

Losing the Next Generation

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[0 : 00] Our gracious and loving Father, we thank you for your word to us. We thank you that you did not leave us in this world without hope! And without instruction and the word of God.

! I don't know how many of you are involved in running in race, in relays, but there is such a race called the 4x100 relay race, right?

And in 2008, in the Beijing Olympics, there were four men, Christian Coleman, Kenny Bednarik, Kyrie King, and Fred Curley, was the U.S. team that was supposed to go to Beijing to take part in the 4x100 relay race.

They had trained and waited all their lives to do this for the country. A race that everybody in the world was watching.

Most people in the world were watching on television. And so the race started. They were ready. They had practiced hard for this all their lives. And as they got on where they were ready, the four runners around the track, the race started and they ran.

[1 : 40] And lo and behold, when it came to Christian Coleman and Kevin Bednarik, they had passed the section in which the baton was supposed to be passed.

And they were then immediately disqualified. And so they finished the race, but they did not qualify for the race, the 4x100 race at the Beijing Olympics.

Then, right after that was the women's Olympics of the U.S. team. And so the hope was great that this U.S. team, this women's team would at least bring back the medal or some kind of medal, since the men had already dropped the baton, so to speak.

They did not finish the passing of the baton within the period, within the section that was allowed them. And so the women's team went, Torrey Edwards and Lauren Williams and the other two, and there were four of them running and again ready.

And again, when it came to the last handover between Torrey Edwards and Lauren Williams, they dropped the baton.

[2 : 50] And it was the saddest thing to see for the American people because here was the hope of getting a gold medal for that race, and instead the Jamaican team had taken the gold medal for that race.

And the passing of the baton was fundamental, was important for that race. It was a team sport, but at the same time there was a handing over of the baton.

And this passing of the baton is important not just in a relay of a race, but I would suggest that it's important even for our Christian faith.

And as I referred to just now in 2 Timothy 1, what did it say that Timothy, Paul had told Timothy, that you have received the gospel from your grandmother, Louise, and your mother, Eunice.

Now be faithful in this gospel that you have come to receive. And I think many of us here today can testify to the fact that your grandmother and your mother, you are maybe the third generation who are here, and your children is here, and that you are handing on the baton of the gospel of Jesus Christ to the next generation.

[4 : 12] How important it is, as my daughter, who is 25 years old, who went to the UK to study, and then she went for, she reflected back on her years as a teenager, and how emotional she was, and how difficult it was growing up, because we had two sons before then, and Connie and I didn't know how to parent an emotional girl, a daughter.

But at the same time, she went over to the UK, and she had some therapies, she had some counseling, and she had to deal with some of the emotional issues.

And she came back, she was very happy, she told us, wow, you know, this therapy session was so good, and I would recommend therapy to everybody. And my oldest son, who is a millennial, just

past millennial, maybe she said, oh, you snowflake generation, you need therapy.

But no, she really gained a lot from it, and she said, and we, you know, said sorry for the things that we did not do, we dropped the ball on certain things, because we did not know how to handle, maybe a teenage girl, who had, who was going through emotional, where her hormones was, was growing and developing, and we did not know how to handle that.

But one thing I told, I reflected, and I told, we told her was that, you know what's interesting, what's good, is that, my generation was the first to receive the gospel, we became Christians, then we shared the gospel with my parents, they became Christians, and now our children are Christians, my brother was the first Christian in the family, but at each generation that goes by, my, all my three children are in church, they love the Lord, they're serving the Lord, and I know that when they have children, they will be faithful in raising their children, in the fear of the Lord.

[6:10] And I told my, my daughter, Lisa, that you know what's the great blessing, is that every generation that goes, with the gospel of Jesus Christ, it only gets better, because the gospel of Jesus Christ, is able to transform, and change our hearts, as we grow, and as we know the Lord.

