

Text: 2 Kings 2:1-11

Title: Leaving a Legacy

Location: Community Presbyterian Church, Celebration, FL

Preacher: Rev. Dr. William Lewis, Senior Pastor

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Following the service a woman exiting the sanctuary shook the Pastor's hand commenting that was a warm sermon. He was touched and thanked her. But every week she would make the same remark, which puzzled him. So finally he asked her what do you mean by a warm sermon? She said not so hot!

It is a dangerous endeavor to try and preach on Elijah and Elisha in the same sermon. Talk about your tongue twister. Elijah the prophet is passing on a legacy of ministry to his successor—the younger Elisha.

For a little background, in 1 Kings 19 when Elijah meets the younger Elisha for the first time he places his mantle on the younger man's shoulders. The symbolic passing of the mantle, the mantle being a symbol of God's calling, power and presence. Elijah wants the younger man to receive his Lord and experience His God.

It raises a fundamental question: What is the Legacy we wish to leave? What influence do we want to have on those who we care about?

Our society stands on the greatest transfer of wealth ever known in history counted in the trillions...the greatest generation (the GI age) is transferring its wealth through its legacy to the generations that follow.

I cannot mention this transfer of wealth without exhorting all of you to put your church in your will. These bequest keep your legacy alive in your church long after you're gone. You'll be in heaven while still building the kingdom of God here on earth!

However, I don't want to focus too much on the quantitative (the amount) the size of the estate thus dodging the more important issues like the quality of the legacy we leave. A preacher cornered a long time member of the church and said Charlie I understand that you are going to leave all your money to the local bartenders. The man was incensed, "What are you talking about I've set up my will so that all of it goes to my sons." The preacher replied, you leave it all to your sons and they're going to give it to the local bartenders.

Once a youth group member informed me, I can't wait until I'm 21, so I could drink beer. I asked why do you have such an unworthy goal? Because my dad drinks beer.

We are able to pass on an amount of money, but a more important issue is the quality of character we leave for them to follow. We can leave a legacy of a big house for our child, but if

we have not left a legacy of being a faithful spouse, a loving family and a spirit of warmth, then the big old home only houses misery. Same goes for the church, do we emphasize the building or a spirit of love.

What do you want your legacy to be? The Swedish Theologian Nels Feray was leaving Scandinavia to board a ship to America where he could get an education not possible in his homeland. His mother ran after him down the platform yelling Nels Nels Don't forget Jesus it's the only I want you to have.

As we send our children off for their college education, if we send them off with their stuff, it's not the same as sending off our children to university with faith and character. This is the time of their life when they find a mate, choose a career and set the direction of their life—shouldn't Christ be influencing these decisions.

So what do you want your legacy to be? Elijah wanted his to be of faith in a living God. Turning back to our text, the crucial verse is when Elisha says to his mentor, Let me inherit a double portion of your spirit. He's not asking to be twice as good as Elijah. He is speaking in the idiom of his day, as when the first born son would inherit the bulk of the estate. Elisha is saying I want to be your heir apparent. I want your ministry and Spirit...I want to be like you. Jesus said, Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness.

What is it about us that we hope those who come after us would want to emulate? Is there a spirit at work within us that should be carried on? The legacy of Elijah was the spirit within him. A spirit that spread to the New Testament in the person of John the Baptist. I thought that was reincarnation in the Bible? No it is the same passionate spirit that thirsts after God.

This is an important question for us Christians because we are living in an increasingly secular climate both within and outside the Church. One man tainted his friend I bet you don't even know the Lord's Prayer. His friend began now I lay me down to sleep... Wow I didn't think you knew it.

Or how about the time on Jeopardy when the question was asked which disciple betrayed Jesus—there was a long pause before someone offered Peter? We are living in a day when our society has become spiritually bankrupt and desperately needs the good news that Jesus Christ brings.

But folks are confused about exactly what we Christians have to offer. A man didn't know what to get his mom for Christmas, until he found a bird that could speak 3 languages & sing opera. He purchased it and had the bird sent to his mom. He waited a couple of days before calling and asked, So mom how did you like the bird? She said, "It was delicious."

This sums up the populace in terms of confusion about what the church is all about.

Let me clarify the church of Jesus Christ is about the God who created us and wants to have a personal relationship with you, so badly that when we chose not to walk with Him, He still didn't let us go, but at great cost to Himself took care of our sin problem, providing us with a way back to Him.

Do you remember the commercial when Michael Jordan was still playing basketball "Be Like Mike" Every child in America wanted to be like Michael Jordan. What did that mean? The Sneaker company wanted that to mean you need to wear his shoes. But simply putting on his shoes doesn't make you like Mike...it made you like every other kid in school. We adults wanted to be like Mike rich and famous. But simply copying the lifestyles of the rich and famous doesn't capture the essence of their success.

If you really want to be like Michael Jordan and appreciate the legacy of the greatest athlete in the world, it means finding out what drives him. For Michael Jordan to live was basketball. If you want to be like Mike it means working on your jump shot 100 times and then 100 times more.

Is there anything in your life that you give yourself to with such commitment? Exhausting yourself, studying and practicing focusing on every aspect. If you want to be like Mike you have to capture the spirit of the man the passion the commitment the fire that drives his soul. Are you on fire for anything It will determine your legacy.

As ambassadors for Christ we are to proclaim the excellencies of Him who saved us.

Often we do not realize we are leaving a legacy. Psychologist tell us that in parenting we don't turn out the kind of children we want, we turn out the kind of children we are.

When we ponder our legacy we are not talking about mannerisms, clothing or money or house. We are talking about the Spirit within: Are we for the self or are we for others? Are we for the betterment of humanity or is it the accumulation of stuff. What are we about? Do you have something within you that is contagious, a spirit that points others to God?

Don't underestimate the power of a godly legacy.

Jonathan Edwards was one of the leaders of the great awakening here in America—the greatest American theologian. Jonathan Edwards was raised in a Christian home. His father was a minister. His mother, the daughter of a minister. Studies have been run on the descendants of Jonathan Edwards. 14 were college presidents. 100 were college professors, 30 were judges, 60 were physicians, more than 100 were ministers, missionaries and seminary professors. 60 were authors.

Studies were further done on people who lived on the same street where Jonathan Edwards lived. The Jewks family lived on the same block, similar house, same neighborhood and tangible environment. Of the 1200 descendants of the Jewks family 330 were professional paupers, 440

were destroyed by their own wickedness. 60 were habitual thieves. 130 were convicted criminals. Only 20 of them learned a trade and 10 of them learned it in a state penitentiary. 7 of the family were murderers. Same neighborhood, same environment different spirits.

What Spirit is at work within you? It is the qualities that will be acquired by those who come after us. Who has shaped you? If someone had remember life is not measured by what has overwhelmed us, but by what we have overcome.

I was at the bedside of one of the church pillars just hours away from death. Holding my hand his face became distraught and with an expression of frustration he sighed Pastor I never fixed the steeple.

On your death bed what will you be thinking about It's a good indicator of what your life was based on.

When we get to heaven and God says what did you do with your time on earth? What will we leave behind? Are we investing in eternity?

Just as Elijah passed the mantle of ministry to Elisha and Jesus passed the baton of ministry to Peter and the disciples and they passed it down to the early church, and the Church fathers passed the calling down through the centuries and millennia to us—we are now passing the baton of Christ's love onto others.

That's what stewardship is all about...look at our Brochure:

These are not my ideas...these are the spiritual dreams I heard congregation members and staff talk about. These are the dreams of the PNC and elders present and past...