 2:38).
 - b. Then we must continue to live faithfully for the rest of our life.
- C. We never retire from being a Christian. It is for a life time.

CONCLUSION

- 1. What kind of legacy will you leave behind? Heb. 9:27
 - a. A Good Name
 - b. Good Stewardship
 - c. Golden Rule
 - d. Faithful living until death
- 2. A failure to live a daily faithful life following our obedience to God would yield us unprepared to meet our God in judgment - Matt. 25:31-46
- 3. Jesus said to those on right hand (v.34) "come ye blessed of my Father," while on the left hand (v.46), "go away into everlasting punishment."

4. Regardless of what we may leave behind, if we fail to live a life of faithfulness we fail at the life that has been given us. Surely it would be better if we had never been born if we fail to live a life of faithfulness we fail at life - Matt.26:24
5. The one thing I want to leave for my family after this life is over is a life that was dedicated to the cause of Jesus Christ. - Phil. 3:13-14
6. Many worry about the material goods they will leave behind. They worry if their children will waste or squander their inheritance. - Matt. 6:19-21
7. Our legacy should not be an addiction to materialism, but rather to spiritual things that will live throughout eternity. What legacy will you leave behind?

Adapted from sermon by Bob Spurlin

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