

“Like Father, Like Son”
2 Kings 21:18-26
(Preached at Trinity, October 2, 2022)

I'm supplying these notes for the benefit of busy pastors who may be engaged in bi-vocational work, feeling the pressure of preparing to preach twice on the Lord's Day while trying to balance full-time secular work as well as caring for their families. While the notes of another man are no substitute for personal study, I pray that these may aid in the process of preparing to preach.

Disclaimer: These are the actual notes I bring with me to the pulpit, which I follow loosely. They are not designed for publication. While I try to make every effort to give proper credit to my sources from the pulpit, adequate citations will sometimes be absent from my notes. If anyone feels their intellectual material has been used without adequate citation, please contact me and I'll make immediate correction giving credit.

1. The first part of this chapter focuses on the reign of King Manasseh. His reign of 55 years was the longest of the kings of Judah and was by far the most wicked. Under his leadership Israel became more wicked than the nations God had driven out before them.
2 Kings 21:9 NAU - "Manasseh seduced them to do evil more than the nations whom the LORD destroyed before the sons of Israel."
2 Kings 21:11 NAU - "having done wickedly more than all the Amorites did who were before him, and has also made Judah sin with his idols;"
 - A. He erected altars for the worship of Baal. He even made his son pass through the fire as a human sacrifice. He practiced witchcraft and sorcery.
 - B. He persecuted the righteous
2 Kings 21:16 NAU - "Moreover, Manasseh shed very much innocent blood until he had filled Jerusalem from one end to another"
The rabbis believed it was at this point that the prophet Isaiah was sawn in two.¹
2. But in 2 Chronicles we read that after he was carried off by the Assyrians he turned to God in repentance.
2 Chronicles 33:10-13 NAU - "The LORD spoke to Manasseh and his people, but they paid no attention. ¹¹ Therefore the LORD brought the commanders of the army of the king of Assyria against them, and they captured Manasseh with hooks, bound him with bronze *chains* and took him to Babylon. ¹² When he was in distress, he entreated the LORD his God and humbled himself greatly before the God of his fathers. ¹³ When he prayed to Him, He was moved by his entreaty and heard his supplication, and brought him again to Jerusalem to his kingdom. Then Manasseh knew that the LORD was God."
The historian Josephus described his repentance: "When [Manasseh] was come to Jerusalem, he endeavoured, if it were possible, to cast out of his memory his former sins against God, of which he now repented, and to apply himself to a very religious life. He sanctified the temple and purged the city, and for the remainder of his days he was intent on nothing but to return thanks to God for his deliverance."²
3. I pointed out last week that although we can find forgiveness in Christ, the earthly consequences of our sins are not easily undone.
Murderers remain in prison. Those who abused their bodies can continue to suffer the afflictions of their sin. Families will sometimes continue to bear the consequences of our sinful past.

¹ Cyril J. Barber, *The Books of Kings: The Righteousness of God Illustrated in the Lives of the People of Israel and Judah*, vol. 2 (Eugene, OR: Wipf & Stock Publishers, 2004), 495.

² *Ibid.*, 497.

