

Psalms For All Seasons: Our Next Generation

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Preacher: Kent Dixon

[0 : 0 0] Welcome here for this Sunday, August 6th. My name is Kent Dixon, and it is my joy to be the pastor here. And welcome to each of you this morning, whether you're here for the first time or the billionth time, whether you're joining us in person or whether you're listening on the phone line or checking out our podcasts or the website in the days ahead.

My thanks to Paul for sharing his heart, what God had laid on his heart with you in last week's sermon. He and I joked about it and said, sometimes the hard theological words are the most important ones.

So does anyone remember the troublesome word that Paul shared with you last week? Very good. Mission accomplished. Propitiation. And so what does that mean?

No, I'm just kidding. So I trust that you were challenged and encouraged by that message. I'm sure that you were. This morning we're picking up again in our series called Psalms for All Season. And we've been learning that the book of Psalms is a book for all the seasons, all the situations and circumstances of our lives, our next generation.

[1 : 1 2] And as Len noted this morning, when we saw that countdown, this is a chilling, pun intended, reminder of what is to come. So hopefully you feel refreshed by seeing frost and not begin to panic.

So we're walking through this book for all seasons, the book of Psalms. And so far we've learned, as I've touched on a bit already, that this is an every season book.

Because the lessons of the Psalms, the lessons that we learn in this book of the Bible, help us in every season of our lives. And as I've said before, they convey the depth and breadth of human emotion and interaction with God.

In week one, we learned that engaging the Bible can make you happy in every season of your life. In week two, we learned that the Lord is our shepherd in every situation of our lives.

So arguably, and maybe you'll challenge me on this, the most important segment of our society seems to be the under 18 population. And I think none of us fit in that category, not even Connor.

[2 : 2 2] And why is that? Well, there's some of the most vulnerable people. Oh yeah, Emmett. Sorry, Emmett. Most vulnerable people, most susceptible to influence and other things in their lives, social media and so on.

And they have the potential to, ideally, probably live longer than any of the rest of us. And so the investments that we make in this group of people will impact, literally impact future generations. And so this morning, we're going to consider our next generation and particularly our obligations to them. Throughout history, God has issued, what I'm going to call, a next generation obligation. Next generation obligation to his people. God continually does that. He has said over and over, teach your children in every season.

Jesus told us that the first and greatest commandment is to love the Lord your God with all your heart. Right? All our souls, all our minds, and all our strength. And then that the second great commandment is to love our neighbors as ourselves.

[3 : 3 6] And hopefully that is familiar to you. It comes right to your mind. But I think we can also safely say that if God had given us a third command, it very well could have been, pass on your love for God to the generation that comes after you.

Teach them to know him. Teach them about him. Teach them to love him and live for him. And to let others know about him too. And that's the challenge and obligation that I believe God has given us to the generation that is coming behind us.

So we can recognize that for many of us here at Braemar, the reality of sharing and nurturing the next generation may be different, may look different. We're not a church that is filled with children

who can literally be taught here, although we're definitely and always well prepared to intentionally do and intentionally teach the ones who come.

But we are a church of committed followers of Jesus Christ. We can still speak into the lives of our adult children. We can be Christ-like examples for them.

We can speak into the lives of our grandchildren and our great-grandchildren. And we can speak into the lives of any younger people we cross paths with in our lives.

[5 : 00] This morning, let's consider an Old Testament story. One day, a worship leader named Asaph thought about his children and their faith.

And Asaph wanted his sons and his daughters and their sons and daughters and their sons and daughters and their sons and daughters to love God as much as he did.

So he wrote the words to a song. And that song became Psalm 78. And you've probably already turned there. I heard lots of leafing.

So the words in that song preserved the faith in his generations for more than 500 years from when Asaph wrote that song and beyond.

So what kind of words could do that? Well, we're going to look at them a bit together. And so we're on the Psalm 78 slide. Psalm 78, if you're looking at it now or if you've ever considered it before, is a very long psalm.

[6 : 04] So rest assured, we are not here for two or more hours. We're going to be looking at smaller portions together and then I will summarize sections. So Psalm 78 starts with a title which says that it is a maschal of Asaph.

Your Bible probably says that if you're looking. So what's a maschal? Well, a maschal means a teaching psalm. So this is a psalm that's going to teach us something.

That's the teaser right there. And specifically, it's going to teach us to teach our children. It begins, and now my translation may be a little different from yours, so don't panic.

My people hear my instruction. Listen to the words from my mouth. I will declare wise sayings. I will speak mysteries from the past.

Things we have heard and known that our ancestors have passed down to us. So this little preamble at the beginning, Asaph is preparing us to hear some history.

[7 : 11] Can you recognize that? But more importantly though, he's going to share, and he's made clear that he's doing this, he's going to share some of the history of God.

So some of the things that we know about God have been passed down to us by the people who experience them firsthand. And why does Asaph do this?

Well, because he's convinced that we, that he, that we beyond him have a next generation obligation. So let's look at a few of these obligations.

Well, first, our next generation obligation is to pass on our faith. Not to pass on our faith, to pass on our faith.

And he says, we will not hide them from their children, but we will tell a future generation the praiseworthy acts of the Lord, his might, and the wondrous works he has performed, Asaph says.

[8 : 11] So what he's getting at here is that our children need to know who God is. The best way to show them who he is, to demonstrate his character, is to tell them what he has done.

God revealed himself to us through Jesus Christ coming to earth to demonstrate what he was like, what his character was like. And that tells us the story of God's actions so that when, then we can understand him through how Jesus ministered, how Jesus spoke, how he cared, how he related to people, explained, described, demonstrated God's character to people.

And Asaph decided to teach his children and ultimately our children as well about God. So to do that, he told stories about God through Psalm 78.

