



TO NO ONE'S REGRET

KEY SCRIPTURES: 2 Chronicles 21:4-20, Acts 9:36-42

My devotional reading was in 2 Chronicles 21 this morning. It was an effective reminder that regret has more than one face.

The book of 2 Chronicles lists several of Judah's kings for us, describing their reigns and making sure to tell us if they were good or bad, if they followed in the way of their fathers or not. And in chapter 21 it tells us that Jehoram, King of Judah, was a bad king.

Like the other chapters about the other kings, 2 Chronicles 21 summarizes Jehoram's many dirty deeds and the way he displeased God with his choices. But when it lets us in on Jehoram's legacy—a legacy that included murdering his own brothers—it goes on to tell us something else, something beyond how he lived. It tells us how he died.

"He passed away, to no one's regret. . ." (2 Chronicles 21:20b).

No one cared that Jehoram was gone. They didn't even bury him in the tombs of the kings.

They just let him disappear.

And they gave us a revealing glimpse at the other face of regret.

When we think of regret, we often think of the things we might leave undone as we travel from this temporary earthly home to our forever heavenly one. I know I do. I often think of the words I will have left unwritten, the stories only I could tell that I will not have gotten down on paper. But I've never given much thought to whether or not there will be regret in the lives of others when I have made my change of address.

Have you?

I wonder, will I have fulfilled such a useful purpose in this life that my vacancy of it will be unmistakably noticed? Will I have touched lives in such a generous, genuine way that where I

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"...so we can know our value, live with purpose, and make a difference...**In that order.**"



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once gave of my time and resources—and love—there will be a noticeable loss at my departure?

Or will I leave to no one's regret? Will I just. . .disappear?

A sobering question, to say the least.

The New Testament has its own story like that of Jehoram, but with a happier twist to it. It's the story of Tabitha, found toward the end of the ninth chapter of Acts.*

Tabitha made clothes. And when she died, the loss that was felt at her passing was so great that the widows mourning her departure even showed Peter what she had made. They brought out the robes and underwear—yes, underwear—that she had sewn as proof that not only did everyone care that she was gone, she had left a spot they were afraid no one else could fill.

Tabitha loved on people by making sure they were taken care of, all the way down to their unmentionables. And it's apparent by those mourning for her that someone who had taken such great pains to care for something so seemingly insignificant must have also been deeply moved by the grander needs.

The regrets the people were expressing were so profound that God allowed Peter to give her back to them. *"Peter sent them all out of the room; then he got down on his knees and prayed. Turning toward the dead woman, he said, 'Tabitha, get up.' She opened her eyes, and seeing Peter she sat up. He took her by the hand and helped her to her feet. Then he called the believers and the widows and presented her to them alive"* (Acts 9:40-41).

In a moment, all regret was wiped away. The people were no longer in mourning, and Tabitha could finish that pair of underwear that she had planned to make for the widow down the street.

If God places such a high value on our skivvies, I wonder if He also might want us to be changed in the way we view our service. I wonder if He is trying to help us realize that our gifts—no matter how seemingly small we think they may be—are all valuable in His eyes.

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God wants us to be mindful of regret—in a healthy way—and in more ways than just the obvious.

He wants us to grow in our love for Him and for others in ways that make us go about our days with this motto on our lips: "No service is unimportant so no good is left undone." Then, He knows we will live in such a way that our departure changes things, just like our presence did.

Jehoram and Tabitha had the same number of hours in their days, and they both used their hours to leave a legacy. What kind of legacy shall we choose to leave?

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*Tabitha was the Aramaic translation of her name, but she's also known by her Greek name, Dorcas.

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