And so, that's the blessing, that we are to think generationally, what is, how is the baton passed on, how is the, the, the great, the, the treasure that we have received, in these jars of clay, passed on, to the next generation, and to the children's children.

And so, this text here today, is very interesting, because, here we are at, the, when Joshua had led the people, into Israel, into the, into Canaan, into the promised land, and they were to do certain things, that Moses had told them to do, in Deuteronomy, chapter 7.

They were to go, and they were to, as God brings them into the land, they were to conquer them, and utterly destroy them. In Deuteronomy 7, 1 to 6, it says, you shall make no covenant, with the people there, and you were to show them no mercy, nor shall, you make marriages with them, you shall not give your daughter, to their sons, nor take their daughter, for your son.

For they will turn your sons, away from following, me, to serve other gods. So the anger of the Lord, will be aroused against you, and destroy you suddenly.

[7:42] But thus, you shall deal with them, you shall destroy their altars, and break down their sacred pillars, and cut down their wooden images, and burn their carved images with fire. Why?

Because it says, you are a holy people. To the Lord, your God, the Lord, your God, has chosen you, to be a people for himself. A special treasure, above all the peoples, on the face of the earth.

So these were a distinctive people, that God had made covenant with. And God said, you are my covenant people, and you are to go into this land, and you are to, to consume this land, to take over this land, to be faithful, and to be, to multiply in this land, and be prosperous.

Because God has given you, this land. And so Joshua, had taken the people through, for 40 years, had led the people, and now, he stands, he leads the people, into the land, and he, to conquer the land, to take over the land.

And, in, Judges chapter 2, verse 8, Joshua, the son of Nun, the servant of the Lord, then died, at the age of 110 years. And they buried him, and all the generation, also, were gathered, to their fathers.

[9:01] And so, in chapter 2, we see, we are standing here, at the entrance, to understand, what happened, to the people of Israel, as they entered Canaan, as they entered, the promised land.

How did their life, how did they do, after Joshua? Moses, had led them, through the wilderness, brought them to Canaan, Joshua, had brought them in, conquered the land, for 40 years, worked with them, and then, he passed on.

What happened, to them? And here, in verse 10, of chapter 2, is probably the saddest verse, for me, in the Bible. It says, and all the generation, also were gathered, to their fathers, and there arose, another generation, after them, who did not, know, the Lord, or, the work, that he had done, for Israel.

all that was taught, all that, Moses had taught, the people, it says here, there arose, another generation, who did not know, the Lord, and, or the works, of the Lord, that he had done.

How did this happen? I think it's important, for us to know, how did this happen? How did the whole generation, grow up, not knowing, the Lord, or the works, of God?

[10:18] And it can be, only one reason, isn't it? That the elders, of the faith, the elders, of the people of Israel, the parents, did not tell, their children, about the Lord, or his works.

That they were not, faithful, in doing, what God, had commanded them, to do. There is a hint, of how this, even began.

If you look at, Judges chapter 1, that the people, had abandoned, the Lord, through a gradual, compromise. And if you were, to look at how, they took over the land, in verse 21, of chapter 1, it says, the people of Benjamin, did not drive out, the Jebusites, who lived in Jerusalem.

So, the Jebusites, have lived, with the people of Benjamin, in Jerusalem, to this day. But this was not, what Moses had said. You were to drive out, the people. You are to destroy, their altars, and you are, and all that, the Ashterahs, and the Baals.

But instead, the Benjamites, lived, allowed the Jebusites, to live, with the people, of Benjamin, the tribe of Benjamin. And then, if you were to look, at verse 28, of chapter 1, when Israel grew strong, they put the Canaanites, to force labor, but did not drive them, out completely.

[11 : 40] Again, they disobeyed, what Moses had said. And instead of driving out, they said, oh, it's okay. I will make them, slaves, and laborers, in Canaan.

Because they know the land. They grew up here. So I will, we will use them, in the farms, and in the land. They did not drive them out, completely.

