

“TELL THEM THE STORIES”

Pastor Mike Corwin

TEXT: PSALM 78:1-8 SCRIPTURE: 2 TIMOTHY 3:14-17

I – THE PIE:

I told you all last Sunday that each of the youth who come to our church should have more parents and grandparents than they can count. That all of us should take part in their lives. In the last church I served we had an annual Thanksgiving Day dinner at the church and I remember one time something happened that touched me. We were in the kitchen doing various things to get ready when a lady came in with her 10-year-old granddaughter. They weren't from our church and they didn't come to eat, but had come to drop off a sweet potato pie on their way to a family gathering. Grandma had spent time with her grandchild, teaching her how to make the pie, and they brought an extra one to our church to share with those who would gather there later for dinner. Imagine the life lesson that grandmother had given that little girl, all over some simple ingredients and a sharing heart. Can you see a Christian witness in that pie? I sure can.

Don't you have to believe that Grandma has helped set the stage for that little girl to grow up doing random acts of kindness instead of random acts of violence? Don't you have to think that girl may show others love instead of hate? All because Grandma took the time to pass on her outlook of compassion for others.

I go to various meetings and gatherings and hear people moaning about how the various service organizations are drying up because the young people aren't stepping up to the plate and working like the previous generations. I listen to charitable organizations complain because the younger generations aren't donating like the older ones. I hear the same complaints in the church too, but I can tell you why...nobody taught them. Nobody passed on the lesson that they were supposed to. Nobody ever took the time to bake a pie with them and help them take it to a church to share. Nobody taught them compassion, kindness, and love and how to share it. In this day it appears nobody is teaching them morals, ethics, or manners.

II – CHILDREN ARE LIKE SPONGES:

Children are like sponges, absorbing the various information, images, and lessons placed in their paths. What they absorb controls how they live, what their attitude and actions towards themselves and others will be. And look at what our children are bombarded with every day in their homes, in their schools, on the television, in their movies, on video games, and in their

music. Graphic violence, drugs and alcohol, rampant sex, that it's O.K. to lie, cheat and steal if it gets you ahead, and the list goes on and on.

My question for you today is this: "WHAT ARE WE DOING TO COMBAT THIS? TO INFLUENCE OUR YOUTH? If we know this and we don't like it, why aren't we using the absorption rate of our children's young minds to pass on different lessons and values? Did you know that the national statistic is that the majority of people accept Jesus as their Savior prior to the age of 13? After that it gets harder and harder to reach them with the Gospel. If we want our youth to grow up and meet our expectations concerning behavior, morals, and ethics, we have to instill it in their minds while they are still young. We have to quit worrying about the fact there is no longer prayer in the schools and start worrying about the fact that there is no prayer in our homes. It's not the public schools job to teach our children about Jesus, It's ours. The school is there to teach reading, writing, and arithmetic, we're here to teach religion!

If we don't like the way our children are turning out, we have nobody to blame but ourselves. They learn what we teach them. If we want them to have the same values we have, then we need to teach them those values. What are we passing on to them about our beliefs, our faith? Look around you...where are all the children who have been baptized and confirmed in this church? What are we doing about bringing them here and teaching them about God and his Son Jesus?

III – SCRIPTURE – PSALM 78: 1-8:

Teaching each generation about God is not an option, it's a Biblical principle. Since the beginning of Creation, humankind has passed the knowledge and lessons of God down from one generation to the next. Before the Bible even existed in written form the early stories found in it were known because parents passed them down to their children, who passed them down to theirs and on and on. Each generation taught the next about God's faithfulness and promises. Each generation nurtured the faith of the next. In this morning's text the Psalmist tells us about this obligation to teach...

Psalm 78:1 - 8 (NLT)

- 1 O my people, listen to my teaching.
Open your ears to what I am saying,
- 2 for I will speak to you in a parable.
I will teach you hidden lessons from our past—
- 3 stories we have heard and know,
stories our ancestors handed down to us.
- 4 We will not hide these truths from our children
but will tell the next generation about the glorious deeds of the LORD.
We will tell of his power and the mighty miracles he did.

