

**SUNDAY 17<sup>th</sup> July 2022**

**Passing God's message on.**

**Scripture: Psalm 78:1-11**

This morning we're going to be talking about what may be the most important season of life...when children are in the home. And those under 18 are probably the most important population, as they are often the most vulnerable, most teachable and have the potential to live longer than the rest of us.



And please don't turn off if you don't have children, or they have grown up, moved away, have their own families. That does not mean ignoring the obligation given to us from God – "Teach your children in every season."

***Our Next Generation Obligation (vs. 1-3) is to pass on our faith.***

Jesus told us the first and greatest command is to love the Lord our God with all our hearts and all our souls and all our minds and all our strength. And that a second is to love our neighbours as ourselves. If there was a third great command, it would say, "Pass on your love of God to the generation that follows you."

Teach them to know Him, about Him, to love Him, live for Him and let others know about Him too. That's the challenge and the call to our next generation.

**Let's step back** to see what was happening to the Israelites at that time. David has just become king of Israel; he wants to move the capital of his kingdom to the mountaintop city of Jerusalem.

One of his non-negotiables is, “If this city is going to be the centre of my kingdom, then it’s going to be the centre of our worship of God as well.”

This meant that the Ark of the Covenant would be moved there so David organises the move and a party as the Ark is travelling. A worship leader by the name of Asaph, played the cymbals for God as the Ark was brought into the city of Jerusalem; this was around 1000 BC.

Around 400 years later Israel was conquered by the Babylonians. 70 years after this, they were conquered by the Persians, and the Persians released the Israelites to return to their homeland. Many of the Jewish people returned to Israel.

Asaph decided to teach his children about God. To do that, he told stories about God. Stories about what God had done in the history of his people. That’s what Psalm 78 is all about.

Psalm 78 starts with a title... ***A Maskil of Asaph.*** “Maskil” means, “a teaching psalm.” This is a psalm that is going to teach us something. The words in that song preserved faith in all his generations for over 500 years. What kind of words could do that?

**Have you ever struggled with finding the right words to pass onto your children and your children’s children and any other children, or anyone in your sphere of influence?**

Some parents say: *“I am not going to influence my kids about God? I am going to let them make their own decision about Him when they are old enough. They can figure it out for themselves.”*

And as they grow up, they still don’t learn about God and it gets later and later in life and sadly it can be too late. You see, they *can’t* figure it out for themselves. God is invisible. They can’t see Him. The way we

find out about God is through revelation. God revealed Himself to us, through Jesus Christ coming to earth to see what He was like, and through scripture, which tells the stories of God's actions, so we can understand what He's like.

Letting children figure out God on their own is like saying, "I'm not going to teach my children which foods are good for them. I'm just going to let them wander around the kitchen and figure it out for themselves." Our children are going to be exposed to all kinds of misinformation about God. If they don't hear the truth about Him from us, they may never know the truth about Him.

***If we teach God's deeds to our children (vs. 4-7) they will put their confidence in Him.***

Everybody puts their confidence in something. Teach children what God has done, and they'll have confidence in Him.

The first generation who heard the Law at Mt. Sinai didn't believe. They had a crisis of faith. God told them to conquer the promised land, but they refused. So God let them die in the desert. Then, in the book of Deuteronomy, He gave the Law again. And this second time, their children believed, and conquered.

Everyone puts their confidence in something. If we teach them about God, they'll put their trust in Him. But...

***If we DON'T teach God's deeds, (vs. 8-11) our people will crumble.***

The people of Ephraim did things wrong:

They shrunk back on the day of battle; They didn't live morally.

They refused to live by the Law and they forgot what God had done.

If you read the entire Psalm you will see all that God did for the people. Asaph is showing the next generations what God is like by telling them about what He has done.

God is a powerful and providing God. He split rocks to provide water. God was faithful to Israel all throughout the Exodus. It's important to remember the stories of God! When we forget what God has done, we start living by sight and not by faith.

Asaph is teaching lessons about God to the generations to come. This is a Psalm worth studying, because it teaches us how to pass on our faith to the next generations.

How important is it to remember what God has done for us? It is commanded by God – it is everything. And when we remember, we trust. And when we trust, we walk by faith.

There is a God who is with us, and He is faithful. But He is invisible. You can't see Him, but you can see Him for what He does. You can see Him provide for you. And protect you. And comfort and encourage. Tell your children – and your grandchildren – about His works.

Tell them about His works of old – in the Bible. And tell them about His works of new – His works in your family. That's your obligation, and mine.

Asaph's solution to passing on faith was simple and effective: *If our kids are going to love God, they have to know what He's done. So I'm going to teach them some history.*

## ***How to Pass on Your Faith to Future Generations:***

### **1. *Teach them what God has done.***

The Bible is brimming with stories of God's guidance, provision and protection. Tell those stories and get your children into programs that tell those stories.

### **2. *Teach them that God doesn't change. (Hebrews 13:8)***

Hebrews 13:8 says, "Jesus Christ is the same, yesterday, today, and forever."

- What He has done in the past, He will do in the future.
- What He did for the children of Israel, He will do for your children.

Then, along with teaching children what God has done for people in the Bible...

### **3. *Teach them what God has done for your family.***

- Tell your children about how you came to Christ.
- Tell them how He led you to your job. Tell them how He provided for you when you lost your job or didn't have a job.
- Tell them how He led them to your spouse, if you have one.
- Tell each of your children how God brought them into your family.
- Tell them how He formed them in their mother's womb.
- Tell each of your children how God watched over them and protected them when they were little, and when they were sick.

Most of us will tell anyone who will listen about the great things our favourite team has done to win championships or procure players. And grandparents, tell your God-stories too. Children need to hear from multiple generations.

And those of us without children, we too have a next generation obligation. You can be part of shaping the faith of future generations by volunteering in your Faith community.

Keep the stories of faith alive and well in your family.

Personally, I believe we are fast approaching the time when our Lord will return. The time is urgent – don't ignore it; you don't have to learn a story, just tell your own Christian journey to children, teens, young adults, adults – basically anyone who does not know the hope you have in God. Then pray and pray and turn them over to the power of the Holy Spirit to soften their heart and minds towards God.