And in verse 30, and 31, again, Zebulun did not drive out, the inhabitants of Ketron, or the inhabitants of Nahal, so the Canaanites lived among them, but became subject to forced labor.

And look at this, in verse 31, Asher did not drive out, the inhabitants of Achor, or the inhabitants of Sidon, or of Elab, Akizib, or of Helba, or of Afik, or Rehob.

So the Asherites, lived among the Canaanites, the inhabitants of the land, for they did not drive them out. In this tribe of Asher, they didn't drive out, when they had advantage.

[12 : 39] But now it says, that the Asherites, lived among, the Canaanites. What a sad situation, that the people did not obey, and began to compromise, in their faith.

And did not obey, what Moses, had told them, to do. And this compromise, as we see in chapter 2, of verse 12, led to total, abandonment.

Led to the loss, of a generation. Revelation. Chapter 2, of verse, and verse 1 of 5, talks about how this, how faithful, God was, in keeping covenant, with the people.

He says, I brought you up, out of Egypt, and brought you, into the land, that I swore, to give your fathers. And I said, I will never break, my covenant, with you. And you shall make, no covenant, with inhabitants, of this land.

You shall break, down the altars, but you have not, obeyed my voice. So we see here, in chapter 2, verse 1 of 5, that, God was faithful.

[13 : 48] God was faithful, to keep covenant, even when they did not. In the people's disobedience, God was still, faithful. And then God, raises judges, to save them, to deliver them.

And they repent, and they come back. And this is the cycle, that we see, in judges, as there are 12 judges, that are raised up, to bring the people, of Israel, back again.

But the question here, as I said earlier, is what led, to their abandonment? What led, to their losing, of their faith? Well, the author highlights, two symptoms, of the abandonment.

And the first one, is in verse 10, is the failure, to pass on the faith, to the next generation. And the second, is the failure, to distinguish themselves, they assimilated, with the people.

Verse 13. So two things, failure to pass on, their faith, to the next generation. And second, verse 13, failure to distinguish themselves, as they assimilated.

[14 : 50] So it started well, when they entered the land. Verse 7 says, and the people, served the Lord, all the days of Joshua, and all the days, of elders, who outlived Joshua, who had seen, all the great work, that the Lord, had done for Israel.

It was good. They had gone in, and they were successful. They managed to take over, some of the land. And the people, served the Lord, all the days. So for one generation, this is the generation, that were born, in the wilderness.

They saw, the goodness of the Lord. After this generation, it says in verse 10, after this generation, there arose, another generation, who did not know, the Lord.

All the works, he had done, for Israel. So there was, number one, a failure to pass on, their faith, to the next generation. Because they did not know, the Lord.

They knew the Lord. They knew of the Lord. Because, why? Because when, they went through suffering, they turned back to God, and God raised judges, and they came back to God. They knew of the Lord, but it says, they did not know, the Lord, in an intimate way, as a covenant, keeping

God.

[16:01] Sure, they heard about Yahweh, and about, how the parents, came from Egypt, the forefathers, came from Egypt. But they did not know, of his faithfulness, of his covenant, keeping God, who loves them, and who delivered them.

Why is it so important, to teach your children, so that they may know? Well, Deuteronomy 8, verse 11 to 17, it says, is to take care, lest you forget the Lord, your God, by not keeping, his commandments, and his rules, and his statutes, which I command you today.

Lest when you have eaten, and you are full, and have built good homes, and live in them, when your herds, and flocks multiply, and your silver, and gold is multiplied, then your heart, it says, will be lifted up.

And you will forget, the Lord, your God, who brought you out, of the land of Egypt, out of the house of slavery, who led you through, the great, and terrifying wilderness. And then it says, beware lest you say in your heart, my power, and the might of my hand, have gotten me, this wealth.

Isn't that how all of us are? When times are good, and we are prosperous, when our career is rising, and when business is good, when our bank accounts are full, when we have a good car, and when things are peaceful, and our children are doing well, that we forget to pray.

