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Farming Faithfulness Multi-Generational

Psalm 98:5-8

1. Multi-generational faith is important and intentional.

2. Multi-generational faith is required not
recommended.

3. Multi-generational faith is farming faithfulness.

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Farming Faithfulness

Multi-Generational

1 Psalm 98:5-8

Good morning!

Most of you know who I am and what I do here, but for those that do not, my name is Dan and I serve as the youth pastor here. I have the privilege of connecting teenagers' faith to something bigger than themselves, something bigger than youth group. I don't do this alone; my amazing team of leaders and we work together to introduce teens to Jesus and equip them with tools and relationships that will help them grow in their faith after they graduate high school.

Today I want to talk about farming faithfulness as a multi-generational church. You've heard Pastor Mike talk about one of our goals of becoming a more multi-generational church. I say more, because there are some signs of multi-generationalism already established, but we're not just talking about being physically present, in the same room, though that does happen a lot, as you can see here: (picture of Phoebe and Pat). *Phoebe taking a big ole bite out of grandma Pat.*

You can call that multi-generational, more than one generation present in the worship center, but we are aiming to go deeper, where not only is our congregation multi-generational, but also our faith and how we share our faith. We want to experience God multi-generationally, we want to grow in faith, multi-generationally.

And it's not often that start out with examples of the main point of what I'm preaching on, but this morning has already been so powerful. Children and a teen getting baptized, an incredible testimony time, God is moving in our church.

We see examples of multi-generational faith all over the Bible, from family to family, generation to generation. The call to be a more multi-generational church isn't new or edgy, what it is, is faithful. Faithful to what God and Scripture calls us to be.

Psalm 78:1-8 highlights the call to multi-generational faith. Before we get into that, I want to give a little background. There are a ton of Psalms, and all of them were written for both corporate and individual worship, provided to reflect on the story of God as an individual and as a community. That point is important, for us, our community, and our passage for today. Psalm 78 is a historical psalm, not in the Chronicles way, the point isn't to record history, but rather the story of God's mighty acts and God's love.

Historical Psalms are written about the past in order to shape the future, and Psalm 78 does just that. Historical, observational, instructional Psalms, like 78, point towards certain behaviors, and their theological concepts guide towards that behavior.

Psalm 78, as an observational and instructional psalm, describes events or realities and leaves it to the reader to decide how to respond. Psalm 78 is organized and presented in a way that fosters learning, teaches, and encourages us to learn and respond. So let's do that!

Please stand in the honor of reading God's word. Psalm 78:1-8, niv...

My people, hear my teaching;
listen to the words of my mouth.

I will open my mouth with a parable;
I will utter hidden things, things from of old—

things we have heard and known,
things our ancestors have told us.

We will not hide them from their descendants;
we will tell the next generation
the praiseworthy deeds of the Lord,
his power, and the wonders he has done.

He decreed statutes for Jacob
and established the law in Israel,
which he commanded our ancestors
to teach their children,

so the next generation would know them,
even the children yet to be born,
and they in turn would tell their children.

Then they would put their trust in God
and would not forget his deeds
but would keep his commands.

They would not be like their ancestors—
a stubborn and rebellious generation,
whose hearts were not loyal to God,
whose spirits were not faithful to him.

Thank you, please be seated. If you're interested in the rest of the background or additional commentary, I've included citations for the sources I used for that information in the sermon notes on our website.

So, as the text intended, let's break that down and learn together, starting with verses 1-4...

My people, hear my teaching;
listen to the words of my mouth.

I will open my mouth with a parable;
I will utter hidden things, things from of old—

things we have heard and known,
things our ancestors have told us.

We will not hide them from their descendants;
we will tell the next generation
the praiseworthy deeds of the Lord,
his power, and the wonders he has done.

The psalmist commands attention immediately, “listen to what I have to say, what I have to say is important”, remember this is a teaching psalm. “I am reminding you of our well-known stories, the stories of God’s faithfulness that met our unfaithfulness.” Which is the Gospel itself really, the story of Jesus Christ dying for our unfaithfulness, and God’s faithfulness, restoring our relationship with Him through Christ’s sacrifice.

We just experienced the importance of sharing the stories of God’s faithfulness, through the testimonies shared today. We were reminded of God’s love and faithfulness through those that shared faith stories, just like text is talking about.

The rest of the Psalm after verse 8 isn’t a parable, but a history of God’s faithfulness, and the psalmist is prepping the reader to learn from that history. These stories are known because of our ancestors, the ones who passed down the stories, passed down faith, the ones who took the charge to farm faithfulness, even though a lot of these stories show their own unfaithfulness. But they, the ancestors aren’t the main character, they are not the main point. The main point is God’s faithfulness, even in the midst of Israel’s unfaithfulness.

What this tells me, tells us, is that multi-generational faith, multi-generational ministry is important and intentional.

