

# Intergenerational Life In the Scriptures

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Transcript

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*Let us pray. God that you entrust to us what you do is humbling. You have spoken to us through generations before to share with us who you are; to share the good news of your Son, Jesus Christ. That we are the bearers of that faith for the next generation is something we take seriously and feel responsible deep within us. Give us your Holy Spirit and strength to do share our faith. In Jesus name, amen.*

## Review:

We ventured down the road of Deuteronomy last week. We worked hard on the 6<sup>th</sup> chapter verses 4-9 called the Shema—the fundamental verses of Hebrew faith and life that are to be impressed upon the children and written on the doorpost and on the forehead and be with you everywhere you go. This needs to be shared with all who come after you.

### **Deuteronomy 6:4-9**

*“Hear, O Israel. The Lord is our God. The Lord alone. You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your might. Keep these words that I am commanding you today in your heart. Recite them (or, “impress them upon”) to your children and talk about them when you are at home and when you are away, when you lie down and when you rise. Bind them as a sign on your hand, fix them as an emblem on your forehead, and write them on the doorposts of your house and your gates.”*

We talked about how Moses says his words repeatedly, because these are the last words before going into the land that God has promised them. He is not going to venture with them so on the top of the mountain he watches over the land that the people are about to enter. He knows they will face great struggles. Over and over again Moses says remember and do not forget. He repeats himself. Planned redundancy. It sinks deep. We have a responsibility to be repetitious as a congregation even to the point of annoyance. It is the grandparents’ responsibility to annoy them just a little bit.

Today we will talk about what will you show them and how will you bless them. Blessing is a critical avenue as to how we hand on the faith.

## What Will You Show Them;

Dr. Rollie Martinson, academic dean at Luther Seminary, tells a story about his early family life. (He will be with us last week in April and two weeks in May. You have to come!). Rollie came home late from work one day. The family waits. He asks Kirk, age fourteen, to get Rollie the mustard. “Get your own mustard,” says Kirk. The table went silent; the room was cold; the food was cold. The meal was finished. Rollie asked his wife what was up with Kirk. Conversation ensued. Rollie decided to take a new course of action. He said they needed to put together a list of all the dirt-ball jobs that make this family work. There were seventeen dirt-ball jobs. They realized mom was doing fourteen; the children three; and Rollie zero. From that he shared this phrase:

“I can’t hear what your saying because what you are doing speaks so loudly.”

Those small people who mill about us upstairs before during and after the worship service seemingly do not pay any attention to what is going on but they are sponges absorbing all that is going on around them. They get what we are doing. They are paying attention without us even knowing it. One of the critical measures of how we hand on the faith is what we are doing. The good news is that you are handing on

the faith when you don't even know it. The fact that they are here is perhaps the number one step that they can receive what they need to receive.

I shared with you last week that my parents brought me to church every day when I was in eighth grade. I now share with baptismal families. I tell them the most important thing you can do is sit with them in worship every Sunday. They are getting stuff juts by being there while you are doing your worship.

"I can't hear what your saying because what you are doing speaks so loudly."

We have faith disciplines that are part of the practice of Christian history. We have ways that we live it out. Be people of faith if you want your children to be people of faith. You would never ask anything of them that you would not do, would you?

### **Faith disciplines:**

What are they? Worship is one. We have the sounds of faith emanating through that room every Sunday. The texts of the hymns are born in Scripture. When you respond, "*Lord, to whom shall we go you have the words of eternal life...*" these are from John's Gospel. Jesus asks them if they will also go away from him. Peter says *to whom shall we go*. You are singing and saying the words of Scripture all the time. My dad sings like it was his last time to sing again. If you ever sat next to someone like that you are going to want to sing. The hymns carry the faith the way the spoken word cannot. You will hold onto those hymns for all of your days. Sing them together as if it is your last chance to sing. Sing. It doesn't matter how well you sing. Make up for quality with volume.

A second discipline is prayer. How do we show our children how to pray? We pray with them. Now I lay me down to sleep I pray the Lord my soul to keep. Come Lord Jesus be our guest. It becomes rote until we think about what the words mean. There is faith in those three words—Come Lord Jesus. Comes to us in our meals, comes to us in our worship. The power of praying with them. Pray with them in spontaneous ways that are required of you as life unfolds. Pray in front of them. Talk to God as if he were your best friend.

