

Disciples for Life: Christ and the Extended Family in the 21st Century Psalm 145:1-13

preached @ Hawkwood Baptist Church
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Intro

Psalm 145 is an acrostic poem. In the original language the first word in each new line begins with the next letter in the Hebrew alphabet. This is not the only acrostic alphabet psalm (Psalm 119 is the best known). Wherever you find an acrostic psalm, you know the composer has worked hard to make his psalm a work of art. If you know anything about Handel's Messiah, you know that the greatest art and the highest praise have always gone together. This was David's last psalm, and as you read it you can sense how hard he worked to make this a perfect offering of praise to God.

Great art is intentional. It never happens accidentally. But the same is true of great love and great praise. These things never happen accidentally. They require intentionality, as well as careful thought and hard work. Because David loved God he intentionally composed a hymn of praise that truly expressed his utmost in the service of God's highest praise. God help us to be intentional in our own praise and obedience!

Today's text

Psalm 145:1 I exalt You, my God the King, and praise Your name forever and ever. 2 I will praise You every day; I will honour Your name forever and ever. 3 Yahweh is great and is highly praised; His greatness is unsearchable. 4 One generation will declare Your works to the next and will proclaim Your mighty acts. 5 I will speak of Your splendour and glorious majesty and Your wonderful works. 6 They will proclaim the power of Your awe-inspiring acts, and I will declare Your greatness. 7 They will give a testimony of Your great goodness and will joyfully sing of Your righteousness.

8 The Lord is gracious and compassionate, slow to anger and great in faithful love. 9 The Lord is good to everyone; His compassion rests on all He has made. 10 All You have made will thank You, Lord; the godly will praise You. 11 They will speak of the glory of Your kingdom and will declare Your might, 12 informing all people of Your mighty acts and of the glorious splendour of Your kingdom. 13 Your kingdom is an everlasting kingdom; Your rule is for all generations. The Lord is faithful in all His words and gracious in all His actions.

Discipleship: a new emphasis on a central theme

If I had been able to preach last Sunday, this is the emphasis I intended to bring. God has put it on my heart that we as members of HBC begin to live up to our official statements. In our official documents we claim that discipleship is our priority, and it is my intention over this coming year to relate every subject we touch upon to our mutual duty of encouraging one another to be

disciples of Jesus Christ.

In dealing with the idea of one generation declaring God's works to the next generation I will speak most directly to grandparents this morning, but that doesn't leave anyone off the hook. I feel like John in his first epistle, where in chapter 2 he specifically states he is writing to children, young men and fathers. The fact is, all Christian truth is relevant to all ages. You may be young, but if you live, you will grow older, and it is your task to prepare now for each stage of life as it comes.

Discipleship is not optional for the Christian. And no matter how true this may be for younger people, it is even more true as the years accumulate and we prepare to give an account before the tribunal of Christ (II Cor. 5:10).

Our HBC Mission

To introduce people to Jesus and together become fully devoted followers. (The word disciple does not appear in this mission statement, but even at a glance you can see that this is the very definition of discipleship. A disciple is a devoted follower of Jesus. There's more to it than that, of course, but it will do for a start.)

Our HBC Vision

To glorify God by fulfilling the Great Commandment (Luke 10:27) and the Great Commission (Matt. 28:19-20). The Great Commission is about nothing if it is not about discipleship!

Our Mission and Vision are fulfilled in the Great Commission

Matt. 28: 18 Then Jesus came near and said to them, "All authority has been given to Me in heaven and on earth. 19 Go, therefore, and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, 20 teaching them to observe everything I have commanded you. And remember, I am with you always, to the end of the age."

Psalms 145 and the Spirit of the Great Commission

Psalms 145:4 One generation will declare Your works to the next and will proclaim Your mighty acts. 5 I will speak of Your splendour and glorious majesty and Your wonderful works.

David is aware that before we can disciple the nations, we must first disciple our own families. He is essentially saying, I must teach my sons and daughters—and my grandchildren—Who God is and what He has done. I have to teach them that God alone is Creator, that God alone has authority to explain the meaning of life and the purpose of life, and that God alone can personally and directly bind our lives to His purposes (what it means to be born again).

- Here's the thing about David as he considered his responsibility to disciple his descendants. The older he got the more urgent his mission became.

Psalms 71:17 God, You have taught me from my youth, and I still proclaim Your wonderful works. 18 Even when I am old and gray, God, do not abandon me. Then I will proclaim Your

power to another generation, Your strength to all who are to come.

- The Bible tells us plainly the kind of wonderful works we're to proclaim to the next generations.

The purpose of Passover

Ex. 12:26 When your children ask you, 'What does this ritual (Passover) mean to you?' 27 you are to reply, 'It is the Passover sacrifice to the Lord, for He passed over the houses of the Israelites in Egypt when He struck the Egyptians and spared our homes.'" So the people bowed down and worshipped.

