

Family Conference: Changing Gears | Session 1 - Eternal Principles in Family Life

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Preacher: Todd Murray

[0 : 00] All right, children, you come with us in the back, and Todd, welcome. Well, good evening.

Did I get it on? All right, three clicks, he said. Well, some of you I know, and your familiar faces, good to see you again, and we look forward, Tandy and I both, to getting to know the rest of you. The Lord's done an amazing thing in bringing two families together, and I suppose in some ways you feel like you're still getting to know each other. So thank you for letting me be a part of this year's conference.

It's a particular delight for Tandy and I to be here. I was trying to think. I know how I feel when I go to a conference, and I don't know the speaker, and I hear him introduced as a pastor and a professor, and so let me just intentionally try to normalize us.

Five children. The Lord's been very gracious to us in those kids. We were not amazing parents, and we can tell you lots of things not to do, as well as things to do, and so maybe I can debunk some of that mythology over our time together tonight and tomorrow.

[1 : 08] But most importantly, in addition to just human anecdotes you can hear from another fellow parent and now a grandparent, is just simply we need what the Word of God says.

So I suppose if I knew that tonight was my only time to speak to you, maybe in some ways tonight's message would be the one I would want to deliver about just the mandate we have to faithfulness to bring the Word of God to our children.

And so I really want to look at some Old Testament passages tonight that just talk about, because we're going to be talking tomorrow about how things change from those early years into high school and adulthood. So maybe we begin tonight just simply saying this, what never changes?

We have the privilege of having relationships now with our adult children, and now our oldest grandchild is 10, 10, 9, 8, 7, 6, 5, 4, 3, 2, 1, and 1 on the way.

So we've gone from having no grandchildren to having 10 in 10 years, which is still just, we're still trying to figure out now how to be grandparents. It's like, I never really understood completely how to be a dad.

[2 : 10] How can I be a grandfather? But whether you're a grandparent, you've got young kids, you've got no kids, looking forward to kids, we just want to look together at the Word of God with this one thought in mind.

Just as in any other ministry that God gives you, God does not require outcomes and fruit from you. He simply requires faithfulness.

Faithfulness. We're stewarded with the gospel. We're entrusted with it. And we are to just be faithful in bringing it to the world, which includes those, if God's blessed you with children, right there in your own home.

If you have grandchildren, whatever influence the Lord would allow you to have. And so we want to be faithful to what we're going to see God call us to do in His Word tonight. And I think that just might be a helpful reminder.

One of the shortest parables Jesus ever gave is the parable where He said this, The kingdom of God is like a farmer who went out to sow seed.

[3 : 14] And he sowed the seed, and then he went home and went to bed. For how it grows, He does not know. How it germinates.

How the seed, this dead-looking little kernel, how it can come to life. Only the Lord knows that. I have sitting on my desk at the church in my study, a statue of a sower just broadcasting the seed.

He's got a sack on his hip, and he's just throwing the seed like this. And it sits on my desk every day to remind me that as I'm ministering to God's people, that's my only job. Sow the seed. And then spiritually, I go to bed.

Because I don't know how to make it grow. Somebody else might come and water it. But if the Spirit of God doesn't come and water that seed, I can't manipulate it into life. And so God just wants you to faithfully sow gospel seed into your family's life.

And of course, beyond your family. But this weekend, we're thinking about what does gospel faithfulness look like at home? And so can I bring you that sense of relief that just says your job is not to produce merely drug-free virgins.

[4 : 24] Your job is not to produce super Christians. Your job is to sow the seed, to live the gospel in front of them, and to pray that God will be merciful and just kindly do to them what he so undeservedly did in your life.

And that is your only job. And that, to be honest with you, kind of takes a load off. And so for those of you who did faithfully sow the seed, not perfectly. Nobody sows it perfectly.

But some of you bear the heartache of kids that you sowed the seed faithfully on, and they're adults now who don't love Christ. And you take that on as kind of an uber guilt.

I must have failed somewhere. Well, of course, there's going to be moments you look back and you failed. But look, being a Christian means being a forgiven sinner. And so your job is just to be faithful.

And isn't it interesting how we're very selective in the way we apply that I'm responsible principle as parents. For instance, if your kids turned out to be an exemplary Christian, would you be tempted to take credit for it?

[5 : 31] Yeah. Well, due to their incredible parenting in the younger years, that's why they're the wonderful young... No, you would just go, it's just the grace of God that they turned out. And so it's funny, we won't take credit if the kids turn out the way our heart wants.

But if our kids go wayward, we will take credit for that. Look, be consistent. Be consistent. Own what you can. I mean, if the Spirit of God's convicting you about some hypocrisy in your life when they were growing up or some neglect of them when they were growing up, then you confess that, you repent of that, and you enjoy the pardon that the gospel brought to you.

But if you look back and you say, yeah, I was imperfect, but I wasn't one person at church and someone else at home. I wasn't a hypocrite. I wasn't guilty of totally neglecting them.

And the gospel seed has not yet germinated in their heart. You can't take credit for that any more than you would take credit for the fact that, you know what? They love the Lord.

So be careful about how you think about that. So I don't want to absolve us of all... Look, we all would have to admit in some ways we're derelict in our parental duties.

[6 : 41] Of course. There are times we don't do what the Lord asks us to do. There are times we encourage them by modeling our own wrong values, and they picked up on it.

And as my pastor, Jerry, says, what you do in moderation, your kids will tend to do in excess. And that's certainly true. So where you become, under the word of God, aware of, you know what, Lord, I didn't do that.

And that wasn't enough of priority. Confess and repent of it. And then just get back in the game, if you need to, of faithfully sowing the seed. What does God require of you? Faithfulness to the kind of commissioning to intergenerational ministry that we're going to be looking at tonight.

So let me show you some Old Testament passages tonight. Then tomorrow morning, we're going to look at sort of parenting in the early years. We'll look together, a close look at what Paul has to say in Ephesians 6, and just defining the basics of parenting.

So tonight, what never changes? Tomorrow, what kind of changes from toddlerhood and infants and toddlers on up into the elementary years? And that'll be out of Ephesians. Then we'll be back in the Old Testament for our second session tomorrow to look at Proverbs chapter 1 through 9, which kind of serves as an Old Testament handbook on parenting.

