DAVID: King of Hearts
A Bible Study by Stan Key

Man looks on the outward appearance, but the Lord looks on the heart. (I Sam. 16:7)

CHAPTER 15. PASSING THE TORCH
I Kings 2:1–4; I Chronicles 28–29

I. Famous Last Words

A. Before I go...

By “last words,” I’m not thinking of what might be uttered from a deathbed or just as someone is about to die (Nathan Hale, Thomas Jefferson, Admiral Nelson, John Wesley, etc.). I’m thinking rather of those occasions when someone who has lived a remarkable life stands before a great crowd of people and gives a prepared speech. The intent is to _____________ the meaning of life and _____________ those who listen to carry on the work:

● Abraham Lincoln’s second inaugural address: “With malice toward none, with charity for all, with firmness in the right as God gives us to see the right, let us strive on to finish the work we are in.”

● Ronald Reagan leaving the oval office after 8 years: “My friends, we did it. We weren’t just marking time; we made a difference. We made the city stronger—we made the city freer—and we left her in good hands. All in all, not bad. Not bad at all.”

● Lou Gehrig’s retirement speech (he was dying) from the New York Yankees: “Fans, for the past two weeks you have been reading about the bad break I got. Yet today I consider myself the luckiest man on the face of the earth...”

● Peyton Manning’s announcement that he was retiring from football after 18 seasons: “There’s a scripture reading, 2 Timothy 4:7—I have fought the good fight and I have finished the race. I have kept the faith. Well, I’ve fought the good fight, I’ve finished my football race and after 18 years, it’s time. God bless all of you and God bless football.”

● General Douglas MacArthur’s farewell address to the cadets at West Point on May 12, 1962, when he was 82: “Duty, honor, country... I want you to know that when I cross the river, my last conscious thoughts will be of the Corps, the Corps, the Corps.”

B. David’s _____________ . Several passages could qualify as David’s final words: David’s Song of Deliverance (I Sam 22; Ps 18), or The Last Words of David (II Sam 23:1–7). However, for this study, our focus will be upon I Kings 2:1–4 and I Chronicles 28–29.

C. Passing the torch.

1. Ancient Greece had a competition called the _____________ in which a lighted torch was passed from one runner to the next (a relay race). Thus the expression “passing the torch” came to mean relinquishing responsibilities to another; conferring on someone else the duty of carrying on the tradition, the work, the mission.

   NOTE: In a relay, regardless of how well the runners run, the critical moment is when the baton is passed from one runner to the next. If the “torch” is ________, the race will be lost.

2. Paul understood well the importance of passing the torch.
You then, my child [Timothy], be strengthened by the grace that is in 
Christ Jesus, and what you have heard from me in the presence of many 
witnesses entrust to faithful men who will be able to teach others also. 
(II Tim 2:1–2)

Paul speaks of four generations: _______________ → _______________ →
_______________ → _______________.

Tragically, as the flaming torch is passed from one generation to the next, the 
fire has a tendency to go out: Abraham, Isaac and Jacob... David, Solomon, 
Rehoboam, etc.

II. Examining the text

A. I Kings 2:1–4:

“When David’s time to die drew near, he commanded Solomon his son, saying, “I 
am about to go the way of all the earth. Be strong, and show yourself a man, and 
keep the charge of the Lord your God, walking in his ways and keeping his statutes, 
his commandments, his rules, and his testimonies, as it is written in the Law of 
Moses, that you may prosper in all that you do and wherever you turn, that the 
Lord may establish his word that he spoke concerning me, saying, ‘If your sons pay 
close attention to their way, to walk before me in faithfulness with all their heart 
and with all their soul, you shall not lack a man on the throne of Israel.’”

NOTE:

1. The context: facing _______________; David is about to die. The reality 
of the “torch” becomes more clear when seen in the context of death.

