

**Bible Text:** Judges 2:1-23  
**Preached on:** Sunday, August 20, 2006

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Will you take your Bibles this morning? We are turning to the book of Judges chapter two. I want to read all 23 verses this morning.

And an angel of the LORD came up from Gilgal to Bochim, and said, I made you to go up out of Egypt, and have brought you unto the land which I swore unto your fathers; and I said, I will never break my covenant with you. And ye shall make no league with the inhabitants of this land; ye shall throw down their altars: but ye have not obeyed my voice: why have ye done this? Wherefore I also said, I will not drive them out from before you; but they shall be as thorns in your sides, and their gods shall be a snare unto you. And it came to pass, when the angel of the LORD spake these words unto all the children of Israel, that the people lifted up their voice, and wept. And they called the name of that place Bochim: and they sacrificed there unto the LORD.

And when Joshua had let the people go, the children of Israel went every man unto his inheritance to possess the land. And the people served the LORD all the days of Joshua, and all the days of the elders that outlived Joshua, who had seen all the great works of the LORD, that he did for Israel. And Joshua the son of Nun, the servant of the LORD, died, being an hundred and ten years old. And they buried him in the border of his inheritance in Timnathheres, in the mount of Ephraim, on the north side of the hill Gaash. And also all that generation were gathered unto their fathers: and there arose another generation after them, which knew not the LORD, nor yet the works which he had done for Israel. And the children of Israel did evil in the sight of the LORD, and served Baalim: And they forsook the LORD God of their fathers, which brought them out of the land of Egypt, and followed other gods, of the gods of the people that were round about them, and bowed themselves unto them, and provoked the LORD to anger. And they forsook the LORD, and served Baal and Ashtaroth. And the anger of the LORD was hot against Israel, and he delivered them into the hands of spoilers that spoiled them, and he sold them into the hands of their enemies round about, so that they could not any longer stand before their enemies. Whithersoever they went out, the

hand of the LORD was against them for evil, as the LORD had said, and as the LORD had sworn unto them: and they were greatly distressed. Nevertheless the LORD raised up judges, which delivered them out of the hand of those that spoiled them. And yet they would not hearken unto their judges, but they went a whoring after other gods, and bowed themselves unto them: they turned quickly out of the way which their fathers walked in, obeying the commandments of the LORD; but they did not so. And when the LORD raised them up judges, then the LORD was with the judge, and delivered them out of the hand of their enemies all the days of the judge: for it repented the LORD because of their groanings by reason of them that oppressed them and vexed them. And it came to pass, when the judge was dead, that they returned, and corrupted themselves more than their fathers, in following other gods to serve them, and to bow down unto them; they ceased not from their own doings, nor from their stubborn way. And the anger of the LORD was hot against Israel; and he said, Because that this people hath transgressed my covenant which I commanded their fathers, and have not hearkened unto my voice; I also will not henceforth drive out any from before them of the nations which Joshua left when he died: That through them I may prove Israel, whether they will keep the way of the LORD to walk therein, as their fathers did keep it, or not. Therefore the LORD left those nations, without driving them out hastily; neither delivered he them into the hand of Joshua.<sup>1</sup>

Amen. May God bless the reading of his Word.

With our Bibles open will you pray with me and pray for me now as we come to hear what the Lord says unto his people.

*Gracious Father, we come this day of worship and we praise thee that we have a desire to worship the Lord God Jehovah even through thy Son Jesus Christ. We are not afraid, oh God, of the exclusive message that Christ comes to deliver that, "I am the way, the truth and the life and that no man shall come unto the Father but by me."*

*We thank you, Lord, that you have given us grace whereby we can with great boldness embrace this exclusive message for, Lord, your Spirit has worked within, bearing witness with our spirit that we are the sons of God. We know, Lord, that flesh and blood hath not revealed these things unto us, but our Father which is in heaven. And we praise thee today for thy regenerating grace, that marvelous supernatural work that takes place within a man's heart that enables him to embrace Jesus Christ as freely offered in the gospel.*

*Lord, I praise thee for every testimony of grace here this morning. I thank thee, oh God, for this church and the ministry that you have wrought through it. I thank you, oh God, for your people. We rejoice that your people cannot be confined to any one congregation or any one demonization. But, Lord, your people are precious in your sight. You love*

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<sup>1</sup> Judges 2:1-23.

