

“The Road to Success”
1 Kings 2:1-4
(Preached at Trinity, May 24, 2020)

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 thing we saw in **Chapter 1** was David's reign was coming to an end. The man who had fought valiantly as Israel's warrior and had ruled as God's anointed king was now an old man. Confined to his bed and unable to get warm he brought in a new concubine, Abishag. It is a fresh reminder of the transient nature of life.
2. The more significant theme in **Chapter 1** was the serious threat to the kingdom and God's king. David's elder son, Adonijah, had determined that he should be king even though God had designated Solomon as David's successor. The chapter describes the vivid distinction between those who oppose God's kingdom for their own ends and those who embrace it, defend it, and promote it. We should always examine our own hearts. Does our allegiance rest upon this present world, or do we clearly demonstrate that we are the citizens of our Lord's kingdom?
Joel Beeke – “What excites you most—searching the Scriptures or surfing the Internet? What conversations do you most enjoy, those that focus on worldly trivia or those that focus on Jesus Christ? Who are your best friends, those who sincerely love the Lord Jesus Christ or those who flirt with worldliness even while they continue to attend church?”¹
3. By the time **Chapter 1** came to a close the challenge to the throne had been crushed and Solomon had been anointed as David's rightful successor.
1 Kings 1:39 NAU - "Zadok the priest then took the horn of oil from the tent and anointed Solomon. Then they blew the trumpet, and all the people said, "Long live King Solomon!"
4. Now as **Chapter 2** opens we find David's final words to Solomon before he dies.
1 Kings 2:1 NAU - "As David's time to die drew near, he charged Solomon his son, saying"
 - A. David's words to his son were words essential for the prosperity of the new king and of his kingdom. How would the kingdom be made secure? How could Solomon assure the success of his reign?
 - B. David's charge to his son has a universal application. As citizens of the Kingdom of God how can we be assured of a successful life?
David's answer is plain—obey the Law of God.
 - C. David's words might seem surprising, at least by today's standard. Today, a nation seeks security and success by applying all of the standards of statehood:
 - Establish a stable economy with advantageous trade agreements
 - Maintain a strong military
 - Make strategic treaties and secure dependable allies

¹ Joel Beeke, *Revelation*, (Grand Rapids: Reformation Heritage Books, 2016) page 397.

Few nations, including our own, see any connection between obedience to the Law of God and success and security of the nation.

- D. David's words are also surprising to some professing Christians.
- Success is measured on the size of our income or our bank account or our retirement plan
 - Success is measured on the size of our home or the model of our car.
 - Success is measured on how people look at our families, the worldly achievements of our kids, sports, dance, popularity. Sadly, there is often little difference between the children of Christians and their unbelieving counterparts.
 - We measure the success of our churches by the size of the membership or the liveliness of the worship or the number of baptisms performed.

5. Could it really be as simple as following God in obedience?

David tells his son:

"Be strong, therefore, and show yourself a man. ³ "Keep the charge of the LORD your God, to walk in His ways, to keep His statutes, His commandments, His ordinances, and His testimonies, according to what is written in the Law of Moses, that you may succeed in all that you do and wherever you turn,"

I. We shouldn't see this as a meritorious list of demands.

A. God's covenant promises were not dependent upon Israel's obedience

1. We know Israel's kings were not faithful to God's Law. They were not faithful to God. Ultimately, God judged them and they fell into captivity and their earthly kingdom was destroyed, yet His covenant promises did not end.
 - a. God promised an everlasting Kingdom
1 Kings 2:4 NAU - "If your sons are careful of their way, to walk before Me in truth with all their heart and with all their soul, you shall not lack a man on the throne of Israel."
 - b. But they were not faithful.
Jeremiah 11:8 NAU - "Yet they did not obey or incline their ear, but walked, each one, in the stubbornness of his evil heart; therefore I brought on them all the words of this covenant, which I commanded *them* to do, but they did not."
2. Even in judgment God remembered His people
Jeremiah 29:11-14 NAU - "For I know the plans that I have for you,' declares the LORD, 'plans for welfare and not for calamity to give you a future and a hope. ¹² 'Then you will call upon Me and come and pray to Me, and I will listen to you. ¹³ 'You will seek Me and find *Me* when you search for Me with all your heart. ¹⁴ 'I will be found by you,' declares the LORD, 'and I will restore your fortunes and will gather you from all the nations and from all the places where I have driven you,' declares the LORD, 'and I will bring you back to the place from where I sent you into exile.'"

