



### **The Keepers of the Cellar**

*Rev. Philip Harrelson*

**1 Chronicles 27:28** *KJV And over the olive trees and the sycamore trees that were in the low plains was Baal-hanan the Gederite: and over the cellars of oil was Joash:*

**New King James Version** -- Joash was over the store of oil

**New Living Translation** -- Joash was responsible for the supplies of olive oil.

**Amplified Bible** -- over the stores of oil, Joash;

**New International Version** -- Joash was in charge of the supplies of olive oil.

**New American Standard** -- Joash had charge of the stores of oil.

**Revised Standard Version** -- and over the stores of oil was Jo'ash.

**The Living Bible** -- while Joash had charge of the supplies of olive oil.

**Moffatt's** -- Joash, managed the cellars of oil.

**The Message** -- Joash was in charge of the olive oil.

**Young's Literal Translation** -- over the treasures of oil [is] Joash

### **I. INTRODUCTION -- LISTS TO LIVE BY**

- In the last few years, a series of books of attained quite a popularity among business executives and professionals around the country. This little series of books are simply entitled "Lists to Live By."
- Detailed within each of these small volumes are lists that range from success, to leadership, to recreation, to relationships, and so on. In each of these small articles, with each one barely covering a full page, one finds little hints of advice.
- Some are worth the time and others are a waste of time to read.

### **II. 1 CHRONICLES 27**

- When we look at 1 Chronicles 27, herein is apparently a list that numbers certain groups and defines the jobs of other groups.
- If you are like me, when you gain entry to one of these spots in the Bible, they are either read very rapidly or not read at all and skipped in favor of the next chapter.
- This group of men are a list of officers who served David and they felt very honored to have been chosen for a service for the King.

#### **A. Lessons from the List**

- This list of officers and their duties can teach us something about our own service to the Lord.
  - Every person has a place of special service for the Lord.

- Each person was called by his name. God knows each person on an individual level. Not only that but God cares for us and keeps up with the details of our life. (Matthew 10:29-31.)
- Each person served a different capacity. We are put into place by God and we can grow wherever He places us.

***Ephesians 2:10 KJV** For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them.*

## ***B. Lessons from Life***

- But just as there are lessons from the list, there is a lesson from the life of one man.
- I would like to draw your attention to a single phrase embedded within this text, particularly in verse 28.
- One finds a man named and then his job description is placed before us. Joash is named among the greatest of David's men and his job is worthy of being mentioned.

*Young's Literal Translation -- over the treasures of oil [is] Joash*

- What an incredible thing to be said of this man, Joash. He is over the "treasures of oil." The Hebrew root word for "cellar" can also give the connotation of: armory, stone house, or place of the garner.
- He is a man who is placed in a special service to the king. His job is not a flashy job nor is it one that really attracted a lot of attention. In fact, much of his time is spent hidden away from the eyes of men.
- Very few visitors come to the dark, damp, and deserted cellars where Joash and his men were laboring. However, what was being worked out in the cellar was going to have a lasting impact not only on Joash's generation but the one that followed his and extending even into today.
- There are many unsung heroes in the church during these days. They labor on faithfully, methodically, carefully, and often hidden. Obscurity marks the path of many and only when they pass from this life is it evident exactly how great their own value was.

The famous preacher in London in the mid- to late 1800's, Charles Spurgeon, was preached to by a deacon on a snowy day. There wasn't a pastor or an evangelist to preach on that cloud snow-bound morning, so a deacon basically got up and read some Scriptures and Spurgeon started his journey.

- Faithful and obscure service has been one of the vast resources that has contributed to the church over the years.

## **III. THE VALUE OF JOASH**

### ***A. The Duties of Joash***

- The duties of Joash create some insight into being used of God.

#### ***1. Prepare the Oil.***

- Joash worked in close conjunction with the priests of his day. They were to manufacture the oil according to the Law of Moses. There were to be no substitutes or anything left out of this oil that was made.
- The specifics of this oil is to found in Exodus 30.

***Exodus 30:22-25 KJV** Moreover the LORD spoke unto Moses, saying, [23] Take thou also unto thee principal spices, of pure myrrh five hundred shekels, and of sweet cinnamon half so much, even two hundred and fifty shekels, and of sweet calamus two hundred and fifty shekels, [24] And of cassia five hundred shekels, after the shekel of the sanctuary, and of oil olive a hin: [25] And thou shalt make it an oil of holy ointment, an ointment compound after the art of the apothecary: it shall be a holy anointing oil.*

- Oil was very important for use in Jewish society:

It was used for religious needs (Lev. 2:1; 7:1-14; among many others).