*your people. And, as the Great Shepherd, you have taken it upon yourself to feed the sheep. Lord, as we open the Word of God this day we ask especially that we would hear your voice.*

*Father, you have said that, "My sheep hear my voice."*

*Lord, I pray that every child of God this morning would hear the speaking voice of the Spirit of God. Lord, I pray that we will not be listening, as it were, for the voice of the under shepherd, but, Lord, through that feeble earthen vessel I pray that we would all be wiser to recognize that it is through the feeble instrumentality that you by the power of the Holy Ghost speak unto your own. Lord, cause us to hear that voice this day and to discern it. Help us to recognize what it is you are bringing to us. We know that the Word of God is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness. Lord, we need thee today to come and apply the Word of God as you see fit. Father, speak to every heart. Speak to those who are still like Lazarus in the grave wrapped in the grave clothes. May they hear the voice of the Lord for the very first time and rejoice that, oh God, even through that speaking voice you are able to bring men unto saving faith. Give us help in the Word of God. Give me help to preach. Deliver me from preaching a spiritual message in a carnal poem, in a carnal display. We ask it in Jesus' name. Amen.*

Every year our churches in North America undergo an examination by the presbytery to ascertain the health of local congregations. And these examinations are comprised of various questions to different peoples. The deacons, first of all, are given questions regarding the physical oversight of the body, questions regarding finance, property, salaries, et cetera. Then there are questions given to the elders regarding the spiritual oversight of the congregation, questions regarding to the method we have for ministry and problem areas or frequent areas of complaint. And then there are questions for the ministers regarding their own spiritual state and the spiritual state of the church in their estimation. These questions are direct and they are very searching. And these questions are to be asked and answered in the presence of the entire church board.

Among the many searching questions I am asked as a minister is: How would you describe the present spiritual state of your church?

Now, in answering that question a minister must step back and look not only where the church has been, where the church is now presently and where the church is going. It is supposed like a business man would look back over five and 10 and 20 years as to where the business will be, so a minister must do the same thing. And it is only in light of those projections, then, can you honestly give an answer regarding the spiritual state of your church.

Well, as I answered that question regarding the church the Lord has brought me to minister there are many things that encouraged me regarding the spiritual health of the congregation. There is however, one outstanding matter that causes me much anxiety and it is this. Where are we heading?

I ask myself a question. Where will Grace Free Presbyterian Church in Litchfield, New Hampshire be one generation from today?

I suppose you have to answer and ask the same question. Where will Toronto Free Presbyterian Church be one generation from this day? That is an important question and it is searching because it is and has been the intent of the devil from the beginning of time to instigate departure from God.

The Scripture makes it very clear that man has a natural tendency to depart from the Lord. There is within every man, then, the spirit of apostasy. Now even Christians can be guilty of apostasy. No, thankfully, not final apostasy but they can be guilty of a temporary apostasy or a departure from God.

And when you look at the nation of Israel you recognize that it is a history punctuated by departures from God. And there is no book that illustrates that better than the book of Judges. When you read through this book you cannot escape the recurring theme and that is they kept on going away from the Lord.

Some men have described it as the sin cycle. You have account here of rebellion and then in answer to that rebellion God sends his retribution. They are brought low and they grieve and in answer to the retribution they repent of their sin.

In God's mercy, then, there is restoration, but it never ends there because it always goes back again from restoration right back again to rebellion. So you have got this rebellion over and over again and you see many instances of it.

In Psalm 78 and 11 they forgot his works.

Psalm 106 and 13 they forgot his works and the counsels that he had shown.

In Judges 2:17 one of the verses that we have read this morning it says that, "That they went a whoring after other gods."<sup>2</sup>

Now the Bible is very direct in the language used, a whoring, a whoring after other gods. You have got idolatry here, but the Lord likens idolatry unto spiritual adultery. And we look at people who commit adultery in the physical sense and we stand back with shame. But we ought to be more sensitive of spiritual adultery, that which is idolatry, a whoring after other gods.

Notice Judges two and 17. This generation it says that they turned quickly out of the way of their fathers.

Do we not know all together how quickly we depart from God? The hymn writer said, "We are prone to wander." After a time of blessing on the Lord's Day we feel as if the

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<sup>2</sup> Judges 2:17.

Spirit of God has spoken directly to us and we feel it will never be the same. Lord, we go out Monday morning and we fall flat on our face because we are quickly departing from God. That spirit within us.

Well, within a space of a generation the people of God, as recorded in Judges two had departed from the Lord. Notice in verse number seven during the days of Joshua and during the days of the elders that served with him they served the Lord with all of their heart.

