

## From Generation to Generation Psalm 78

### Introduction

- Photo Albums
  - Parents' house on either side of the fireplace is lined with photo albums
  - Often when I am there, I will take down at least one photo album and flip through the pictures- just a reminder
    - Show my kids
    - Explain a story to my wife
  - One particular set of photos stands out
    - Corner of the outside of the house, there used to be a large sandbox
    - The only way to know this is by looking at the pictures
    - One day the neighborhood kids gathered in my sandbox and each of us took turns burying one another
    - The events of that day were preserved in photos
    - The story is told a lot around our house
- I've heard people say that if their house was on fire, aside from getting everyone out safely they would want their pictures.
  - Pictures somehow preserve the passage of time
  - They remind us of what used to be
  - They remind us of great accomplishments
  - They remind us of people who have since passed on
- Sermon Series: "All In: The Family of God"
  - Psalm 78
  - Message: Tell the story of God's works to the next generation so that they may set their hope in God.
  - Historical Psalm which provides a photo album of God's works and the response of God's people to the works of God
  - Our purpose with this sermon series
    - Pass on the story of God's works (The Bible) from generation to generation
    - The family is one of the most effective ways to do so
      - Each family unit is built on significant relationships of influence
      - Church as Family which offers support and encouragement
    - As a church
      - Preaching/teaching about how to incorporate this story into your family
      - Modeling it through "Come to the Table"
      - Providing opportunities to strengthen our relationships and purpose through outreach events like "The Gathering" and "Fall Festival"

- In many ways, what we are doing represents what Psalm 78 instructs believers to do
- What can we learn then from Psalm 78
  - Significance of telling the story to the next generation
  - Cycle of human sin
  - Cycle of God's grace
  - If we can break the cycle of rebellion against God, we can develop a faith that will endure the test of time.

### Open Your Ears and Not Your Mouth

- Psalm 78:1-4
  - A call to listen
  - What the Psalmist has to share is not new, but stories that the people are familiar with
  - What needs to happen, as the Psalmist will illustrate, is that the people need to pull out their albums to recall once again their history and the works of God
- Purpose of my journal now with pictures
  - Began keeping a journal several years ago, in part because of a sermon I heard Dr. Charles Stanley give regarding a similar topic of remembering the works of God
  - He talked about how he would record instances when God answered prayer, or especially blessed him and how he would return to those journal entries when he found himself lacking faith
  - For many years I would just write and reflect, however within the last couple of years I have begun to add pictures
  - The pictures help me to reflect upon a particular memory or event that I participated in or that my kids were involved in. No matter what I'm going through I have that picture that reminds me of the blessings God has given me.
- You need to develop some system to reflect upon how your life is interacting with your faith
  - It could be as simple as reviewing sermon notes, or even watching the sermon online during the week
  - It should at least consist of you picking up your Bible during the week and reading it
  - Reflect upon how you are applying God's truth to your life, and the ways that God is working in your life.
- The Psalmist says, "Give ear" and "Incline your ears"
  - Before talking, try listening
  - Reflect on "the glorious deeds of the Lord, and his might, and the wonders that he has done (Psalm 78:4b, ESV)."
  - As you reflect upon the works of God, communicate to your children and grandchildren the ways in which God has worked in your life.

