

Well, of course, this past week, the church was just buzzing with activity.

Kids ran through the halls singing, laughing, making crafts, eating snacks, and most importantly, screaming.

That's all they did.

It was a lot of excitement and a lot of screaming.

If you have an Apple Watch, mine kept dinging me saying, you're in a loud environment.

You're going to go deaf.

Stop listening to all the screaming that was going on.

We won't do that for you today.

I think I had a number of individuals that still say their ears are ringing when we had Friday closing.

And I realized as I saw all of this excitement and these kids just having such a great time that this really is the next generation of the church.

And the thing is, as I was looking at them and praying, I'm praying that they would be ready and that we would instill in them what they need to know and understand so that they can take the gospel forward after all of us in this room are long gone.

And so we want them to be ready.

but also for you and I to be ready now.

Because even though we are called to raise up and to teach these to the next generation, we're going to see that it's something that you and I need to do regularly.

And that is this first point that we see at the very beginning.

When Asaph says, give ear, O my people, to my teaching, and ultimately we will not hide them from their children.

You have to know this, God's people are a remembering people.

And remembering in Scripture isn't just memorizing things.

Yes, we had the backpackers as they were making their upward-bound journey to the summit to understand their need for Christ and what His death upon the cross provides for them, as well as His righteousness imputed to them by grace alone through faith.

And though we do want people to memorize Scripture, but in the Bible, remembering is more than just nostalgia.

It's rather an active reminder of what we are to know, to be, and to do.

In fact, Asaph says, I'm going to open my mouth in a parable.

He said, I'm going to say something.

And this is what he then says.

He says, I'm going to utter these dark sayings from of old.

Now, in our culture today and

One of the things that gets into English Bible translations, and if we ever kind of took time to go through that, you'll recognize that a lot of what we do in English now has to do with tradition when it comes to the Bible.

Of course, the King James Version is one of the oldest English translations, so oftentimes newer translations, which by the way, are actually better translations because they use manuscripts that are older than what the King James Version used.

However, there's just tradition.

There's words in there that people remember, and therefore, even though it's not the most accurate of words, it's used.

So when we read in here that Asaph is going to give these dark sayings, it sounds like something that's going to happen at Halloween, or it's something that is mysterious or evil.

No, it really means they're dark.

They have depth.

There's something that you're not going to fully understand unless you reflect upon it and dig deep into it.

It speaks of the seas as being dark because there's such vast depth to it.

And God's Word, even though it's able to be understood, even though it is something that we can grasp even at a very young age,

Individuals like Ren Zepp, who are really old, have been studying this forever, and yet I love it when he comes to me and he says, you know what, I was in the Word today and I learned something new.

So when Ren Zepp is telling you that he's learning something new, it's dark.

It's deep.

It's depth.

We got you.

But it is something that you can spend your entire life studying and still be amazed at what's in it and still have new insights to it because the Word of God is living and active, and it'll apply to your life.

So this remembering isn't just nostalgic.

It's not just an idea of regurgitating.

It's looking deeply and remembering who God is and what He has said He has done and what He promises what He will do.

And it's important for us to remember it so that we can tell it

And here's my challenge to you.

If you're not telling the story of the gospel, then you're really not remembering it.

Because when you remember it and it is part of who you are, you're going to then respond to it.

When we remember things, it encourages us to behave and to act and to think differently.

You might remember a difficult time in your life, and God uses that to remind us of how we are to be right now.

One of the things that I forgot to remember is that a mandolin vegetable cutter is sharp.

And if you're really quick, like making slicing onions for a hamburger, you're not paying attention, you'll end up decapitating your pinky.

It's not that bad, just a flesh wound.

But let me tell you, after I felt the blade kind of take off a little chunk of my pinky there, I remembered these things are sharp.

And likewise, when we understand and remember God's Word, it reminds us

in a lot of ways to avoid those situations, those circumstances that ultimately could lead us in a way of breaking God's law or falling short or sinning or doing something stupid.

But in order for you to tell the story, you need to know the story.

You need to remember in your own life, what has God done for you?

How has he done it?

And maybe you're here and you're not realizing that God has been involved in your life.

You might not even recognize it.

It doesn't change the fact that He is.

And everything that you have gone through, everything that you're experiencing, even things now, we can remember how God has been faithful, how He has demonstrated that He's working all things together for good.

And we have a collection inspired by Him of those stories that show the miserable failures of the people that we call heroes of the faith.

I mean, their only heroic act is to show you how stupid we can be in so many ways.

Moses, David, even Paul, seeking to operate in their own power, not recognizing that it's all from God.

So remember the story so that you can tell others.

Remember in those times of difficulty how God has been faithful in your life.

How those things that you were so devastated that the prayers He didn't answer...

You can look back upon it and say, thank you.

You can remember that the prayer you were praying was far weaker and misguided than what God had planned and what he ultimately did.

Remember the story so you can tell it.

Tell the next generation the praiseworthy deeds of the Lord.

That's not just at VBS or in Sunday school or in some small group or Sunday school class remembering the specific events and details of God's word.

but your own story that God has written with your life and how Christ has been glorified in and through it.

