

Psalm 78

Today's topic is about the power of influencing the next generation—the obligation of teaching the next generation about Jesus Christ. This command was first taught in Deuteronomy 6. Asaph made the decision to pass on his faith in God to the next generations.

Three thousand years ago, David wanted to move the capital of his kingdom to Jerusalem. It would become not only the center of government, but the center of worship. This meant that the Ark of the Covenant had to be moved there since God's Spirit hovered over the Ark. So, David organized a procession for moving the Ark to Jerusalem. 1 Chronicles 16:4-6
Asaph played the cymbals in this procession. This happened in 1000 BC.

Four hundred years later, Babylon conquered the southern kingdom of Judah. Many Jews were taken to Babylon. The Persians eventually conquered Babylon and allowed the Jews to return home. Those who returned in the second wave is recorded in Nehemiah 7. In verse 44, we discover that 148 descendants of Asaph returned. Asaph praise God in 1000 BC, and now his descendants were doing so in 500 BC!
A cymbal player, named Asaph, thought about his children and their faith. He wanted his sons and 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, Psalm 78, which preserved faith in all his generations for 500 years!

Psalm 78, a maskil of Asaph. "Maskil" means "teaching psalm." It will teach us to teach our children.

We do this by remembering what God has done in the past, in history. Why?

1. Our Next Generation Obligation is to pass on our faith in Jesus Christ. (vs. 1-3)

Our children need to know who God is, and the best way to show them who He is to tell them what He's done. We cannot nor do we dare let them figure their faith out on their own. The reality is they cannot figure things out on their own. God is invisible. The only way any of us discover God is through revelation.

God revealed Himself to us, through Jesus Christ coming to earth to see what He was like, and through scripture, which tells the stories of God's actions, so we can understand what He's like.

Letting kids figure out God on their own is like saying, "I'm not going to teach my children which foods are good for them. I'm just going to let them wander around the kitchen and figure it out for themselves." Our kids are going to be exposed to all kinds of misinformation about God. If they don't hear the truth about Him from us, they may never know the truth about Him.

Asaph decided to teach his children – and our children - about God. To do that, he told stories about God. Stories about what God had done in the history of his people. By doing so, they will trust in God.

2. If we teach God's deeds to our children, they will put their confidence in Him. (vs. 4-7)

Asaph, for 72 verses, *is telling them about the wonders of the God who made them and loves them and is with them all the time.* Asaph is passing the history of his people onto the next generation.

History to help us understand vs. 9-11 – when Israel conquered the Promised Land, the twelve tribes would receive land except the tribe of Levi. Levi was to be the priestly tribe, which meant they would receive no land. Joseph's tribe would be split into two tribes named after his sons: Ephraim and Manasseh. Because of their size, received large tracts of land.

In vs. 9-11, Ephraim put their trust in something else instead of God

3. If we DON'T teach God's deeds, our tribe will crumble. (vs. 8-11)

The people of Ephraim did three things wrong (vs. 9-11): 1. They shrunk back on the day of battle. They didn't believe God would fight for them, so they acted in fear, not in faith and "turned back" on the day of battle. 2. They didn't live morally. They refused to live by the Law. 3. They forgot what God had done.

The Ephraimites were without excuse for they saw God work through the Exodus (vs. 12-16). They saw that God is: 1. A faithful God. 2. A delivering God. 3. A guiding God. 4. A powerful and providing God. The Ephraimites also saw God work in the wilderness wandering (vs. 17-31). He provided manna and quails, even though they did not deserve it.

Beginning in v. 32 through 64, Asaph reminds his audience of what God does when His children are unfaithful—He remained faithful. Why was Israel unfaithful? V. 42 – *They did not remember... When we forget what God has done, we start living by sight and not by faith. We start living for ourselves and not for God and others.*

In vs. 67-72, Asaph explains that the Messiah came out of the tribe of Judah and not from the leading tribe of Ephraim, because Ephraim lost faith. They lost faith because they did not remember what God had done for them.

How important is it to remember what God has done for us? It's everything! We are called to walk by faith, not by sight. We can't see God, so we must trust Him without seeing. We can't see, but we can hear, and remember what God has done. When we remember, we trust. And when we trust, we walk by faith.

Friends, there is a God who is with us, and He is faithful. But He is invisible. You can't see Him, but you can see Him for what He does. You can see Him provide for you. And protect you. And comfort and encourage. Tell your children – and your grandchildren – about His works. Tell them about His works of old – in the Bible. And tell them about His works of new – His works in your family. That's your obligation, and mine. Asaph's solution to passing on faith was simple and effective: *If our kids are going to love God, they must know what He's done. So, I'm going to teach them some history.*

Application

1. Teach your children and grandchildren what God has done.

The Bible is brimming with stories of God's guidance and provision and protection. Tell them these stories. Keep the stories and realities of all that God has done in front of your kids as much as possible.

As you're teaching your children about what God has done,

2. Teach them that God doesn't change. (Hebrews 13:8)

Hebrews 13:8 says, "Jesus Christ is the same, yesterday, today, and forever."

- What He has done in the past, He will do in the future.
- What He did for the children of Israel, He will do for your children.

Then, along with teaching kids what God has done for people in the Bible...

3. Teach them what God has done for you and your family.

Asaph says...

We will not hide them from their (our) children;

we will tell the next generation

the praiseworthy deeds of the Lord,

his power, and the wonders he has done.

Psalm 78:4