### Establish the Story in Your Heart

- I was not a smart kid growing up, and still not real smart as an adult
  - Kids get off the bus I ask, “Did your brain grow today?”
  - I didn’t become a “student” until I reached high school and college- and even at that what I learned to do was memorize the study questions so that I knew the answers by heart and could pass the test
  - One of the things that I think parents try to do is give their kids opportunities that didn’t have or teach them not to make the same mistakes that we did
  - So, I’ve tried to establish this study habit with my kids
  - I’ll study with them for a test so much that I feel like I could go and take the test for them! I knew it by heart!
  - In fact, I remember a social studies test last year where I knew all the government officials and how they operated—Even Mike Lorentz was a test answer!
  - If they can’t pass the test, then its because they truly don’t understand what they studied! They should know it by heart!
- **Psalm 78:5-6; 8**
  - God established the law for the people
  - Teach it to their children
  - KEY: don’t be like the generation before!!!! Teaching from their own mistakes
  - The previous generations heart and spirit were not in it—it’s not that didn’t know the story. It’s that they chose not to listen to the story
- Establish the Story of God in Your Heart- Know it by heart
  - Know the cycles
    - Cycle of sin
    - Cycle of grace
  - Break the cycle
    - Families tend to live in cycles
      - Poverty (my dad)
      - Divorce
      - Education (my parents were the first to get a college education; I was the first to receive a doctorate)
      - Lack of Faith
    - It only takes one person to break the cycle!
  - It’s at this point where the pictures of our family and the picture of God’s story come together!
    - If we want to change the cycle, we have to establish his story of grace in our heart
    - We have to do something with the truth that he has provided
    - We have to learn from the past to set the course for the future!

#### Respond to Challenges with the Faith from the Past

- **Psalm 78:9-11**
  - Ephraimites were the largest clan in Israel

- They had everything, but lacked the faith to trust God in battle
- Broke their covenant with God
- Where does faith come from?
  - Puzzle example from “Come to the Table”
    - Began working the puzzle without the picture which made it difficult- without a picture (Jesus) we don’t know what were are putting together
    - Start with the corner pieces and then build the sides- corner pieces of prayer, bible study, church, serving others
    - As you establish the picture and the corner pieces of your life, you develop faith to confront the challenges in your life- this is where faith comes from
    - You may not know what will happen as you approach the challenges, but you know who to trust- have a picture from the past of God’s faithfulness to rely upon.
- Picture of Passover and Communion
  - Deliverance from Egypt
  - Provision in the wilderness
  - Water of life
  - Remember this?!!! It all fits together like a puzzle
- **Psalm 78:17-20**
  - Sinned more through rebelling
  - Tested God in their hearts— why it is so important to establish his story in your heart
- Respond to challenges with the faith from the past
  - You can’t change the cycle unless you step out in faith
  - You need God’s story to make your story complete!

### God Always Has the Last Word

- Words that get under my skin
  - “It’s not my fault”
  - “It was an accident”
  - “I didn’t know”
- Two conclusions: Either my kids have really bad luck, or they fail to take responsibility for themselves
  - I tend to lean toward the second conclusion!
  - Break the cycle! This isn’t the last word if we are going to correct the action; Mom and Dad get the last word
  - Whether we break the cycle of sin or not, God always has the last word
- **Psalm 78:67-72**
  - Ephraim, the biggest clan in Israel, was rejected by God
  - Instead God chose the smallest- Judah
  - He chose the most unlikely place to establish his Kingdom
  - He choose the most unlikely king in David

- God always has the last word
  - You can fight him, argue with him, dismiss him, etc.
  - With God it is always either judgement or deliverance
  - It's what you do with his story that matters how your story will be told!

### Conclusion

- As Christians, we can read Psalm 78:67-72 and look past David and see that David is just a sign to Jesus Christ
- The story of Passover and Communion are stories of grace and deliverance
- There's always an opportunity to change the cycle
  - Open our ears
  - Establish God's story in our hearts
  - Face our challenges with the faith of our past
  - Remember that God always gets the last word
- This is the reason that the Psalmist proclaims **Psalm 78:6b-7 (ESV), "and arise and tell them to their children, so that they should set their hope in God and not forget the works of God, but keep his commandments."**
- Aside from telling you that you need to receive Jesus into your heart and repent of your sins in order to get to heaven, this message of sharing God's story from generation to generation may be the most important message we hear.
- It's crucial to preserving faith in your family and in this church.
- Let's face the challenges ahead with the faith preserved in the story of God