And then in verse eight you see that Joshua dies. Verse nine tells us where he was buried. Verse 10 tells us that all the other elders that served with him died. And then notice what verse 10 says. “And there arose another generation after them, which knew not the LORD, nor yet the works which he had done for Israel.”<sup>3</sup>

All the faithful men and women of one generation passed away and another generation arises that do not know the Lord. But I ask or am asked the question: How would you describe the present spiritual state of your church? It is that matter that causes me the anxiety. Because this generational departure is almost ingrained within our fallen nature, how sad is it when the children of God fearing men and women grow up and depart from the God of their fathers.

Verse 12. “And they forsook the LORD God of their fathers.”<sup>4</sup>

This generational departure from God is not only a real threat to our homes, but it is also a great threat to our churches. You see, great and faithful churches within a short period of time can—and history says they do fall into apostasy. If you have been reading *The Canadian Revivalist* you will see story there my father wrote on Ulrich Zwingli. Many great churches raised up in his day and in his ministry and what is being preached from those pulpits today?

If you travel to Newburyport, Massachusetts there there is a church, a Presbyterian church. Under the pulpit is buried George Whitefield. What is being preached in the church above George Whitefield’s dead body every Sunday? It is a completely apostate message.

Go to Northern Ireland and you will see that on many of the churches there is a plaque stating the date of the beginning of the Church, 1859, 1860, many churches. And from many of those churches today no longer rings forth the truth of the gospel. Why? Because there arose a generation after them that did not know the Lord.

And so what we are talking about here in the book of Judges is a very real threat. And because it is a real threat surely there is a warning for us. Here is a problem that engulfed the nation and will it not happen to the Free Presbyterian Church?

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<sup>3</sup> Judges 2:10.

<sup>4</sup> Judges 2:12.

Here is a problem that plagued God's ancient people. And will we be so presumptuous as to imagine that it will not happen to us?

Friends, we don't have a monopoly on God blessing. God blesses only according to the riches of his grace and if we don't hold on to the mercy he has extended, the mercy that has been extended then we will lose.

And so this morning I want to look primarily at this verse 10, but really in light of the context as we consider generational departure from God.

"There arose another generation after them, which knew not the LORD, nor yet the works which he had done for Israel."<sup>5</sup>

As we think of second generational departure from the Lord, let's look, first of all, at the description of this new generation? Because the verse says, "There arose another generation..."<sup>6</sup>

Ecclesiastes one and four says that, "One generation passeth away, and another generation cometh."<sup>7</sup>

We try to escape that reality, but the fact of the matter is in one generation we will all be gone. But where will this church be and the ministry that takes place underneath its roof?

Well, as we look at this new generation there are three differences that I want to point out to you. This new generation, first of all, lacked the fight that their fathers exhibited. This new generation, they lacked the fight that their fathers exhibited. They had no experience in the battles their fathers had fought.

The book of Judges begins a new era. The book of Joshua is a book of conquest. The book of Judges is a completely new era. It is the development of the nation now in its land. The previous generation was one of conquest and war and we read of that in the book of Deuteronomy.

"The LORD thy God, he will go over before thee, and he will destroy these nations from before thee, and thou shalt possess them: and Joshua, he shall go over before thee, as the LORD hath said."<sup>8</sup>

Joshua 10 and 40. "So Joshua smote all the country of the hills, and of the south, and of the vale, and of the springs, and all their kings: he left none remaining, but utterly destroyed all that breathed, as the LORD God of Israel commanded."<sup>9</sup>

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<sup>5</sup> Judges 2:10.

<sup>6</sup> Ibid.

<sup>7</sup> Ecclesiastes 1:4.

<sup>8</sup> Deuteronomy 31:3.

<sup>9</sup> Joshua 10:40.

And Joshua 11:18. “Joshua made war a long time with all those kings.”<sup>10</sup>

So Joshua’s generation was a generation of war.

Now notice what it says about this new generation in chapter three and verse one. “Now these are the nations which the LORD left, to prove Israel by them, even as many of Israel as had not known all the wars of Canaan.”<sup>11</sup>

Here is a generation and coming into homes, into a nation, into society that had already been set up. But they didn’t understand how that it got there and they didn’t recognize the blood, sweat and tears of their forefathers that brought them to where they were.

Well, friends, is there not practical truths for us there to recognize? What you notice here is that when the people were in war, when they were fighting they were faithful and theirs was a battling generation. Notice they, “served the LORD all the days of Joshua.”<sup>12</sup>

And what kind of days were Joshua’s days? They were days of war. When the fighting ceased the departure began. So the point I am saying to you here is that they lacked the fight their fathers exhibited.