4. The last part of this chapter bears the theme that is all too familiar in Old Testament families. The children often demonstrated the sins they saw in their fathers. We have a saying today that describes it well: "Like Father, Like Son."
- A. We saw it with Abijam, the son of Rehoboam in **1 Kings 15:3 NAU** - "He walked in all the sins of his father which he had committed before him; and his heart was not wholly devoted to the LORD his God, like the heart of his father David."
- B. We also saw it with Ahaziah, the son of Ahab. **1 Kings 22:51-52 NAU** - "Ahaziah the son of Ahab became king over Israel in Samaria in the seventeenth year of Jehoshaphat king of Judah, and he reigned two years over Israel. ⁵² He did evil in the sight of the LORD and walked in the way of his father and in the way of his mother "
- C. We also sadly saw it even with King David. David's poor example and insufficient parenting all but destroyed his home. His sinful affair with Bathsheba and murder of her husband left an indelible mark upon his children. His sons bore the image of their father, but their sins exceeded their father. Amnon's lusts led him to become a rapist. Even of Solomon we read: **1 Kings 11:3-4 NAU** - "He had seven hundred wives, princesses, and three hundred concubines, and his wives turned his heart away. ⁴ For when Solomon was old, his wives turned his heart away after other gods; and his heart was not wholly devoted to the LORD his God, as the heart of David his father *had been*."
5. **Verses 18-26** give us a brief account of the reign of Amon, Manasseh's son. The description of his reign is unambiguous: **2 Kings 21:19-20 NAU** - "Amon was twenty-two years old when he became king, and he reigned two years in Jerusalem; and his mother's name was Meshullemeth the daughter of Haruz of Jotbah. ²⁰ He did evil in the sight of the LORD, as Manasseh his father had done."
- A. One of the most striking parts of the description is at the end of **Verse 20** - "He did evil in the sight of the LORD, as Manasseh his father had done."
- B. But didn't his father repent and turn from his wicked ways? Yes, but sometimes our sin can become so egregious that the earthly results can't be undone. Apparently, Manasseh's repentance came too late to have an impact upon his son. Cyril Barber comments on this: "There may be a warning for us here. A healthy spiritual legacy seldom flows from a late and sudden conversion but from the practice of lifelong and attractive godliness."³
- C. As usual, 2 Chronicles gives us greater detail: **2 Chronicles 33:21-23 NAU** - "Amon was twenty-two years old when he became king, and he reigned two years in Jerusalem. ²² He did evil in the sight of the LORD as Manasseh his father had done, and Amon sacrificed to all the carved images which his father Manasseh had made, and he served them. ²³ Moreover, he did not humble himself before the LORD as his father Manasseh had done, but Amon multiplied guilt."

³ Ibid., 310.

6. The influence of Manasseh's earlier life had already left its mark on his son. And as is often the case, Amnon's sins exceeded what he had seen in his father. The human heart is corrupt. Children must be carefully nurtured. Left to themselves children will follow the sinful propensity of their natural depravity.
7. I stated that this is a problem seen often in the Old Testament, but it is just as prevalent today. The sins of the fathers are often transferred to their children. John Woodhouse writes: "Here's a terrifying thought: the faults and failings of parents are often reproduced in their children. Good looks and intelligence are not the only things that are passed on from one generation to the next. We who are parents shape our children in many ways, in our own image. Sometimes we take pride in that. But it is a terrifying thought."⁴
- We read in the Second Commandment:
Exodus 20:5-6 NAU - "for I, the LORD your God, am a jealous God, visiting the iniquity of the fathers on the children, on the third and the fourth generations of those who hate Me, ⁶ but showing lovingkindness to thousands, to those who love Me and keep My commandments."
8. We shouldn't be surprised to read that Amon was just like his father, Manasseh.
1 Kings 15:26 NAU - "He did evil in the sight of the LORD, and walked in the way of his father and in his sin which he made Israel sin."
- A. Like father like son often bears truth, particularly as it regards reverence towards God.
- B. Of the kings of the northern kingdom, not a single one was faithful to God. None were good. All rebelled against the worship of God. All walked in the sins of Jeroboam, the son of Nebat. He left an indelible mark upon the entire nation.
9. I should point out that while this is a principle that calls us to rise to our duty as parents it isn't such an axiom of truth that we don't find exceptions. Sometimes wicked children will succeed Godly parents and sometimes Godly children will succeed wicked parents. There are examples in in **Chapters 20-22**
- A. Hezekiah was a Godly king and yet he gave birth to Manasseh. As I pointed out last week, it is possible he had been spoiled, doted upon. Hezekiah had been given a 15-year extension and now God has given him an heir. The young prince would have been given his every desire. And then at the age of 12, his father died. Sadly, before the principles of his father could be tested by the maturity of adulthood.
- B. Samuel was a godly priest and leader of Israel, yet his sons did not follow in his righteousness.
1 Samuel 8:3 NAU - "His sons, however, did not walk in his ways, but turned aside after dishonest gain and took bribes and perverted justice."
- C. But on the other side of the argument, by God's grace sometimes the children of the wicked will follow the path of righteousness. Even though Amon was a wicked king, his son Josiah was one of the most Godly kings of Judah.

⁴ John Woodhouse, *2 Samuel: Your Kingdom Come*, ed. R. Kent Hughes, Preaching the Word (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2015), 339.

