

Matthew 1: Living a Legacy Worth Leaving

It started in the 1890's as an outcry from the impact of the deep recession of that era. Men were out of work, as Chicago rail magnate George Pullman laid off scores of workers and reduced the wages of others. Other workers, as a result of Pullman's response, went on strike and the American Railway Union boycotted the cars operated by Pullman. As a result, the rail industry was impacted nationwide.

David Papke later would write that this action tapped into a deep and alienation of labor in general. "Workers were mad about their situation. They were mad about their conditions, and about what they took to be mean and arbitrary treatment they received from distant owners of the industries in which they worked". The Pullman workers started their strike in May of 1894. In June, Congress passed a law noting the first Monday of September as a day to recognize laborers in our society. While there was a day already in place for that, it has been said that Congress passed this law to appease the angry laborers of this uprising. But, the strike went on, as did the recession.

In July, of 1894, then President Grover Cleveland sent in troops to crush the strike. Up to that time, there had not been any large -scale rioting, and the governor of Illinois wrote President Cleveland to object to the federal troops being used and thus imposed upon the people of that city and movement. Within days of the arrival of the troops, rail cars were being overturned, fires were set, property was destroyed, and full -scale riots were taking the city of Chicago by storm. Bullets, bayonets, and bullying was the response of the troops the President had activated. Dozens of people died in Chicago, and elsewhere.

Since that time, there has been a mellowing of movement force to commemorate those who work in their jobs, support their families, and strive to achieve something. The legacy of that time is that there is a Labor Day we still enjoy today. Many uprising have occurred since that time, yet millions of working mothers and fathers have labored to work hard for something that they could achieve in financial attainment, while also leaving a legacy of their own to the children and those who knew them.

Work. Many of society today are in an entitlement mentality. Those people choose to have a hand out with the expectation and demand to be taken care of, rather than be given a helping hand to get ahead. That is their legacy. Others work hard at the chosen vocation, calling, and skill sets to be providers, while also loving their families so much that they are willing to sacrifice to provide for them.

All of us work for something. We want our house paid off. Our car owned by us and not the bank. We choose to provide groceries for our tables, raise our children, spend time developing relationships and friendships that are deeper and lasting, provide for insurances against losses brought on by health crisis, auto accidents, and loss of loved ones. Our lives are spent working to achieve something that is either truly needed or deeply desired.

Yet, if we are truly honest and look at the eternal perspective, we must realize that these things will fade into the past when we face Jesus. What will not fade, however, and what is important in the eternal, and the lasting sense, is the legacy that we live, and the legacy that we leave. If I may, let me ask the question of the hour:

ARE WE LIVING A LEGACY WORTH LEAVING?

Do our actions speak of eternal things, and will they be remembered as memories that bring cherished thoughts?

Do the words we speak raise an orchestra of treasured balm and love that goes with others, even before we become nothing other than a memory?

Are the tears we shed over the lives we are touched by, and those we touch, for the good of others?

Do the memories we leave bring a touch of the heart that resounds of love, holy living, and care that is truly worth leaving?

Matthew 1 gives us a symphony of examples of holy people that are sure and true examples of holy living, that left legacies for us to reflect upon. It is the genealogy of Jesus, as recorded by Matthew. To me it is the grace hall of fame, but it is also a passage that speaks loud in the area of legacy.

Matthew 1: 5-6: Salmon begot Boaz by Rahab; Boaz begot Obed by Ruth. Obed begot Jesse, and Jesse, and Jesse begot David the king. David begot Solomon by her who had been the wife of Uriah (Bathsheba).

1. Salmon left a legacy of RECONCILIATION (Verse 5).
 - A. He reconciled her AWAY FROM being demeaned: Prostitution, rejection, the “low life” of society, rejected, castigated EXCEPT by those who would use her and abuse her for their own carnal desires.
 - B. He reconciled her AWAY FROM being killed:
 1. The people of Jericho were wiped out, EXCEPT for Rahab and those in her house.
 2. The people of Israel should have killed her, as a foreign god worshipper, and negative influence.
 3. The Law of Moses dictated that she be killed as she was a prostitute, and one considered impure in many ways.
 4. The Reconciliation of God, through Salmon, kept her alive, and let Grace be the word of the day.
 - C. He reconciled her UNTO himself.
 1. He RECONCILED her as his OWN responsibility, and into his OWN family.
 2. He RECONCILED her not as a “simple” concubine, but as (by some commentators thoughts) his chosen and preferred wife.
 3. He RECONCILED her to be the one of influence in his home with his children,

Ananias: Lived the Legacy of Reconciliation of Saul, later Paul, to the Church (Acts 9)

Does it not behoove us to realize the Christ who forgave US, reconciled US, take US away from a life that WAS to a life that is RECONCILED to Himself?

