March 28

Happy Monday, DGCC Family.

This week we resume our walk through the Biblical books in order and continue this week with the historical book of 1 Chronicles.

1 Chronicles and 2 Chronicles, which we will look at next week, were once one book and do exactly what the title says: they chronicle the history and heritage of the Jewish nation. Written in about 430 BC, they are written well after both the northern kingdom of Israel and the southern kingdom of Judah have been overtaken by foreign powers as a direct result of their sin and idolatry and their people sent into exile. Both book focus almost exclusively on the southern kingdom of Judah.

Before I get into the lesson for today, as I read the opening chapters of 1 Chronicles, which starts with the genealogy of the Jewish nation, I couldn’t help but thinking of both my father and my father-in-law. No, they weren’t Jewish. But to both of them, family and where they came from was important. I’ll save the story of my own father for another time, and today will focus on my father-in-law, Clarence Ouwenga.

Clarence died in January 2019 at the age of 100. He was a lifelong farmer. My wife Judy visited him every Friday for the several years he lived after my mother-in-law passed away. They would take rides, and he loved to look at the fields and reminisce about his time as a farmer.

When I would visit him, he loved to talk about “the old days.” Rationing during WW II, the price of corn 50 years ago, the tractors he rode, farm dogs he had, how his father died at a young age leaving him as the oldest to care for the farm and the family, and so on. It might seem tedious, but honesty, to me, it never got old. I always felt that he was so gracious in allowing this city boy into the family and blessing my request to marry his daughter that, well, the least I could do was listen to an old man nearing the end of his earthly life. But honestly, I always felt like it was a privilege because his story was Judy’s story, and that story became part of my story. It’s part of what binds us as family.

And that is the purpose of the lengthy (8 chapters) genealogy that opens the book of 1 Chronicles. It starts all the way at the beginning with Adam:


It ends at the beginning of chapter 9: “All Israel was listed in the genealogies recorded in the book of the kings of Israel and Judah: (9:1).
In the same way that Clarence’s story is Judy’s story and became my story, so it is with the nation of Israel. As followers of the Messiah, the story of Israel, whose mission of salvation is fulfilled in Jesus, where the genealogy ultimately ends, is our story as well.

This genealogy might seem lengthy, boring, and tedious, but it tells the story of how the family of God came to be, and that most certainly is our story. And, as with any family, it has ties that bind. For us, we are bound into one family and one story by the One who gave everything, Himself bound to a cross, on a hill called calvary.

IHS,
Pastor Lou

March 29
Grace and peace to you this day.

Yesterday we concluded our lesson with the opening sentence of chapter 9 of 1 Chronicles. It states this: “All Israel was listed in the genealogies recorded in the book of the kings of Israel and Judah” (9:1).

However, I purposely left off the second sentence that is the rest of the verse, which is this: “They were taken captive to Babylon because of their unfaithfulness” (9:1). The Hebrew word used here for “unfaithfulness” is maal (pronounced mah-al). It can also mean “treachery” or “a treacherous act.”

It’s important to understand two things here. The first is this: The Jewish leaders and people were not simply unfaithful to God. They engaged in evil, treacherous, idolatrous acts that were common among the pagan peoples of the region.

The second thing to understand is this: not all of the Jewish people engaged in these practices. There were some, indeed many, who remained faithful to God and adhered to His laws and commandments. However, despite that, everyone was sent into exile. That is the nature of sin. What are we to learn from this?

I think the lesson is this: as followers of Christ, we are called follow Him, His Word, and His mission. We are called to a life of obedience to the Father and of discernment in the Spirit. This is especially true when the ways of the world crash against the ways of Jesus.

So, my prayer for you, and for our church today, is this: Let’s continue to stand firm in the Lord. Let’s continue to study His Word. Let’s continue to follow Him in mission. And let’s be the light of the world at 66th and Fairview.

IHS,
Pastor Lou
March 30

Greetings to you this day in the name of the Messiah.