And stories about what God had done in the history of his people and that's what Psalm 78 is all about if you read through it. So let's read a little bit. Verse 5, Asaph begins and he's talking about God.

He established a testimony in Jacob and set up a law in Israel which he commanded our ancestors to teach to their children. so that a future generation, children yet to be born, might know.

[9 : 33] Well, when did God do that? Do you remember Mount Sinai? God gave the law and the Ten Commandments to Moses. He made his law and commandments clear to his people.

So Asaph continues here that the people of that generation, they were to rise and tell their children so that they might put their confidence in God and not forget God's works but keep his commands.

Our second next generation obligation is to teach God's deeds to our children so that they will put their confidence in him.

everybody puts their confidence in something and if we teach young people what God has done and how he's demonstrated his power and his faithfulness and his trustworthiness throughout human history, they're more likely to put their confidence in him than in something else.

Asaph continues here in verse 8, then, after having been told this, then they would not be like their ancestors, a stubborn and rebellious generation, a generation whose heart was not loyal and whose spirit was not faithful to God.

[10:56] So we recognize in Scripture in the Old Testament the first generation who heard the law at Mount Sinai, they didn't really believe. They kind of had a crisis of faith.

God told them to go and conquer the promised land. Do you remember what they did? They refused. So God let them die in the desert.

And then in the book of Deuteronomy, he gave the law again. And I've talked about this many times over the years, that God is eternally patient. We do dumb things and we're still welcome.

We turn away and we're still welcome. We ignore his direction and we're still welcome. We're still loved. So everyone puts their confidence in something.

And if we teach people, if we teach the next generation about God, they will more likely put their trust in him. But, our third next generation obligation is to remember that if we don't teach God's deeds, our tribe, our communities, our cities, our nation, the world, will crumble.

[12:11] We have a calling. God has given us a mission and we are his agents in that mission. And throughout this psalm, in verses 12 to 14, for example, we see how Asaph recounts how God delivered his people from Egypt.

He parted the Red Sea. He recounts, Asaph recounts these stories. He led them as a cloud during the day and a pillar of fire at night. Our God is a guiding God.

Once his people got out of Egypt, they needed to know where to go, so God led them day and night. He never leaves us to wander on our own.

Never leaves us to just figure it out for ourselves. Psalm 78, verses 15 and 16 says, reminds us, that he, God, split rocks in the wilderness and gave them drink as abundant as the depths.

He brought streams out of the stone and made water flow down like rivers. God is a powerful and providing God. And we're reminded as well that he split the rocks to provide water.

[13:26] He provided manna for them to eat. And he provided meat, quail, when they got bored of that. God is patient. God was faithful to Israel all throughout the Exodus.

And Asaph is showing the next generations what God is like by telling them what he has done. In verse 32, stepping down a little bit, Asaph reminds them of what God does when his children are unfaithful.

Despite all of this, Asaph says in verse 32, they kept sinning and did not believe his wondrous works.

So despite what God had done, despite his provision and demonstration of love and care, people go, eh. Verse 36 then says, but they deceived him with their mouths.

They lied to him with their tongues. Their hearts were insincere toward him, and they were unfaithful to his covenant. Hear this in verse 38. Yet, I have this underlined in my notes, yet, even though all this complaining, all of this bitterness, all of this backbiting and backstabbing and behavior that was going on, yet, he was compassionate.

[14:46] God was still compassionate. He atoned for their iniquity, it says, and he did not destroy them. He often turned his anger aside and did not unleash all his wrath.

He showed mercy. He remembered, it says, that they were only flesh, a wind that passes and does not return. Even when the people were unfaithful, God remained faithful to them.

Verse 41, they constantly tested God and provoked the Holy One of Israel, it says. Why did they constantly test him?

Doesn't that seem crazy to you? Well, verse 42 says, here's the root of it, folks, they did not remember. I can't stress enough how important it is for us to remember the stories of God.

Verse 42 says, they did not remember his power shown on the day he redeemed them from the foe. When he performed his miraculous signs in Egypt and his wonders in the territory of Zoan.

[16:03] My friends, 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 in Psalm 78.

[22 : 23] And then, along with sharing stories of what God has done for people in the Bible, number three, remind them of what God has done for you and your family.

I can't even begin to recount all the stories that my mother and father and my grandparents and aunts and uncles told me over the years, and still tell me at times, of how God has acted in our lives, has changed the course of someone's life in our family, has led us back to him, has affirmed our faith and trust in him.

Over and over, this is a consistent theme. Tell your children about how you came to Christ. Remind them of that story if they're older. Tell them how he led you to your job.

Tell them how he provided for you when you lost a job or didn't have one. Tell them how he led you to your spouse. If you have or had one. Tell each of your children how God brought them into your family and the circumstances of their birth and their early years and their adult years.

Tell them and remind them that God formed them in their mother's womb. Remind each of your children how God watched over them and protected them when they were little and when they were sick.

[23 : 46] And those of us without children can also have that same next generation obligation. You can be part of sharing your faith with future generations by sharing your faith stories with members of the next generation in your life.

Somebody who mows your lawn. Somebody who's in your neighborhood. A neighbor. Kid. Tell the story of how God has been at work in your life. Jumping back to verse 4.

Asaph says, reminder here, we will not hide them from our children, but will tell a future generation the praiseworthy acts of the Lord, his might and the wondrous works he has performed.

Friends, keep the stories of faith alive and well in your family. So, what story will you share this week?

Pick one right now in your mind. Give some thought to who you might share it with and when you might do that. I won't check up, I promise.

[24 : 53] But challenge laid down. And remember for yourself the things that God has done for his people throughout time, as well as for you in your own life and in the life of your family.

And help others to remember that as well. Amen. Amen.