

Pondering Christ in 1 Chronicles

TRANSCRIPT (AUTO-GENERATED)

Well, hello, and welcome to Ponder by NorthernLife. We're having a conversation about the Word of the Lord as it was preached to us on Sundays and as we encounter it in our everyday lives.

I'm here with a smaller table today with Jono and Tristan, Ben's on a well-deserved holiday.

And unfortunately, we couldn't have the whole night service around the table this morning because we had some great discussions about Jono's sermon on Christ in 1 Chronicles. Jono, could you give us a little recap of that sermon?

So, I started with the story of Cricket Carpenter, who was a lady in 1993 who had a terrible car accident and was put in a coma and lost a lot of her memory. And one of the big parts was she didn't remember getting married two months before.

So her husband's there and she's got a ring on her finger, and there are photographs of the wedding, but she doesn't remember. And so she has to put together her identity from the evidence that's before her.

And that sort of felt like a quite fitting illustrative start to the Book of 1 Chronicles, because the people have come back of Israel, have come back from exile. And this is a long time after that too.

It's over a hundred years after coming back and doing a bit of a shabby job of rebuilding the city and the temple and finally the wall. And the question is that they're asking, I think, is who are we?

Still God's people has the Davidic promise of a king in the line of David, has it failed? And so the book of 1 Chronicles is this going back to Adam and retelling the story, giving the evidence that they are God's people, that Yahweh is still king.

He's never left the throne. We sort of landed on Chronicles 29 where David has this great prayer. Yours is the kingdom, the power and the glory.

Yahweh is king and he's the provider of everything. And he wants and always has wanted Israel's heart and the king's heart. And so there was this idea that he's the satisfier as well.

So he's the king, the provider and the satisfier. And then we sort of allowed that to naturally take us through the 400 year wait to the true Davidic king, Jesus, who turned up and did everything that Israel were meant to do.

Yeah, I was, you asked in the night service for us to have some reflection time.

And I was really struck by something my wife said actually, which was this prayer that David gives about God providing the things for the temple. And God is sort of king of the temple.

And of course, you've got David looking towards the building of Solomon's temple. You've got the author of Chronicles looking at this sort of lesser form of the temple.

And I was really struck by how those points map on to us as the church, as the temple, as a spiritual temple, where God dwells.

And that God has provided the people, the building, the space, that he satisfies us with the living water, and he is king of the church. And that's something that I was really dwelling on. Tristan, did you have a reflection?

Yeah, on that part, the biggest question that was running through my mind was, where are we at now in terms of the church today and the context?

Because I find it interesting that we haven't gone through that level of exile, where it's in dire straits and everyone's looking to rebuild.

But I think we're in this different sort of exile, where the world's getting quicker, like there's less need for thinking, there's less need for like deep reflection on things.

And one of our core identities as people in Christ is to be slow and to pause and to really look at life through this lens that Christ provides for us, and He is satisfied and He is King.

So it was a good time for me to sit there and just see where are we at right now.

And to that point actually, that makes me think that there has also been a slight identity disruption for the church nowadays, where the church used to be, Christianity used to be the big thing in society, are really at the helm and now it's very

much moving towards the margins. And so there's a sort of, it's obviously not quite the same as the Israelites in Chronicles, but there is a sort of a church wrestling with what its identity is in a post-modern world.

And a lot of public failure of leaders, like the kings in a way.

Yeah, absolutely.

So that brings me to my first question. So thinking about the chronicler, the writer of Chronicles, sort of sitting in this dilapidated version of Jerusalem and the temple.

And Jono, you talked about your own experience going from a really vibrant church and coming to Hornsby, where there's pews holding up the ceiling and sparks lying off the heaters.

The chronicler's response to this situation is to start writing about the past. And telling the stories of the past, and especially with a very positive attitude. You know, we compare Chronicles to Kings.

Chronicles is, as you said, a bit airbrushed. So how does looking to the past, can that work for us as individuals to help reconstruct identity by looking at our pasts? What do you think?

It's essential, I think, the way forward in human identity is so much linked to, even back to our family of origin.

But, yeah, I've been sort of quite interested in reading about memory and the brain in a sort of pop way, I suppose, as much as I can access it in not being a medicare.

But it's fascinating that we need to rehearse stories, to remember stories, to embed memory, which defines where we've come from, and it really shapes our expectation for the future.

So in a non-Christian way, just neuroscience says memory is hugely important for how we approach the future. In every way, and we've talked about it a lot, it's huge in the Bible. God just says, don't forget, remember, remember.

So I don't think we're any different. We need to tell the stories of God's faithfulness way back, but also right up until now.

I started the sermon at night last night, telling the story of an amazing God incidence in the morning service, because I'm trying to let people know God's at work right up until six hours ago. So I couldn't agree enough that it's very important.