Does it not behoove us to realize that RECONCILIATION is a legacy that is worth living and leaving, and apathy vs. rejection is a legacy worth losing?

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Does it not behoove us to realize that we have a choice to be a legacy of RECONCILIATION, and thus embrace and leave such a legacy?

Are we, truly, living a legacy – even of RECONCILIATION – worth leaving, or are we living a legacy worth losing?

2. Boaz left a legacy of RESTORATION (Verse 5).

- A. He restored her AWAY FROM a life of poverty.
 - 1. He took her from the poverty of no provision, to the prosperity of all provision.
 - 2. He took her from the poverty of widowhood to the place of being a wife again.
 - 3. He took her from the poverty of a foreign family member, only by relatives, to a position of purpose and place in his own life and family.
- B. He restored her AWAY FROM a life of being forsaken.
 - 1. He did not let the death of her husband define her, but let it lead her to belonging.
 - 2. He did not let the leaving of her own family enslave her, but rewarded it by faithfulness to his duties as a kinsman.
 - 3. 3. He did not let the menial life of gleaning become her, but had her cover herself – even as his wife – and thus as belonging once again.
- C. He restored her UNTO a life of inclusion.
 - 1. He led her into inclusion as a completely accepted part of Judaic family life.
 - 2. He led her into inclusion as a completely integral part of Judaic history.
 - 3. He led her into a legacy of being of the lineage of David, and thus Jesus.

Paul: Regarding John Mark, even though Paul had, at one time refused to be with John Mark, so much so that Barnabas took this young protégé on, and Paul took Silas, Paul later RESTORES John Mark to himself as one that should be brought with Timothy. (2 Timothy 4:11).

Paul, LIVED this LEGACY of RESTORATION to the one who had abandoned him those many years earlier.

Is there a time, when we were included, accepted, rebuilt, and thus RESTORED by someone who dared to be risky and become a legacy for us?

Does not Jesus call us to be the living Legacy of helping to disciple others that they, too, may experience Restoration.

2 Corinthians 1:4 tells us we receive comfort, that we may give it forward. Can we not see that Christ provided for us RESTORATION from our old selves, that we may be a new Creation in Christ so that, among other legacy ministries, we can help others be restored?

Are we, truly, Living a Legacy Worth Living, or living a legacy worth losing? Do we live the legacy of the restored person, AND are we being the channel that brings Restoration to others, even as Boaz was for Ruth?

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3. David left a legacy of REPENTANCE (Verse 6).
 - A. He REPENTED away from the sin of hiding his sin.
 1. Repentance requires admission: "I did IT".
 2. Repentance requires contrition: "The IT is SIN."
 3. Repentance requires acknowledging: "The SIN is DISCOVERED".
 - B. He repented AWAY FROM a decision of moral failure.
 1. Repentance requires Forsaking: Never repeating the sin now acknowledged.
 2. Repentance requires Broken-ness: The weight of the sin is too great to repeat and too heavy to live in/ continue doing.
 3. Repentance requires Realization: The sin separates me from God, until and unless it is truly left behind me.

Hebrews 12:1-2: "... lay ASIDE the weight and SIN that so easily besets, and run with patience the race that is set before us, looking unto Jesus, the Author and Finisher of our faith.

Paul: Pressing on to the mark of the high calling of Christ, counting all things of the past as loss.

Leaving the sin, never returning, while knowing the failure that resulted and the results that can plague us again, IF we repeat them.

- C. He repented UNTO a life of transformation.
 1. He was transformed into a man after God's own heart – the sin was not seen but the new heart was.
 2. He was transformed into a man that God used to show transformation living after sin, despite the nature of the sin committed.
 3. He was transformed into the most revered King of the history of Israel, and not removed from being of the lineage of Jesus.

Does there not seem to be a pattern here? The Legacy of these three persons in the lineage of Jesus were living a legacy of grace.

Does this not remind us to be a living Legacy, and HAVE a Living Legacy Worth Leaving?

What is your legacy? When you take your final breath, and close your eyes the last time, what will people say and remember of you? What will they say of me?

"Pirate" illustration.

"Duck" Illustration.

Personal illustration: I pray that, unless the Lord tarries, my legacy will be that I loved Jesus, loved my wife, Preached the Word purely and as best I could, and shared Christ with others. Chef, Hunter, Fishing, and anything else must be secondary.

“Oh To Be Like Thee”