[17:20] We forget that we need God. We forget to go to Him on our knees. We live comfortable lives, proud, and arrogant. It says in verse 14, our hearts are lifted up.

We fail to teach our children, and tell them the stories, of the good God, that has led us. Because why? We don't have time. We are too busy. We have houses to build, we have careers to climb. We have business to take care of. And yes, you may take your children, your children to church, but do they know of God, or do they know the Lord, who has been faithful to you and I?

Psalms 78, actually, I shared this at the parents' meeting yesterday, at the seminar yesterday, and I think it's very clear in Psalm 78, verse 5 onwards to 8, it says, He established a testimony in Jacob, and appointed a law in Israel, which commanded our fathers to teach their children, that the next generation might know them, and the children yet unborn, and arise and tell them to their children, so that they should set their hope in God, and not forget the works of God, but to keep His commandments.

You see how the baton is passed, that they may teach their children, that the next generation might know them, and the children yet unborn. Isn't it our responsibility, that this baton of the gospel of Jesus Christ, be passed on to the next generation, and I'm not just talking about parents, I'm talking about all of us here, older women to younger women, older men to younger men, discipleship of your Sunday school children, or your covenant children, who are here worshipping with you, and to ensure that all of us are discipled well, that we would grow, and so that as we get mature in Christ, that this gospel will be transferred, will be faithfully brought to the next generation.

[19:36] Deuteronomy 4.9, Only take care and keep your soul diligently, lest you forget the things that your eyes have seen, and lest they depart from your heart, all the days of your life. Make them known to your children, and your children's children.

Again, here in Deuteronomy, verses after verses, it tells us of the importance, and the need of passing the baton, of the gospel of Jesus Christ, faithfully.

While it is our responsibility to tell our children, so they may know, it doesn't quite guarantee though, that they would choose to follow Yahweh, when they are grown. Your parents cannot force you to follow Christ.

It is truly the work of the Holy Spirit. And so as parents, one of the things that we ought to do, in passing this faithfully, is to be on our knees, for our children, interceding for them, their hearts, and their faith.

Dr. Dave Ralph Davis, says on knowing, he says, your children may remain within the church, in their cold, dead, formal way, but there is no fire in their faith, no warmth in the love, no joy from the hope.

[20:46] And this is what the gospel brings, and we need to be faithful, to continue to preach the gospel of Jesus Christ, to our children, and our children's children. There is a war to the parents here today, there is a battle for the hearts and minds, of our children.

And one hour of Sunday school a week, is really not enough to teach, and to nurture your child. It has to be lived down at home, while you sit, while you walk, and while you lie down.

The goal is that the next generation, know the Lord, and his works. And so helping parents be equipped, to teach your children, to read verses, to pray together.

To remember also the good, the faithfulness of God in your lives. As your family goes through difficult times, it is good to pray, and when the times are, when the difficult times are over, that those become milestones, of God's goodness, and faithfulness to the family.

And then you recall them, as your children grow up, of God's faithfulness. Remember your family milestones, as you go through them. The second thing is that, the failure to differentiate themselves.

[21 : 57] Why? Because the people assimilated. They could not, you could not tell, the holy covenant people of God, with the local, Baal idol worshipping, people of the Canaanites.

They were to be holy unto God. Means set apart, as God's people. But instead, the people of Israel, worshipped Baal, and Ashtoreth.

Verse 13, Baal is really designated, as the universal, God of fertility. And in that capacity, his title was, Prince, Lord of the Earth.

He was also called, the Lord of Rain, and Dew. The two forms of moisture, that were indispensable, for the fertile soil, in Canaan. For the nations around Israel, Baal was the rider of the clouds, who brought the rains, and blessed the earth.

When Baal showed up, the heavens rained, oil, the rivers ran with honey, mothers gave birth, to healthy children, and even the dead, could be raised.