I think it also shows the importance of a multi-generational church setup. Like, that's what my story was. It's people telling me stories about their past, and so it can shape my future.

And that's such a key element of the church that I think is not lost, but diminishing slowly when we have, like, just separateness between generations within churches naturally in today's society.

And I think that's a vital part of, like, just looking back on your faith and how it can impact younger people today. And I've also been sitting on this question that was actually posed to me at Bible College at the beginning of the year.

It was, what does it really mean to say, oh, the good old days? Like, what does that look like? Like, what are you doing there when you say, this is the good old days?

And our lecturer is trying to push the narrative that the good old days should be now in your present. And that's what, it's about recognizing when you're in the good old days before it's too late.

And I think I counted by saying, no, it's the good old days because that's something we can always draw back onto and then take forward. So yeah, I think that's just a fun little anecdote to it.

How do you guys think we can practice that art of remembering?

As like in our everyday lives, as a habit or as a church, how can we remember what God has done in the way you've been talking, you mentioned, Jono?

Yeah, a good friend of mine got me to journal again. And it's a very old way of doing things instead of typing it down and just having a memory bank.

But yeah, I found really writing down what has happened throughout the day in a framework of how did I start my day? How did it go in between what was noticeable, what was like a pinpoint?

And at the end, it's mostly where I fill up the pages, the reflection of how did God use me today? And sometimes I see it as very little, sometimes I see it as massive, but I found it a really good practice.

And even if you're not writing friendly, just type it up. It's a good thing to journal.

It's where Lifehubs, we call them Lifehubs, Bible studies, small groups, any gathering, typically midweek, that happens in the local church, provides a really special forum for telling stories.

And so last Wednesday, I asked the question, what are you learning? What are you learning? And that brought out a whole bunch of things.

And what it then did was it invited people to reflect and remember and share, testify. And I think it's just the way it's designed.

That's what's really good to meet in small groups around God's Word, around the big memory, and then to allow that to draw out the current learnings that are being embedded about the faithfulness of God. What do you think?

Yeah, I think absolutely, like in community is a great place where you're, you're not just telling it to yourself, but you're sharing it to other people and allowing them to benefit from seeing what God has done in your life.

I also relate to what you said Tristan about journaling, because I'm not a super consistent journal art, but I have been in previous eras of my life, and it's quite interesting to go back and read through those and remember, oh, God did that or

something that I thought was unanswered at the time. And now, with the passage of years, looking back and seeing, oh, God actually fulfilled that in a really big picture way.

And these experiences that I thought were negative were actually part of his work. I mean, there's something about getting some distance that allows you to reframe and see God's hand at work in the way that you don't see it in the minute.

And who doesn't love the idea of a time machine? Yeah. But that's what journaling does.

It allows you to go back in time to yourself and truly be a time traveler. You sort of have a bit of fun with it. Talk to yourself and say, you know, if I was able to talk to you self, God's been faithful.

It works out or God provides in ways that are really surprising. And I think that's for me, when I was telling that story of being really quite depressed when I first came here as a pastor.

And, I mean, I couldn't, I couldn't exaggerate how that brought me to a place of being quite depressed. Like, when I started when I was preaching at the very first, and it was very hot or very cold, and so many people were falling asleep.

And I found it really hard. I say that and people laugh, but when you're the guy preaching and it's God's word, and it's important, and you've done it all your life, and you're not bad at it, but people are just falling asleep.

And I've never experienced that in 25 years. That was depressing, that was hard. But if I went back to that person, me, who was depressed, I would rave about the years that are gonna come.

And the life partners that people are gonna find here. And just God's undeniable sovereign hand that was leading us to this part of the world. And I'm sure, you know, your time traveling self will come back.

You could go back just a year ago in South Africa and say, mate, it works out okay. Yeah, exactly.

And I think also, aside from the individual component, there's an element of remembrance in more, the more formal aspects of church life. I mean, I think of communion.

That is an act, that's one of the great, and Jesus says, do this explicitly, in remembrance of me.

And we do that not just in a mental way, but in a physical way, where I'm tasting and consuming and participating and remembering in a really visceral way what God has done in the past. But also even in just the reading of the Bible.

I mean, yes, you're reading the scriptures and remembering, but also you talk about a time machine. I read someone like Paul, like, and I'm kind of... Writing is almost a time machine, right?

Like his thoughts are traveling across 2000 years to me right now.

Yeah.

And I'm seeing all the good that those words have done, all the ways they've been misinterpreted, the mission and the movement that they sparked. I'm on the other end of it, but I'm still connecting with someone in a sort of a time travel-y way.

You're so right. Communion, baptism, but also Sunday. Yeah.

Just the people of God meeting in a rhythm, a weekly rhythm on a Sunday. It's not because it's Sabbath. It's because it's Resurrection Day, the day that Jesus rose from the grave.