Now let’s apply that spiritually. The Scripture leaves no uncertainty. We are called to fight the good fight of faith. The hymn writer said, “Since I must fight if I would reign.” We are called to war against the world, the flesh and the devil. We are told and encouraged to put on the whole armor of God. We are told to constantly have the sword in hand. And what is the implication? As we are enduring hardness as good soldiers, the implication is that you can never ever in the Christian walk leave or call a cease fire with the enemies because the moment you cease to fight, well, that is the moment the enemy is going to take you over.

Turn over to Judges chapter three and we will notice exactly how that happens. Judges three and verse number five.

And the children of Israel dwelt among the Canaanites, Hittites, and Amorites, and Perizzites, and Hivites, and Jebusites: And they took their daughters to be their wives, and gave their daughters to their sons, and served their gods. And the children of Israel did evil in the sight of the LORD, and forgot the LORD their God, and served Baalim and the groves.<sup>13</sup>

Three things happened. Remember, this generation is not a warring generation like their fathers were. And what happens? Well, first of all they are content to dwell among them. Forget casting out the Canaanites and the Hittites and the Amorites, the Perizzites just as

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<sup>10</sup> Joshua 11:18.

<sup>11</sup> Judges 3:1.

<sup>12</sup> Judges 2:7.

<sup>13</sup> Judges 3:5-7.

the Lord had said, but they dwelt among them. Whenever they dwelt among them, notice, now they are intermarrying with them. The third thing you notice here is now they are serving their gods.

Dear friends, do you not see already that that is what is happening in our generation? There was a day when the world was something to be abhorred or something to be stayed away from.

“Abhor that which is evil.”<sup>14</sup>

But the generation today in which we live is not one where people are seeing this as a real, true, spiritual fight against the world, the flesh and the devil, but they are content to dwell among them. And when they dwell among them, what happens next is they begin to intermingle, intermarry with them. And before long they are no longer serving the God of their fathers.

And there is a generation, then, that are pure in their own eyes and yet they are not washed from their filthiness. Friends, there is the generation that don't see the dangers. They don't see it happen because it happens over a period of time.

And so we can apply it individually, but let's apply it also in terms of the Church. Because the Church has been at war from her inception.

In Genesis 3:15 we are told that the seed of the woman would constantly fall under the animosity of the seed of the serpent. And today we enjoy spiritual and theological freedom because men and women before us have fought and have been burned at the stake in order that we might have God's truth. They have labored to grant us what we have got. But our generation for the most part knows nothing of such battles. We take for granted that now we come into an environment where this is just here, but we don't understand how it got here.

And today's attitude within the church is, “Well, we can't be confrontational and we must settle back to a comfortable type of ministry and we need to soften our attitudes.”

And what happens when we do? When we are content to dwell among them it won't be long before we are intermarrying spiritually with them. And before long you will see it happening in this church what happened in Newburyport, Massachusetts and all these other countries and all these other places.

There cannot be any compromise. There cannot be any toleration for that which is evil, for the Church is at war. And, friends, we have always got to view our ministry in terms of that reality.

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<sup>14</sup> Romans 12:9.



And so the first difference, then, of this new generation is that they lacked the fight that their fathers exhibited. Notice the second difference is they left the faith that their fathers had embraced.

This new generation, we are told that they knew not the Lord. And I guarantee you they would have denied that claim.

“What do you mean we don’t know the Lord? Of course we know the Lord.”

You see there is all the difference between knowing the Lord and knowing about the Lord. And I fear some of our young people know about Christ, but they don’t know Christ. What is the difference?

Well, someone has asked you, “Do you know the prime minister?”

You might respond, “Yeah, I know about the prime minister, but I don’t know him.”

And that is what this new generation arising, they knew all about the Lord God Jehovah, but they did not know him. Oh, they knew all the right words because we are told that they drew near with their mouth and with their lips they did honor him.

We are told in Jeremiah with their mouth they drew near, but they were far away in their reins. And that is the same thing we are reading in the book of Judges here because they cased not from their own doings. No, their own stubborn way.

You see, today’s gospel has become: Put your faith in Christ. You will be saved from hell fire, but you don’t need to change or amend your ways whatsoever. And in that sense to day’s generation does not know the Lord.

Isaiah 55:7 makes it very clear that the wicked has to forsake his way. He must go the way of the Lord and he must turn away from this thoughts.

That this new and upcoming generation, they had all the right words. Not only did they have the right words, but they knew the right things to do.

