

GENERATING THE NEXT GENERATION

Psalms 78-1-7

September 17, 2006 Sunday A.M.

INTRODUCTION

- A. Look around this room today. What do you see? Did you notice how unusual this group is (I didn't say weird)?
 - 1. People in this room come from all walks of life,.
 - 2. We all come from different backgrounds.
 - 3. You can also see a cross section of ages. Sometimes four or five generations . All in the same place.
 - 4. This means our church is an inter-generational fellowship.
- B. Psalms 78 is called a wisdom or teaching Psalm.
 - 1. It teaches the older generation the importance of reaching the next generation (**READ 78:1-7**).
 - 2. Notice two questions that arise from this passage.

I. FIRST, WHY SHOULD WE REACH THE NEXT GENERATION?

- A. First, we should reach the next generation because that's God's plan-vv.5-6.
 - 1. Five generations are mentioned in this passage.
 - 2. So much for the silly notion that parents should have a hands-off policy toward the faith of their children. We've all heard of parents who say hey will not force religion on their children. They will just remain neutral and let their child decide when they get old enough. Of course, a child must decide for themselves. But the palmist tells us the previous generation must teach and guide the next one.
 - 3. Research has revealed that if a child is the first person in a household to become a Christian, there is a 3.5 percent probability that everyone else in the household will become Christians. Not very high at all. If the mother is the first to accept Christ, the percent goes up and 17 percent of the homes will see the remainder of its members trust Christ. But if the father is first, there is a 93 percent probability that everyone else in the household will follow.
 - 4. What happens when one generation doesn't reach the next?
Recent research indicates that 68 million of our nation's 94 million men don't attend any church. This, in spite of the fact, that 86% of them grew up with some sort of church background. Although each person must decide for themselves whether God will have a place in his life, apparently the generation before these men did not take seriously their responsibility to reach them.
- B. Second, we should reach the next generation because we gray beards need the young. I know two things about churches and children.
 - 1. First, every church wants to have lots of young people and children.
 - 2. Second, when the church gets students and children they immediately want them to start dressing and acting like adults.
 - 3. We old timers have very short and selective memories. We have forgotten that we dressed and acted just like kids do today, maybe even worse.
- C. Third, we should reach the next generation so they can remind us that church isn't about us, our wants, our wishes, our comfort, our preferences, and our contentment.
Its not about us. Its about God and what He wants. And he wants us to reach the next generation because He has no Plan B.

II. SECOND, HOW CAN WE REACH THE NEXT GENERATION?

- A. The Psalmist warns us not to hide our faith from the next generation-v. 4.
- B. How do we hide our faith?
 - 1. First, we hide our faith by not teaching the next generation.
This is why we need Sunday School, and a Student ministry and a Children's ministry.
 - 2. Second, we hide our faith by our inconsistencies.

The next generation needs to not only hear about our faith, they also need to see it in action. Its not enough to say “do as I say, not as I do”.

Illustration:

Did you hear bout the Little League coach who suddenly stopped the game. He walked over to one of his players who had just made an out. He looked down at the young player and asked, “Do you understand what cooperation is? What a team is?” The little boy nodded his head. “Do you understand that what matters is whether we win together as a team?” The little boy nodded yes. “So,” the coach continued, “when a strike is called or you’re out at first, you don’t argue or curse or attack the umpire. Do you understand all that?” Again, the little boy nodded. “Good,” said the coach. “Now go over there and explain it to your mother.”

(The Executive Speaker, quoted in Bits & Pieces, November 10, 1994, pp. 20-21).

3. Third, we hide our faith by our lack of honesty.

The next generation needs to know that we struggle with our faith, that life isn’t always easy and that sometimes we fail.

CONCLUSION

- A. Look around this room again. This room is our first responsibility. This is our “Jerusalem” (Acts 1:8). If we fail to win this next generation we fail!
- B. Video Clip: “Play It Forward” (31:26 to 34:28 minutes).