[7 : 57] It's different from Proverbs 10 through 30. Chapter 31 sort of stands on its own as well. But 1 through 9, it doesn't have that sense of kaleidoscopic truth that you, you know, when you hear Proverbs, you think of one verse on pride, and then a verse on the tongue, and then a verse on money, and then a verse on lying.

Just wonderful miscellany that God planned. But Proverbs 1 through 9 are different from that. You get whole paragraphs, whole chapters on one theme. And the reason I would call it a parenting handbook is because the divisions in chapter 1 through 9 are marked by these words, my son. And then it'll happen again. You may have 20 verses, and then verse 21 will be, my son. So it's really easy to outline where the divisions of thought in Solomon's mind as he's talking to adult kids, he's talking to princes, privileged sons, listening to their fathers, like overhearing Solomon's instruction to his son.

So we'll look at that. It kind of prepares you for what to expect of the temptations to be and the challenges in the young adult years, which, by the way, serves as a warning not only for you as parents, but really, if you cover Proverbs 1 through 9 frequently with your young adult children, then they're kind of prepared.

These are, you know what? This is normal. This is what the Bible said would be coming in these years of the tumult of becoming an adult. I don't know why we're all in such a big hurry to get here, do you?

[9 : 26] I mean, has adulthood been for you all it was cracked up to be? No, not me. So why was I in such a hurry to get here? So that's kind of the scope. And then Sunday morning, we're going to take a deep dive at a particular psalm, Psalm 78 written by Asaph, where he just really lays out what should be the curriculum, the spiritual curriculum that I particularly want to zero in on when we go to teaching our children.

And how can they be warned from the history of Israel? So hope that just kind of gives you an overview. This is a little bit of what we enjoyed this summer on Wednesday night, this series that I just called Changing Gears, these transition points in parenthood.

So what we did over the course of many weeks, we're going to try to cram some of it into one weekend. So if you'd open your Bibles for tonight, let's start in the book of Exodus. Exodus, as you're turning to chapter 10.

What you're going to notice in tonight's themes is, I probably should have put this on your little handout there, is four words that start with the letter R that you're just going to see rolling around in a number of texts that we look at tonight.

The idea of remembering this tendency to have spiritual amnesia and forget spiritual truth. So remembering, you're going to hear a focus on that we need to be teaching our children, our grandchildren, multiple generations about the power of God's redemption.

[10 : 54] So remembering, and you'll hear much about redemption through the course of the night. And you'll hear a lot about God's word itself. So I just chose the R, the word revelation, divine revelation.

And so these important themes that you'll see them just keep rolling around. And so watch for them together and I'll point them out as they keep coming up.

So remembering redemption, remembering God's power and his revelation. And then finally, the other theme that's just going to come up constantly, the other R is just rebellion.

God's people have had a tendency to rebel. Your children will be tempted to be willful. It's true of your heart as well as a parent. And so remembering and redemption and God's revelation.

And then what are we up against? We're up against a heart that tends to rebel, even believers at times. And so let's look together. Starting in Exodus chapter 10, we're just looking now here.

[11 : 53] What's the mandate? How do I know that God expects me to sow gospel seed and truth into my children's heart? Well, there are lots of Old Testament passages, but let's start here.

Exodus 10, just those first two verses. Then the Lord said to Moses, go to Pharaoh, for I have hardened his heart and the heart of his servants, that I may perform these signs of mine among them.

And that you may tell in the hearing of your son and of your grandson, how I made a mockery of the Egyptians and how I performed my signs among them, that you may know that I am the Lord with an emphasis on I am the unrivaled God.

This would be one of many Old Testament passages where God says, I'm going to flex my spiritual bicep and I want you to share with me in enjoying my glorying over the defeat of your enemies.

The defeat of Pharaoh, the defeat, how I showed my signs. I'll make a mockery of hard-hearted Pharaoh so that you may know that I am the Lord.

[13 : 12] Now, you and I are not Egyptians. You and I are not Israelites. But the timeless truth for us is that God expects us, as he did Israel of old, tell your children, tell your sons and your

grandsons about how I glorify myself by defeating my enemies and the enemies of you and your soul.

This is, in essence, a call for you to lift up your Bible and say, look what God did for Israel. But I would suggest to you tonight, I think many parents overlook this great opportunity they have to, in addition to that, say, and here's my story, how God defeated the enemy of my soul.

Hebrews chapter 2 says that all of us were enslaved to the fear of death. Let me tell you how God delivered me from the fear of death through Jesus Christ. Curriculum are great.

Plans to read to young children, choosing books that would take them systematically through the great themes of the Bible. I used them all. I love many of them.

But when you couple that overview of Scripture with your powerful story, how the Lord saved you, just don't neglect that. I remember I was an adult with children and realized, I don't, my mother who led me to Christ, I don't even know the details of how she came to Christ.

[14:39] She'd actually never really told me. So we were home on a visit one time and I said, Mom, tell me the details. What were the passages and what were the truths and what were you convicted of? And she began to rehearse her story.

I should have known that story from, you know, from the knee where I was hearing the gospel. How did the gospel impact you, Mom? So she was a brand new believer, started sharing the gospel with me when I was eight years old.

She attended a charismatic ladies Bible study where she was impressed by two things. That everyone in that room believed that Jesus was real and she thought he was like Santa Claus. She couldn't believe there were actually adults who believed that Jesus was more than a story.

And the second thing, though she wasn't a Christian and had no particular regard from the Bible, seeing these women underline and write in their Bible, she thought was sacrilegious and horrifying. Those were her initial impressions of the gospel.

So she just starts laying out for me how she came to know Christ. Do your kids know an age-appropriate version of the story of how you came to know Christ?

[15:41] They should. They should. God wanted Israel. I want you to tell them how my power and my glory defeated Israel's greatest enemy.

So that you may know I am the one and only unrivaled Lord. And you and I are being called to do the same thing. So don't neglect your Bible. Teach them truth of God's mighty deeds through Jesus Christ.

But tell them how that impacted you and your story. I think sometimes we're reluctant because we're afraid. If I start telling them how I sinned when I was a teenager, then they may give them ideas. That's why I'm saying give them an age-appropriate version of your story.

But as your children grow older and more mature, then you should mature the story along with them. That way, if they're dealing with deep sins in their life and they find out, wow, you're a fellow sinner too, maybe they'd be a little less scared to come and open up their heart with you.

So here's the mandate. Tell your sons and your grandsons the mighty deeds that I have done. Look at Psalm 45 verse 17. Look at four passages from the Psalms here, five passages.