2. The first essential of keeping the charge passed down is _______________ 
(be strong, show yourself a man).

3. Solomon’s primary charge is found in two words: _________ and _________.

4. If Solomon does his part, then God will _______________ him in all his ways.

B. I Chronicles 28–29

<table>
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<th>David’s charge to Israel</th>
<th>David’s charge to Solomon</th>
<th>Offerings for the Temple</th>
<th>David prays over the congregation</th>
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<tr>
<td>I wanted to build the Temple but God said “No.”</td>
<td>Know God, serve him and seek him</td>
<td>David is the first one to give an offering!</td>
<td>Yours is the kingdom...</td>
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<td>Therefore, observe the commandments!</td>
<td>Be strong and courageous and do the work committed to you!</td>
<td>Then leaders and then people also give generously</td>
<td>You test the heart...</td>
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<td>28:1–8</td>
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III. On a clear day you can see forever

Not all moments in life are created equal. Some moments are _______________ with 
possibilities and become pivotal to all of life. Nothing is ever the same again. One such 
moment is when the torch is passed and words are said to explain what is happening. As

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1 David’s personal offering for the Temple capital campaign was 3,000 talents of gold (about 112 tons) and 7,000 
talents of silver (262 tons) (I Chron 29:4). The people’s offering was about 188 tons of gold, 375 tons of silver, 675 
tons of bronze and 3,750 tons of iron.
the torch begins to be transferred from one hand to another, we see more clearly than ever before.

A. The reality of death.

David’s opening words to Solomon set the context: “I am about to go the way ____________...” (I Kgs 2:2). He is reminding his son that death is a reality for everyone. Everyone has an ____________ with death. “It is appointed unto man once to die, and after that the judgment” (Heb 9:27). God knows the date of this appointment, but he’s not talking (Ps 139:16). Therefore, live in the reality of death. In the Middle Ages, Christians sometimes greeted one another with the Latin expression Memento mori (“Remember death”; “Remember that you will die”). Much poetry (elegies, etc.), art (tombstones, etc.), devotional literature (“The Art of Holy Dying” by Jeremy Taylor, etc.), music (requiems, etc.), architecture (you walk through a cemetery to get to church) and special days (Ash Wednesday, All Saints Day, etc.) aimed to help people reflect on their mortality. For example, consider John Donne’s words written in 1624:

No man is an island, entire of itself.
Each is a piece of the continent, a part of the main.
If a clod be washed away by the sea, Europe is the less....
Each man’s death diminishes me,
For I am involved in mankind.
Therefore, send not to know
For whom the bell tolls,
It tolls for thee.

American culture ____________ death, makes jokes about it and pretends it isn’t there. But it is only those who know how to die who really know how ____________.

Solomon wrote: “It is better to go to the house of mourning than to go to the house of feasting, for this is the end of all mankind, and the living will lay it to heart” (Eccl 7:2).

B. The unfinished task

David had a God-given vision to build ______________. He bought the land, drew up plans, gave the money and organized the labor force... but God told him “No.” (I Chron 28:2–3). David died with an unfinished dream. Based on this text, Alan Redpath (once pastor at Moody Church in Chicago) preached a sermon in which he spoke of “the blessing of a ______________ desire.” As long as this God-given desire was unfulfilled, David kept praying, trusting, obeying, etc. Not a bad way to spend your life. Few things keep us closer to God that frustrated desire.

If you are living with such a frustrated desire, an ambition which God has cut right across, what have you done about it? When your great dreams of accomplishment lie shattered around you, have you allowed your appetite for the service of the Lord to turn sour, or can you truly say that you are doing your part to build the church of Jesus Christ?... Have you accepted the ______________ of a frustrated desire?... Though you may not reap, yet you can sow. Though you may not water, you can plant.... We can clear the ground for the temple... Learn to enter into the blessing of a frustrated desire, and gladly accept your part in God’s plan. (Redpath, The Making of a Man of God. p 251f)

C. The heart of the matter.

In his old age, the ______________ thing that David can do is pass the torch to the next generation. God’s work is much bigger than one lifetime. The most ______________ in the race David is running is that moment when he passes
the baton to the next generation. If the baton is dropped, the race will be lost. David succinctly summarizes the heart of the matter when he says to Solomon there are three things you must ____________ and three things you must ____________:

1. **Things you must know.**
   a. **Know _______________.** “And you, Solomon my son, know the God of your father…” (I Chron 28:9). David had a personal relationship with God and he wants the same for his son. J. I. Packer states the matter succinctly: “A little knowledge of God is worth more than a great deal of knowledge about him” (Knowing God, p 26). Don’t leave your children a _______________; leave them a ______________! b. **Know that God is _______________.** “Do not be afraid and do not be dismayed, for the Lord God, even my God, is with you” (I Chron 28:20). Yes, Solomon, you are _______________ and _______________ and the task is great and the enemies many. But remember, you are not alone! God + me = a majority. c. **Know your _______________.** David instructed Solomon to take care of Joab, the sons of Barzillai and Shimei (I Kgs 2:5–9). Recognizing who our enemies are is harder than you think. The elders need to help the next generation know who their real enemies are. Historically, the church has named three enemies who are out to destroy every Christian: the _______________, the _______________, and the _______________.

2. **Things you must do.**
   a. **Be _______________,** don’t be afraid. “Be strong and show yourself _______________” (I Kgs 2:2). “Be strong and courageous and do it” (I Chron 28:10, 20). Life is hard. There are battles to be fought. Danger is real. Get over it! So, grow up and act like a man! b. _______________, “Keep the charge of the Lord your God, walking in his ways and keeping his states... walk before me in faithfulness...” (I Kgs 2:3–4). The Christian faith is not so much a legal status as it is a _______________. Don’t leave your children the idea that being a Christian is praying a prayer. Rather it is walking a walk. c. _______________ the work. “Keep the charge of the Lord...” (I Kgs 2:3). Complete the temple! God’s work is not done. So find your God-given mission and do it!

3. The heart of the matter is the matter _______________. David was chosen as king because he had a heart like God’s (I Sam 13:14; 16:7). Though once David allowed his heart to be captured by sin (adultery, murder, etc.), he asked God to create in him a new heart, a clean heart (Ps 24:3–4; 51:10). Thus, David’s final words focused on the heart:
   - If your sons pay close attention to their way, to walk before me in faithfulness with _______________ and with all their soul, you shall not lack a man on the throne of Israel (I Kgs 2:4).
   - And you, Solomon my son, know the God of your father and serve him with a _______________ and with a willing mind, for the Lord searches all hearts and understands every plan and thought” (I Chron 28:9).
   - I know, my God, that you _______________ and have pleasure in uprightness (I Chron 28:17).
- O Lord... keep forever such purposes and thoughts in the hearts of your people, and direct their hearts toward you. Grant to Solomon my son a ________________ that he may keep your commandments... (I Chron 28:18–19).

**TABLE TALK**

1. Think of the generation that preceded you (your parents, your teachers, your pastors, etc.). What work was left unfinished and given for you to complete? Have you been faithful with the charge entrusted to you?
2. Now think of the generation to come (your children, your students, etc.). What work will be unfinished when you die? What are you doing to pass the torch to them?
3. Remember that scene in *Tom Sawyer* when Tom and Huck attended their own funeral? Hiding in the balcony of the church, they listened to what people said about them. Now, *memento mori*, imagine your own funeral. What will people say? What do you want them to say?
4. What message do you want to leave your children? Have you told them?
5. We have labeled our study of David “King of Hearts.” What have you learned about the heart from this study?

**A Charge to Keep**

By Charles Wesley

A charge to keep I have,
A God to glorify,
A never-dying soul to save,
And fit it for the sky.

To serve the present age,
My calling to fulfill:
Oh, may it all my pow'rs engage
To do my Master's will!

Arm me with jealous care,
As in Thy sight to live;
And O Thy servant, Lord, prepare
A strict account to give!

Help me to watch and pray,
And on Thyself rely,
Assured, if I my trust betray,
I shall forever die.