

## Daily Devotional, July 6, 2021 Living and Loving as a Faithful Generation

***He decreed statutes for Jacob and established the law in Israel, which he commanded our ancestors to teach their children, so the next generation would know them, even the children yet to be born, and they in turn would tell their children. Then they would put their trust in God and would not forget his deeds but would keep his commands. They would not be like their ancestors—a stubborn and rebellious generation, whose hearts were not loyal to God, whose spirits were not faithful to Him. Psalm 78:5-8 (NIV)***

Every so often, when we read through the psalms, we come across one that demonstrates a bit of the history of God's grace and mercy to God's chosen people of Israel. Within the content of psalms such as this one, what we learn is that God continues to be gracious and merciful, but God's people continue to lack gratitude.

In this passage, we hear that God established for his people a law, for them to follow. However, this law may be difficult for those who have lived against its provision their entire lives, who are adults hearing this law for the first time. Nevertheless, they are to teach this law to their children, who are to teach this law to their children, and so on, and the hope is that one day a one of these generations will actually grasp these concepts and begin living according to God's command.

After many years of waiting for this this to happen, God finally sent Jesus into our world. Jesus came and lived a life that embodied the grace of God, the essence of the law, and the ways of God's kingdom. All that we are commanded is to simply follow that example. That generation was then asked to be witnesses to all that had been done by Jesus, and through the power of the Holy Spirit, were to live as examples of what Jesus embodied. In doing so, those who learned from Jesus' disciples would also imitate them as they imitate Christ. The idea here, is that we have a living example of how we should live, and our task to is to follow that example by passing it on to the next generation.

Advance forward a few decades, and the church is already debating what Christ really means by some of his teachings, the work of the apostles is refuted, and many are executed or excommunicated. As we continue this thread up to today's culture, what we find is a world with hundreds of denominations, none of which can agree on certain aspects of faith, yet all claim to know God's truth. At the same time, in society, we can't even agree on what it means to treat another human being with love and respect, as we argue over which lives matter.

The truth is, we need to learn how to be a generation of individuals that *sets our hope in God*. We cannot forget the work that God has done in our lives, and we should treat others with the love in which God has treated all of us. We should offer the same forgiveness that God has offered us, and we should be accept others as God has accepted us.

I know we can read these words and quickly agree, but the real proof is when we actually put words into action and choose to live in a way that reflects what we believe. When I think about many of the things I see in our world today, I hear, loudly, the words of the psalmist: that *"they would not be like their ancestors, a stubborn and rebellious generation, whose hearts were not loyal to God, whose spirits were not faithful to Him."* I believe we can be better—we can choose to do better, we can be a people who are faithful to love God in word and deed, and especially in our relationships with others. May God give us guidance to be God's people, obedient to God's law of love, now and always

***Prayer: Gracious God, I pray that as each of us comes to a point in our lives where we surrender to Your will for us. It may not be what we want, but it will surely be what we need in order to live a life fully invested in You. Help us to realize that anything You bring into our lives and anything You reveal to us is for our good and for the good of others. Give us a spirit of acceptance and a heart open to Your movement in our lives. Allow us to let Your love surround us and cast out any fear or doubts. Help us to live in love with You, and to accept Your will for our lives. May we trust in the way You show us to go. In Jesus' Name, Amen.***