[16:52] Psalm 45, 17. The psalmist writes, I will cause your name to be remembered in all generations. Therefore, the peoples will give you thanks forever and ever.

I will cause, I will actively involve myself in making sure that your name, and God's name in the Old Testament means your reputation, your resume, your great accomplishments.

I will cause your character, your reputation to be remembered in all generation. One of the things that that psalm details is that his name, his character, is that he's a king whose throne is forever.

That he subdues his enemies, that he loves righteousness. It's an amazing psalm. On one layer, it's a song written for a king of Israel's wedding day. You can hear verses that are written to the groom, verses written to the bride.

But then when it starts talking about this king that's, you know, got this wedding ceremony, it says, your throne, oh God, is forever. That's when you start realizing, oh, you're talking about more than Israel's king.

[18:02] You're talking about the ultimate king. You're talking about the ultimate David on the throne. It's an amazing psalm. Is that your heart? I will cause your name. I will actively make it happen that your reputation will be remembered by my children and my grandchildren, all generations.

Look at Psalm 79. Psalm 79 verse 13. The psalmist writes, So we, your people, and the sheep of your pasture, we who belong to you, we will give thanks to you forever.

It's a long psalm, but for deliverance over enemies. We will give thanks to you forever. To all generations, we will tell of your praise. Are you telling the praiseworthy deeds of God in the scripture and in your life and in your story?

Not just how you came to Christ, but his faithfulness, his praiseworthiness in your life since you've come to know the Lord. Nothing wrong with using other men's thoughts and words and catechisms. Whatever you want to do to be organized and faithful in this mandate, don't forget your story of the faithfulness of God. Psalm 89 opens this way.

[19 : 19] Look at Psalm 89 1. I will sing of the loving kindness of the Lord forever. To all generations, I will make known your faithfulness with my mouth.

Two things happening here, kind of the who of God and the what of God. Who is he? And what has he done? If you get lost in the weeds, in the busyness of parenting, what is it I need to be told? Who is God? What is he like? And what has he done? This word loving kindness is interesting. This is probably the closest Old Testament word to the New Testament word for grace that you have in your Bible.

When I was trying to explain this word, we don't have a single English word for this particular Hebrew term. So I used to explain it to my kids this way. Imagine a hyphen between each of these words.

Loving kindness in the Old Testament is the you never earned it so you can never do anything to make it go away love of God. Now that is a long sentence. Pastor Jerry says it more succinctly.

[20 : 23] He said it this way. The love you didn't earn your way into and the love you cannot sin your way out of. You didn't earn your way in and you can't sin your way out because this love is grounded in God's character, not you.

You didn't do anything to make yourself a candidate for it. And you can't once he has poured his love on you, you can't send this love away. And he says, I'm going to sing about that.

I will sing to all generations about the love I did not earn and cannot sin away. Indeed, to all generations, I will make known your faithfulness.

Loving kindness and faithfulness often go together in the Psalms. Faithfulness is the word that means reliability, firmness, steadiness. Used metaphorically. Sometimes it's used literally.

Remember when Moses' arms were just, as long as the arms were up, they won the battle. And his arms were getting droopy. And so loving brothers come up and hold up his arms.

[21 : 21] And it says, and when they held his arms, his arms were faithful, steady, reliable. That's what this word means. So I'm going to sing of the love of God, who he is, and the way he has displayed his faithfulness.

But make no mistake about it. Sometimes we have this idea that the writers of scripture, I don't know, they just somehow had a Cinderella life. If they have a storybook life, they just kind of had an edge and things went a little better for them than they do for us.

This determination to sing of God's love and to praise his faithfulness to the next generation is on the lips of a man who's in deep water.

Look ahead to verse 49, right? Verse 1, I will sing of the loving kindness of the Lord forever. But verse 49 says, where are your former loving kindnesses?

All of a sudden you realize this man is determined. God is faithful, reliable, steady. And his love is there and will never go away.

[22 : 31] Even when circumstances have removed any sense of it. In faith, I'll still sing of it. I'll still speak of it to the generation behind me.

That should encourage you. Some of you are in a valley and you think, I don't even know if I'm a very good advertisement for Christianity right now. If I open my mouth in front of my kids, they know how hard things are right now.

Well, join the club. Psalm 89 is a lament psalm. It's a sad song that opens by saying, it's a determination. You understand? It's not a description. I'm going to sing of the loving kindness of the Lord like I always do.

No, he says, it's grim. It's black. It's painful right now. This is not a description. This is a determination. I won't stop singing what I believe.

No matter how I feel, particularly in the light of another generation behind me. It's a powerful psalm. It's another long psalm.

[23 : 36] You should read it and know it. Look at Psalm 102, verse 18. He says of what he's cataloged in this psalm, for deliverance again over enemies and for the giving of God's promises.

He says this, this tribute to God's deliverance and faithful promises. This will be written for the generation to come, that a people yet to be created may praise the Lord.

In other words, the testimony of the glory of this great God who delivers, right? There's that theme of powerful redemption. It's going to be written down so that a generation of people who aren't even alive yet, so they can praise the Lord.

All it takes is one generation to go mute, and then the next generation will know nothing about God. And then finally, look at Psalm 145, verse 4. For one generation, Psalm 145, verse 4.

One generation shall praise your works to another and shall declare your mighty acts. That's a determination.

[24 : 53] This is what's going to happen. This is what's supposed to happen. And this is what we're going to do. But now let's just take a little bit closer look into Psalm 78, just a closer look at some particular verses where the curriculum is kind of laid out for us.

What is it that should make up the heart and soul of what we want to communicate to the next generation? Psalm 78, written by a handful of Psalms, written by Asaph. Asaph was David's hand-picked chief musician.

And so Psalm 78 opens this way. Look at verse 1. Listen, O my people, to my instruction. Incline your ears to the words of my mouth, and I will open my mouth in a parable.

I will utter dark sayings of old, which we have heard and known, and our fathers have told us. We will not conceal them from their children, but to tell the generation to come the praises of the Lord. Verse 4, we will not conceal. This is a determination that has to be made in the heart because our natural default mode, left to ourself, unchallenged, if we're not careful, is we might actually, we might conceal it.

[26 : 14] We might be quiet. We might be reluctant to speak. We might grow silent. So he says, we will not conceal them from their children, but tell the generation to come.

