



8/28/24

We had a wonderful service for my stepmom on Monday. It was in a tiny little town called Carmi, Illinois. I grew up going to her parent's farm in the summers...learning how to ride a horse and do whatever it is you do with beans (even though I don't remember what it's called)...and crossing the border into Kentucky to go their cabin on a lake where I learned how to waterski on my dad's feet. Sweet memories. I'm so thankful to know that my stepmom has passed from life on this earth to the incredible inheritance of eternal life in the presence of God. It must be amazing!!! We have such a good God...here with us in this broken life, sustaining us until He brings us home to perfection. Amen!

*Blessings,
Jonna*

1 Chronicles 29:10-19 ~

Vs. 10 starts with the word, "Therefore." So what's the therefore there for? This was the celebration and dedication of all the materials to build a temple for the Lord...not a tent as they had used for 40 years when they were wandering in the desert...but a structure made from rock that would be built in the center of Jerusalem. David wanted to be the one to build the temple for the Lord, but God said no. He would allow David's son, Solomon, to build the temple but not David because "You have shed much blood and have waged great wars. You shall not build a house to My name, because you have shed so much blood before Me on the earth" (1 Chronicles 22:8). But God allowed David to get all the materials for the temple so that Solomon would have everything he needed when he became king.

Once all the materials were acquired, 1 Chronicles 22:9 says, "Then the people rejoiced because they had given willingly, for with a whole heart they had offered freely to the Lord. David the king also rejoiced greatly." I see this same theme throughout the word. God celebrates not just that we give, but that we give willingly, freely, and with a whole heart. "Therefore..." David blessed the Lord with everyone there for the celebration.

What did he bless the Lord for?

Vs. 10 ~ He is the God of their forefather, Israel (Jacob). Not just his God, but his God forever and ever, which meant that hundreds of years including 400 years of slavery hadn't changed the fact that the one true God was their God...and mine.

Vs. 11-13 ~ Greatness, power, glory, victory, and majesty belong to God because everything in heaven and on earth belongs to Him. He makes Elon Musk, Oprah Winfrey, and all the other billionaires combined look like paupers.

His Kingdom is THE Kingdom. Psalm 103:19 says, "The Lord has established His throne in the heavens, and His kingdom rules over all." He is exalted as Head, not just over the Jews, but over all heaven and earth...all people and all the unseen spiritual beings.

It is only by God's hand that we have strength or power. It is only by God's power that anyone is made great or strong. The only response in light of who God is, is to praise Him and thank Him for being my God. And I know something David didn't know at the time. God had given him His personal name, but I know that God has done even more through Jesus. He has given me an even more personal name...Dad. He has adopted me and made me His child. My kids know my personal name...Jonna...but they call me something even more personal...Mom. I know God's personal name...Yahweh (which is translated LORD), but I get to call Him by a name that is even more personal...Abba...Dad. I thank and praise my God who is over all, who has all the power and majesty and victory...because He is my Dad.

Vs. 14 ~ "BUT WHO AM I?" Who am I that God should choose to be someone so personal in my life, so invested into my purpose, so loving toward me? Who am I and who are His people...that we should BE ABLE to offer anything to God with a willing heart? Who are we...that God would be so generous with us and allow us to give back to Him from the very blessings He's given to us? He doesn't demand our gifts. He lovingly receives them as we give with a willing heart. Everything we have comes from Him. It is an act of obedience to give some of that back to Him...but it must be an act of willing obedience...that we would be grateful to be invited in to help fulfill His purpose.

Vs. 15 ~ In truth, apart from the Lord's grace and mercy, we are just strangers before Him...people who are just passing through. Long after Solomon built the temple, the temple stood...but David and Solomon and so many others did not. Their lives on earth ended. And yet God gave them the opportunity to be part of something far greater than themselves...something that would continue on way past their time on earth.

Vs. 16-19 ~ David knew that all the materials needed to build a house for the Lord came from God's own hand. I know this in my own life. Everything I need to serve the Lord faithfully comes from His own hand. It's like giving my toddler money so that she can buy my birthday present. She has no money of her own...but she gets the blessing of being able to give. It blesses me that she wants to give and it blesses her that she has something she can give. "Oh, the depth of the riches and wisdom and knowledge of God... 'Who has given a gift to Him that He might be

repaid?’ For from Him and through Him and to Him are all things. To Him be glory forever. Amen” (Romans 11:33, 35-36).

God tests the hearts. He takes pleasure in our “uprightness.” What is the evidence of an upright heart? A willing heart. A heart that freely gives to the Lord and doesn’t resent Him for it. A heart that gives with joy. The only way that’s going to happen is if I understand who it is I’m giving to. He is the one with all the power and majesty and victory and authority...and He freely and joyfully gives to me! I have nothing apart from Him...not even my breath.

Now a prayer for the Lord to continue His work in us. O Lord, God of Abraham, Isaac, Israel, and all the fathers that came before us...please keep forever the purpose to honor and serve You. Please guard and protect us so that our hearts remain willing and joyful in giving to You. Please direct our hearts to You...because even our willing hearts don’t stay willing without Your help.

That’s why it’s so important that we don’t let our walk with God live on emotional, spiritual highs. No relationship grows stronger on spiritual highs unless it is committed even in the mundane. The spiritual highs are awesome...but it’s only by consistently walking with the Lord, knowing His word, drawing near to Him in conversation with Him...that our hearts stay whole...undivided...willing...joyful. It’s true in every relationship. If we rely on a feeling to keep us going, our relationships will suffer. O Lord, help me to be wholly surrendered to You even when my feelings don’t line up with Your truth.

David prayed for Solomon, the one who would oversee the building of the temple...which was way more important than just being a building. What did he pray for Solomon? That he would have “a whole heart” so that he could be faithful to God’s word...not just in hearing it, but in doing it. A divided heart will always move away from the Lord. “But be doers of the word, and not hearers only, deceiving yourselves. For if anyone is a hearer of the word and not a doer, he is like a man who looks intently at his natural face in a mirror. For he looks at himself and goes away and at once forgets what he was like” (James 1:22-24).

O Lord, I need two major things in order to offer myself to You with an undivided, willing, joyful heart. I need to see WHO You are. If I don’t understand who You are, I will avoid You and pull away from You. Please open my heart to embrace ALL of who You are and reject ANYTHING that isn’t true about You. The second thing I need is Your generosity. I can’t offer anything that You haven’t given to me first. Please help me to see that nothing comes from my own strength. It is all from You. Please help me to be surrendered to You, humble before You, confident in You, and grateful to You. Blessed be You, O Lord my God and my Abba...Dad.