

Generations

Opening Text: Judges 3:1-2

We had a look at this text two weeks ago when I spoke about “Tests, Training and Triumph”. Today I want to approach this text from another angle and speak on the topic of ‘generations’.

V.2 says “*this was only so that the generations of the children of Israel might be taught to know war, at least those who had not formerly known it*”,

As we saw before, the book of Judges describes a period of time after Joshua’s death and after all the great conquests in Canaan. Despite those conquests, large areas remained yet to be possessed by the individual tribes.

God was concerned with the new generation. It was so important for this new generation...

- To experience God for themselves
- To build their own history with Him
- To be equipped to fight
- To be allowed to have a role and try it for themselves.

1. God is a generational God

He is “the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob”.

There is a work of God that is to be carried out from one generation to the next generation.

Isaiah 41:4 NLT- *Who has done such mighty deeds, summoning each new generation from the beginning of time? It is I, the Lord, the First and the Last. I alone am he.”*

There is a summons from God, a calling to each new generation.

2. He has an assignment for each generation and it is the job of each generation to help the next one succeed – in practical ways and spiritually.

Psalm 71:17-18

Psalms 145:4

Psalms 78:4-6

We help the next generation win when we provide them with a standard for life (God’s ways), rather than just improving their standard of living.

We need to help the next generation win spiritually.

Acts 13:36 says that David served his own generation by the will of God. However, he did not only serve his generation but the following too:

1 Chronicles 22:5

David invested in the next generation in a very practical, material way. However, he also did it spiritually:

Read verses 11-15

In the end, David died with honour and His son was set up to succeed in every way.

1 Chronicles 29:28

Proverbs 13:22

Our spiritual legacy is so important (although sometimes we only think of the material one).

3. What often happens is that we allow tension between the generations, instead of understanding that each generation has a specific role in the plan of God.

What often happens is that we build gaps between age groups. We have all heard the expression ‘generational gap’. A wall that should be strong against evil is made weak by a gap, a breach. May we be breach- repairers not breach builders!

Sometimes ‘old’ people are resentful towards ‘young’ people, sometimes ‘young’ people reject or are dismissive of their elders. That was the example of king Rehoboam who decided to act upon the advice of his young friends only. That led to some seriously bad decisions (**2 Chronicles 10:13-14**).

We need to believe that God can use young leaders but young leaders also need the input of mentors.

In 1 Kings 20:14-15 we read how God used young leaders under the leadership of King Ahab. God use young people. 1 Chronicles 12:28 speaks of Zadok a young man who was a valiant warrior. Timothy was a young man under Paul. Most scholars believe that most of the 12 disciples of Jesus would have been young adults. All these were young but had mentors.

1 Kings 11:28 also speaks of people like Jeroboam who was chosen by Solomon to a high position solely on the basis of his youthfulness and vigour who turned out to be a very bad choice.

In the kingdom of God there is room for the young and the old... and everyone in between.

In 2 Chronicles 24:2 we read how Joash, a young king, did very well while he was mentored by an old priest. When the priest died, he made poor choices.

The Church is a family made up of all generations, young and old. There is room for everyone:

Acts 2:17 ... “*your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, your young men shall see visions, your old men shall dream dreams*”.

Paul told Timothy:

1 Timothy 5:1-2 - *Do not rebuke an older man, but exhort him as a father, younger men as brothers, ² older women as mothers, younger women as sisters, with all purity.*

Paul told Titus

Titus 2:2-5, 6 - *² that the older men be sober, reverent, temperate, sound in faith, in love, in patience; ³ the older women likewise, that they be reverent in behavior, not slanderers, not given to much wine, teachers of good things— ⁴ that they admonish the young women to love their husbands, to love their children,*

⁶ Likewise, exhort the young men to be sober-minded,

There’s advice here for all generations. God always intended all generations to be present in the church, living harmoniously together.

Conclusion:

- Let us work on our spiritual legacy
- Let us be mindful to engage, invest, welcome and encourage the next generation
- Let us mind the gap – acknowledging that at the source of this is a spirit of division
- Let us bridge the generation gap, let us repair any breaches.
 - **Malachi 4:5-6** - ... “and he shall turn the hearts of the fathers to the children and the hearts of the children to the fathers.”
 - **Isaiah 58:12** - *Those from among you shall build the old waste places; you shall raise up the foundations of many generations; and you shall be called the Repairer of the Breach, the Restorer of Streets to Dwell In.*