The praises of the Lord. What happens next at the end of verse 4 there is one of these R's. Here's that redemption word. These mighty acts of God that all fall into the work of redemption.

Whether you're talking about the defeat of Pharaoh or the gospel saving power, his redemption.

Look what he says next after the praises of the Lord. One generation will tell the praises of the Lord, specifically his strength and his wondrous works that he has done.

There it is again. Who is he? He is the Lord, capital L-O-R-D, the promise-making, covenant-keeping God, the self-existent one. Who is he? That's who he is. What is he like?

What has he done? Tell them of all his wondrous deeds. So gracious, powerful redemption. That's one of the things we just can't tell our kids that enough.

[27 : 19] But look at verses 5 and 6. Here's that reference to God's divine revelation to scripture. For he, God, established a testimony in Jacob. He appointed a law in Israel which he commanded our fathers.

So here exists the revelation of God. He commanded our fathers they should teach them to their children. Keep this in mind when you read about the law in the Old Testament. I grew up in Florida. And we used to, in the summer, we had a community pool and we would go there every day. And when we'd get there, I just remember over on the side by the pool, there was a light blue sign with peeling black letters that had the 10 rules about what it meant to be in the pool.

Number one was always shower before you get in the pool. In my 63 years of life, I've never seen anyone take a shower before they jumped in the pool. But that rule was there, though ignored. Don't run, no glass bottles, you know, no pushing anybody off the high dive.

Which to me as a kid was, it might as well have been the Ten Commandments. Those are the 10 things that are basically saying don't have fun at the pool. And sometimes when you read about the psalmist, about treasuring God's law, or saying, oh, how I delight in your law.

[28 : 34] I remember as a boy reading that in the scripture and thinking, who delights in rules? Who delights in do's and don'ts that are mostly don'ts? I thought of the law as the light blue sign with the black peeling letters.

The great killjoy. Don't have fun at the pool. This is God saying don't have fun in life. You mustn't bring any remnant of that kind of thinking when you hear this man say that God established and appointed a law in Israel.

To an Old Testament believer, when they heard the word law, you know what they heard? Not do's and don'ts. Yeah, technically there's language that says do and don't. But they didn't think of it as a killjoy, a wet blanket on fun.

They thought of it more like guardrails to keep me from falling off the road to destruction. They thought of it as guidance in a dark room.

They thought of it as a flashlight on a path. So when he says that we want to communicate to our children who is God and tell them about his character. Tell them about his powerful redemption.

[29 : 42] Teach them the law of God. They're saying it's teach them guidance that will save their life. They found safety and security. In other words, they heard protection in the law.

Not a wet blanket on fun. Verse 5 again with those thoughts in mind. For he, God, established, made firm a testimony in Jacob.

He appointed a law in Israel which he commanded our fathers. Teach not the do's and don'ts.

Teach them the protection that comes with living within the guardrails of God's word.

He commanded them. Here's divine revelation. I command you, teach these not do's and don'ts.

Not wet blankets. Teach this light and darkness.

Teach this light and darkness. To your children. Why? Why? Why? Verse 6. That the generation to come might know. Even the children yet to be born.

[30 : 46] That they may arise and tell them to their children. There's at least three generations implied there. There's you, the children yet to be born.

And the children of the children yet to be born. God has commanded us. My whole point tonight is you have a mandate. This is not an option for super Christians to saturate your children in the character and the deeds of God in the Bible and how those have come to powerfully change your life.

You have a mandate. God commanded Israel. And by extension, you and I carry that same mandate today. But look at verse 7. Here's the purpose.

Call them. Maybe think of it specifically. All right. What is it I'm supposed to teach? Well, there's some very specific things here. We've seen redemption. We've seen revelation. And the rest of this psalm talks a lot about rebellion.

But look at verse 7. Call them to trust. Call them to faith. Look at verse 7. That they should put their confidence in God.

[31 : 59] That is a top priority on the heart of Asaph. Tell them, don't do like your spiritual forefathers did. Who put their trust in themselves, in false idols and false systems.

No, tell them that they should put their confidence in God. I was talking to someone this week whose life circumstances understandably greatly tempt them to be afraid.

I was trying to just remind them what the scripture says about the opposite of this kind of fear would be faith and trust and hope in the Lord. And I remember saying to them, look, if I somehow had a crystal ball.

As a former charismatic, I can say, if I had a prophecy or a word from the Lord, like I used to think I had. If I could somehow foresee the future and tell you, let me tell you how this ends.

These circumstances that you're in now, let me tell you the day in which it ends. This is how God does it. This is how it ends. This is why you're going to be okay. And this is what's going to happen to your family members that you're worried about.

[33 : 06] This is what's going to happen to your finances. This is what's going to happen to your health. If you could know the end and see the faithfulness of God now, and I could tell that to you, you know what would happen to us?

We'd all go like this. Ah, okay. Now I'm okay. What God is calling you and I to do is without that knowledge, to find your, ah, he says, find it in me.

All you need to know is who, not what, not when, not how, who. Find your, ah, your sense of trust and well-being, that, that sense of relief.

Oh, there's nothing to be afraid of. There's nothing to dread. The Lord is just saying, right, because I'm me. Tell your children.

That's what he means. Put your confidence in God. Find your sense of, ah, and well-being and safety and that everything's okay. Find it in me.

[34 : 13] Tell them, verse 7, to put their confidence in God. And here's where that word remember comes in. Look at what he says next in verse 7. And not to forget the works of God.

But keep his commandments. There's revelation rolling around again. Redemption. Remembering. Revelation. Don't forget the works of God. And keep his commandments.

There it is. Tell your children and your grandchildren at whatever age they're at. Too young to even understand you. You can never start too early. I started talking to our kids while they were in Tandy's womb.

You can't tell them too often. And tell them who God is. Tell them what he's done long before they can understand it. But then as they mature and have the ability to understand it, just give them more and more details.

Warn them of your own battle. Oh, even as a believer, sometimes I do put my confidence in myself. And let me tell you how that always ends. Warn them in this wonderful, warm combination of biblical truth and what you've learned about walking with Jesus in your years.

[35 : 19] Don't forget the works of God. Spiritual amnesia happens to all of us. But keep his commandment. Don't you think it's appalling that the Lord should ever have to remind us?

To have to tell me don't forget? Again, living in South Florida, I remember not too long ago, there were some German tourists on the beach there in Jupiter.