You see, through the history of Israel generation after generation after generation were arising, many of which did not know the Lord, but they did not stop offering sacrifice unto the Lord. In fact, they became more systematic at times with their sacrifice and their ceremony until the Lord stopped them in Isaiah through his prophet and said, “To what purpose is the multitude of this sacrifice unto me? What on earth are you giving me all this for?”

Dear friend, I wonder today. Do you understand that in the eyes of the Lord it is better to obey than to sacrifice? Do you know Christ or do you just know about him? It is all the difference in the world.

We are told of this generation that they did not know the Lord nor did they know the words that he had done for Israel.

The word “know” here that they use does not refer to intellectual knowledge, but experiential knowledge. They knew God intellectually, but they had no experience of what God does in a man’s life. They knew what they had heard, but they had never experienced.

I wonder, young person, are you here this morning and you know what Christ does only because of what your parents have told you, but you have never experienced it in your own soul?

You know, growing up in this church one of the things that gave me the greatest fear was that anybody should ever ask me my testimony. I could have given you your testimony because I knew what I had heard and I knew what I had been passed along the years. But a testimony is not what God does for the next man. A testimony is what God has done for me.

And, friends, if you don’t have a testimony as to God’s saving grace in your life, that is a dangerous place to be. Now you might not have a time when it took place, but can you say like that one man, “Once I was blind, but today I can see”?

This generation did not have that testimony because they left the faith that their fathers had embraced.

I want you to notice a third difference is they lost the freedom that their fathers enjoyed. They lost the freedom.

Look at verse number 14. “And the anger of the LORD was hot against Israel, and he delivered them into the hands of spoilers that spoiled them, and he sold them into the hands of their enemies round about, so that they could not any longer stand before their enemies.”<sup>15</sup>

They had taken the freedom their parents had gained through obedience for granted and they did not recognize that life as they had known it was nothing more than the result of the freedom that God had given.

They imagined, I am sure, that they would always have prospered and they imagined, I am sure that they would always have had the victory and that all things would always seemed to have worked out. But they didn’t see the danger of going back, again, into bondage. Instead of the Israelites spoiling the enemy, now the enemy is spoiling them.

Things would not always be the same as they were. Well, our children are growing up in our homes and imagining, well, because of the stability of this home, because of the

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<sup>15</sup> Judges 2:14.

prosperity and the blessing and all of God's goodness, because I know it now in my youth, therefore I expect it will always be there.

But, you know, the best way to lose your privileges is to forget how you got them? Do you realize today why you don't grow up in a home, dear young one, where there is a complete mess, a dysfunctional family where alcoholism rules and reigns, where there is not every kind of immorality destroying your family as so many others? That is not mere coincidence. That is the blessing of God upon your home. And if you depart from the Lord who brought it to your parents, the blessing and the privilege that they had will be gone. The best way to lose your privileges is to forget how you got them.

The Bible says we must not forget.

And so we have looked at three descriptions of this generation. "There arose another generation."<sup>16</sup>

Look with me now if you will at the deficiency of the old generation because we are told here, "There arose another generation after them."<sup>17</sup>

It would be easy to sit in judgment of the new generation and engage in the blame game.

"Oh, I can't believe what these kids are doing. I can't believe what they have got up to."

The Bible says, "Let a man examine himself."<sup>18</sup>

You know, whenever we get into a type of ministry where it is always looking at what the next person is doing that is wrong, we forget the biblical imperative to let every man examine himself. And so when we look at the description of the new generation, yes, there are things that cause grief. But there is a deficiency here in the old generation because this generation, you must remember, is arising up after them. And as we look at the biblical account here and notice this old generation, they failed in at least three ways. Let me share them.

The first thing we have to say is they failed to teach. How on earth did this new generation not know the Lord? Remember David?

He said:

We have heard with our ears, O God, our fathers have told us, what work thou didst in their days, in the times of old. How thou didst drive out the heathen with thy hand, and plantedst them; how thou didst afflict the people, and cast them out. For they got not the land in possession by their own sword, neither did their own arm save them: but thy right hand, and

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<sup>16</sup> Judges 2:10.

<sup>17</sup> Ibid.

<sup>18</sup> 1 Corinthians 11:28.

thine arm, and the light of thy countenance, because thou hadst a favour unto them.<sup>19</sup>

And then David says, “Thou art my King, O God: command deliverances for Jacob.”<sup>20</sup>

You see, when David came to the place where it was his turn to fight, based on what he had heard from his Father he commanded the Lord to be the same. “Though hast been favorable.”<sup>21</sup> Therefore, Lord, be favorable to us.

