

## Our Duty To The Next Generation

### Psalm 78: 1-8

I had the opportunity to watch day 1 of the RNC this week on television. If you missed it, it was done in true Trump style with personalities like Kid Rock and Hulk Hogan speaking and performing. In some ways, I was actually encouraged about the possibility of a change for the better if and when this man is elected. However, at the closing of day one there was something done that absolutely raised the hair upon the back of my neck and put fear in my heart concerning the direction our country is headed.

The last speaker of the night was a woman by the name of Harmeet Dhillon, and she closed the night with a recitation of the Ardas – a Sikh prayer asking for protection from God.

For those that don't know, Sikhism is defined as an ethical monotheism fusing the elements of Hinduism and Islam. They will tell you that their God and our God is one and the same because there is only one God. However, this cannot be true because while they may accept Jesus as a great prophet, they will not accept Him as God, because they believe that God cannot be born.

This woman offered prayer to “our one true god Wahegru,” asking for his divine protection. I don't know who this Wahegru is, but he is not the God our founding fathers worshipped. He is not the God I believe in; nor the God I serve; nor the God who shed His very blood and died on a Roman cross to save my soul. He is certainly not the God that I feel comfortable as a nation offering a prayer to.

Many in this country simply do not care, and would tell me that I am majoring in the minors, that I am over reacting. Many did not notice, or were not offended because they just don't know any better. Why are we that are supposed to be a “Christian” nation; we that are supposed to be “one nation under God” now praying, and/or tolerating the prayer to a foreign god. I can't help but feel that as a nation we are running headlong into idol worship. I can't help but feeling that we, like Israel, have forgotten the God of our fathers and all of the wonderful things that He has done. I can't help but feeling that generationally there has been a failure at some point, and that we are now in the process of failing our children.

**Psa 78:1** Maschil of Asaph. **Give ear, O my people, to my law: incline your ears to the words of my mouth.**

**Psa 78:2** **I will open my mouth in a parable: I will utter dark sayings of old:**

**Psa 78:3** **Which we have heard and known, and our fathers have told us.**

**Psa 78:4** **We will not hide *them* from their children, shewing to the generation to come the praises of the LORD, and his strength, and his wonderful works that he hath done.**

**Psa 78:5** For he established a testimony in Jacob, and appointed a law in Israel, which he commanded our fathers, that they should make them known to their children:

**Psa 78:6** That the generation to come might know *them, even* the children *which* should be born; *who* should arise and declare *them* to their children:

**Psa 78:7** That they might set their hope in God, and not forget the works of God, but keep his commandments:

**Psa 78:8** And might not be as their fathers, a stubborn and rebellious generation; a generation *that* set not their heart aright, and whose spirit was not stedfast with God.

Psalm 78 is a history lesson in song. I believe that it is the second longest Psalm after 119 unless I missed something. It was almost certainly written after the division of the Kingdom. We know this because it specifically addresses Ephraim in verse 9 and 67.

Ephraim was the dominate tribe for much of the history of the Northern Kingdom of Israel. Here is recorded how Ephraim led Israel astray, away from God and into sin. Here is recorded how God chose instead the tribe of Judah and the house of David.

In between these themes is an overview of Israel's history – how God brought them out of Egypt and provided for them in the wilderness. But it is not a history written to make the Israelites look great. Instead, we see beginning in verse 54 how they turned from God after He had established them in the Promised Land. Here it credits David and his kingdom with bringing the Israelites out of the darkness of the Judges period.

That's a summary of verses 9-72, but we will only be focusing on the first eight verses that we read as a text. It serves as a preamble for the history lesson. It is practically parallel to the commandments of Deuteronomy 6:1-13:

**Deu 6:1** Now these *are* the commandments, the statutes, and the judgments, which the LORD your God commanded to teach you, that ye might do *them* in the land whither ye go to possess it:

**Deu 6:2** That thou mightest fear the LORD thy God, to keep all his statutes and his commandments, which I command thee, thou, and thy son, and thy son's son, all the days of thy life; and that thy days may be prolonged.