They ignored some warnings, got caught in a riptide and were pulled out to sea. And instead of there are things you can do to survive that, but they didn't know that. They're just wearing themselves out and they're going to drown. And locals on the beach formed a human chain. Some stood on the beach holding each other. They formed a human chain and they rescued. They were in an unguarded beach. No lifeguards there, so they rescued them. And I remember watching on the news this couple saying, We will never forget you.

We'll remember this day the rest of our life. And I'm thinking, you will. You will forget. No, you won't remember this forever. I mean, first few days, first few weeks, first few months, sure.

[36 : 21] But that was at least a decade ago. I'm pretty sure if I could find that couple now in Germany. So do you really think of it every day? No. No. Isn't that just the human heart?

You can have the most dramatic deliverance from death and you just come to get used to it. You take it for granted. You're presumptuous. We have spiritual needs. You forget. You know you almost died.

And yet, this is what the Word of God is saying. You know you should praise me, right? Should God ever have to say, don't forget to tell me thank you for rescuing you from my judgment and eternity in hell? Yet he does have to tell us.

And he does have to remind us. Spiritual amnesia is real. Don't forget the works of God. The plagues of Egypt. If you saw it, you think you'd ever forget it?

Yes. The drowning of Pharaoh's army, you think you'd ever forget it? Yeah, you would. You saw how quickly Israel did. The first time they needed water, they didn't say, oh God, who has done so much for us in the last few weeks.

[37 : 22] Please provide water for us now. We know you will. No, they were like, it was better in Egypt. You brought us out here to kill us. God doesn't love us. They doubted the love. We will turn on the dime against our Redeemer.

So tell your kids, don't forget. I forget sometimes. You forget sometimes. God's people forget. Don't forget the works of God, but keep his commandments. Look at verse 8.

Don't be like your fathers. They did forget. They didn't keep the commandments. Don't be like their fathers, a stubborn and rebellious generation.

A generation that did not prepare its heart and whose spirit was not faithful to God. Look at verse 11 in this further description.

The rest of the psalm just describes the failure of the nation of Israel. Verse 11. They forgot his deeds. Verse 22. They did not believe. Verse 32.

[38 : 22] They did not believe. Verse 47. They did not remember. Verse 56. They rebelled. Yet sprinkled in between those verses or phrases like this.

Yet God fed them with manna. Yet God fed them with quail. Yet God forgave their sin. Yet despite their unfaithfulness, God was faithful to them.

There's that concept of the loving kindness of God when he sets his love on his people. That Israel didn't earn their way in. And Israel couldn't sin their way out.

You see how this just becomes the platform for you to share the gospel. This is the nature of our God. This is the nature of man left to himself.

And this is the nature of God. Maybe if you boil it all down, here's two twin truths you want your children to believe. And here they are. You can see them represented even in the struggle of Psalm 78.

[39 : 24] 78. And here are the twin truths. You have to have them together. And every moment of your life you're being tempted to doubt one or the other of these. One, that I am actually as bad as God says I am.

I don't want to believe that. I don't want to think of myself that way. I want to read about Israel and go, What a bunch of numbskulls. And instead, if I have any humility and honesty at all, I'm going to look at Israel and go, Oh, I'm just like that.

I am just like that sometimes, God. You look at the disciples and like, Come on, you saw the miracles of Jesus. You are standing with the God man. How can you not get it yet?

And yet, what are they called? Foolish. Slow of heart. Slow to believe what the Bible says. So, we're really reluctant to believe that we are as bad as God says we are.

I mean, the testimony against us here is pretty black. Left to ourselves, who are we? And even as redeemed people, how pathetic we are at times.

[40 : 33] So, you're going to be tempted to doubt it and your kids. So, make sure they understand you really are as bad as God's words says you are. But here's the other glorious balancing truth.

And God actually is as good as he says he is. My life kind of works like this. Things are going okay. I think I've got this.

I've had my quiet time five days in a row. I haven't raised my voice at anyone. You're thinking, okay, I've kind of got a five-day winning streak going here. And on those days, all kinds of horrible things happen.

I become prayerless. I become autonomous. I become independent of the Lord. Because I've kind of got this. I've got a five-day streak. That would be a long streak, by the way. I'm pleased with a five-minute streak.

So, you've had this five-day streak going on. And you're tempted to think it's all okay. And you know what? I can't. I'm not. I mean, my heart is not desperately sick. I mean, it's not perfect.

[41 : 30] You just don't want to believe what God, as he describes the human heart. And so, your children will be reluctant to believe it. But let's say I've had five really lousy days.

And now, even I can't argue anymore. All the cards are on the table. Even a Todd Murray can't deny. I am a train wreck. And I pretty much ruin everything I touch.

I contaminate it with sin in some way or another. Even I can't deny it. So, now what am I going to be... I'm no longer tempted to doubt that I'm as bad as God's word says I am. But what will I be tempted to doubt?

Now, I'm tempted to doubt there's no way. There's no way he still loves me. He cannot be as good as the Bible says he is.

You see? And so, you have to believe them together. And you'll have to fight for it and scrap for it. We don't know. That's why saturating your mind in Scripture.

[42 : 32] Is anything in the world going to tell you you're bad and sinful and needy? No. Everything in the world is going to say what? You're good? As a matter of fact, you're better than most.

Spurgeon preached a sermon one time. He came down on a woman sincerely trying to encourage her pastor said, Pastor, that was the greatest sermon I've ever heard. And he said, thank you so much.

The devil just told me the same thing. I don't want to believe I'm needy and desperate. But here it is in God's Word. And then when even I can't deny that I'm that needy and desperate, then I have to come back and saturate my mind here.

Nothing in the world will tell me how needy I am. But nothing in the world will also tell me when I'm filled with shame, when I'm filled with sorrow, and want the power to repent and be changed.

When I've lost sight of what you're hearing so wonderfully in Romans 6, it's on your union with Christ and that Jesus' autobiography became my biography. That's incredible.

[43 : 35] But nothing in the world is going to reinforce that. Only you saturating your mind in the Scriptures will keep you in these twin truths in balance. You are as sinful as the Word of God says you are, and God is as loving and forgiving and faithful and consistent and perfect as the Word says He is.

That's what you want to teach your kids. Let me walk you through one final passage just as another model. Turn backwards to Deuteronomy chapter 4.

Actually, running out of time. Let's go to Deuteronomy 6. Deuteronomy 6. BK, what time is tonight am I supposed to be done?

