

In a holiday season full of time with family and loved ones at Thanksgiving and Christmas we've started a series called Ancestry.Christ – lesson's from the family tree of Divinity. The background of Jesus's family tree is full of wild characters and broken branches. There's the righteous and the ratchet. Both the holy and the horrible.

And let me be honest – I hate it for that family history...but I love it for me. Because my family tree is far from perfect. None of our families are perfect.

Matthew 1:1 reads: *This is a record of the ancestors of Jesus the Messiah, a descendant of David and of Abraham*

This week I want to look at the second forefather mentioned in Matthew 1:1 at the roots of Jesus' family tree: **David**.

The sermon title is **Royal Fumble**. Because while he carried the sword as a warrior and carried the scepter as a king, he fumbled the baton as a parent. How many broken branches could have been prevented on Christ's family tree if he showed the same skill and passion as a parent?

“Son of David.”

Matthew uses the name of David some 17 times, more than any other book in the New Testament. We see people cry out “Son of David” again and again.

In **Jeremiah 33:15&16** is says:

*In those days and at that time I will make a righteous Branch sprout from David's line; he will do what is just and right in the land.*

*In those days Judah will be saved and Jerusalem will live in safety.*

*This is the name by which it will be called: "The Lord Our Righteous Savior."*

I've heard it said by Bible scholars before: when they call out “Son of David” it's as much a question as much as it is a cry.

They are asking: ***What kind of Son of David are you?***

Because David's descendants and the branches on his family tree varied from holy to horrible and righteous to ratchet and back again. The sons and grandsons who were heir to his throne swung from Solomon who had a harem of wives and idols and slaves, to Asa who zealously uprooted idolatry and led revivals, and back to characters like Manassah who practiced witchcraft and sacrificed his own children to pagan gods.

Being a son of David and a branch on his family tree was a mixed bag.

Our family tree may be just as checkered. We may not like the fruit of our past. But I'm here to tell you tonight as a parent leading a family you get to have a say in the fruit of the future.

David teaches us so many lessons in parenting... and many come from his mistakes.

King David was a legendary warrior.

This is a man who returned with troops to the sound of people chanting:

*“Saul has killed his thousands, and David has killed his tens of thousands.”*

From his throne he heard the sound of praise for his work as a King –people would come into his presence like the widow from Tekoa who would say things like “*you are as wise as an Angel of God, and you understand everything that happens among us.*”

Yet the sound of David’s parenting.... A dropped baton.

We talk about the spiritual life as if it is “running the race” as Paul once did.  
And we walk about the fact it’s not a sprint, but a marathon (shout out to Dave Letourneau)

But we also have to remember: it’s a relay.  
You can run your leg of the relay with perfection.  
If the baton gets dropped, it doesn’t matter. You’ll lose.

We don’t have to be the fastest or the best, but we do need to run the race and pass the baton  
And for many of us the work we do to prepare the next generation is done at home with our own children.

## **2 Samuel 13 – Amnon, Absalom, and Absentee Parenting.**

### **ABDICATING OUR ABSALOMS – the peril of passive parenting.**

Abdicate can mean “*to renounce one’s throne.*”

Ironically the story of Absalom escalates to the point that he throws a coup that drives his own father David to abdicate his throne and flee into exile.

But abdicate also means to “*fail to fulfill or undertake a responsibility or duty.*”  
And it was due to David’s abdication of parenting Absalom that led to his eventual abdication of the throne.

Passiveness didn’t cripple David on the battlefield. It didn’t cripple him on the throne.  
But it crippled him at home.

How easy it is to go home from that kind of work and “check out.”  
The busyness and pressure of the grind can blind us to our purpose at home.  
We need to continually remind ourselves that we get home and check into the most meaningful work we will ever do.

Possessions. Careers. Success at our career. All of these things can cause us to abdicate our role as parents.  
But to abdicate our call to lead our kids is to set the stage for rebellion.

In 1 Kings 1:5-6 it says of David’s son Adonijah:  
**“David had never disciplined him at any time, even asking “Why are you doing that?”**  
Why are you home so late? Where are you going? Why does it take you five hours to do what should take one? There are questions loving, active parents should ask.

We fear rebellion. So we stay uninvolved as a good cop, and we figure at least when they hit rock bottom they will turn to me.

***You don't need your child to like you, you need them to respect you.***

If your child doesn't respect you, they can't truly love you,  
and when the time comes they won't turn to you...

This was the case with Adonijah. Adonijah didn't come to David, he did the opposite. Out of a lack of respect for David he tried to make himself king not once, but TWICE. And he died for it.

David's permissiveness only bred rebelliousness... which led to the death of his son. Not once. But twice. Not just in Adonijah's life but in Absalom's too.

*"My parenting feels like this... I feel like I'm raising rebels..."*

We may look at our children at times and see rebels. We get caught up on the behavior. We forget the behavior is a symptom of a condition that causes it – sin. We have to remember we are raising children who are born lost.

David understood this. He says in Psalm 51

*"Surely I was sinful at birth, sinful from the time my mother conceived me..."*

The picture scripture gives us for sin is being lost.

David confesses himself in Psalm 119:175-176

*"...let your rules help me. I have gone astray like a lost sheep; seek your servant, for I do not forget your commandments."*

What do lost people need? Direction. Lost people need understanding. Help. Guidance. Wisdom.

Yet leading our kids isn't full of 180 degree moments– "I'll obey forever" "Where can I repent?"

Sometimes we forget that change is a process. Not an event.