**Deu 6:3** Hear therefore, O Israel, and observe to do *it*; that it may be well with thee, and that ye may increase mightily, as the LORD God of thy fathers hath promised thee, in the land that floweth with milk and honey.

**Deu 6:4** Hear, O Israel: The LORD our God *is* one LORD:

**Deu 6:5** And thou shalt love the LORD thy God with all thine heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy might.

**Deu 6:6** And these words, which I command thee this day, shall be in thine heart:

**Deu 6:7** 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.

**Deu 6:8** And thou shalt bind them for a sign upon thine hand, and they shall be as frontlets between thine eyes.

**Deu 6:9** And thou shalt write them upon the posts of thy house, and on thy gates.

**Deu 6:10** And it shall be, when the LORD thy God shall have brought thee into the land which he swore unto thy fathers, to Abraham, to Isaac, and to Jacob, to give thee great and goodly cities, which thou buildedst not,

**Deu 6:11** And houses full of all good *things*, which thou filledst not, and wells digged, which thou diggedst not, vineyards and olive trees, which thou plantedst not; when thou shalt have eaten and be full;

**Deu 6:12** *Then* beware lest thou forget the LORD, which brought thee forth out of the land of Egypt, from the house of bondage.

**Deu 6:13** Thou shalt fear the LORD thy God, and serve him, and shalt swear by his name.

That passage establishes so many wonderful facts, including:

- The greatest truth – “Hear, O Israel: The LORD our God is one LORD”.
- The greatest commandment – “love the Lord thy God with all thin heart, with all thy soul, and with all thy might.”
- The greatest responsibility – “Thou shalt fear the LORD thy God, and serve him”.
- The greatest duty – “And thou shalt teach them diligently unto thy children,” It is that duty – the passing of truth from one generation to the next – that will be our subject.

Brothers and sisters, it is our duty to pass on the truth of God, the love of God, and the blessings of God. With that in mind, I have four things I want to bring to you from this passage.

#### I. Hear the truth

**Psa 78:1** Maschil of Asaph. Give ear, O my people, *to my law: incline your ears to the words of my mouth.*

**Psa 78:2** I will open my mouth in a parable: I will utter dark sayings of old:

**Psa 78:3** Which we have heard and known, and our fathers have told us.

Look at verse 3 - “Which we have heard and known, and our fathers have told us.”

I want you to see here that we have a personal responsibility. In order to pay this forward to the next generation, to pass on the truth to the next generation, we must first possess the truth ourselves.

- We have heard it – learned it for ourselves.
- We have known it – experienced for ourselves.
- We have been told it by our fathers – someone carried out the duty of teaching us.

If the next generation will know the truth, we need to pass it on to them. It is scary how much I see myself in my kids sometimes. Things I never really tried to teach them, but they just picked up. From music to food to habits, they have picked up from my example. What I have modeled is far more powerful than what I have simply told them to do. The old saying says that actions speak louder than words. Can I tell you, the problem with the youth in our society is that they act like their parents? Know how those parents act like? The grandparents! It is a vicious cycle that seems to gain momentum if unchecked.

We have had a few generations now where parents did not take the responsibility of raising their families as seriously as they should have. They let the schools raise their children. They tried to let the churches raise their children. They let television and media and pop culture raise their children. They let everyone else do the job they should have!

But you know what those kids learned? How to be apathetic parents. And the cycle continues.

Want to change the next generation?

It starts with the previous generations learning and holding the truth and then passing it on.

## II. Hide Not the Truth

**Psa 78:4 We will not hide *them* from their children, shewing to the generation to come the praises of the LORD, and his strength, and his wonderful works that he hath done.**

Here is what is scary about the cycle I was just talking about. Somewhere up the line, some generation probably had the truth or at least something close to it. Someone had the truth and did nothing with it. They hid it like candles under a bushel. They hid it like the man that buried his talent. They hid it like someone stuffing cash under their mattress. I thought here of my grandfather and my father. My grandfather served in WWI and my father in WWII. I know that their generation didn't talk about it much, but I wish I could have heard more about their experiences. However, they were hidden away. Neither one, talked much about their life experiences nor their spiritual truths. For far too long, too many have hid away their faith for fear of offending some person that desperately needs to hear that good word and see that faith in action.

