

Scripture: Psalm 145:1-21

Text: Psalm 145:4-7

Message: We Have a Story to Tell

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When I was in high school, I ran in the track and field competition. One event was the 4 x 100 metre relay. I sometimes got frustrated when our teacher insisted that we spend time in practice handing the baton from one person to another. Why did we have to practice that? It's easy to just give the little stick to the next person.

But we found out how important it was to do this well. In a race, valuable seconds can be lost if the baton is not handed over in the right way. Or a race could be lost if the baton was not handed over in the allotted space as marked off on the track. Or a race could be lost if a baton was dropped.

As followers of Jesus Christ, it is also important that we think about how we are passing on the baton, the truths of our faith from one person to another or from one generation to another. It is not enough to *assume* that other people will come to know and believe in Jesus as Saviour and Lord. It is not enough to assume that our children will come to know and believe in God, the Father, Son and Holy Spirit.

Our Scripture reading uses the words, "future generations *will be told* about the Lord." "They *will proclaim* his righteousness to a people yet unborn." "One generation *will commend* your works to another. They *will tell* of your mighty acts."

There is a definite speaking and telling from one person to another. Who does the telling?

It is a generation, a people, a person who has seen the work of God. It is a person or people who know about the mighty acts that God has done. It is a person or people who believe that God is real and has done great things.

Those who do the telling must do more than simply pass on information. Passing on the truth of God's mighty works, telling of his righteousness is more than merely teaching some doctrine and memorizing definitions. What is passed on is a living faith. It is a faith that must live in the hearts of those who do the telling. It is a faith that must be making an impact in the lives of those who are telling of the great things God has done.

It is hard to believe what someone is saying if they are not convinced of it themselves. Would you be convinced to go to a certain restaurant when the person encouraging you to go has never been there? Would you buy a particular make of car if the person trying to sell you the car drives a

car made by a different company? If you had never tasted watermelon before, and you knew that I don't like watermelon, would you be convinced if I tried to tell you that it really tastes good and you should try it?!

If we are going to tell the next generation about the Lord and his righteousness and his mighty acts, we need to have the Lord living in our hearts. He needs to make a difference in how we live and talk and relate to others. Those who hear our words need to see that our hearts and lives are affected by what we are talking about.

That's the joy and the responsibility of being a parent or teacher or leader. Those under our care or influence need to see that we love this God we are talking about. They need to see that we honour this God we are talking about. They need to know that we believe that this God has actually done the mighty acts we are telling them he has done.

One generation will commend your works to another. One generation will pass the baton of faith to another. We have looked at who does the telling. The next question is, who does the listening? Who is the one generation talking to?

We have already answered that question somewhat. A generation usually refers to the children of their parents. Or a generation is the group of people born in a certain time period. In this church we have an older generation, our seniors. There is a middle age group of people and a group of younger people. We have teenagers and young children. Each generation needs to hear about the great things God has done, his mighty acts and his righteousness.

One generation tells another. One age group of people will tell another age group of people about the Lord and what he has done.

We love to tell stories. One activity that can be fun to do between generations is to talk about what you did as a child. Sharing stories can be a way to share faith lessons that we have learned in life. Did you know that my wife and I wrote letters, with pen, on paper and mailed them to each other every week, for three years, while I was in college? There was no such thing as email, or text-messaging or snapchat or web-cams. We had to wait at least a whole week for the latest news from each other. The Lord helped us to learn patience and trust in our long distance relationship. Each of us has great stories to tell about our experiences, about things in our lives that made an impact on who we are, on how we view life.

Let us share the stories, from one generation to another, of how great God is and how great God has been in our lives. Let us share stories of doubt and difficulty, of pain and hope and experiencing God's faithfulness. Let us share the stories between generations of what a joy it is to serve our God. Let's hear those stories.

This past week we have shared stories from the Bible at Summer Kids Club. We lived and shared our faith with the 55-60 children who attended each day. I would like to invite a few of the leaders or other volunteers to come forward and share a story of how you saw God at work this past week. Share a story of “what the Lord has done.”

“One generation will commend your works to another; they will tell of your mighty acts.” It happens when counselors at GEMS and Cadets build relationships with the girls and boys and live their faith in those relationships. It happens at the Impact Zone ministry from Crosstown Impact, as volunteers share Bible stories and their own faith with children in our public schools. Our denomination is emphasizing the importance of inter-generational ministry through Faith Formation Ministries.

But this is not just about telling our children or grandchildren. This good news, the great things God has done, must be shared beyond our families, beyond parents telling their children. We need to let our neighbours know about this God in whom we believe. We need to let our co-workers hear about what God has done. We need to impact our city and province and country with this good news of God’s righteousness.

We need to let people hear about the God who loved the people of the world so much he sent his Son, Jesus, to restore our relationship with him. He wants to be more than some distant God in heaven. He is our loving Father, through Jesus, his Son. We need to let others know what it means for us to be a child of God and to trust in God and know that he cares for us, always, when life is great or when we have troubles and difficulties.

We need to let people from the nations, all languages and races, hear about this great God. We share this good news with refugees and immigrants in our city. We support this good news being shared in Cambodia and Nigeria and China and to the ends of the earth.

In a world where people take sides on the right and left, where hatred makes headlines, we need to live the kindness and love of God to our neighbour. We might not agree with them. They might not agree with us. Our living and sharing of God’s story is not first of all to convince them. It is to show them hope and peace and love. It means we also have to live the story we are telling.

Pass it on. Don’t hold on tight to the baton, the story of God and his wonderful work. Don’t assume someone will learn the story, or assume that they will pick up the baton. Hand it off. Share it. Let it go. Help others to know the wonder of who God is and the joy of trusting him, living for him, serving him. One generation will commend your works to another.

Amen.