And we are people of the Resurrection. So here every time we meet on a Sunday, it's like, hey, it's Resurrection Day. What's that song we sing at Easter every year?

This is Resurrection Day.

Oh, Happy Day?

Happy Day. Yeah. Happy Day.

Oh, Happy Day. That's, Ben does it so well in leading. Worship, it's just, this is the gospel.

And we come here to remember. We have been set free.

Yeah, I think it's, especially Easter and Christmas, we do it, but it would be better for us to do it on a more regular rhythm, to come with a very intentional attitude of, okay, let me come and remember what God has done and connect that to what

And it's so important to recognize that what makes it special is when you go through it, but you only recognize it was special after it happens.

And I think that's what the key thing of looking back, the real importance of it is, because the church is a moment maker.

Every week, it gives you a moment, whether it be in communion, whether it be a sermon illustration, or just a conversation with someone. And you only look back on to it.

So that should be a call for anyone within a community to say, do you want some moments? Like, come here. Like just be inviting with that, because yeah, it's a joyous day on a Sunday, but there's many moments in between.

Well, we got a lot to juice out of that question.

My next question, thinking about comparing the way Chronicles reflects on the past, to the way Kings reflects on the past. So you mentioned, Jono, Chronicles has kind of an airbrushed view of David and the Kings.

It tends to focus on the positives and what God has done, and when Kings return and that sort of thing.

I would say, looking back at the Book of Kings, which Ben preached on, those books go out of their way to show you the negative aspects of each of the Kings. And sort of, I guess, there's a, if Chronicles is remembrance, maybe Kings is confession.

And I guess I want to ask, what's the advantage of focusing on the positives of the past versus the negatives of the past? Did you guys have any thoughts on that?

I would say it's not going to be productive if you don't hold them both together, the negative and the positive. Because if you focus on the positive, then you're just going to hammer away and do the same things over and over.

And it could potentially become a negative thing. But if you focus on only the negative in its sole purpose, it leads you down a road to ruin.

But also, if you hold both intention together, that's where you can be constructive and really give it to God in a way of saying, I recognize this, I recognize this. Like, let your will be done in both ways. And that, it could be that sort of moment.

It could be a trusted friend that comes around your shoulder and says, I don't think this was the right thing to do. Like, there's in many ways where you have to hold the negative and the positive together.

Well said. Yeah, King's is the roads to ruin stories, really. And you need that, it's about judgment and warning.

Telling the truth about a wandering heart and where it ends up. And Chronicles is speaking hope. It's a reminder of hope, of the future.

God hasn't given up, and he's going to solve this perennial problem of sin at a future date.

And that's those two that you talked about, the constant judgment on sin and the wavering of the heart that we struggle with, and they struggled with, mixed with the airbrushed hope of the king who would come. I mean, it's... talk about airbrushed.

I mean, it's this... what? This incredible, you know, God, man, savior, humble, warrior, king, who wins by dying on a cross.

It's like this incredible being, and that's the word of God, Jesus. So I think it's an incredible setup for the one who is above all, the Lord Jesus Christ.

In the sort of second part of the sermon, Jono, you talked about...

Focusing on this prayer of David, you talked about Christ is our king, Christ as our provider, Christ as our satisfier. And I had a couple of questions about those.

So firstly, looking at Christ as our king, you talked about how the Israelites are faced with these rising and falling of kingdoms. And in fact, we ourselves experienced that not just in history, but in our own lives. You use the analogy of stocks.

The stocks in Tristan are up, and then they'll go down, and they'll go up again. How can we stay grounded in the kingship of Christ?

When I feel like that the rising and falling of kingdoms, as it were, can be very distracting, especially because they will impact us. How can we sort of set our focus on the kingship of Jesus in the midst of that?

Do it regularly, that's the key. Yeah, you have to keep doing it. I don't know what else to say.

I mean, there's all sorts of ways that you could be reminded that Jesus is the king of the cosmos. Just flip to Colossians 1.15 and have a read of that regularly. Philippians 2.

But I think the key is doing it regularly, and even if you get stuck in the sin and feel ashamed and feel like I'm going to avoid remembering that there's a king over my life now, who says in the Sermon on the Mount, you'd be really silly not to

listen to my words. So I feel like the kingship of Christ over our universe and our lives just has to be remembered regularly. Is there regularly, daily, if not every couple of days, there's a sort of a realignment of who's in charge?

Yeah, absolutely. And so moving to Christ is our provider, how can we practice identifying God's provision in our lives? And then how can we determine what to use it for?

I mean, in the passage you cited, you know, Israel's just given this great sort of contribution towards building the temple, and David knows, okay, this is for building the temple.

Not always so easy sometimes when God just gives us things, how do we sort of think about that or determine how we can use that?