It was used as fuel for the lamps (Exo. 27:20; among many others).

It was used for merchandise (1 Kings 5:11).

It was used as medicine (Luke 10:34).

- Oil is also a symbol of the Holy Ghost. That Spirit of God has been placed within us and we must be careful to guard the treasure that is within us. We need to be keepers of the treasure.

*2 Corinthians 4:7 KJV [7] But we have this treasure in earthen vessels, that the excellency of the power may be of God, and not of us.*

- If we take care of the treasure within, then notice what happens without:

*2 Corinthians 4:8-9 KJV [8] We are troubled on every side, yet not distressed; we are perplexed, but not in despair; [9] Persecuted, but not forsaken; cast down, but not destroyed;*

- In the day of Joash, the keeper of the treasure literally kept the lights of Israel going. As you will see, far more than that was accomplished with his hidden ministry and service to God.
- The keepers of the treasure today are those who literally keep the “lights” on in the house of God.

*Act 1:8 But ye shall receive power, after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you: and ye shall be*

*Ephesians 5:18 KJV And be not drunk with wine, wherein is excess; but be filled with the Spirit;*

*Galatians 5:22-25 KJV But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, [23] Meekness, temperance: against such there is no law. [24] And they that are Christ's have crucified the flesh with the affections and lusts. [25] If we live in the Spirit, let us also walk in the Spirit.*

- So, Joash was to prepare the oil.

## **2. Preserve the Oil.**

- His second duty was to preserve the oil. Joash and his company had to make certain that no one could come in and steal or corrupt the source of oil. History bears out the fact that this oil was stored in large vats. A vat was a huge container that had a lid on it.
- This huge vat would sometimes be sealed with a wax ring around the rim so that nothing harmful could gain access to the source of oil.
- His men had to carefully notice if any mold or mildew had begun to grow on the lid. They had to make sure that the wax did not become cracked with age and allow insects or rodents fall into the oil.
- His men had to make sure that the containers themselves were in good working order. They also had to maintain a continuous rotation of fresh oil to make sure that no oil ever went to waste.
- He was a watcher of the treasure. He could not become complacent or sleepy or apathetic about his duties. We need men just like this today. The Church needs those men who will ensure that the oil of the

Spirit does not become corrupted or stolen.

Corrupted with complacency.  
Corrupted with compromise.  
Wasted by worldliness.  
Wasted by popularity.  
Stolen by apathy.  
Stolen by a multitude of would be enemies of the Cross.

- Where are the watchmen of the night? ? ?

*Romans 16:17 KJV Now I beseech you, brethren, mark them which cause divisions and offenses contrary to the doctrine which ye have learned; and avoid them.*

*1 Corinthians 16:13 Watch ye, stand fast in the faith, quit you like men, be strong.*

*1 Peter 5:8 KJV Be sober, be vigilant; because your adversary the devil, as a roaring lion, walketh about, seeking whom he may devour*

- Preserve the oil. Do not let your guard down when you are troubled. Do not get discouraged in the cellar. . . . You are guarding the treasure.

## ***B. The Disadvantages of Joash***

- The duties of Joash create some insight into being used of God. However, having said all of this I must remind you of some of the disadvantages of the job that Joash was required to fulfill.

### ***1. It was Unnoticed***

- Very few people ever saw Joash and his men laboring under the task of treasuring the oil. When you read the list, you will notice that many of the King's men were those who were out front and quickly noticed by the people.
- It was an honor to be one of the king's "seen" men but it did not do much for one's self-esteem to be an "unseen" man of the king. That even has greater implications in the times that we are living in.

*2 Timothy 3:2-5 KJV For men shall be lovers of their own selves, covetous, boasters, proud, blasphemers, disobedient to parents, unthankful, unholy, [3] Without natural affection, trucebreakers, false accusers, incontinent, fierce, despisers of those that are good, [4] Traitors, heady, highminded, lovers of pleasures more than lovers of God; [5] Having a form of godliness, but denying the power thereof: from such turn away.*

- There is a cult of self that does its best to rule not only this world but at times moving into the church.
- However, we must free ourselves from that cult mentality of self. Do it for the King. . . . He takes note of every effort. . . . He has a record book in Heaven that is very meticulous and we are not going to be paid until we get "home."