Today we will continue by moving onto the second part of the book of 1 Chronicles. Recall that the first eight chapters deal with the genealogy of the Jewish nation. The second half recounts the life of King David. But before we get into that, I would like to recount an experience I had a few days ago.

This past Sunday I had the good fortune to bring the message to the good people at the Taiwanese Community Church in Lombard, as I have done many times over the last seven or eight years. They are a wonderful congregation that is so very faithful in their worship and service to the Lord.

One of the great blessings of participating in worship with them is that they have a real pipe organ, and someone who really knows how to play it. Every Sunday, this young woman plays it for the prelude, the hymns, and the recessional. As I sat there and listened to the prelude (I think it was one of the Bach Prelude and Fugues, though I couldn’t place exactly which one), I closed my eyes and the beauty of the music somehow seemed almost holy to me. I truly felt the calming presence of the Holy Spirit as this music filled the sanctuary and prepared this congregation for worship. It reminded me how important music is to worshiping the Lord.

Towards the end of 1 Chronicles, in chapter 25, David sets aside a number of people who will care for the temple and conduct worship services. This is what it says about the musicians:

“All these men were under the supervision of their father for the music of the temple of the Lord, with cymbals, lyres, and harps, for the ministry at the house of God. Asaph, Jeduthun and Heman were under the supervision of the king. Along with their relatives—all of them trained and skilled in music for the Lord—they numbered 288. Young and old alike, teacher as well as student, cast lots for their duties (1 Chronicles 25:6-8).

Imagine. David enlisted 288 “trained and skilled” musicians to worship the Lord. By contrast, a full-scale symphony orchestra, like the Chicago Symphony, has about 90 musicians. David’s “praise band” was more than three trines the size of the Chicago Symphony!

One can imagine that when they played and sang, people danced, sang along, and raised their hands and voices to the Lord. No doubt it was a loud, and joyful, noise.

This tells me that the Lord rejoices when we lift our voices and hands in praise of him. I’m looking forward to doing just that with all of you this coming Sunday.

IHS, Pastor Lou
March 31

Greetings to you, DGCC Family

Today I would like to conclude our brief study of 1 Chronicles with the first two paragraphs of the prayer of King David found at the end of chapter 17. It is a prayer that David offers after God makes His great promise to Him that someone will be on David’s throne forever. As we know today, that “someone” is Jesus. As you read it, note its humbleness, how it focuses on God, praising Him and recognizing His blessings.

Let me suggest that you read it once, and then perhaps read it again as a prayer, substituting your name in place of David’s and substituting the promises God fulfilled in David’s life with the promises He has fulfilled in your life.

“Who am I, Lord God, and what is my family, that you have brought me this far? And as if this were not enough in your sight, my God, you have spoken about the future of the house of your servant. You, Lord God, have looked on me as though I were the most exalted of men. “What more can David say to you for honoring your servant? For you know your servant, Lord. For the sake of your servant and according to your will, you have done this great thing and made known all these great promises. “There is no one like you, Lord, and there is no God but you, as we have heard with our own ears. And who is like your people Israel—the one nation on earth whose God went out to redeem a people for himself, and to make a name for yourself, and to perform great and awesome wonders by driving out nations from before your people, whom you redeemed from Egypt? You made your people Israel your very own forever, and you, Lord, have become their God. “And now, Lord, let the promise you have made concerning your servant and his house be established forever. Do as you promised, so that it will be established and that your name will be great forever. Then people will say, ‘The Lord Almighty, the God over Israel, is Israel’s God!’ And the house of your servant David will be established before you. “You, my God, have revealed to your servant that you will build a house for him. So your servant has found courage to pray to you. You, Lord, are God! You have promised these good things to your servant. Now you have been pleased to bless the house of your servant, that it may continue forever in your sight; for you, Lord, have blessed it, and it will be blessed forever” (1 Chronicles 17:16-27).

IHS,
Pastor Lou
April 1

Happy Friday and beginning of April!!
Here’s your musical devotional for this week.
Turn up the volume and enjoy!
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=MqKo_Isf5WY

IHS,
Pastor Lou