1. MULTI-GENERATIONAL FAITH IS IMPORTANT AND INTENTIONAL.

Look at the way the psalmist began, they didn’t start out with, “hey, listen to this if you want, or don’t”, this is not a causal Psalm, this is important stuff that everyone needs to hear, that people need to study, both individually and in community, to learn from what has happened, and to pass on the stories of God’s faithfulness.

Parents, what is the difference between telling your kid to do something when they are or are not actively listening? If it's important, don't you get up close? If it's super serious, maybe you'd even say, "listen to the words coming out of my mouth." I doubt you've said "as I utter things of old" I don't know, maybe you have, but still, you get my point.

Multi-generational faith is important and intentional.

Let's look at 5-7...

He decreed statutes for Jacob
and established the law in Israel,
which he commanded our ancestors
to teach their children,

so the next generation would know them,
even the children yet to be born,
and they in turn would tell their children.

Then they would put their trust in God
and would not forget his deeds
but would keep his commands.

The psalmist continues by reminding us of God's commands in Deuteronomy, to pass on these stories of God's faithfulness to generation to generation. Each generation was not encouraged, but obligated to teach its children these stories, each generation must remember God's covenant.

And why is that? Verses 6 and 7: so the next generation would know them, even the children yet to be born, and they would in turn tell their children. Each generation was obligated to pass on these stories so that the next generation might put their trust in God, by remembering his deeds and by keeping his commands. Each generation was and still is obligated to farm faithfulness in the next generation.

2. MULTIGENERATIONAL FAITH IS REQUIRED NOT RECOMMENDED.

The psalmist is telling us that multi-generational faith is important and that it is required, are you picking up on the severity here, the urgency of it, are you listening to the words of my mouth as I utter things of old?

Such strong instruction and affirmation of the passing down of faith here, whatever could have happened to warrant such a repetitive and stern instruction?

Let's look at verse 8:

They would not be like their ancestors—
a stubborn and rebellious generation,
whose hearts were not loyal to God,
whose spirits were not faithful to him.

The ancestors that are being referenced here, or dragged here, are the Israelites of the Wilderness, the ones who escaped Egypt and were, at times, following God in the desert. The purpose of this lesson, this Psalm, is to help the following generations to avoid the failures of the first generation that came out of Egypt and perished in the wilderness, and also the second generation that invaded the land, only to forget the power and faithfulness of the God who brought them out of Egypt and began worshipping the gods of the Canaanites.

And our lesson is the same, we do not want to repeat those same mistakes, we don't want to be unfaithful, we don't want to teach the next generation to be unfaithful, we want to share the stories of God's faithfulness, so that the next generation would hear these stories and put their trust in God, and not forget God's deeds, but keep God's commands.

3. MULTI-GENERATIONAL FAITH IS FARMING FAITHFULNESS.

Multi-generational faith is farming faithfulness. Multi-generationalism isn't new, it isn't the next fad, it isn't the next big thing. What it is, is being faith to God and to God's word. But it requires a partnership, between multiple generations.

You see, the interesting thing about the passing down of faith, the stories of God's faithfulness, is that it requires both parties to be active.

Remember Verse 7: Then they would put their trust in God, and would not forget his deeds but would keep his commands.

As the next generation receives the stories of God's faithfulness, they are then brought into the mission of continuing to tell those very stories, they are brought into the missio dei, the mission of God.

They are then commissioned to go out and continue to tell the story of God's faithfulness, yes to the next generation, but also to share their experience with the ones who first introduced them to the stories.

Are you starting to get a picture of what we mean when we talk about being a multi-generational church? Church, we have much to learn from each other, I don't mean just from the pastors, but from the people sitting next to you, this group up in the front row, the big group that is down the hall right now in the children's wing. Let's continue the tradition of making the stories of God's love known to the next generation, let's learn about God in

new ways from those younger than us, and soak in the wisdom of those older than us, growing in faith and love, together.

Pastor Mike said it best a couple weeks ago: A multi-generational church is where the older ones mentor the younger ones and the younger ones spend the energy setting an example for the older ones. We look out for and take care of each other. Every generation is valuable and important in the Kingdom of God.”

Every generation is valuable and has something to offer.

Because of this call to faithfulness, we are looking for more opportunities for generations to meet, share experiences, share stories of God’s faithfulness, and grow in faith together. We as a church staff will be thinking of more opportunities we can create for more multi-generational faith, times when we can practice what today’s scripture says. I’ll give you an early notice that we will be hosting a ping pong tournament in the spring, both individual and team competition, I’m very excited about the potential relationships and opportunities from that event. Online friends, we’re not leaving you out on this one, Pong has come a long way, coming out with Pong 2, which allows online multi-player. I’d love to be able to test that out, if you’re interested in helping with that, can you give me a call, message on whatever platform you’re on, I’d appreciate your help.

It doesn’t have to be just church staff, in fact we encourage your ideas of ministry, of fostering multi-generational faith, come and talk with us, we’d love to support you.

