Walk By Faith: Tell The Children

Psalm 78:1-7
1 Give ear, O my people, to my law: incline your ears to the words of my mouth.
2 I will open my mouth in a parable: I will utter dark sayings of old:
3 Which we have heard and known, and our fathers have told us.
4 We will not hide them from their children, shewing to the generation to come the praises of the Lord, and his strength, and his wonderful works that he hath done.
5 For he established a testimony in Jacob, and appointed a law in Israel, which he commanded our fathers, that they should make them known to their children:
6 That the generation to come might know them, even the children which should be born; who should arise and declare them to their children:
7 That they might set their hope in God, and not forget the works of God, but keep his commandments:

Shared Stories:
• Our lives are made up of memories
  o and our memories are encapsulated
    ▪ in the stories we tell.
• Those stories are passed down
  o from one generation to another
    ▪ and they become the narrative
    ▪ of our shared experience.
• As a nation we are defined
  o by the stories of Honest Abe,
  o Davey Crockett,
  o and George Washington’s encounter with a cherry tree.
• Those stories, and others like them,
  o emphasize the unity of a group of people,
    ▪ the common experience
    ▪ of what it means to be an American,
  o and they help instill in us the core values
    ▪ that make us who we are as a nation.
• The same is true, on a smaller scale, in our families.
  o The stories that are repeated on granddad’s knee
    ▪ are stories of triumph and accomplishment,
      ▪ stories of bravery and courage.
  o They are the stories that help a young child
    ▪ solidify his or her sense of self-identity
      ▪ in the triumphs and heroic accomplishments
        ▪ of those who have gone before them.
• They are our shared narrative
  o and at the end of the day,
    ▪ the colorful history of who we are,
as a nation or as a family,
  ▪ is preserved from generation to generation,
  ▪ not in history books
  ▪ but in the stories that we tell.

Faith Stories:

• Dads, it is with this understanding in mind
  o that the Psalmist, in the 78th Psalm,
    ▪ charges us, as fathers,
  o to make sure that our children
    ▪ hear the stories that compose
      ▪ the shared narrative of what it means
        o to walk by faith.
• The Psalmist understands
  o that as long as the stories are told
    ▪ from one generation to another,
  o there will always be children
    ▪ who will strive to walk
    ▪ in the footsteps of faith
      ▪ that have been left behind
      ▪ by those who have gone before them.
• So the Psalmist says,
  o I’m going to tell the old stories
    ▪ that my father told me.
• I’m going to share them with my children,
  o and they will share them with their children,
    ▪ who will share them with my great grandchildren.
• Five different generations
  o are identified in the first 6 verses of Psalm 78,
    ▪ all of which are shaped
      ▪ by the stories that I tell.
• So the Psalmist says,
  o whatever you do,
    ▪ don’t hide the stories.
• Don’t let the narrative die with you.
  o The identity of your children,
    ▪ their children
    ▪ and the children that follow them,
      ▪ will be found in the stories
      ▪ that you learned from your father.
  o Don’t let them down.
• They need to know about the mighty hand of God.
  o They need to hear about the delivering power of God.
• They need to hear the stories of
  o the God who answers by fire,
  o the God who parts the Red Sea
  o and the God who causes water
    ▪ to flow from a rock.
• They need to hear the stories
  o of the heroes of faith,
    ▪ who have walked by faith,
      • and have shown all of us
      • how to trust in the Lord.
• The Bible says that the footsteps
  o of a good man
  o are ordered by the Lord.
• But I have no doubt today,
  o that those footsteps are
    ▪ a whole lot easier to follow
  o when we can clearly see
    ▪ the faint impression around them
      • of a trail that has already been trod
      • by the heroes of the faith
      • that have gone on before us.
• It is their story that compels us
  o to abandon what we can see
    ▪ and strive for that which remains unseen,
      • just over the horizon of our faith.
• As we set out on that journey,
  o we find our strength in their triumphs,
    ▪ in stories like that of a shepherd boy
      • defiantly defending his God
        o against a huge terrifying giant.
• We find the courage to trust God
  o in the story of three Hebrew boys
    ▪ who wouldn’t back down
      • even when they were to be
      • thrown into a fiery furnace.
• And we find the wellspring of our hope
  o in the knowledge that their hope
    ▪ was never in vain,
      • that God always came through for them.
• Our hope is validated
  o when we are reminded of that
    ▪ he is the God who shuts
      • the mouth of the lions
      • and silences our accusers.
• If we want to raise up a generation
  o that will walk by faith,
    ▪ then father's we are charged
      • with making sure they hear the stories
        o of what it means to walk by faith.
• It is our job to make sure
  o the stories don’t die with us,
    ▪ that we teach the generation to come
      • how to praise God for the mighty things
        o that he has already done.
• We are commanded to show
  o the generations to come
    ▪ the praises of the Lord
      • and his strength.
• To declare the wonderful works that he has done.
  o So, on this Father’s Day morning,
    ▪ I want to speak to the dads
      • and encourage you to tell the story!