Micah 2:12 NAU - "I will surely assemble all of you, Jacob, I will surely gather the remnant of Israel. I will put them together like sheep in the fold;"

3. The ultimate fulfillment of God's covenant with David is in the King of kings. The Kingdom of Christ is an everlasting Kingdom.
The ultimate fulfillment of God's covenant with Abraham is the New Covenant – Abraham's true seed, the children of faith.
- B. David's words to Solomon were not a method to gain God's covenant promises but how to enjoy God's covenant promises
1. The promise itself was unconditional
2 Samuel 7:12-16 NAU - "When your days are complete and you lie down with your fathers, I will raise up your descendant after you, who will come forth from you, and I will establish his kingdom. ¹³ "He shall build a house for My name, and I will establish the throne of his kingdom forever. ¹⁴ "I will be a father to him and he will be a son to Me; when he commits iniquity, I will correct him with the rod of men and the strokes of the sons of men, ¹⁵ but My lovingkindness shall not depart from him, as I took *it* away from Saul, whom I removed from before you. ¹⁶ "Your house and your kingdom shall endure before Me forever; your throne shall be established forever."
 2. Obedience for the Christian is not a means for entering God's covenant but the means for enjoying it.
- C. But it is true that the enjoyment of God's covenant promises is conditional
1. God demanded obedience for the individuals within the covenant in order to enjoy the fulness of the covenant.
Deuteronomy 28:1-2 NAU - "Now it shall be, if you diligently obey the LORD your God, being careful to do all His commandments which I command you today, the LORD your God will set you high above all the nations of the earth. ² "All these blessings will come upon you and overtake you if you obey the LORD your God:"
Deuteronomy 28:15 NAU - "But it shall come about, if you do not obey the LORD your God, to observe to do all His commandments and His statutes with which I charge you today, that all these curses will come upon you and overtake you:"
 2. David is telling his son that to truly prosper as king it was essential for him to embrace and obey God's Law.
 3. God made this same promise to Joshua as he entered the Promised Land
Joshua 1:6-8 NAU - "Be strong and courageous, for you shall give this people possession of the land which I swore to their fathers to give them. ⁷ "Only be strong and very courageous; be careful to do according to all the law which Moses My servant commanded you; do not turn from it to the right or to the left, so that you may have success wherever you go. ⁸ "This book of the law shall not depart from your mouth, but you shall meditate on it day and night, so that you may be careful to do according to all that is written in it; for then you will make your way prosperous, and then you will have success."

4. David experienced this in his own life.
 - a. David's early life was greatly blessed of God
1 Samuel 18:14 NAU - "David was prospering in all his ways for the LORD was with him."
 - b. It was after his fall into sin with Bathsheba that his life took a sad turn—the death of his son, the breakup of his family, civil war that threatened to destroy his kingdom.
5. Israel failed to enjoy the blessings of God's covenant by their disobedience.
Jeremiah 9:12-14 NAU - "Why is the land ruined, laid waste like a desert, so that no one passes through? ¹³ The LORD said, "Because they have forsaken My law which I set before them, and have not obeyed My voice nor walked according to it, ¹⁴ but have walked after the stubbornness of their heart and after the Baals, as their fathers taught them"
6. Everyone of Israel's kings disobeyed God's Law. None of them perfectly walked before God. This ultimately resulted in the destruction of the historical kingdom.
But God's covenant promise remained firm. One King obeyed perfectly, and His kingdom will never end.
Revelation 11:15 NAU - "Then the seventh angel sounded; and there were loud voices in heaven, saying, "The kingdom of the world has become *the kingdom* of our Lord and of His Christ; and He will reign forever and ever."