Yeah, it's the Corinthians keeping the kids, so who cares, right? What time? Eight? Oh, I heard eight. I'll take eight.

Thank you. I was just so afraid you were going to say 7.30 and it's 7.39. So my heart was going to fall if you said you were supposed to be done nine minutes ago. Okay. All right, Deuteronomy 6.

[44 : 56] Let's just use this as a template for kind of everything we've been talking about tonight. This great mandated privilege we have to declare God's redemption, to declare the nature of His revelation, to remind folks not to forget, to remember, and to be cautious about disobedience and rebellion.

Look at chapter 6, the first three verses. Here's a call to obedience to multiple generations. Now this is the commandment, the statutes and the judgments which the Lord your God has commanded me to teach you, that you might do them in the land where you are going over to possess it.

Verse 2. So that, here it is, multi-generational, you and your son and your grandson might fear the Lord to keep all His statutes and His commandments, which I command you today, all the days of your life so that your days will be prolonged.

Remember when you hear commandments and law and statutes, you're to think about provision, protection, guidance, so that your life will be prolonged. Verse 3.

O Israel, you should listen and be careful to do it, that it may be well with you, and that you may multiply greatly, just as the Lord, the God of your fathers, has promised you in a land flowing with milk and honey.

[46 : 15] So there's, think of that as your mandate again. That's a call, multi-generational obedience. I'm teaching you, and then in turn you, your son, your grandsons.

Three generations there. Now, here are some of the methods of multi-generational ministry, and I'm so glad the Lord said, well, how do we go about it?

And you'll notice several here. Here's the first one. Here's the first method. Number one, meditation. Meditation? Yes, meditation. Look at verse 4. Hear, O Israel, the Lord is our God.

The Lord is one. And you shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul, with all your might. These words which I commanding you today, they shall be on your heart, because you love him, you hang on every word he speaks.

I guess young people in love probably don't write letters anymore. They probably write romantic texts to one another, I suppose.

[47 : 18] But back in the day, you wrote love letters to someone you love. And Tandy and I still have some love letters. We met in high school at church, and we are high school sweethearts.

Tandy thinks I'm amazing only because she never dated anyone else. And I'm just so glad that she's ignorant enough to think that I'm okay. But we still have some letters we wrote to each other. And back in the day, there was a year where we were a year apart from one another, a school year apart. She was away at university, and I was still finishing high school. And we would get those letters, and we would read them and reread them.

Long distance calls were expensive. I didn't have any money. So letters were pretty dear. And we read and read and hang on every word. Why? Because I loved her. And I wanted to hear everything she had to say.

And in essence, your first step, your first method in passing along is that you love the Lord, and as a result, His words are on your heart. If you think you're going to not love God, and then artificially, we will have our family devotions now, while you have no love for the author of said scripture, you kids will see through that.

[48 : 29] Man, they can smell hypocrisy a mile away. So where does it start? Love God above all else. And cherish His word, so that it's on your heart.

Meditation precedes instruction. But instruction is your second method. How do you influence another generation? Well, you literally instruct them. Look at the first half of verse 7. And you shall teach them diligently to your sons.

Love the Lord, have His word in your heart, and I'm commanding you, teach them. Pass it along to them. That means there are times where you formally open the Bible, you read it, and you explain it, and you do not have to be a pastor or a seminary graduate to do that.

Read the Bible, explain it. Meditation. Instruction. Now the second half of verse 7, all the way through verse 9, it just talks about saturation.

Saturate. Marinate your kids in truth. Verse, second half of verse 7, and you shall talk of them. This is not formal instruction.

[49 : 40] This is, this is injecting God conversation into everyday life. You shall talk of them when? When you sit down in your house, and when you walk by the way, and when you lie down, and when you rise up.

You shall bind them as a sign on your hand, and they shall be as frontals on your forehead. You shall write them on the doorposts of your house, and on your gate. It's just a picture of saturation. Now you know what the human heart does. It externalizes everything. So have you ever seen Fiddler on the Roof, or some other movie that has, you know, Orthodox Judaism in it, and you'll see little things that have little copies of the Ten Commandments in it, and when they'd walk by, they'd touch it, or they'd kiss it, or they, well, God meant more than writing it on the frontals of the, it, they, they just took the external form and lost the heart of it.

If you're not careful, you'll go through the motions similarly. It starts with loving God, and his word on your heart, and then you instruct in formal times, and you talk of it, when?

All the time. I think this is the hardest part, and I, looking back on, you know, at, at 63, with, as empty nesters now, looking back, this is the part, I, I was fairly faithful on times of, in family instruction, but not nearly.

[51 : 04] I could have done so much more to make sure at every meal that just some small little catalyzing question that would just turn the conversation towards the things of the Lord.

I mean, if something big happened, there was a financial need, the car broke down, the dishwasher broke, we didn't have any money, I mean, I would teach them to pray, the Lord will take care of this need.

I mean, I had pockets of faith, and then other places, I just, I didn't drag God into the, all of it. And that's the whole point. This is a saturation to soak them in it. Not in some artificial, overly fake, pious way, but you really understand it's a result of, well, if I love the Lord full tilt, and I'm meditating on His word day and night, then whatever happens next, you know what, His word is actually on my mind, so it comes out my mouth.

And so I think, I think verses four through six, maybe that's the hardest. Loving God above all of the things, cherishing and meditating on His word, and then Av is an overflow, teaching and talking. So meditation, instruction, saturation, verses 10 through 12, I just call it demonstration. And how do you demonstrate?

[52 : 20] Well, through some tests. The first test is in verses 10 through 12, the test of material prosperity. Wealth is a temptation. Look at verse 10. Then it shall come about, when you're teaching and talking to your children this way.

Then it shall come about, when the Lord your God brings you into the land, which He swore to your fathers, Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, to give you great and splendid cities, which you do not build, and houses full of good things you did not fill, and hewn cisterns, which you did not dig, vineyards and olive trees, which you did not plant.

And when you have all that, and you eat, and you are satisfied, then watch yourself, that you do not, here's that forgetting and remembering theme again, that you do not forget the Lord, who brought you out of the land of Egypt, and out of the house of slavery.