David knew because his father had told him.

Deuteronomy six and four.

Hear, O Israel: The LORD our God is one LORD: And thou shalt love the LORD thy God with all thine heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy might. And these words, which I command thee this day, shall be in thine heart: And thou shalt teach them diligently unto thy children, and shalt talk of them when thou sittest in thine house, and when thou walkest by the way, and when thou liest down, and when thou risest up.<sup>22</sup>

And you say, “Well, I don’t know how, Lord, to teach my children.”

Well, the answer is right here. Let the Word of God be in your heart, “And thou shalt teach them diligently.”<sup>23</sup>

And I have heard many people since I have gone to New Hampshire blaming the church or blaming their school because of the generational departure from God. And if there is failure to teach it has to come right back to our house because the obligation lies four square upon the parents.

How do you know?

“And thou shalt teach them diligently unto thy children.”<sup>24</sup>

And well, you say, “Well, that was the corporate body.”

Yes, “And when thou walkest by the way, and when thou liest down, and when thou risest up.”<sup>25</sup>

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<sup>19</sup> Psalm 44:1-3.

<sup>20</sup> Psalm 44:4.

<sup>21</sup> Psalm 85:1.

<sup>22</sup> Deuteronomy 6:4-7.

<sup>23</sup> Deuteronomy 6:7.

<sup>24</sup> Ibid.

<sup>25</sup> Ibid.

We are talking about the most intimate setting of the home. So when we say: Why did this nation arise not knowing the Lord? There had to be somewhere along their failure to teach.

Dear friends, as we think of that can we not together moan or bemoan the fact that we are so diligent to teach them this, that and the other. I wonder do you teach your children or do you diligently teach them? You see, this generation had to have failed to teach if their generation after them rose not knowing the Lord. I want you to notice even more importantly here they failed to lead by example.

Look with me, if you will, at judges chapter one. And we are looking here at some of the deficiencies of the old generation.

Judges chapter one and 21. Notice, “And the children of Benjamin did not drive out the Jebusites.”<sup>26</sup>

Verse 27. “Neither did Manasseh drive out the inhabitants.”<sup>27</sup>

Verse 28. “They... did not utterly drive them out.”<sup>28</sup>

Verse 29. “Ephraim [did not] drive out the Canaanites.”<sup>29</sup>

Verse 30. Zebulon did not drive them out.

Verse 31. Asher did not drive them out.

Naphtali, verse 33, did not drive out the inhabitants.

This old generation was a warring generation, but guess what? They had become selective in their battles and they had fought on many fronts. But why does the Bible say over and over repeatedly this one thing that they did not completely finish the job?

They engaged, it seems in battles that seemed legitimate, but in other battle fronts they were left untouched. They did not deal fully and completely with the enemy. And, friends, practically speaking take that truth into your own home. And recognize that, parents, you cannot afford to take half measures with sin. Why? Because the enemy that you leave alone will be the very enemy that will overcome your child.

Do you notice here that the enemies that they left, the enemies that they left untouched were the same ones that now the next generation they were intermarrying with?

The whole scenario reminds me kind of Lot. Lot was a man, as you know, who set up his

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<sup>26</sup> Judges 1:21.

<sup>27</sup> Judges 1:27.

<sup>28</sup> Judges 1:28.

<sup>29</sup> Judges 1:29.

tents a lot closer to Sodom than he should have, right in the gates. When the Lord came unto Lot that righteous man, we are told, he came unto his sons-in-law and he said, “Get out of this place. The Lord will destroy it.”

The Scripture says, “But he seemed as one that mocked unto his sons in law.”<sup>30</sup>

“Yeah, good one, Lot.”

“Get out of this place.”

“Why are you telling us to get out of this place if you are here yourself?”

He was trying to teach separation from the world as a man who could say no more than do as I say, but don’t do as I do.

Dear parent, I wonder, are you trying to do the same thing? You know, there should be no surprise in some cases that there is so much of the world in the next generation. The reason being there is so much of the world still in us. And if we don’t deal fully and completely with the enemy, our children are not so foolish as to see... not be able to see the inconsistency.

This generation, then, they were deficient in that they failed to teach and that they failed to lead by example. They were deficient, thirdly, in that they failed to restrain.

Chapter three and verse six. “And they took their daughters to be their wives, and gave their daughters to their sons.”<sup>31</sup>

Now this is said of a new generation, but we can look at it practically speaking in regards to any generation. Here is a people that know the Lord, have the truth at least intellectually on their mind and now they are not only watching their children get married to unbelievers, but they are giving their children away.

