

What is Our Legacy?

Centenary United Methodist Church

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01 TITLE

Please pray with me: May the words of my mouth and the meditations of our hearts be acceptable to you, O God, our rock and our redeemer. Amen.

What kind of legacy do you want to leave?

- Do you think about that question?
- I admit I've thought about it a few times.

What do I want to be known for when my days on earth are done?

- 02 BRETT AND RYAN** I never became a famous baseball player.
 - While I loved George Brett as a kid, I really wanted to be more like Nolan Ryan
 - Both were inducted into the Hall of Fame in 1999.
- I'm not filthy rich and giving away lots of cash to charities.
 - **03 GATES** Bill Gates — through his foundation — has given \$50 billion since 1994.
 - Eradicate disease
 - Promote education
 - Advance gender equity
 - Occasional story of a teacher or even a lunch worker who has set up foundations for disadvantaged students.
- I'm not an inventor.
 - **04 STULL AND PRINTER** 3D printers, invented by Chuck Stull of Colorado
 - Medical implants
 - Entire houses in Third World countries
 - Aerospace parts
- I haven't cured any diseases.
 - **05 COVID DOC** Dr. Karalin Kariko, a biochemist was a major contributor to the COVID vaccine in an amazingly short amount of time.
- I've never owned a wildly popular business.

So what will my legacy be?

06 DEFINITION

Let's look at what the word means: Legacy

- A gift of property, especially personal property, such as money, by will. A bequest.
- Anything handed down from the past, as from an ancestor or predecessor.

When we say the word "legacy" in the church, we often are talking about remembering your church in your wills — the first definition.

- The Kansas Methodist Foundation can help you do just that if you so choose.

- And while I certainly hope that you do that, we're going to focus today on that second definition.
- Basically, what are each of us handing down to the next generation?
 - Besides money
 - To our children and grandchildren

What kind of world are we leaving for them?

07 TROUBLED WORLD

We have serious problems with:

- Violence.
- Economic inequity.
- Food deserts — North Lawrence, without a grocery store with fresh produce, is one, by the way.
- Clean water in some areas of the world.
- Energy shortages and environmental concerns.
- And then there is ethics such as about artificial intelligence.

What kind of world are we handing off to the next generation?

One of the most famous handoffs — regarding leadership, and especially that legacy of handing down something from a predecessor to a successor — comes from the book of Deuteronomy.

08-15 SCRIPTURE

Let's take a look at the last days of Moses from Deuteronomy 34:1-12.

Then Moses hiked up from the Moabite plains to Mount Nebo, the peak of the Pisgah slope, which faces Jericho. The LORD showed him the whole land: the Gilead region as far as Dan's territory; ² all the parts belonging to Naphtali along with the land of Ephraim and Manasseh, as well as the entirety of Judah as far as the Mediterranean Sea; ³ also the arid southern plain, and the plain—including the Jericho Valley, Palm City—as far as Zoar.

⁴ Then the LORD said to Moses: "This is the land that I swore to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob when I promised: 'I will give it to your descendants.' I have shown it to you with your own eyes; however, you will not cross over into it."

⁵ Then Moses, the LORD's servant, died—right there in the land of Moab, according to the LORD's command. ⁶ The Lord buried him in a valley in

Moabite country across from Beth-peor. Even now, no one knows where Moses' grave is.

⁷ Moses was 120 years old when he died. His eyesight wasn't impaired, and his vigor hadn't diminished a bit.

⁸ Back down in the Moabite plains, the Israelites mourned Moses' death for thirty days. At that point, the time for weeping and for mourning Moses was over.

⁹ Joshua, Nun's son, was filled with wisdom because Moses had placed his hands on him. So the Israelites listened to Joshua, and they did exactly what the LORD commanded Moses.

¹⁰ No prophet like Moses has yet emerged in Israel; Moses knew the LORD face-to-face! ¹¹ That's not even to mention all those signs and wonders that the LORD sent Moses to do in Egypt—to Pharaoh, to all his servants, and to his entire land— ¹² as well as all the extraordinary power that Moses displayed before Israel's own eyes!

May God add a blessing to the reading, hearing and understanding of scripture.

16 MOSES

Moses has been, to the date in this text, the most influential follower of God.

- He confronted the Egyptian pharaoh.
- He led the people out of slavery.
- He guided them through the desert for a full generation of Hebrews — now known as Jews.
- On more than one occasion, he intervened and talked God into forgiving the ancient Israelites when God was pretty close to destroying them.

Above all, he was the conduit through which God gave the Law.