I would say when it comes to recognizing what God has provided us with, it's very helpful to have it in the framework or the mindset of, how can I use it for the betterment of the kingdom?

And he provides in many ways, he provides gifts with different people, with different skill sets, and that's part of community and building and working together.

The easy answer is what David says, everything has come from your hand. You all might have think that I gave anything of my own volition. It's all from you.

Yeah, so in that sense, it's the wrong question to ask.

How can we identify what God's provision, there's nothing that isn't your provision.

Good place to try to remain. While Tristan's thinking about the rest of his answer, and I'll just rudely jump in there, sorry about that, mate. I just immediately go back to our May series on mission and giving blessed to be a blessing.

We, the more you can realize that God is a God who wants to bless his people to the thousandth generation. He is a provider. He's a generous provider.

The New Testament talks about, he's not going to give you one thing when you ask for another, and he's not going to give you something that you think is good, that's going to be bad for you. He's smart and kind like that.

But he wants to bless us, and none of us are called to be dead seas. We're called to be, let the water come in, let the blessing come in, let it flow out. And so your question, I think we can answer where it comes from.

But how much do you give away? Well, just because Ben's not here, we need a Willard quote. I asked Ellis Willard once about how much to spend on a house.

Because we hadn't bought a house and I was like, how much should you spend on yourself? And he said, well, Jonathan, I get together with your wife and your children, and you just talk to the Lord and ask him for some help, and he'll guide you.

He'll guide you. And that wasn't a bad impression, really. But it was just interesting.

I mean, the most godly human I've ever met, he just expected the with God life. He just expected that to answer your question, it's to ask God, ask the Spirit, and expect him to guide.

And he said, and don't be too stingy on yourself, and don't give too much away. That was just a classic proverbial wisdom. It was like, God will guide you.

And I think what his point was is like, the trick is to trust your growing relationship with the God who is in you and around you, and wants to co-manage the world with you.

And so his take is always, you are responsible as a steward of creation, so step up. So that frames how I'm asking the question, what do I do with the resources and provision that I've been given? Well, the simple answer is something.

This is not all for me. I'm blessed to be a blessing, and I'm a co-manager with Christ of creation. So find stuff to do that will then use, that will utilize your resources that you've been provided with.

To go back to my answer.

When it comes to identifying what God has provided for us, yes, it is everything, all-encompassing. A new day, that is a daily provision that is for us, that we need to take hold of in just glorifying Him.

But there's, I think you can, there's two ways you can really put it in a way that is recognizable. Is one, make it personal for yourself, whether that be in reflection or devotion or the many resources that we have.

And make it community-based, separate the two, if you want to do it that way. Because if you really look back on how God has worked in your way, in your life personally, that list is going to be, it's going to be, for days, it's going to be endless.

But it's also very helpful, and I've done this a couple of times, when you sit back and look over the past year of the church and that life, community life, whether it be looking at life-hub prayer notes that you've taken down, of what is this

person's journey and you can track it. Like, there's so many ways where God has provided for us, and we just don't see it, because we're not looking for it. Like, once we have that point of recognition, you're like, whoa, he has provided a lot.

Well, with that, I might move to a palate cleanser question, and this week's palate cleanser, I've been saying I was gonna, I was been saying I was gonna retire the palate cleanser questions.

Well, with Beds Away, the Boys Will Play, I guess.

This week, our palate cleanser question has been sent to me by friend of the show, Karen Braiding.

And I think we'll do the rest of her. She's written a big question. I think we'll do the rest of it next week, because it sort of touches on some of the stuff in 2 Chronicles.

But this palate cleanser is, if you could have lived at the time of one of the kings, which would it be?

It's hard to... I want to say multiple. You know, I'd love to be with David at his height when things are going great.

I'd love to have seen Solomon at his most wise, and the kingdom in its most glorious sort of setting. But since my eldest-born son is called Josiah for a reason, Josiah David, we got two good kings in there.

Josiah being a young, righteous king who did immense reforming of the people, I wouldn't mind seeing that young man do his thing. King Josiah.

Can I pick two and use our time machine that we built for ourselves to jump between the two? I'll pick Saul. I just want to see what it looked like, like the first.

The head are taller than everyone else.

Yeah, I want to see it.

His handsome face.

And then Solomon.

Solomon.

Yeah. See, I thought about Solomon. That was my initial thought.

But I think if you were on Solomon, you might get conscripted to do like palace construction or something like that, and he'll whip you with whips.

So I was thinking, someone who's a little bit more chill, I was thinking Asa, who's not as famous as the other ones, but it says he's a pretty good king. You know, there's no massive crises in his reign, to my memory.

So I think, from a purely selfish perspective, I'd go for Asa, but from wanting to see the splendour of Solomon, it's definitely an appeal. All right, well, thank you guys for chatting with me today.

Thank you all for listening, and I hope you have a great day.