Another discipline is service. How do we live out our lives to show that we have a selfless life in Christ and *have the same mind in you that was in Christ Jesus who though in the form of God did not count equality with God so that he grasped and emptied himself taking the form of a servant*. We have been justified in faith so that we may live out our days in the confidence that we know where we are headed. Therefore what does it mean: how are we to live? We serve others before self. We live out lives of service in the everyday life of those who are closest to us.

"I can't hear what your saying because what you are doing speaks so loudly."

Table conversation: What we some of the faith rituals and disciplines that you practiced when you were young and continue to hole on to today.

You can come back to faith conversations at any time!

A few years ago I went to the Pot Belly sandwich shop in Dinky Town at the University of Minnesota. As I came through the door I noticed that a man had a stack of books and he was reading quite loudly so that everyone could hear him. I went over and asked if I could sit down with him. "Not yet" he said. He was reading from Romans 13. I sat down and met Baraki. He had a stack of books of philosophers and religious thinkers. He said, "I read good words." He believed those words should be heard by others.

As a child I would visit my mom's parents and stay with them by myself. Grandparents get to be all gospel and all grace. Parents get to be the law with boundaries and rules. What I remember most is sitting in the front seat of the 1968 Impala sedan with the plastic seats. I would sit there between them and my grandma would blink her eyes with gentle love. My grandpa would reach over and pat me on the knee. "Pauly, my boy, you are not such a bad old hairpin." What? The words didn't even matter. I got it. I was getting blessed. The two things included in the blessing were touch and good words. Spoken from a heart of love and handed down to the generation that comes after.

### **How You Will Bless Them**

Etymology of blessing. The words evolve. They come from one language to the next. Each language has come from one before it. The meanings are dense.

The Hebrew word for blessing is *barukh*. It means to kneel but in the sense of praise and adoration. We praise and adore God. God in turn praises and adores us. This word is written all over the Bible. Open to Genesis 48. Good words. All the way through to the 49<sup>th</sup> chapter Jacob is blessing his sons. Those final good words are specific for each son. Jacob bestows on his twelve sons also a sense of what they are called to do. How they are supposed to live now as they venture together as Israel. This is Israel moving forward in life with an understanding of the good words their father is leaving with them.

The Greek language took the 400 times the word *barukh* was used in the Old Testament and used it in Greek. The Greek word is *eulogeitos*. What does that sound like? Eulogy. Praise about someone. We wait until people die. Why? It has become an issue in funerals. The reason so many people talk is because they did not say these things when they were alive. It is ultimately blessing. It is to call down God's gracious power on them. Have you ever looked at a child's face when you praise them not for what they do but for who they are?

When the heavens parted and the Spirit of God came down on Jesus at his baptism God spoke and said this is my Son with whom I am well pleased. The Greek word, *eldokacko*, means to speak—to have good thoughts. God had really good thoughts about this Jesus he was sending.

Then it went to the Latin: *benedicere*. This sounds like benediction. We pronounce good words upon the gathering, upon each other. Then to the German. It became more of a heathen word meaning to mark with blood in some ritual way.

Now we say God bless you and bless this house and it has lost something of what it was intended to be. We use it so generally. What we really need to do is actually bless someone. We bless them by saying good words.

We have a ritual in our family. On our 10th anniversary my wife gave me a present—a small cup and saucer with a cross on it. It is a blessing cup. The idea is on special days of the family gets to pick what goes inside the cup. Each person says a blessing as we pass it around the table. We gave it a try. The first time it failed. The children thought it was so stupid but we kept trying. By the time the oldest was thirteen it began to work. My 13-year old son said to his 11-year old brother, "AJ is a blessing to me because he is my friend." The heavens were torn open. And the Spirit of God came down in the form of a dove. With you I am well pleased. The saucer is broken and was glued back together. A constant reminder to me that we are broken. We decided three years ago to say good words upon my father. We brought out the blessing cup and gave the children time to prepare it. My dad said in all of his 77 years he had never heard anything like that before. It is the power of God called down upon someone else.