*Proverbs 15:3 KJV The eyes of the LORD are in every place, beholding the evil and the good.*

*Revelation 22:12 KJV And, behold, I come quickly; and my reward is with me, to give every man according as his work shall be.*

## 2. *It was Uncomfortable*

- The control room of Joash was not somewhere that was clean and fresh and great to be. He had to live and work in the cellar. That cellar was dark, it was damp, and it was deserted.
- Remember that all of God's assignments are not pleasant. When God calls us to a task, He has confidence that we can fulfill that task.
- Our obedience in a difficult place proves our faith in God. Our duty is to deny self, obey the Lord, and treasure the oil.

*Matthew 16:24 KJV Then said Jesus unto his disciples, If any man will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow me.*

- Whatever you do. . . . Keep the Oil!!!!
- Revival does not just magically appear because we say that we desire it:

There is a purposeful walk toward it.

There is a struggle involved in it.

There is a discontent that constantly troubles the man hungry for revival.

There is a destiny that will never allow contentment until it comes.

There is a great discomfort that lives with us until revival comes.

## 3. *It was Unappreciated*

- Joash found himself in the very un-enviable position of being unappreciated. There are times that I am sure that Joash was mocked. People will not always understand your motives for guarding the treasure and keeping the cellar.
- We may be lonely in the place where we are. We may feel misrepresented and misunderstood but every now and then that King will come to visit. Just as David came to find and visit Mephibosheth, the King will come and find us.
- Keep doing what you are doing and in the course of time, it will matter to the King.

*Matthew 25:21 KJV His lord said unto him, Well done, thou good and faithful servant: thou hast been faithful over a few things, I will make thee ruler over many things: enter thou into the joy of thy lord.*

- If you continue to serve the Lord with gladness there will come a day when you will be rewarded and the Lord will pour out blessings on you.

## C. *An Illustration - The Dirt Man*

- Tonight (February 6, 2005), the National Football League is playing it's annual Super Bowl. The New England Patriots with it's high flying quarterback, Tom Brady, and it's stifling defense is playing the Philadelphia Eagles.
- This whole week the stories have been about the players and how good they are and what their coaches strong points and downsides are. But the most important man in the game is not a player, nor is he a coach, nor is he a trainer, nor is he a staff member.
- The most important man on the field is not even on the field tonight. His name is George Toma and he is recognized as the "Dirt Man." He is 76 years old and has been a part of every Super Bowl ever played. 'Dirt Man' grooms fields with passion -- Mark Long / Associated Press JACKSONVILLE, Fla. (AP) - George Toma walks to the middle of Alltel Stadium, gets on his hands and knees and starts scouring the ground for sprigs of grass. He finds some seeds, several sprouts and plenty of optimism.
- "It's coming along nicely," Toma says about a week before the Super Bowl between the New England Patriots

and the Philadelphia Eagles. Then he picks up a metal hand tool with three prongs on one end and plunges it into the sod. He twists the tool purposefully, then lifts and sinks it again. No divots. No damage. Just a few small indentations. "We could play the game today and not have any problems," he says.