Abraham
• Tell the story of Abraham, the father of the faithful.
  o Make sure that your kids understand
    ▪ that God called him out of Ur of the Chaldees
      • to a land that he had never seen before.
• Make sure you tell them
  o that Abraham walked by faith.
• He didn’t know where he was going
  o or what the end of the journey would look like,
    ▪ he only knew that if he followed God
      • and trusted God
      • that God was going to take care of him.
• Our kids need to know
  o that this is what it means to walk by faith.
• We don’t always see the road map,
  o we don’t always know where the journey ends
    ▪ but we take each step with a confidence
      • that can only be born in faith.
• A confidence that can only come
  o from the knowledge that if God
    ▪ starts a good work in my life,
      • he will finish what he has begun.

• His story is a story that will teach our kids
that faith doesn’t have to know
  • where its going
as long as faith knows that
  • God is the one giving the directions.

Our kids will learn to walk by faith
  • from the stories of that old Patriarch, Abraham,
    • who left everything he knew behind
      • and followed God on a journey
      • to land that God promised to give to him
        • and to his children
        • for countless generations to come.

Dad’s you can tell your children
  • that today, thousands of years later,
    • that land is still possessed
    • by the children of Abraham,
      • all because he had the courage to walk by faith.

Moses
  • Tell them the story of Moses.
    • Tell them about a boy
      • who was raised as a prince in Egypt.
  • Tell them about a young man who,
    • when he came of age,
      • refused to be called an Egyptian
        • but insisted that he be numbered
        • with the people of God.
  • That young man,
    • who abandoned the easy life
      • of privilege and position
        • that was given to him in Egypt,
    • to walk the difficult road of faith,
      • trusting in the God that he only knew
        • from the stories that his mother and father
          • shared with him as a very young child.
  • Moses chose to walk by faith
    • when it would have been easier
      • to go with the flow.
  • But because he followed God,
    • he became the great leader
      • who would lead his people
        • out of Egyptian slavery
      • and on journey back to the land
        • that God promised to Abraham.
• His story is the story of a man
  o who did not possess the confidence
    ▪ to believe that he could do
    ▪ the task that God called him to accomplish.
• But he followed God anyway,
  o he chose to walk by faith,
    ▪ and he quickly discovered
      ▪ that God would never fail him.
• Our kids need to learn
  o that walking by faith means
    ▪ that sometimes you are pushed
      ▪ outside of the boundaries of your comfort zone,
    ▪ that sometimes God asks us
      ▪ to do difficult things
        o but that he always makes a way
        o where there seems to be no way.
• Our kids need to know
  o that when you follow God,
    ▪ when you walk by faith,
      ▪ God walks with you every step of the way.
• Moses’ journey is made all the more amazing
  o by the spectacle of God’s abiding presence
    ▪ that goes with him on every step of the journey.
• As a cloud by day and a pillar of fire by night,
  o God very visible demonstrated
    ▪ that he walks with those who walk by faith.
• Our kids need to hear those stories.

Gideon
• Tell them the story of Gideon.
  o Tell them about a young man
    ▪ who was a nobody
      ▪ that came from a whole family of nobodies.
• Tell them that Gideon’s parents
  o gave him a name that defied his station in life.
• They called him “a mighty man of valor”
  o in a time when there were no mighty men
    ▪ and valor was a rare commodity.
• His story starts in a hiding place,
  o where a fearful Gideon
    ▪ is threshing wheat while hiding
      ▪ from stronger men
      ▪ that would steal the wheat from him
An angel appears to Gideon
- in the middle of his dilemma
  - and calls him what his name
    - declares him to be,
      - a mighty man of valor.
- In that divine encounter,
  - Gideon receives a call from heaven
    - that will forever change
      - the trajectory of his life.
- In that moment,
  - Gideon chose to walk by faith,
    - and God used him to bring
      - seven cruel years of bondage to an end.
- With a tiny army of only 300 men,
  - Gideon would face down
    - the mighty of Midianite army
      - and, with the help of God,
        - he would defeat them
        - and set his people free.

Gideon was the least of his family.
- His family came from the least of the tribes of Israel.
- He wasn’t the best of the best.
  - He was the kid who gets picked last in the softball game.
- But from Gideon we learn
  - that God uses kids like that
    - to do great and mighty things for him,
      - when they walk by faith.
- Dads, you need to tell your kids
  - that God makes heroes out of zeros,
    - because everyone of us feels
      - like a zero from time to time
        - in our lives.
- Our kids need to know
  - that when they walk by faith
    - they can become mighty
      - men and women of valor
        - in the Lord
        - and God can use them
          - to do great things.

Esther
- Daddies, you need to
Tell The Children

- take your little girl in your arms
  - and share with her the story of Esther.