"I read good words and Pauly my friend you are not such a bad old hairpin." It means that my grandfather's love is with me no matter what. That is how we hand down our faith. We speak it to others. When we sing we are saying to God you are not such a bad old hairpin.

I was sitting with the music staff on Tuesday. Jack Swanson mentioned an old hymn in the Augustans hymnal—his grandmother's favorite hymn "Wonderful words of life."

Sing them over again to me, wonderful words of life;  
Let me more of their beauty see, wonderful words of life;  
Words of life and beauty teach me faith and duty.  
    Beautiful words, wonderful words, wonderful words of life.  
    Beautiful words, wonderful words, wonderful words of life.

Christ, the blessed one, gives to all, wonderful words of life;  
Sinner, list to the loving call, wonderful words of life;  
All so freely given, wooing us to heaven.  
    Beautiful words, wonderful words, wonderful words of life.  
    Beautiful words, wonderful words, wonderful words of life.

Sweetly echo the gospel call, wonderful words of life;  
Offer pardon and peace to all, wonderful words of life;  
Jesus, only Savior, sanctify forever.  
    Beautiful words, wonderful words, wonderful words of life.  
    Beautiful words, wonderful words, wonderful words of life.

Remember and do not forget.

1. I had the honor to be with Ray and Wanda Bodeen as Ray was dying. We are also leaving them both how to live and how to die. How we die says a whole lot about faith. *Lord to whom shall we go...You have the words of eternal life.* We have this deep held trust in faith that at then end of our days God will bring us home. Ray died a week after we were together at his bed. They had this family ritual as to how they were a people of faith: jokes, scripture, hymns, and Name a person who made an "impression" of faith upon you and describe how they did it.
2. "Remember" a significant faith event in your life and share it with the group.
3. Tell about a time when God saw you through (Slavery/Exodus/Wilderness) from "wilderness" struggle to promise.
4. Share what you recall of the "ritual" life of faith that was given to you.

5. Share what you do to incorporate faith discipline into your daily life. What would you like to add in?

6. Share your favorite hymn and why. How much of the text is committed to memory?  
Holy Communion. There was an entire ritual of faith that happened at the bedside. This made it very clear as to how we are to die.

There was a letter framed on the wall.

To My Dear Friends and Family

Jesus said: "I go to prepare a place for you." There we can meet. "I know that my Redeemer liveth. I too shall live." My only regret is that I have done so little for the Lord who dies for us. My dear grandchildren, I plead with you Live close to the Lord. In his word you will find him. He has surrounded me all my life with so much love. In eternity together we will thank him. Do not grieve. "Eye has not seen, ear has not heard" the things awaiting us.

May the Lord bless you and keep you all till we meet again.

With the Lord,  
Grandma Stein

Milanna is six months old and was baptized into our congregation. Let us imagine we have Milanna with us for the next eighteen years as she walks together with us in faith. We need to be out ahead of her in the ways in which it means to follow Jesus. We need to share the words and the teachings so that the words become part of her soul—repeated over and over again. She needs to hear us sing as if we are singing for the last time. She needs to hear good words. There are two parts to this blessing: touch and good words.

Table conversation and assignment. Write down what you believe to be most important about what Milanna receives while she is with with us for the next 18 years.

Our prayer is in the present tense in worship. I don't use the past tense or the conditional tense because I believe this is who God is. God blesses us. He speaks good words of us

*The Lord blesses you and keeps you. The Lord's face shines upon you and is gracious to you. The Lord looks upon you with great pleasure in you.*

#### **Discussion Questions:**

7. Name a person who made an "impression" of faith upon you and describe how they did it.
8. "Remember" a significant faith event in your life and share it with the group.
9. Tell about a time when God saw you through (Slavery/Exodus/Wilderness) from "wilderness" struggle to promise.

10. Share what you recall of the “ritual” life of faith that was given to you.

11. Share what you do to incorporate faith discipline into your daily life. What would you like to add in?

12. Share your favorite hymn and why. How much of the text is committed to memory?