The German couple rescued from death in the Atlantic Ocean. No doubt they've forgotten. Israel, delivered through the plagues, the drowning of Pharaoh and his army, and miraculously provided. I mean, you understand what the book of Deuteronomy is, right? Every word we're reading right now, is being spoken to Israel 2.0. That's what Deuteronomy is. The men and women, who Moses is preaching to, and Deuteronomy is basically an anthology of his preaching, he's preaching to the second generation, that says, your parents disqualified themselves, from going into the land.

[53 : 53] You be careful, and don't do the same. Sadly, as you know, Moses himself disqualified himself, from going into the land. Failing in the last lapse of life, is not uncommon.

You think that's not on my mind, as a 63 year old grandfather? We can blow it now. I think we all think, we're going to blow it in the early years, oh man, tripping in the last lap.

Even pastors, celebrity preachers, in their 60s and 70s, it's tragic. Prosperity's never been good for anyone.

It was never good for Israel. It's never been good for the church of Jesus Christ. It's silly that we dread persecution. Silly that we dread civil opposition to our faith.

That's always been better for us. You know, the church in the east, that was during the cold war, so persecuted. It was funny, when believers would go over there, and have a chance to minister behind the iron curtain, years, well, decades ago now, they would say, we pray for you, we worry about you, and we feel so sorry for you under all this.

[55 : 02] And they said, oh, we pray for you. We pray for you. We pray for you. I mean, we're purged, right? We're debulked. And, you know, you're either a real believer or you're not, because if you don't really love Jesus, you're not going to suffer persecution.

No, we worry for you, the seduction of comfort. And I said, you should worry for us. So the Lord's warning them, you're going to go into the land, He's going to give you everything He promised to your forefathers, because God is faithful, but you watch yourself that you don't forget the Lord who brought you here.

So you have a chance to demonstrate to your children, even in times of prosperity, watch how you handle that. Here's another test. Look at verse 13 through 19, the test of spiritual idolatry.

Verse 13, here's words about false gods, and you shall fear only the Lord your God, and you shall worship Him and swear by His name, and you shall not follow other gods, any of the gods of the people who surround you, for the Lord your God in the midst of you is a jealous God.

Otherwise, the anger of the Lord your God will be kindled against you, and He will wipe you off the face of the earth. Ooh, there's a warning. You saw what He did with your parents?

[56 : 26] They disqualified themselves. He'll do the same to you if you're not careful. This singular devotion. Now, idols have never been an issue of graven images alone.

Idolatry in the heart is still an issue today. You want to know what the idols in your heart are? Here's three questions. You want to identify your idols? Here you go. Number one, what in the world will you send to get or to keep?

Either to get something you don't have, or to keep something you do have. Is there anything in this world that you'll send to get or to keep? Then that's an idol. And the Lord is just saying, you shall fear and worship only me, not that.

The other is, kind of the flip side of the same question. What will you send? What in this world, if you don't get it, will you send? One is, what will you send to get?

The other is, how will you send if you don't get it? Maybe a third question. Where do you turn for refuge and comfort in trouble?

[57 : 32] All of us under pressure have old things, old paths before you knew Christ that you used to run back to. And even as a believer, you'll be tempted. Where do you go for comfort and consolation? The answers to those three questions, those would be potential idols in your heart.

Not all, some of them are just out and out wrong. And others of them are just good things out of proportion. Let me give you an example. Let's say there's a woman in a church who desperately wants to be married and is not married and she's in her 30s.

Anything wrong with her desire to be married? Is that by definition an idolatrous desire? No. It's a normal, healthy desire. How would she know if her normal desire to be a wife and potentially a mother, how will she know if that normal God-given desire has been corrupted into a monster desire, an idol in her heart?

Well, if she'll sin to get it. So let's say an unbeliever at work asks her out on a date and she's now tempted to enter into a relationship with an unbeliever.

So if she sins, you know what, my biological clock is ticking, God doesn't seem to be doing anything, I don't know that I'll ever, you know what, I'm going to pursue that. I'm going to say yes and she marries an unbeliever.

[58 : 50] Now we know her normal, holy desire to be married became an idol in her heart because she was going to sin to get a marriage. Or, let's say she says no to the invitation of the young man

who is showing interest to her at work and she says, you know what, I'm a Christian and as a Christian, it's just not going to work and I'm devoted to Jesus Christ and you're not and our lives will never blend and be, wow, thank you, I'm actually flattered that you asked and the attention actually means a lot, I have to say no.

But let's, so she said no. But now, next Sunday, she learns that yet another young woman in the church got engaged on Saturday night and there's a joyful announcement from, yay, this very pulpit inviting everyone in a few weeks to a wedding and she's sitting in that chair right there, let's say, that empty seat and her teeth are set on edge at the announcement of someone else's joy. Always a bridesmaid, never a bride. And now, she starts to sound like Israel of old. You brought me into Christianity just to make me miserable like they said, you took us out of Egypt, you don't love us, you brought us out here to kill us and make us miserable.

So now, she's not sinning to get a husband but how do we know that her normal desire to be married has become corrupted into an idol? How do we know? Because now she'll sin against God if she doesn't get it and she'll sin against others.

She begins to be jealous of that woman. She begins to hate the woman that's getting what she desperately wants. That's idolatry. So, don't be too quick to say, well, if I'm going to demonstrate to my children through the test of spiritual idolatry, there has never been a statue in our house that we bowed down to and said, we worship you.

[60 : 47] Look, you can teach your kids this concept early. This idea of idolatry, sinning, if you get it, sinning, if you don't get it. I freaked my children.

We talked about it a lot when they were growing up and one day there was a tussle over a toy and I broke into the room and thought, I'm just going to, I'm just going to do something they will never forget here. I said, what's going on?

Confident. I said, you know, we've been talking about idolatry. I said, you're basically worshiping the Tonka truck. No, we're not, dad. No, you're worshiping. So, I got on my hands and said, we worship you, oh Tonka truck.

You have the power to bring our lives meaning and purpose and joy. Dad, stop, that's bad. I said, yeah, that's exactly it. You don't have to bow in some formal religious ceremony to have idols all over your life.

John Calvin said, the human heart is a factory of idols. Every time I hear, I'm reminded of that. You know what, I picture that scene where Lucille Ball is doing at the chocolate factory and the conveyor belt just comes out faster and faster and faster.

[61 : 50] That's us, Lord. We can, no sooner than I smash one idol, another one comes out. It's the glory of redemption and once we finally get to heaven, no more rivalries in my heart.

There'll be no battle for God to reign supreme as he ought. Demonstrate to your children, admit to them what you tend to sometimes worship more than God.