- She was an orphan girl who became a queen.
  - In a story that could have come
    - from the pages of a fairy tale,
      - the little orphan girl was chosen,
        - by the king of Persia,
      - to become his queen
        - and was exalted to a life of luxury
          - in the palace of the king.

- But Esther, never forgot who she was.
  - She never forgot her humble roots.

- And eventually there came a day
  - when she was challenged to lay it all on the line,
    - to risk her very life to save her people.

- Her cousin, Mordecai,
  - the man who raised her,
    - reminded her that she was brought to the kingdom
      - for such a time as this
  - and, when it was the difficult choice to make,
    - Esther chose to walk by faith.
      - God preserved her people because of that choice.

- In the story of Esther,
  - our children learn that the call of God
    - takes preeminence over everything else.

- Walking by faith sometimes means
  - that we have to make hard decisions,
    - but when we do,
      - God watches over us,
      - his hand goes before us
        - and he makes a way
          - where there seems to be no way.

- Daddy, tell your little girl
  - about a hero of the faith named Esther.

- Let them learn what it means
  - to walk by faith and not by sight.

Tell The Children

- I could go on and on today.
  - If time permitted,
    - I could talk about a shepherd boy named David,
      - or about a prophet named Isaiah.
  - We could hear the story of young man named Joseph
• or a young lady named Ruth.
• I could tell you about a virgin girl named Mary
  o or a brash fisherman named Peter.
• Every one of those stories
  o contributes to the narrative
    ▪ of what it means to walk by faith.

• But my goal this morning
  ▪ is to remind you, fathers,
    that you are the keepers of the stories.
• You are the ones who are charged by the Psalmist
  o with the task of making sure
    ▪ that your children hear the stories.
• You have, at your disposal,
  o a great treasury of stories
    ▪ of what it means to trust in God
      ▪ and follow him wherever he may lead.
• It is your job to tell your children those stories!

Don’t Hide It
• Two years ago, a couple living in the Sierra Nevadas
  o made a life changing discovery on their property.
• They were walking their dog
  o when they noticed the top of a rusty canister
    ▪ sticking out of the ground.
• Thinking that a recent rain
  o might have unearthed some interesting artifact
    ▪ of days gone by
    ▪ they stopped to dig it up
    ▪ and see what it was.
  o When they finally got it exposed,
    ▪ they were shocked to discover
      ▪ that the canister was filled
        ▪ with gold coins dating
          ▪ from the mid 1800s.
• Realizing what an incredible discovery they had made,
  o they began to examine the area a little closer
    ▪ and, before they were finished,
      ▪ they found a total of 8 cans
        ▪ containing over 1,400 gold coins.
  o It was the biggest hoard of gold coins
    ▪ ever unearthed in the United States.
• The face value of the coins
  o amounted to nearly $28,000
• and, while the real value of the find
  • has yet to be determined,
• coin collectors believe that
  • it is worth well over 10 million dollars.

• Now, we don’t know how that treasure came
  o to be in that particular place
    • but we can easily surmise
  o that somewhere in the mid to late 1800s
    • there was a man who was in possession
      • of a tremendous treasure.
• Perhaps it was his life savings.
  o Perhaps it was an inheritance
    • that received after his dad
    • or an uncle
      • or a grand parent passed away.
  o Whatever it was,
    • it was enough of a treasure
      • to live like a king
        • for the rest of his days.
• However, for whatever reason,
  o the man decided to preserve the treasure,
    • to save it for some future time.
  o So he hid it in the earth.
    • He put it in cans and buried it in the ground.

• The problem is that he failed
  o to share that secret with anyone else.
    • And somehow, his life came to an end
      • before he managed to tell anyone
        • where the gold was hidden.
• What a tragedy!
  o The treasure was lost
    • because the keeper of the treasure
      • failed to tell the story.

CLOSE
• Dads, we have been entrusted
  o with a great treasure of stories of faith in God
    • and the Psalmist specifically warns us
      • against hiding the treasure.
• Whatever you do, don’t forget to share the story.
  o Whatever you do, don’t forget to tell your children
    • the old, old stories
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- of what god will do for those
  - who will walk by faith.
- If we don’t tell the stories,
  - then they become as useless
    - as the gold that was buried in the mountains.
- What a terrible tragedy that would be.

- Ask the Men to Stand:

- This morning I want to join my voice with the Psalmist
  - and lay this solemn charge upon you:
    - You are the keepers of the storehouse of faith.
      - You are the guardians of the treasury
        - of the incredible stories of faith.
    - I solemnly charge you
      - before God and this great crowd of witnesses,
        - to go tell the story.
    - Make sure that the treasure isn’t hidden and forgotten!
  - Let your children and grandchildren
    - be like the children in the 44th Psalm
      - who said to God,
        - Our fathers have told us
        - about the mighty things that you did!
- It is your calling.
  - It is your purpose.
    - Go tell your children the stories
      - of what it means to walk by faith!