- 5 For he issued his decree to Jacob;
he gave his law to Israel.
He commanded our ancestors
to teach them to their children,
6 so the next generation might know them—
even the children not yet born—
that they in turn might teach their children.
7 So each generation can set its hope anew on God,
remembering his glorious miracles
and obeying his commands.
8 Then they will not be like their ancestors—
stubborn, rebellious, and unfaithful,
refusing to give their hearts to God.

To teach means, “to cause to know.” As ministers of the Gospel it’s our duty to inform, correct, and nurture the faith of the congregation. The Psalmist says that to fully understand your faith, you need to know the stories of the past. How God has been working throughout history on behalf of his children. How God has interceded on our behalf, the miracles and mighty acts of power that have been witnessed through the ages which were performed by God. It’s this interaction between God the Creator and his creation that establishes our religion and our faith. It’s through his lessons, his commandments, his instruction that we know how he wants us to live, to act, to behave. We need to know these laws and commands came from God, not a human.

God did this all with our ancestors and then commanded them to pass it down to their children, who in turn should pass it down to their children and on and on from generation to generation. This is done so that each generation can find their hope in God. So that each generation can put their trust in God. We do it so that we are bound to repeat the same rebellious behavior as our ancestors becoming stubborn and turning our hearts over to the world instead of to God.

We pass our faith on to each new generation not so they have a bunch of information or something new to learn and recite, but so that they can have the same lifesaving hope that we have. Passing on our Faith through the stories of God is essential to the existence of the people of God.

The only way they’ll learn about God is if we teach them. The only way they’ll hear about Jesus is if we tell them the stories.

IV – TEACH THE CHILDREN AND CHANGE THE WORLD:

How can a child know love if all they see is hate...know good if all they see is evil...know peace

if all they see is violence...know purity and abstinence if all they see is promiscuity...know compassion if all they see is contempt? They will only absorb what they're exposed to. So what are they absorbing around you, at your house?

It's up to us as a generation of Christians to teach them the alternative to what they see in their everyday lives. It's up to us to insure they know of the love of God through his Son Jesus, just as someone took the time to insure we knew it. When we're in public as well as in our own homes we have to remember that little eyes and ears are watching and absorbing. When we speak to them do they hear love or anger? When we touch them do they feel love or ice? When we eat is it every man for himself, or do we pause for prayer? Do they learn to say their prayers at night or just lay out their school clothes? Can they sing Jesus loves me as well as the sponge bob square pants jingle? At Easter do we emphasize a rabbit or a cross? At Christmas is the present under the tree or the one from heaven that takes center stage? Do our children know the golden rule and the 10 commandments as well as they do the lyrics from a Carrie Underwood song? Do we drag our children to church with as much vigor as we do to the mall or the game?

According to the Scripture from Timothy this morning we heard that what's contained in this book (BIBLE) is inspired by God and it was given to us to teach us how to live. It was given to us to prepare us for doing what God wants us to do, for teaching others about him. It was given to us to lead us to Jesus and Eternal life. So have you passed it on? Do your children have a Bible as well as an I-PAD? Do you sit down and read it with them, discuss it with them, explain it to them? Do they spend as much time with the Word of God as they do the computer or a video game? Are you telling them the stories?

V – GIVE THEM JESUS:

How are we handling this obligation as the Church of Jesus? Have we done all in our power to teach the next generation about God, done all we can to reach out to the youth in our community? What have we done to make the Gospel available to them? How can we give them Jesus?

There is an old saying that goes, "GIVE A MAN A FISH AND HE'LL EAT FOR A DAY. TEACH A MAN HOW TO FISH AND HE'LL EAT FOR A LIFETIME." I want to change this to give you a new saying this morning. I want to give it to you this way, "PRAY FOR A CHILD AND THEY'LL FEEL BETTER FOR A DAY, TEACH A CHILD TO PRAY AND THEY'LL FEEL BETTER FOR A LIFETIME, TEACH THEM ABOUT JESUS AND THEY'LL FEEL BETTER FOREVER."

I pray this morning that you would join me in making it our priority to save our children, by telling them the stories in this book, especially the ones about Jesus. If we give them Jesus, they won't let others give the things of this world that harms and destroys them. AMEN