- He should know. The confident, charming and compact Toma has been the NFL's turf consultant for every Super Bowl, responsible for getting the playing field ready for sports' biggest game. His job is always pivotal, sometimes challenging and often overlooked. Toma loves every aspect of it. Even though he turns 76 on Wednesday, has prostate cancer and has been retired for several years, he refuses to slow down. "I can't sit still," he says. "I tried to slow down and take it easy, but that didn't work for me. I just couldn't do it. I need to stay busy."
- Toma estimates that in the six years since retiring as head groundskeeper for the Kansas City Royals, he has spent less than 150 days at home in Kansas City, Mo. He's been on the road even more in the last six months.
- He first arrived in Jacksonville in July to begin preparation for the Super Bowl. Working through the four hurricanes that affected Florida, Toma built one practice field at the University of North Florida and two more at Bartram Trail High School. He even did most of the physical labor himself.
- He worked until late November before heading to Hawaii for five weeks to prepare fields for the Pro Bowl. He returned home on Christmas, took it easy for two days, then couldn't rest any longer. He mowed several neighbors' lawns despite chilly temperatures.
- "He's one of the hardest-working guys I know," says NFL fields director Ed Mangan. "He's always running around doing something. I just have to try to keep up." Toma developed his work ethic at a young age. When he was 10, Toma watched his father fall to the ground as they walked. George Toma Sr. died from lung disease caused by years of working in coal mines.
- Though Toma's friends already were getting paid to separate rocks from coal, his father's death prompted him to do something else with his life. He spent three years on chicken and vegetable farms, then began working with a neighbor who was the groundskeeper for the Wilkes-Barre Barons, a Class-A baseball team in Pennsylvania. Four years later, in 1946, Toma took over as the Barons' head groundskeeper.
- Toma quickly learned the importance of doing good work. Whether he was mowing, raking, weeding, watering, edging or fertilizing, he did the job "and then some" - a phrase he has since adopted as his motto. Nearly six decades later - and after becoming the best in the business - he expects everyone working with him to have the same approach. They do.
- They also have countless stories about Toma - but not nearly as many as they hear from him. Toma could spend hours chronicling the places he's been and the people he's met along the way.
- There's one about his first day as head groundskeeper for the Kansas City Chiefs, when he kicked a man out of the stadium for walking on the field and later learned it was team owner Lamar Hunt. There's one about how New York Yankees' players pooled together some of their own money in an attempt to lure Toma to the Big Apple. There's one about how former Texas Rangers star Alex Rodriguez asked him to move to Arlington just to take care of the infield between second and third base.
- "I was offered about every job in the big leagues," Toma says proudly. There's more, too. There's the story about sleeping in a wheel barrow while re-sodding Atlanta's Fulton County Stadium before the 1996 Olympics. He also fondly recalls his favorite baseball player, George Brett, who refused to spit his tobacco on the turf at Royals Stadium because of Toma's dedication.
- Then there are the Super Bowl memories, from his first one in which he used just a small trunk of supplies (he now has a 36-person crew and four tractor-trailers) to several that stand out because of field problems. Two of those happened in Florida. For the Super Bowl in Miami in 1999, Toma used grass grown on professional golfer Greg Norman's sod farm in central Florida.
- Toma says the farm burned the sod by fertilizing it before transportation. "It looked like grandma's quilt," he says. Toma and Mangan eventually used 250 gallons of green paint to "make it look like a million bucks."
- At the Super Bowl four years ago in Tampa, when a large section of grass near midfield was singed during rehearsals for the pregame show, Toma ordered 1,000 square feet of sod removed the night before the game.
- Then he had several members of the grounds crew follow him to the University of Tampa, where he rammed his truck through a locked gate and "borrowed" sod from the school's soccer field. "Sometimes you have to do what you have to do to get the job done," Toma says. "But they were well compensated later."
- The father of three boys, Toma was inducted into the Pro Football Hall of Fame in 2001, had his autobiography, "Nitty Gritty Dirt Man," published in 2003 and recently had a bobblehead doll created in his likeness. The doll is wearing a big smile, holding a rake and ready to work - just like Toma. "He's the pioneer of this business. He pretty much started it all," Mangan says. "If he hasn't seen it or done it, it probably hasn't been done."

- Toma took care of the dirt and the grass for 39 or 40 Super Bowls and this year is the first time that his work has ever been acknowledged.

#### **IV. CONCLUSION -- THE QUEEN OF SHEBA**

- Joash had no idea that what he was doing was going to reach beyond his own generation. However, there was a woman who was waiting in the wings. Because of his tenacity of purpose with the oil, because he was having to supply the source of light, medicine, commerce, and other needs of oil for Israel. A revival was waiting in the wings.

##### ***A. Solomon's Temple***

- Day in and day out the priests came to get oil for the Temple of Solomon. His pure, precise, and protected oil of the finest quality was being delivered to the huge oil lamps.
- There was just one lamp in the Tabernacle of Moses but there were ten in the Temple of Solomon.
- These ten golden lampstands would illuminate the Temple holy place and all the furnishings within. Everything would have been in darkness without their light. The priests could walk in the light of the lamps and enjoy the table of showbread. They could see the altar of incense and see the beauty of the ornamented walls of the Temple. They could observe the golden floor and the golden ceiling. All of the other material would be seen in the light of the lampstands.
- I am certain that Joash had no idea that when he signed on for the job that it would entail such majesty and such dignity and such importance. He was working in the cellar for something that he could not see.  
-But there was a queen, a lady in waiting, who heard about the majesty of the Temple. The light had cast aside the darkness and she traveled to see this Temple of Solomon.