[23 : 04] And so in verse 11 and 13, it says that the people, prostituted themselves, they gave themselves, to Baal, and the Ashtoreths. The people, were slaves in Egypt, they were builders.

But they did not know, how to farm. They were nomads, in the wilderness. And here, they came to Canaan, and they were to farm. And how were they to live?

They looked across, their neighbors, and saw their Canaanite neighbors, and thought, these people worship, the God of, the clouds of rain, and honey, and dew, and it works for them.

So maybe we too, can worship, Baal and Ashtoreth. And so they, they wanted food. When they were in the wilderness, they wanted food.

Manna came down. They wanted meat. Sparrows or doves came down. They had water. They were nomads, but they were taken care of. But now in the land of Canaan, they had to farm.

[24 : 05] They had to do the works, of the land, to live, to be prosperous, as God had given to them. But instead, they went to Baal and Ashtoreth, because they could not trust, that this God, who delivered them, through, through the wilderness, would now, provide for them also, in Canaan.

And so what did they do? They went, to the gods of the Canaan. And there was an anxiety, in their hearts. Who is going to take care of our needs? Who is going to look after?

Who is going to cause the crops to grow and sprout? Perhaps we have to turn to Baal. Children or youth today, you have that anxiety too, isn't it?

Are we going to succeed in life? How are we going to, join this red race? Parents, you're worried about your children. And so we enlist them upon tuition, upon tuition classes.

Piano class, gymnastics, I don't know what else there is, but there are weekends, Saturdays, Sundays, full of tuition classes. Parents, you have an anxiety, to ensure your child is successful.

[25 : 15] That they get a good education, that they score straight A's, in SPM or whatever, in STP, that they get a good job. And so we prepare them for, for the work after school.

But we fail to prepare them, for life, with the gospel, of Jesus Christ. Singles, there may be anxiety, of unmet needs too, isn't it?

Will I ever settle down? Will I have a, you know, enjoy a spouse? For some of you, trapped in addiction, it's the inability to trust, that God can truly satisfy completely.

Just like the people of Israel, who entered Canaan. Can we really trust God, to provide? The truth is, we are all anxious people.

There are many things, that we are anxious about. And so we drink at the fountain of lies, that says, you are the Lord of your own destiny. You are self-reliant, self-dependence, self-improvement, self-identity.

[26 : 24] And you are to take control, of the power. You cannot trust God. After all, did he, did God, really say, as, the serpent said to Eve.

We have to take control. And we, to do that, to get ahead in life, we have, to be, to take control. But the way of the cross, really, as we know it, is really different, isn't it?

The way of the cross, is emptying of ourselves. As Christ emptied himself, so that he could be obedient. Christ came, to bring healing, and restoration, restoration to our lives.

And it's a matter of finding, our identity, and our satisfaction, in Christ. And not the things, that the world, can offer us. You know, I'm convinced, that as, one of the things, one of the issues, of all our lives, as we struggle with sin, is this question, of satisfying, satisfaction.

Where do we get, our satisfaction? And if we, cannot get it from God, then we go to other places, to find this, satisfaction. And that's why, I think the psalmist, in Psalm 90 says, verse 14 says, satisfy us in the morning, with your steadfast love, that we may rejoice, and be glad, all our days.

[27 : 43] Satisfy us each morning, with your unfailing love, so we may sing for joy, to the end of our lives. You see, God is desiring, to satisfy us. And it only takes us, in the morning to come.

And pray this prayer, Lord, today, satisfy me, in the morning, with your unfailing love, so that I can sing for joy, the whole day, and the entire day, of my life.

Psalm 81, verse 10 says, I am the Lord, your God, who brought you out of Egypt. And what does he say now? Open wide your mouths, and I will fill it. See, God reminds the people here, that I am the God, that is faithful, that has delivered you, that has brought you, into Egypt.