Friends, first you must have the truth and then when you have it, you can't hide it. That means live it, tell it, teach it. I like what it said in Deuteronomy 6: 6-9.

**Deu 6:6 And these words, which I command thee this day, shall be in thine heart:**

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**heart:**

**Deu 6:7** 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.

**Deu 6:8** And thou shalt bind them for a sign upon thine hand, and they shall be as frontlets between thine eyes.

**Deu 6:9** And thou shalt write them upon the posts of thy house, and on thy gates.

- In verse 6 the words, the truth, is supposed to be in our hearts, but it doesn't stay there!
- In verse 7, we teach them and talk about them while we sit, walk, or lie down.
- In verse 8, we bind them on our hand as a reminder, we put them as frontlets before our eyes.
- In verse 9, we write them on the posts and gates.

That doesn't sound like hiding it! The truth should be in every part of our lives. It should frame our thoughts, our attention and our actions. Our world needs Christians – good, solid, Godly individuals – now more than ever. Our families need them, our churches need them, our society needs them. We need godly men and women to stand up and not only believe these truths, but to have the courage to defend them. You can't hide it! You have to live it!

### III. Hope in Truth

**Psa 78:5** For he established a testimony in Jacob, and appointed a law in Israel, which he commanded our fathers, that they should make them known to their children:

**Psa 78:6** That the generation to come might know them, even the children which should be born; who should arise and declare them to their children:

**Psa 78:7** That they might set their hope in God, and not forget the works of God, but keep his commandments:

Here is the goal – we bring others to hope in God. We are the guides that are bringing them to this destination. Hope is an expectation. An expectation that God will save us. An expectation that God will guide and protect us. An expectation that God will deliver us. An expectation that God will be with us forevermore in that land of perfect peace and beauty.

It doesn't just say they will know the truth – though they won't forget the works of God. It doesn't just say that they will keep the commandments, though it says they will. It says their heart will be stirred and hope will spring forth. Something is sparked in them and they will develop their own love for God! Hope is brought to life! By the way, hope is only as good as what it is attached to. We should place all of our hope in God.

#### IV. Humbly Share the Truth

**Psa 78:8 And might not be as their fathers, a stubborn and rebellious generation; a generation *that* set not their heart aright, and whose spirit was not stedfast with God.**

In all the previous points, I have taken a word directly from the text, but this one I see as implied. What could follow in this history lesson is victory after victory, success after success. It could be the most glowing account of a nation you have ever read. But instead, it is honest. The Israelites experience firsthand the great miracles of God, yet they fell into unbelief.

Those adults that came out of Egypt, saw the plagues, crossed the Red Sea, heard the thundering on Sinai – they failed to have the faith to cross over into the Promised Land. That next generation took possession of the Land, yet it was not long until their descendants did not choose to serve God like Joshua told them to do. The sins of the people continued until God forsook the Tabernacle.

That is not a glowing report! But it is honest. And that is where humility steps in. An old saying says that men, at best, are men, at best. Have we failed at times? Have our forefathers failed at times?

Yes! But none of that negates the greatness of God, rather it magnifies it. The goal in passing the truth on to the next generation is not for them to think that we were great, but that our God was great. In doing so, sometimes you need some humility.

Sometimes we must teach by saying, “don’t do like I did!” Sometimes we must apologize for our own failures. Truth should breed humility, not pride. As I close, let me say that I do not think that we have lost the younger generations completely. However, we are starting from behind! But so long as God lives, there is hope! The more the world tries to silence us and limit us the more we need to make our voices heard. There are a lot of lies out there right now. There are a lot of pressure for Christians and churches to be silent. There are a lot of people out there, young and old that need to hear the truth. They need to know about our God. They need to know how good He is, and what He has done to reconcile us back to Him. If you don’t take anything else away from today’s message, please remember this. The only way truth dies is if it is not passed on or picked up.