

A Privileged Child

Scripture Reading — 1 Kings 12:1-24

[Rehoboam] said, "My father made your yoke heavy; I will make it even heavier."

1 Kings 12:14 —

If a spoiled child award had been given in ancient Palestine, Rehoboam would have been a prime candidate. He had no apparent competitor for the throne. He had horses, friends, feasts, and concubines. He was the poster child of privilege. But was he grateful? No. He apparently felt he deserved all this and more.

When the time came for him to govern, he received two kinds of advice. His father's advisors told him to speak gently to the people, and they would follow him as sheep follow a shepherd. His fellow young hotshots, however, advised him to show who was boss. Given his character, he took the advice of his arrogant friends.

Virtually everything Rehoboam had was handed to him by the privilege of his birth, not because of his industry. For those of us who live in free, prosperous societies, much of what we have is the result of our birth too. Many who are born in the Sudan or Bangladesh today, for example, have very different lives than we do. If you were born in a developed country, you too are privileged. And being born at a certain time and place is hardly something we can say we have earned.

Take the elders' advice. Speak humbly to others. Act with kindness. Recognize that what you have is what God has given you.

Prayer

Forgive us Lord, for thinking we are entitled or deserving. Thank you for the blessings we have received through our birth, and help us to give to others as they have need, for your honor and glory. Amen.

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