II. God's true covenant people are always an obedient people

- A. Israel's rebellion was merely a sign they were not God's covenant people
 1. A whole generation perished in the wilderness, yet a remnant was saved. God did not forget His covenant.
 2. During the monarchy Israel again rebelled against God. God declared them, "Not My people." Yet, God maintained His covenant promise
Hosea 1:9-10 NAU - "And the LORD said, "Name him Lo-ammi, for you are not My people and I am not your God." ¹⁰ Yet the number of the sons of Israel Will be like the sand of the sea, Which cannot be measured or numbered; And in the place Where it is said to them, "You are not My people," It will be said to them, " *You are the sons of the living God.*"
- B. One of the signs of being in the New Covenant is obedience
 1. God has written His Law upon our hearts
Jeremiah 31:31-33 NAU - "Behold, days are coming," declares the LORD, "when I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel and with the house of Judah, ³² not like the covenant which I made with their fathers in the day I took them by the hand to bring them out of the land of Egypt, My covenant which they broke, although I was a husband to them," declares the LORD. ³³ "But this is the covenant which I will make with the house of Israel after those days," declares the LORD, "I will put My law within them and on their heart I will write it; and I will be their God, and they shall be My people."

2. Jesus taught this often
Matthew 7:22-25 NAU - "Many will say to Me on that day, 'Lord, Lord, did we not prophesy in Your name, and in Your name cast out demons, and in Your name perform many miracles?' ²³ "And then I will declare to them, 'I never knew you; DEPART FROM ME, YOU WHO PRACTICE LAWLESSNESS.' ²⁴ "Therefore everyone who hears these words of Mine and acts on them, may be compared to a wise man who built his house on the rock. ²⁵ "And the rain fell, and the floods came, and the winds blew and slammed against that house; and yet it did not fall, for it had been founded on the rock."

III. Exposition of the Text

- A. We are charged to courage - "Be strong, therefore, and show yourself a man."
 1. "show yourself a man" or "play the man" were OT figure of speech to describe courage. They were words often spoken to soldiers facing a fearsome enemy. But David is using it figuratively here. In this sense it could be applied to either a male or female.
 2. Godly living in an ungodly world demands courage and boldness.
 3. We are being assaulted on many sides. Satan continually tempts us to compromise. We can soon forget what a holy life looks like.
 4. Living a Godly life will often be costly.
- B. David describes God's demands: "walk in His ways, to keep His statutes, His commandments, His ordinances, and His testimonies, according to what is written in the Law of Moses."
 1. The ways of God are the ways of obedience. It's to follow His instruction. It means to keep His statutes, His commandments and laws.
 2. David had often failed in this. He took multiple wives. He committed adultery with the wife of another man and then had him put to death to cover it up. He also failed to hold his sons responsible for their actions.
 3. Eventually, Solomon would fail also.
 4. David's charge demands much grace from God.
- C. All of our obedience is by God's grace
 1. This is in no way implying a prosperity Gospel. That we can earn God's blessings by our decisions and behavior.
 2. God receives all glory from our life. David's obedience can be attributed to one source:
1 Samuel 18:14 NAU - "David was prospering in all his ways for the LORD was with him."
 3. Solomon's obedience can be attributed to one source:
1 Kings 3:12 NAU - "Behold, I have given you a wise and discerning heart, so that there has been no one like you before you, nor shall one like you arise after you."

- D. How do we define success? - "that you may succeed in all that you do and wherever you turn,"
1. Surely this had a temporal meaning. God gave Solomon a secure kingdom and also blessed his kingdom with great wealth.
 2. Is this how you define success? Do you define it as this world defines it? Is this what you are looking for – more earthly wealth, power, prestige?
 3. Solomon failed to comprehend the true meaning of success. Success is found in the pleasures of obeying God. There is reward in keeping the Law of God – See **Psalm 19:7-11**
 4. Our ultimate reward is not in this life.
Colossians 1:5 NAU - "because of the hope laid up for you in heaven, of which you previously heard in the word of truth, the gospel"
1 Peter 1:3-4 - "Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who according to His great mercy has caused us to be born again to a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, ⁴ to *obtain* an inheritance *which is* imperishable and undefiled and will not fade away, reserved in heaven for you,"