I know coming up with ideas can be a challenge, but I’d like us to do something together before we leave this place. Ok, close your eyes. Think back when you were in elementary school, middle school, high school, or even college/young adult. What kinds of things were forming you during that time? What kind of mentor or activity would have really made a difference in your life during that time? Got it? Ok, open your eyes, do you think you could do that now, be that mentor now, for someone else in our church?

If you are currently in one of the educational areas of life that I just mentioned, elementary to young adult, how have you experienced God lately? How has your relationship with Christ changed the way you live? Would you mind sharing that with someone, someone who probably doesn’t have the same experience you do, someone a little older than you?

You are important, your story is important, the next generation needs to hear it, and the next generation also has a lot to offer and teach you.

Let us pray.

Benediction:

Now, may we leave this place and faithfully serve and love our community the way Christ intended us to.

Sermon Notes:

The psalm serves as a commemoration of events, primarily in Exodus. It is history, and was probably used in temple teaching as a reminder of God's faithfulness, as passing down of the faith, in order to farm faithfulness. (Alter 272)

Psalm 78 is one of four Psalms devoted to a review of Israel's history (nbhc 62)

Psalm can be titled "Lessons From Israel's History" (Gaebelein 504)

The Psalm is intended to teach (Gaebelein 504)

The history of redemption is revelatory. The Lord's mighty acts reveal his love, mercy, and patience with his people. (Gaebelein 505)

The goal of the wisdom teacher is to open Israel's history from God's perspective. (Gaebelein 506)

Historical Psalms sing about the past in order to shape the future. (Jacobson 79)

There is a lot of history in the Bible, but the historical Psalms tell the story of God's mighty acts rather than record history in the modern sense. (Jacobson 79)

Psalm 78 is an instructional psalm in terms of form; in terms of history it relates parts of the story from the time of the exodus, through the wilderness wanderings, down to the time of King David. (Jacobson 79)

Psalm 78 is a psalm that intentionally connects the individual with the congregation, in a sense making the life situation the heritage of any who reads them. (Jacobson 113) Psalm probably read for temple congregation.

Psalm 78 is an observation, or teaching, psalm, it involves a psalm pointing towards either certain types of behavior and their outcomes or key theological concepts as a means of guiding towards appropriate behavior.

Rather, it describes certain realities and then leaves it to the reader to decide how to respond. Observation as a teaching technique thus requires that there be at least a general trend of supporting experiential evidence, and this evidence can be accessed by the readers. (Johnston 169)

Psalm 78 essentially demonstrates how Israel has persistently neglected the law they were given and told to teach their children. (Johnston 179)

Psalms were written for both corporate and individual worship, to reflect on the story of God as an individual and as a community. (Jacobson 112)

Asaph:

My people, hear my teaching;

listen to the words of my mouth.

The Psalm is organized and presented in a way to foster learning (nbhc 62)

The importance of the teaching is to glean from Israel's history (Gaebelein 505)

I will open my mouth with a parable;

I will utter hidden things, things from of old—

The story (parable) goes back to earliest national traditions (Alter 272)

things we have heard and known,
things our ancestors have told us.

The parables being presented are not hidden meanings, but well known stories that are being recounted (nbbc 63)

We will not hide them from their descendants;

we will tell the next generation

the praiseworthy deeds of the Lord,

his power, and the wonders he has done.

The act of telling the next generation is a continuation of the tradition heard and known from the fathers. (Gaebelein 506)

The contents of the tradition of redemptive history are transmitted without further explanation so that each generation may draw lessons from the parables and riddles of God's interaction with the previous generation (Gaebelein 506)

The acts of God described in the lessons draw attention to God's deeds and not primarily to man's rebellious spirit. (Gaebelein 506)

He decreed statutes for Jacob

and established the law in Israel,

which he commanded our ancestors

to teach their children,

Deuteronomical 6:4-24 (Alter 273)

Each generation was obligated to teach the children these stories (nbbc 63)

Each generation must remember that God revealed the divine oracles to Israel as an expression of the covenant relationship that he had sovereignly and graciously established between himself and Israel. (Gaebelein 506)

so the next generation would know them,

even the children yet to be born,

and they in turn would tell their children.

This was so that each generation would teach the next generation, that they would farm faithfulness in the next generation (nbbc 63)

Israel was expected to teach this revelation to their children from generation to generation so that each generation might put their trust in God by remembering his deeds and by keeping his commands.

Then they would put their trust in God

and would not forget his deeds

but would keep his commands.

The result of the children's education would be to put their confidence in God. What the descendants would learn from prior generation would guide them through the years of their lives. (Nbhc 63)

They would not be like their ancestors—
a stubborn and rebellious generation,
whose hearts were not loyal to God,
whose spirits were not faithful to him.

Israelites of the Wilderness (Alter 273)

The purpose of this lesson, this Psalm, is to help the following generations to avoid the failures of the first generation that came out of Egypt and perished in the wilderness and the second generation that invaded the land, only to forget the power of the God who brought them out of Egypt and began to worship the gods of the Canaanites. (Nbhc 63)

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