Admit to them, they already know, they watch you, they see you where you run to for comfort when you don't open the word of God and run to him first. Meditation instruction, saturation, demonstration.

One of those demonstrations, how do you deal with material prosperity? Show your kids how to not love the world. Secondly, show your kids how to avoid false gods.

Or worse yet, how about a wrong view of the true God? Look at verse 16. You shall not put the Lord your God to the test as you tested him at Massa.

[62 : 51] Do you remember what happened at Massa? They want water, there is no water, they say horrible things about the Lord. Moses strikes the rock, God gives them water despite their rebellion, the goodness of God again on display, his loving kindness, you can't sin your way out of this love, though you can certainly grieve and stir up the wrath of God.

And God's assessment of their hearts in Exodus 17 at Massa is this, you said in your heart, is God among us or not? I remember studying that passage years ago and just going, Lord, if it provokes you in a time of difficulty, a life-threatening situation, not having water was not a luxury, this, right, this was a, this is a, no water you die in the desert.

So they're not craving a luxury, they're in a life-threatening situation, instead of trusting the Lord, they turned on the Lord and God says, here's what you said in your heart, have I been abandoned by God?

Has God left us? Is the fact that I don't have waterproof that God is not faithful and that he does not love me? And I just remember being convicted, I'm thinking, Lord, if that stirs up your wrath, every time a difficulty comes, because that is my knee-jerk adolescent reaction, I've been abandoned by God.

What's God saying in Exodus 17? If you're going to wonder who will be faithful in a time where you're being deprived of something, don't wonder about me. Wonder about you.

[64 : 30] You should be saying, will I be faithful under this trial? Not, have I been abandoned by God? Accusing him of any kind of wrongdoing?

So, if you're going to teach your children to avoid spiritual idolatry, it won't just be false gods, things that you love more than God, things that you'll sin to get and sin if you don't get and places you'll run for refuge and comfort in time of trouble.

Verse 16 is also saying, you could also distort the gospel by showing your children, oh, I don't abandon the God of the Bible, but I just adopt ideas about him that aren't true.

So, false gods, yes. How about false views of the true God? Admit that at times you distort him. Another way to demonstrate the validity of God's word is through personal obedience.

Look at verse 17. And you shall diligently keep the commandments of the Lord your God and his testimonies and statutes which he's commanded you, and you shall do what's right and good in the sight of the Lord, that it may be well with you and that you may go in and possess the land which the Lord swore to give to your fathers by driving out all your enemies from before you as the Lord has spoken.

[65 : 50] You can also demonstrate the gospel and the reality of your walk with God through your personal testimony. Look at verse 20. When your sons ask you in times to come, saying, what do the testimonies and the statutes and the judgments mean which the Lord our God commanded you?

Then you shall say to your sons, and here's their story. Here's where I can say, tell them your story, your version of deliverance. We were slaves to Pharaoh in Egypt and the Lord brought us out of Egypt with a mighty hand.

Moreover, the Lord showed with great and distressing signs and wonders before our eyes against Egypt and Pharaoh and all his households. He brought us out from there in order to bring us in to give us the land which he swore to our fathers.

Tell them your story. I was a slave to sin. I deserved death and hell and this is where my life was headed. And in final, allusion to instruction, look at verse 24.

So the Lord commanded us, this is, you know, if your son asks you, so the Lord commanded us to observe these statutes, to fear the Lord our God for our good always and for our survival as it is today and it will be righteousness for us if we're careful to observe all his commandments before the Lord our God just as he commanded us.

[67 : 19] Just as we close, I just want to remind you what happens when there's a failure in multi-generational instruction. And what happens, you see, for instance, in the book of Judges.

It says in verse 10 of chapter 2, all that generation were gathered to their fathers. And then listen to what he says, and there arose another generation after them who did not know the Lord, nor the work which he had done for Israel.

What does that mean? How could they not have known? It means their parents, didn't tell them. You can't outsource this all to the church.

We partner together. You can't say, I'll do it all and don't need the church, but you also can't say, I'll trust the church to teach my kids. You have a responsibility and a mandate.

The church has a responsibility and a mandate. I can't take over your role as a parent, and as a parent, you can't usurp my role as a pastor. We work together for the same gospel goal.

[68 : 28] And what's the result when a generation doesn't even know anything about God or his works? The end of the book of Judges, in those days, there was no king in Israel, and everyone did what was right in their own eyes, not the eyes of God.

But I'll also remind you of the blessings of multi-generational ministry. Psalm 103 says this, We're going to look at Psalm 128 Sunday morning, but I'll just give you a little teaser.

The psalm ends this way. The Lord bless you from Zion. May you see the prosperity of Jerusalem all the days of your life. Indeed, may you see your children's children.

Peace be upon Israel. This is the mandate that doesn't change whether your child is 21 months or 21 years.

Whether you're talking to your children or your grandchildren, this is the mandate. Tell them of God's character and of his works.

[69 : 50] Emphasize redemption and rebellion and remembering and divine revelation. That's our mandate. Tell them, teach them, convince them from the scriptures.

You really are as bad and needy as God says you are. And God really is as good and gracious and loving and saving as he says he is.

Don't you doubt either of those twin truths ever. That's our mandate. And it doesn't change no matter how old your kids are. Let's pray together.

Gracious Father, thank you for the opportunity just to sit and have our own minds meditate to be just saturated with a number of passages that demonstrate for us not only what we must do but even the content, what we should be emphasizing, both demonstrating in our own lives, through modeling and through formal times of teaching and just through saturation of gospel conversation all the time.

Lord, none of us are adequate for this task. And for the most part, the great challenges are because we don't love you with all our heart, soul, mind, and strength and because we aren't meditating on your word, we're kind of having trouble bringing anything meaningful to the table.

[71 : 09] people. So do a work in us so that we can be a useful vessel to the next generation and the generation after that as well. God, bless us in our efforts.

The gospel is at stake both in the community as they watch us as church families and within our family itself. So Lord, bless us, encourage us.

Thank you that all you ask, just be faithful to sow the seed and then be like the farmer who goes home and goes to bed for how it grows. He does not know. Lord, we have no power.

We could do this perfectly and it still doesn't guarantee the outcome we want of saved kids. But you didn't ask us to produce believers. You asked us just to be faithful.

Help us to do that, we pray in Jesus' name. Amen.