As we read that I am reminded of Eli, the sad account of Eli, 1 Samuel chapter two. Imagine the grief of that aging man as he hears of the abomination and the shame of his sons, the whoredom that they are committing right outside the temple, right outside the tabernacle. Grieved in his heart he speaks unto them and he tells them his disappointment.

But then over in chapter three verse 13 we are told that, “He restrained them not.”<sup>32</sup> In other words, he was not happy with what they were doing, but he failed to restrain them. What does that mean? It means he failed to use his authority, first of all, as a father.

“Oh, I don’t like what you are doing.”

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<sup>30</sup> Genesis 19:14.

<sup>31</sup> Judges 3:6.

<sup>32</sup> 1 Samuel 3:13.

He failed to restrain them with the authority of the father. Then he failed to restrain them with the authority of the high priest.

Why on earth were they still that office?

But, dear friends, that which is true of this nation is true many times of us. Let me ask you as we head towards the next generation are you restraining your children? Are you restraining your children? Do you restrain them when they watch TV? I am amazed. I really am amazed. And I can't speak in regard to this congregation because I don't know, but I am amazed that any parent who would take the name of the Lord who would allow their children to sit unrestrained in front of the TV set in this day and age.

Do you restrain your children before the internet? Do you know TV watching is drastically dropping? It is not the thing of this generation. It has become apparent to me that very quickly we lose touch with the next generation as far as what they are into. I am only 33 so I think, well, I know basically what the kids or the college career age are doing in our church. I have no idea because technology is advancing so quickly that there are children within our churches—and reports have come back because they are in my church—of kids who are sitting before the internet and have access to the most wicked, vile stuff. And often times it is purely on account of the parents that they just don't even see it. I say ignorance in the most respectful way.

And then sometimes when it is addressed the parent would say, "Well, it would never happen with this one. It would never happen with little Johnny."

Let me tell you that little Johnny is a devil apart from the grace of God and little Johnny has a deprived nature. And I don't care what type of home life your child has if you fail to restrain them, if you fail to engage in drastic action to keep the next generation, it is going to be just as it was in the book of Judges. And you are going to stand back and wonder, "Lord, why did it happen?"

Well, the mercy is the failure of this generation is brought before our attention so that we can examine it and can recognize our deficiency and seek God's forgiveness and his mercy to continue.

Let me close with one final thought then.

We have looked at the description of the new generation. We have looked at the deficiency of the old generation. What is the hope then of any generation? Well, look at the deliverance. What is the deliverance for any and every generation.

Well, first of all it is the mercy of God. Notice there in Judges two and verse number 16. Perhaps you think the message is gloomy. Let me tell you, I feel it gloomy. But thank God for the first Word of verse number 16, "Nevertheless..."

You can't find Christ in the Old Testament? There he is, right there. "Nevertheless..."

Here is a nation that was arising. They had forsaken the God of their fathers. They had served Baalim and all the hosts of other gods. They were guilty as a new generation. There was deficiency in the old generation. All seemed hopeless.

"Nevertheless the LORD raised up judges, which delivered them out of the hand of those that spoiled them."<sup>33</sup>

In other words, notwithstanding all the failure of the new generation and all the failure of the old generation, that God in his mercy for no reason apart from the good pleasure of his will, he breaks in and he says, "Nevertheless I will save you still."

Child of God, where would we be today without the nevertheless? I mean what hope is there for our children if they will be saved purely on account of our parental duties?

If my child's soul hangs based upon my parenthood they are going to be damned because I have failed a thousand times. But thank God nevertheless he breaks in. And in spite of all of our failure he sends judges to deliver them from the and of the spoilers and for that reason.

And then many times in the Psalms we read, "I will sing of the mercies of the LORD for ever: with my mouth will I make known thy faithfulness to all generations."<sup>34</sup>

"He hath remembered his covenant for ever, the word which he commanded to a thousand generations."<sup>35</sup>

"For the LORD is good; his mercy is everlasting; and his truth endureth to all generations."<sup>36</sup>

Let me ask you. Where would our generation be without the mercy of God? Sometimes we look at the next generation with disdain, imagining that we are better than they. I think in many cases we are probably worse.

God in his mercy has intervened in your life. And if he can intervene in your life apart from any goodness in you, can he not do the same for your children?

Parent, if today you have many causes to be anxious over your children and you feel this overwhelming guilt because you as a parent have failed, thank God nevertheless he sends he judges to deliver his people.

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<sup>33</sup> Judges 2:16.