*1 Kings 10:1-9 KJV And when the queen of Sheba heard of the fame of Solomon concerning the name of the LORD, she came to prove him with hard questions. [2] And she came to Jerusalem with a very great train, with camels that bore spices, and very much gold, and precious stones: and when she was come to Solomon, she communed with him of all that was in her heart. [3] And Solomon told her all her questions: there was not any thing hid from the king, which he told her not. [4] And when the queen of Sheba had seen all Solomon's wisdom, and the house that he had built, [5] And the meat of his table, and the sitting of his servants, and the attendance of his ministers, and their apparel, and his cupbearers, and his ascent by which he went up unto the house of the LORD; there was no more spirit in her. [6] And she said to the king, It was a true report that I heard in mine own land of thy acts and of thy wisdom. [7] Howbeit I believed not the words, until I came, and mine eyes had seen it: and, behold, the half was not told me: thy wisdom and prosperity exceedeth the fame which I heard. [8] Happy are thy men, happy are these thy servants, which stand continually before thee, and that hear thy wisdom. [9] Blessed be the LORD thy God, which delighted in thee, to set thee on the throne of Israel: because the LORD loved Israel forever, therefore made he thee king, to do judgment and justice.*

- There is a world waiting to see a church that is full of the glory of God. They are looking for the cloud, they are looking for the majesty of God. . . . They will find it in a church that keeps the oil in the cellar.

##### ***B. The Oil of the People***

- However, there is one more consideration of another source of oil. There is oil that is brought by the people.
- It is not brought by the priesthood. It is not brought by the leaders. It is not brought by the elders. It is not brought by the Levites.

*Leviticus 24:1-4 KJV And the LORD spoke unto Moses, saying, [2] Command the children of Israel, that they bring unto thee pure oil olive beaten for the light, to cause the lamps to burn continually. [3] Without the veil of the testimony, in the tabernacle of the congregation, shall Aaron order it from the evening unto the morning before the LORD*



*continually: it shall be a statute forever in your generations. [4] He shall order the lamps upon the pure candlestick before the LORD continually.*

- This oil was brought so that the priesthood could see “how” to minister in the Holy place. Never underestimate your value to God and to this Church. You are imperative and a priority if this place is going to continue to have a revival like we have never experienced before.

### *C. Ten Minutes of Purpose*

From National Public Radio -- June 6, 2002 -- Writer Bob Greene calls it "the miracle of the trains." Starting in December 1941 and throughout World War II, volunteers in North Platte, Neb., greeted and comforted millions of soldiers and sailors heading off to battle as troop trains made brief stops in the little town.

"The people of the town were there, every train for the entire war," Greene says. In a Morning Edition interview with host Bob Edwards, the Chicago Tribune columnist and author discusses *Once Upon a Town*, his new book about North Platte.

The numbers are astonishing. "This town of 12,000 people... greeted 6 million men. Sometimes with as many as 20 trains a day, sometimes 7,000 or 8,000 people came through this little town. And the men pulled in and they looked out the train windows" and saw the locals waiting for them with a smile and a meal.

The North Platte Canteen was an oasis for "the boys" -- many of the soldiers were teenagers, who were lonely, hungry and tired. Many had never been away from home before "and they didn't know if they'd ever come back," Greene says.

But during their 10-minute stops, they were greeted with chicken and egg salad sandwiches, coffee and free magazines. Volunteers from North Platte and 125 farming communities from around Nebraska came to the canteen. They took turns preparing meals for the GIs. The locals would stay up all night cooking chicken and "in an assembly line they would make hundreds or thousands of sandwiches in a day," Greene says.

(cold bottles of milk and coffee with free magazines and books were made available; some gave above their ration card... only \$5.00 from F.D.R. the only government aide given to the project!)

There was even time for a bit of socializing. "There was a piano in the corner of the canteen and they would play the piano and the men would dance with these girls for 10 minutes," Greene says.

The men received popcorn balls with little slips of paper tucked inside with the addresses of local high school girls or young women for the soldiers to write to. In researching his book, Greene says he even found two women who ended up marrying men who found their names in the popcorn balls. (pen pals... some even married)

Other places around the country sporadically pitched in to help soldiers during World War II. But in North Platte, it was a constant effort. Greene says the Nebraskans "were doing it for themselves, doing it to say, 'This is what it means to be an American.'"

The soldiers were amazed to see the locals waiting for them -- even in the middle of the night -- and would talk about their brief visit when they got to the battlefields of Europe. Greene says: "The men would say to each other, 'Ever been to North Platte, Nebraska?' They never forgot because the trains only stopped for 10 minutes.

The people of North Platte made those 10 minutes count."



- I don't know about you. . . . but I am going to make my life count for something. . . .