We don't live in constantly grand moments with significant decisions. Most of life is done in the mundane. The fight over the last Coke, the argument over outfits, the pout when we say no... these are all seemingly small moments that we are called to as parents as we carry the sacred calling to shape our children's hearts.

There's a cultural cynicism about raising our teens and young people.

Teenage years have long been seen as an unproductive struggle.

So we check out.

We get passive.

We abdicate our role.

We need to see it as *daily ministry* and *unprecedented opportunity*.

## **ELEVATING WISDOM OVER WORSHIP – RAISING SOLOMONS**

David walked in wisdom.

Solomon walked in even more – 1 Kings 4 says: *Solomon [had] very great wisdom and understanding, and knowledge as vast as the sands of the seashore. In fact, his wisdom exceeded that of all the wise men of the East and the wise men of Egypt. He was wiser than anyone else...*

We desire this for our kids. Wisdom. Not just the wisdom that earns good grades. The wisdom that produces discernment, discipline, and self control.

But boy do we do well to remember the words of Psalm 111:10  
***The Fear of the Lord is the beginning of Wisdom.***

And after David wrote a majority of those Psalms, his own son Solomon would echo these words in **Proverbs 9:10 - *The Fear of the Lord is the beginning of Wisdom.***

Another translation says: it is the foundation.

Worship is the beginning of wisdom. It's the bedrock.

This means without worship, wisdom is hollow.  
It'll crumble under the weight of seeking meaning and purpose.

If Bible scholars who believe Solomon wrote Ecclesiastes are to be believed, the very man who walked in more wisdom than anyone on the planet came to the conclusion in Ecclesiastes 2 that it too is meaningless.

*"Since I will end up the same as the fool, what's the value of all my wisdom? This too is meaningless!"*

The key - the Fear of the Lord is the beginning of Wisdom.

Let us aspire to raise kids with good grades and disciplined students.  
But what good is an A+ student that's a C grade follower of Christ?  
It's meaningless.

Paul talks about his education as a Jew, how he was smarter and more well-learned than anyone, and yet he calls all of that compared to knowing Jesus.

For all Paul's wisdom - Solomon had all the wisdom in the world! He was even wiser.  
Yet what was his end? His reign went down in an infamous ball of flames.

For my money there are few words in the Bible than the word:

***"Nevertheless..."*** in 1 Kings 11... Solomon knew of God, he encountered God, he was blessed with all of this wisdom.... And nevertheless he took on all these wives, and even worse he adopted their pagan gods as well.

Solomon had all the wisdom in the world according to scripture, and yet his worship went off the rails. And without the foundation of worship, we too will crumble.

Seeing modern day Solomons breaks my heart. There was a recent stat that showed 51% of Christian college students will abandon the faith before they graduate.

But I often wonder how many really abandoned their faith... how many just abandoned a bunch of head knowledge that never truly captured their heart and their worship?

Worship is truly the key. What has the heart.

Why do your kids do the things they do? Their worship.  
How does change take place? What they worship.  
How can I be a tool of change? Leading them into worship.

### **You parent worshippers.**

What controls our heart controls our behavior.  
What we worship will effect our discipline.

### In Homer's tale **The Odyssey**

Odysseus' solution for the Sirens – have his men tie him and bind him to the mast.  
Odysseus is assaulted by temptation due to the siren's singing, but the plan works.

There's wisdom in being self aware and accounting for our weakness. There's wisdom in setting up guardrails. There's wisdom in precaution. Only fools assume they can tough out every temptation.

But there's another lesser known Greek epic by the name of **Argonautica** that gives a second strategy to pass the Sirens. And it gives us an important lesson.

In Argonautica, the men of the ship have the legendary poet and musician Orpheus on board. He plays a superior, more beautiful song on his lyre than the Sirens could sing. The sailors pass on safely as they are enthralled by Orpheus' sweeter song.

These two accounts give us an important picture of wisdom and discipline.  
The first strategy restrained the hand.  
The second captured the heart.

The baton we have to pass is the "sweeter song" that comes from the heart of God.  
The sweeter song that comes from his Word, the Good News, and his grace.

**Discipline** is good.

**Devotion** goes deeper.

Our devotion informs our disciplines.

We want to insulate and protect our kids from the temptation outside, which is fair.  
But we can't protect them forever.  
The real battle is on the inside – for their heart. For their worship.  
Their devotion will shape their discipline.

And for all of us regardless of age - all of our biggest problems aren't outside of us like sirens over the horizon ready to wreck our ship.  
*They're inside of us.*

Jeremiah 17:9 – the heart is deceitful above all things.  
Helping our children to see their heart and their need for God is one of the greatest gifts we can ever give.

Foolishness is defined in the Psalms as a denial of God.  
That means true wisdom is a recognition of one's need for God.

Thomas Chalmers – ***“the expulsive power of a new affection.”***  
To conquer sin means replacing misplaced affections with affection for God.

You may hear this about self-control and discipline and think – I'm off the rails myself.  
I'm no saint. I'm no man with the wisdom of an angel like David.

We should forget that David too went off the rails.  
And his rape of Bathsheba is no doubt what kept him from stepping in at the rape of his own daughter. The consciousness of his own guilt no doubt paralyzed him. How could he confront Amnon in light of his own sin?

We have to rebuke the lie of the enemy that we've disqualified ourselves as parents. As witnesses. As ambassadors or reconciliation. As leaders.  
You were never able to. But God is.  
You were never faithful. But God is.

God doesn't call you without the grace to equip you.  
And that same grace covers you.