10. Parenting can be most difficult, and even Godly people can have a blind spot when it comes to their children.
- A. David was not a good father. His style of parenting can be summarized as we read about Adonijah, the son born after Absalom:
1 Kings 1:6 NAU - "His father had never crossed him at any time by asking, "Why have you done so?"
- B. Eli was a godly priest, yet he failed to correct his sons.
1 Samuel 3:13-14 NAU - "I am about to judge his house forever for the iniquity which he knew, because his sons brought a curse on themselves and he did not rebuke them. ¹⁴ "Therefore I have sworn to the house of Eli that the iniquity of Eli's house shall not be atoned for by sacrifice or offering forever."
- I. This is a call for us to give careful attention to the matter of raising children
- A. This is an important duty for all to obey
1. It is true for young parents. They have been entrusted with immortal souls, with human beings who are bearers of the image of God.
 2. It is also true for senior adults.
 Although they may no longer have young children at home they still have the duty to teach and train younger parents.
Titus 2:3-5 NAU - "Older women likewise are to be reverent in their behavior, not malicious gossips nor enslaved to much wine, teaching what is good, ⁴ so that they may encourage the young women to love their husbands, to love their children, ⁵ *to be* sensible, pure, workers at home, kind, being subject to their own husbands, so that the word of God will not be dishonored."
 3. It is also true that we must give careful attention to the witness we give to all men. Our adult children should see us as example of piety.
- B. Parents must display their faith to their children
1. We must not diminish the power of our example
 2. G.K. Beale writes:
 "One of the main ways that children of Christian parents become Christians is not merely through biblical teaching but also through the models of Christ-like living that they catch from their parents. Unfortunately, children of Christian parents sometimes rebel against the faith because their parents play the part of a Christian outside the home but respond to trials no differently than an unbeliever within the home."⁵
 3. Our children observe our actions. Our standards become their standards.
 4. We must not forget the truth, sin will always increase. Our sins become worse in the hearts of our children.
2 Chronicles 33:23 NAU - " Moreover, he did not humble himself before the LORD as his father Manasseh had done, but Amon multiplied guilt."

⁵ G. K. Beale, *1-2 Thessalonians*, The IVP New Testament Commentary Series, (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2003), 58.

William Blackburn – “And how does this cry aloud to every parent to beware of tolerating in ourselves what we would not have continued and intensified in our children. The evil that you may have almost overcome, may appear in your child, and prove its ruin. Let fathers and mothers dwell upon this lesson.”⁶

II. We must give careful regard to today

A. We can’t put off training our children

1. It is often difficult to undo damage done
2. This doesn’t mean that it wasn’t a good thing for Manasseh to repent and seek to correct his past. It just means once the damage is done in the lives of our children it is difficult to correct.

Dale Ralph Davis – “Better Manasseh repent than not repent. Better that he seek to undo damage he had done than ignore such. Wonderful to hear of Manasseh’s wonderful conversion. But his new, personal relationship with Yahweh didn’t affect all that much. The disaster had been inflicted, the poison administered. Whatever change had come to Manasseh had no impact on Amon. Manasseh had already made his impression there.”⁷

3. This could every parent to consider carefully the impact they are having on their children.

B. We are facing a crisis in our nation

1. We are seeing daily the fruit of bad parenting or no parenting. The family is the foundation of a strong society and we have witnessed the systematic destruction of the family.
2. Most of the mass killings are being perpetrated by young men under the age of 25. Are they modeling what they learned at home?
3. God has hardened the hearts of our leaders as they continue to make decisions destructive to the family. Marriage is being destroyed through homosexual unions and sexual immorality.

And they frame their intentions under such high-sounding titles as, “The Respect for Marriage Act” which is has the intention of repealing “The Defense of Marriage Act” that has been law for over 25 years.

Albert Mohler wrote after the passage of the bill,

“The biggest single lesson is the brute fact that the nation has experienced a profound moral transformation on the issue of marriage. This transformation did not start with same-sex marriage—it started with easy divorce. But the emergence of same-sex marriage as a political issue just a single generation ago shows the moral transformation of the nation.”⁸

⁶ William M. Blackburn, *The Rebel Prince*, (Birmingham: Solid Ground Christian Books, facsimile from the 1864 edition), Page 27.

⁷ Dale Ralph Davis, *2 Kings: The Power and the Fury*, Focus on the Bible Commentary (Great Britain: Christian Focus Publications, 2005), 310.

⁸ Albert Mohler writing for “World Opinions” - <https://wng.org/opinions/republicans-get-on-board-the-same-sex-marriage-train>

Conclusion:

1. As Christians we need to consider the impact our lives have on future generations, particularly the importance of good parenting.
2. And our duty as parents does not end when they enter adulthood. We must spend much time in prayer.