<sup>34</sup> Psalm 89:1.

<sup>35</sup> Psalm 105:8.

<sup>36</sup> Psalm 100:5.



And so the deliverance for any generation is, first of all, the mercy of God. Then it is the prayers of the saints because in chapter three verse nine we are told that when they were feeling the pain of being now put under tribute we are told that they cried unto the Lord. They cried unto the Lord when they saw the state as it really was.

The end of the month we have become prayer times in our congregation. The last Sunday of the month we come early and I have noticed that those who come to those prayer times are people who recognize that their children are struggling. And those prayer times have been times of brokenness where husbands and wives and fathers and mothers have wept before God to intervene because they know that their children are beyond their reach.

I am always amazed, however, that those who have good children—if we can say that—are never found in that prayer time or rarely. Does that not show us that sometimes only when the Lord lets us see depravity as it really is sometimes right up close that we feel the urgency? Oh, that we had the urgency before such times of disaster.

Friends, we have got to pray together that God has mercy.

And then, finally, there has got to be a firm determination on the part of the present generation. Joshua came to that point. He said, “Choose you this day whom ye will serve; whether the gods which your fathers served that were on the other side of the flood, or the gods of the Amorites, in whose land ye dwell: but as for me and my house, we will serve the LORD.”<sup>37</sup>

We look at this truth then this morning, the danger of second generational departure from God. Let me remind you that Ecclesiastes one and four says, “One generation passeth away, and another generation cometh.”<sup>38</sup> There is another coming right now.

And Church history has demonstrated that no church has stood more than about 40 years without significant signs of decay and departure. Why? Because apostasy is in our nature.

I wonder, dear parent, has God spoken to your heart this morning? God has brought to your heart your failure. And praise his name because he wounds that he might heal. And there is mercy with God in spite of our failure. But the Lord after he speaks peace unto his people and reassuring mercy, he says, “But let them not turn again to folly.”<sup>39</sup>

Do things need to change in your home? Do things need to change in your heart? How many times has God burdened your heart and you leave the service convinced, “Ok, from this point onward it is going to be different?”

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<sup>37</sup> Joshua 24:15.

<sup>38</sup> Ecclesiastes 1:4.

<sup>39</sup> Psalm 85:8.

Sadly, it reverts back to what it has always been. Is it because you don't think it is going to happen in your home? Or you don't think it will happen with your children or with your church?

Well, it happened to the Israelites, the ancient people of God and will it not happen with us.

When I have to answer that question, then: What is the spiritual health of your congregation? While there are many things that encourage me, it is this thing here that causes me a great deal of anxiety because I think already there are signs of some of what we are talking about this morning already evident in the next generation.

If that is the case, it is the responsibility of us all. May God help us to heed this warning. May he help us to overcome all our failures and by grace seek his help and mercy. These things are written for our learning.

A few weeks ago for the very first time in my life I had the thought of grandchildren. Never did I think about having grandchildren. But I supposed realistically I could be as close as 10 years away. As I look at my children growing up and then try to contemplate where will their children be, I had an overwhelming sense of fear because what we see in the book of Judges we can't escape from it unless we recognize that we have got to walk a very straight line before the living God.

As we close, then, this morning in prayer, dear young person, do you know about Christ or do you know him?

Dear parent, if you have failed him many times you are not on your own. Thank God that God saves in spite of your parental efforts at times. If you have failed him, would you come today and repent of your sin and pray, oh God, that by his grace you mean to go on.

As we close this morning let's pray for the Holy Ghost, the empowering agent because without him we can do nothing. May God empower us to be the generation that we need to be so that the generation arising after us will not have the testimony of this one before us today.

Let's all pray.

*Father in heaven, we praise and thank thee for thy Word and for thy mercy. We thank thee, oh God, for the sharp and for the blunt and for the direct reminders. And, Lord, I pray for humility of heart for all of us enough to see these things developing in our own hearts and in our own homes. Oh God, as you show us depravity we have cause to be terrified. But, Lord, you never show us depravity apart from Christ and for that we are grateful. And, Lord, depravity could drive us to despair if it would not first drive us to Christ. Lord, may we be driven to Christ today to seek the mercy of God that is extended in him. Thank you for all of the parents here. Lord, empower them by your Spirit to be all that they need to be. And, oh God, I pray for the next generation, that nevertheless in*

*spite of all of our failure that you will empower them to know thee and to serve thee with all of their hearts. God, go before us and let not the Word of God come to our attention without grace that we might follow your way and do your Word. Here our prayer we ask in Jesus' name. Amen.*