

## Transitions: David to Solomon

### 1 Chronicles 28:1-10

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We're in a month-long series called Transitions. For many years, we've worked hard to provide this faith community with the language of change and transition. But, from the very beginning, it's been essential to distinguish between the two: change is what happens outside of us. Moving to a new community. Switching jobs. The birth of a child or grandchild. Sometimes we create the change, and sometimes change happens to us, but change is what happens outside of us. Transition is what happens inside us. It's the stew of anxiety, uncertainty, hope and expectation, learning and growth that occurs within us as we move from what we have known to a new reality. And that's a reality that's been at work here at Prince of Peace since this faith community launched in 1963. So, the intention of this "Transitions" series is to equip us to think about how patience, courage, and faithfulness will help us understand the changes so that we can make the transitions. All of that, of course, is rooted in scripture.

There's been a lot of change and transition here at Prince of Peace. But, over the past 15 years, Pastor Jeff and the leadership team have worked on laying a foundation for what's to come. Transparency has created trust, and deeper trust has opened the doorway to fiscal responsibility, creating far more ministry opportunities. The work that we've done together through the years has created a beautiful and highly functional church facility. But we're also aware that there is more work to be done. In this current moment, we want to make the most of the leadership transition that is coming to continue what God has begun in us. And one of the most important parts of that is to trust that God is already working in the heart and mind of the next leader to be called. When King David realized that his time as the leader of the people of Israel was coming to an end, Solomon was God's next chosen leader; he laid a healthy (financial) foundation for what was next. And Solomon built a great sanctuary for God and God's people. Let me read this passage for you.

1 Chronicles 28:1-10

*David assembled at Jerusalem all the officials of Israel, the officials of the tribes, the officers of the divisions that served the king, the commanders of the thousands, the commanders of the hundreds, the stewards of all the property and cattle of the king and his sons, together with the palace officials, the mighty warriors, and all the warriors. Then King David rose to his feet and said: "Hear me, my brothers and my people. I had planned to build a house of rest for the ark of the covenant of the Lord, for the footstool of our God; and I made preparations for building. But God said to me, 'You shall not build a house for my name, for you are a warrior and have shed blood.' Yet the Lord God of Israel chose me from all my ancestral house to be king over Israel forever; for he chose Judah as leader, and in the house of Judah my father's house, and among my father's sons he took delight in making me king over all Israel. And of all my sons, for the Lord has given me many, he has chosen my son Solomon to sit upon the throne of the kingdom of the Lord over Israel. He said to me, 'It is your son Solomon who shall build my house and my courts, for I have chosen him to be a son to me, and I will be a father to him. I will establish his kingdom forever if he continues resolute in keeping my commandments and my ordinances, as he is today.' Now therefore in the sight of all Israel, the assembly of the Lord, and in the hearing of our God, observe and search out all the commandments of the Lord your God; that you may possess this good land, and leave it for an inheritance to your children after you forever. "And you, my son Solomon, know the God of your father, and serve him with single mind and willing heart; for the Lord searches every mind, and understands every plan and thought.*

Let me remind us again: we're in a time of change and transition. The good news is that we've been learning how to do that for the last decade. The change and transition from Moses to Joshua was a big deal. But God was in it. The Spirit guided them through that. The change and transition from David to Solomon was a big deal. But God was in it. The Spirit guided them through that. The change and transition from where we've been to where we're going is a big deal. But... say it with me now, "God is in this with us, the Spirit is guiding us through this."

To thrive in this time of transition, we'll want to keep three things in mind: patience, courage, and faithfulness.

**First, thriving as a congregation in transition requires patience.**

If you've been around this community of faith for any time, you know it takes time and patience to work through important matters. Whether we're planning together to reduce debt or coming to grips with racial issues, or navigating a pandemic, or working through issues relating to human sexuality, it all requires patience. The change and transition in leadership from Merv Thompson to Mike Foss required patience. Likewise, the change and transition from Pastor Mike Foss's leadership to Pastor Jeff Marian's leadership took patience. But behind all of the change and transition is the prevailing promise that God is active and moving in our lives to bring about a clearer expression of the kingdom of God in this place. King David wrote these words in the book of Psalms (27:14) "*Wait for the Lord; be strong and take heart and wait for the Lord.*" That will take patience, but that will help us thrive. So consider your own patience quotient in your life. Are you generally patient or not? Knowing that we'll need to be patient with the process and patient with one another, what will you need, and how will you develop more patience in your life?

**Next, thriving as a congregation in transition requires courage.**

There was a 9-foot giant in David's life. That giant's name was Goliath. Goliath was a seasoned warrior. David was something like 16 or 17. He was a shepherd. We could safely say that odds were definitely stacked against David. Or so we might have thought. Nevertheless, David was courageous because he knew God was faithful and would always be with him.

Throughout our shared history here, Prince of Peace has faced a lot of giants, a lot of Goliaths. And none of them more foreboding, even dire than our giant debt. But we have the benefit of perspective; we know how that turned out. In the worst possible conditions, we took courage in knowing that God is faithful and that God would always be with us. We practiced gratitude. And as it always does, gratitude creates generosity. We courageously zeroed out our debt and freed up hundreds of thousands of dollars for ministry. As a congregation, we found courage in

the words of David when he wrote in Psalm 27:1, "*The Lord is my light and my salvation—whom shall I fear? The Lord is the stronghold of my life—of whom shall I be afraid?*"

Moving ahead as a congregation will necessitate courage. How will you do that? Would a small group study be helpful for you? Would joining a prayer group to pray for all that is ahead work for you? There are so many opportunities. Let us help you find the right one.

**Finally, thriving as a congregation in transition requires faithfulness.**

A month ago, Pastor Jeff preached a message on hope. He made a powerful connection between hope and the act of remembering to create faithfulness in our lives. When the people of God faced challenging times as they leaned into the future, they were encouraged to remember God's faithfulness to them in the past. Equipped with remembrances of God's past faithfulness, they could walk into the future with faith. Likewise, the ancient Israelites remembered how God had taken them from the hopelessness of captivity in Babylon to the freedom of being home again in Jerusalem. What had seemed utterly impossible, God made a reality. But this raises a good question. Why is the act of remembering so important? Because when we find ourselves in a seemingly hopeless situation, our vision becomes narrowed. As Jeff reminded us, we lose all sense of the larger story of what God has done in the past. However, when we bring to mind God's past faithfulness to us, that widens our vision and invites us to remember God's power. So we literally "back into the future" by moving forward with the image of God's constant presence. So let's make this sticky and start with what we know.

We have a past, and God has been present. We know that as we regularly recall the past faithful work of God in and through us.

We have the present; we know that God is walking deeply into our shared life of faith together. Stories of God's leading and guiding continue to inspire us every week.

And we also have a future that is held in God's hands, a future into which God is leading us. So as we move into that future, we go the way the people of God went from David to Solomon. We move ahead with the words of David from Psalm 31:14-15 on our lips and in our hearts: "I trust in you, Lord; I say, "You are my God." *My times are in your hands; deliver me from the hands of my enemies, from those who pursue me.*"

Here's what I want to challenge you to do: pray for patience, courage, and faithfulness. Pray for patience in your life to trust the process. It's going to take some time; it's going to necessitate much discerning. Pray for courage for the leadership to make wise decisions as we move into these coming months. And pray for faithfulness. Pray for this whole faith community as we lean into the changes that are taking place and the transitions that those changes will necessitate.