Now, all you need to do, is open your mouths, and I will fill it. You know, I'm reminded, that as I went to this, Matoma Church, in, there's this church, that, services a group, of Indian people, in West Malaysia.

They came from India, and they stayed, you know, with themselves, as a group of Indians. And as a STM student, I had to go, visit different churches, and temples. And so I went to this, Matoma Church, and it's funny how, when the Holy Communion came, the priest comes, and he, and he has this little spoon, with a, with a, with a, chalice, with a wine inside.

[29 : 09] And the people are supposed to come, and they sit, they kneel in front, and they put their hands to the back, and they kneel, and they do this. And, and the priest goes, flip, flip, flip, flip, flip, flip, flip, flip, and he just flips the, the wine, and the, and the bread into everyone's mouth, and they were fed.

And they just to open, their mouths. And this reminds me of this, in Psalm 9, 81 verse 10. I brought you out of Egypt, now, would you just open your mouths, and I will feed you.

You see, God is faithful. God, even promises to us, come to me, all your attire, and heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you, and learn from me, for I am gentle, and humble in spirit, and you will find, what all of us are looking for, rest for your souls.

For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light. Would you satisfy, would you find your satisfaction, in the Lord?

And then we don't have to go, to other places. We can be a distinct, group of people. As we go to the world, as we go to our workplaces, on Monday, we shine, with the love of Jesus.

[30 : 24] We tell people, of the love of Jesus, and about his goodness, and grace, and mercy, and we become, witnesses of Jesus Christ, because we are fulfilled, because we are satisfied, in the Lord.

Parents, older men, older women, spiritual fathers, and spiritual mothers, are you passing, the baton well? Are you intentional, in ensuring, your child, knows the Lord, and the works of the Lord? Are you, celebrating, the milestones, in your family, as you look back, upon what God has done? Or are you just, leaving it to the church, and to the pastor?

You see, this is a responsibility, of all, of everyone, all of us, as we pass on the baton, to the next generation. There is a message, for the church as well, are we taking the responsibility, to pass on this baton?

Is the next generation, our priority? Are we discipling, our young? Are we teaching them, the truth, of the gospel, of the Bible? Perhaps we need, like last yesterday, we had a parenting class, to teach parents, how to, pass the baton, how to teach, and how to, disciple, their children.

[31 : 56] Let not a single child, within this covenant community, who will grow up, not knowing, the Lord. Pray with, and for every child, that just left this room, to their Sunday school classes.

Be faithful, in praying for them, every day, that not one of them, will be lost, to the world. We are called, to live our lives, as a people of God.

And so parents, are you living, counter culture? Are you, living, a life that is, unique and different, according to the word of God? Are you, showing your children, that you live for Jesus?

That Jesus is the most important, person in your life? The world values, success, big houses, nice cars, comfortable life. And nothing wrong, with those things. But when we compromise, and show our children, that our studies, are more important, than God. That being successful, in your work, in the workplace, and in the world, is more important, than your faith.

[32 : 59] Then we have, dropped, the baton. How do we show that? When it comes, to exam time, we say, it's okay, you don't have to come to church. When it comes to, our SPM, or IGSC, it's okay.

No need to come to church. No need to serve. No need to do, the things that God, has called us to do. No, no, we don't do that, because that, shows them, when they grow up, that it's okay, to, to put God second, when, when, when other things, are needed.

It's a scary thing, isn't it? This response, that we have. But God will give us mercy, and he will show us the way. Mothers, as you, as today is Mother's Day, that you would, remember this, heavy responsibility, that even though, there's no appreciation, or a lack of, no thanks, yet we know, that this is the job, that God has called you, to do.

To pass on, the baton, faithfully. To be, a Lewis, and a Eunice, to Timothy. And so, may God bless you, may God bless all our mothers, and our parents, today, this, in Kuching Evangelical Fellowship, I'll be praying for you, that God may, continue, to pass this baton, faithfully, to the next generation.

God bless you.