Monuments and Miracles

Joshua 4: 20 Then Joshua set up in Gilgal the 12 stones they had taken from the Jordan, 21 and he said to the Israelites, "In the future, when your children ask their fathers, 'What is the meaning of these stones?' 22 you should tell your children, 'Israel crossed the Jordan on dry ground.' 23 For the Lord your God dried up the waters of the Jordan before you until you had crossed over, just as the Lord your God did to the Red Sea, which He dried up before us until we had crossed over. 24 *This is so that all the people of the earth may know that the Lord's hand is mighty, and so that you may always fear the Lord your God.*"

Three truths to tell the generations

1. The mighty acts of God (Ps. 145:3-4)
 - a. Biblically
 - b. Personally
2. The goodness of God (Ps. 145:8-9)
 - a. It is more difficult to communicate the goodness of God than the greatness of God.
 - b. You can communicate the greatness of God by simply pointing at creation. But how does one feelingly communicate the goodness of God? It requires intentionality!
 - i. Be sure no root of bitterness (idolatry) is growing in your life (Heb. 12:15). In other words, be sure that the greatest desire of your heart is to know and experience God's goodness, for the purpose of using your life to lead others to praise and worship God!
 - ii. Keep your eyes fixed on Jesus, the author and finisher of our faith, who for the joy that was set before Him endured the cross and despised its shame (Heb. 12:2). Like Jesus, if we keep our eyes focussed on what awaits us beyond the cross, beyond this life, we will never doubt that God is good.

3. The eternal growth of God's kingdom (Ps. 145:13)

Daniel 2:44 "In the days of those kings (Roman empire), the God of heaven will set up a kingdom that will never be destroyed, and this kingdom will not be left to another people. It will crush all these kingdoms and bring them to an end, but will itself endure forever. 45 You saw a stone break off from the mountain without a hand touching it, and it crushed the iron, bronze, fired clay, silver, and gold. The great God has told the king what will happen in the future. The dream is true, and its interpretation certain."

It is our duty to teach the next generation that all other kingdoms fail. Only Christ's kingdom will someday fill the whole earth. Napoleon was a fool to think he could establish a permanent kingdom. So was Lenin and his successors. Nothing built on rebellion against God can stand very long. Hitler's thousand-year Reich didn't even last 10 years. And I can assure you that current efforts to establish a modern-day Tower of Babel through the United Nations will also fail. All such efforts are doomed by God's decree. But Christ has established His kingdom, and it is growing. He is waiting for the day that will certainly come when the gospel prevails upon the whole earth and His enemies become His footstool (Heb. 10:13).

Every generation has a duty to communicate God's greatness to the next generation. And the older we get, the more important it becomes that we secure our own legacy in the Lord by passing on our faith to the generations to come.

Surveys show that older people (grandparents/extended family) are potentially powerful influencers of a child's Spiritual Development. In fact, grandparents come in second only to parents, but ahead of peers and quite a ways ahead of Sunday School teachers, youth workers, etc.

Helps for grandparents

1. *Courageous Grandparenting* by Cavin Harper
2. Scriptures to Pray for Children & Grandchildren
3. Grandparents @ Prayer (January 31, 7:00 p.m., led by Rod and Helen Wensley)
4. A new grandparenting movement (including a summer camp)

The Intentional Christian Grandparent Declaration

Created by Larry Fowler
CEO, Legacy Coalition

I am a grandparent, but I am more than a grandparent.
I am a Christian grandparent.
I believe the Bible and the God of the Bible.
I've received the grace of the Gospel of the Christ of the Bible and I desire to be a life-long
devoted disciple . . . and
I want my grandchildren to do the same!

Yes, I am a Christian grandparent, but I am more than that. I am an *intentional* Christian grandparent, and this is my declaration . . .

I love my grandkids, so I will . . .
hold them when they are born,
cuddle them when they are one,
chase them when they are two,
read to them when they are three,
play with them when they are four and
laugh at their jokes when they are five.

I'll support them,
exhort them,
cheer them,
revere them,
I'll praise them;
even help raise them.

I will be there for them, but that's not enough!

As an intentional Christian grandparent, I will do more.

I will pass on my faith, but my vision is beyond that. I will perpetuate my faith.
Therefore I will teach two generations.
I will not only teach two generations,
I will think four generations.

I will ponder what kind of grandparent must I be, so my grandchild becomes one like me, then carries on the legacy.

Yes, I am an intentional Christian grandparent.

Culture says; “Retire and go play.”
I say; “No thanks, I’ll pray.”
Culture says; “Pursue affluence.”
I say; “I’ll pursue influence.”
Culture says; “You’re old, you did your time.”
I say; “Not so! I’m in my prime.”
Culture says about the young generation; “You can’t relate.”
I say; “Ain’t true. My influence is great.”

I know my grandchildren need me, but *from* me they need Godly wisdom,
my Christlike example,
my faith stories,
my earnest prayers,
my uninterrupted time,
my unlimited love and
my God-authorized blessing.

So, what is intentional Christian *grandparenting*? Let me spell it out for you. It means I will . . .

Guide grandkids with grace.
Respect parent roles.
Abound in my affection.
Nurture their nature.
Deal with the dilemmas of distance.
Pray with passion and purpose.
Adjust my attitude, in case I need to . . .
Restore relationships.
Excel in my example.
Number my days.
Tell them my testimony.
Intentionally influence.
Never neglect the newest generation. And, most importantly . . .
Give them the Gospel!

I am an Intentional Christian Grandparent and this is my declaration!

Conclusion: As we speak to our children and grandchildren one driving thought must inspire us, “God forbid, but it is possible that my grandchildren may never believe what the Bible says. But with God’s help I will live in such a way that at the very least they will know that I believed it!”