- It's even referred to as the "Mosaic law."
- 10 Commandments.
- Love the Lord your God with all your heart, soul and strength. Jesus would call this the greatest commandment — followed closely by "Love your neighbor as yourself."
- He taught them about festivals — times to praise God.
- He showed them how to deal with conflict.
- He provided discipline.

In short, he showed the people how to have a relationship with God.

- Doesn't mean God cut him any slack.

- He doesn't get to go into the Promised Land.

17 WATER FROM ROCK

Numbers 20 tells the story.

- People are thirsty in the desert and grumbling about why did Moses bring them out there to die.
- Moses goes to God, and God tells him to speak to the rock.
- Instead, Moses — clearly frustrated with an ungrateful people — strikes the rock twice.

God still provides the water.

- But Moses now appears to be the one who provided the water instead of God.
- Moses disobeyed.
- The penalty is that he won't enter the Promised Land.

Seems unfair doesn't it?

After all Moses has done in service to the people and to God, he gets a tease by seeing the Promised land, but he doesn't get to go in.

- Maybe it was actually a gift.
- You see, settling the Promised Land turns out to be extremely complicated and full of problems.
- Maybe God was saying, "Moses, you've done all you can and need to do. Now it's your turn to rest."

Moses' legacy was the people — what they would do and become because of how he helped prepare them.

- Joshua is filled with wisdom because Moses placed his hands on him.
- The Israelites listen to Joshua.
- And they did exactly what the Lord commanded Moses, and then Joshua.

18 DAD

So what will your legacy be? What will you pass on when you have passed on?

- My dad died almost penniless — kind of heartbreaking, really.
- But he passed along lessons about:
 - A strong work ethic.
 - Caring for others.
 - Importance of family.
 - Of pursuing opportunities and dreams.

19 KIDS

I hope I've done that for my kids.

- I've tried through my actions.
- Also through discussions at various times with each of them.

- And now I have a grandson to concern myself with.

One I think I've tried hardest to instill is to maintain a relationship with Christ.

- Clearly my wife had a lot to do with that, too.
- Our son is finishing his final year of seminary and should be commissioned as a provisional elder in June.
- Our daughter will start serving on the church council at First United Methodist Church in Colorado Springs starting in January — a church she and her husband joined just a few months ago.
- We'll be traveling over the Thanksgiving weekend to be part of our grandson's baptism.

Not quite the work of Moses, but it's been persistent and rewarding work. I hope and pray you are doing the same with your children and grandchildren as well.

And the reality is we may not see the fruit of those labors.

Moses saw the promised land, but he didn't experience the promised land.

20 MLK

It brings to mind a more modern-day Moses — Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.

- We talk a lot about his "I have a dream" speech — and rightfully so.
- But one of my favorites comes from his famous "Mountaintop" speech
 - Given just a day before he died during a speech in support of sanitation workers in Memphis.

Think of all King did to attempt to bring equity for people of color in the United States.

- He ushered in a strategy of passive resistance.
- He rallied people.
- He tied the struggle for equity to the Gospel of Jesus Christ.
- He celebrated successes with people.
- He cried tears with people in times of tragedy, when hatred took the lives of the very old, the very young and others in between.

20- A — PLAY SPEECH

He closed the speech in this way:

Well, I don't know what will happen now. We've got some difficult days ahead. But it doesn't matter with me now. Because I've been to the mountaintop. And I don't mind. Like anybody, I would like to live a long life. Longevity has its place. But I'm not concerned about that now. I just want to do God's will. And He's allowed me to go up to the mountain. And I've looked over. And I've seen the promised land. I may not get there with you. But I want you to know tonight, that we, as a people, will get to the promised land. And I'm happy, tonight. I'm not

worried about anything. I'm not fearing any man. Mine eyes have seen the glory of the coming of the Lord.

He died the next day, fully at peace with his efforts — with his legacy.

I pray that we will make every effort to pass along what we have learned.

- The importance of knowing God — of having a relationship with our creator, like Moses had.
- The task we've been given of proclaiming Christ — the great commission we read about in Matthew 28.
- Showing love to God and others by serving others, especially the poor.
- And seeking justice as Jesus did during his ministry on earth.

If we can do those things, our children will see.

- They will do those things.
- And that is quite a good legacy indeed.

Let's pray:

Loving God, help us to solidify our legacy by making our relationship with you even stronger.

Grant us the wisdom you gave to Moses and then to Joshua.

Give us the courage to speak up about matters of faith with our loved ones so that they, too, can be close to you and have a future in the eternal kingdom.

Help us to "see the promised land" and see the glory of the coming of the Lord.

Amen.