So remember the story so you can tell it.

Next, we're called in this to raise up the next, not just the now.

And that's important.

Faithfulness in one generation is never the finish line.

We talked about the journey.

It's not the destination is faithfulness in one generation, but rather it's the starting block for the next generation.

There's a famous missionary who once said that Christianity is one generation from extinction.

Now, granted, we believe in God's sovereignty and the power of God, but the challenge is if we're not telling the story, if we're not the ones communicating the gospel, who do we expect is going to do it?

Politicians?

NGOs?

No.

We're the ones who have this message.

We're the ones whose story has been written.

We're the ones who know it, that we can share it.

Psalms 78 reminds us that healthy churches don't just hold the line, but we advance the line.

I think one of the weaknesses of the church today is we like to look past, look into the past and try to recreate what the church once was.

And that's not successful.

The idea is not only are we ministering to the people that are here, but friends, we're doing what we're doing.

We're bringing these kids up here.

We're engaging them in a way that is real for them because our role isn't for those who are here, but those who are yet to come.

And for those who are yet to lead, in fact, we have who's next.

That's what the whole question of this sermon is.

Well, we have the men who you saw that were willing to say, I'm next.

It's my turn to take up the work of the ministry here at Pinewood.

And for those of you who have been here since its inception, you know of the number of individuals who God has called home who served faithfully in the roles of

Rick Crose is one that comes to mind right off the bat, and others who have done that who are now in glory.

Charlie Smith, so many, if I got thought about over the last 16 years.

These are men who raised up the next.

And you're here today because of their faithfulness.

And you know what?

When you're long gone, maybe there'll be somebody, when I'm long gone, there'll be someone standing here saying, you know what?

Many of you are here because of the people who
right now that are sitting here in this room today.

You're the generation that encourages the next generation.

So, this is the idea of how God's covenant promises work.

It doesn't go through genetics, but rather it goes through God's promises.

And this is that succession principle built into covenant life.

God has always worked through generations.

Abraham to Isaac, Moses to Joshua, Elijah to Elisha, Paul to Timothy, and Jesus to you and me.

Know the story.

Raise up the next.

And what we're called to do, root their hope in God.

The goal isn't just church attendance, telling how many people, how many nickels and noses we have, but rather

It's communicating and living out so that the world can see what a resilient hope does when you have that hope in the God of the Bible.

The end game is not church growth.

It's Christ-centered hope.

And that comes when people not only hear the gospel, but see it lived out in a community of believers.

And this past week, if you were not here, I encourage you, come on out next year, because you will see the embodiment of this next generation idea of communicating, loving, and investing in those who will follow us.

And I just want you to think as we conclude here.

Think about two things, both have to do with kind of running.

One is, every time the Olympics is going to begin, they have the torch being passed from individual to individual, making its way to the opening ceremony games.

And notice in all of the Olympics, it's all about competition, it's all about time, it's all about perfection, yet for this, it has nothing to do with how long it takes.

but it's rather the successive passing.

And while you have it, that you make the most of the light that you're carrying.

So for many of us, we've been past that torch of this Olympic gospel legacy, that we don't necessarily have to run fast or look like everybody else, but rather while we have it to live and to be and to do who God has uniquely called you to be.

and what he has called you to know, and ultimately what he's called you to do.

If you've missed the Sunday school classes so far, you are missing out on a lot.

In fact, you new elders and deacons, old elders and deacons, you need to be here.

This is our interaction with everybody.

It's relational wisdom.

There was a movie clip that was shown about Bones speaking to a woman in the movie Mom's Night Out.

And of course, with that, he was sharing just that we are called to be who we are.

If we are all the same, then the gospel wouldn't go forward.

The people that I know, the people that I connect with, the people that I interact with are probably different than the ones that you know.

I live by different people than you do.

I work with different people than you do.

I engage with other people than you do.

I would love to know your people so I can share the gospel with them, but guess what?

I'm not going to be able to do that, but you can.

And you should.

Because our desire is to root them in the hope of God.

So while we are carrying that torch, we are showing them a life embodying the gospel.

Now, in those Olympic Games, you oftentimes have relays.

You know, the passing of the baton is very short.

It's about a 20-meter, you know, space.

And these individuals are running at lightning speed.

So that 20 meters goes by faster than most people can blink, it seems.

And in that small time, they have to prepare and be ready to hand off to the next runner so that the relay can continue on.

And honestly, some of you have been around for a long time, not so long, some very long, like Ren, and you realize how short that time is.

You realize how short that time is and how little time we have to pass that on.

I don't know how many parents have talked with me and more will probably talk with Dan as well as Dennis about missed opportunities and how quickly the time went by.

They thought they would be able to do some more things with their kids or instill in them those biblical values and before they know it, they're 18 years old, they're out of the house, on to college.

Goes by like that, 20 meters.

And we're called to root them in hope, in their God.

And you know what?

Here's the good news.

Jesus is the ultimate baton passer.

He didn't just teach us.

He died for us.

He didn't just call us.

He equips us.

And he promises to be with us until the very end.

So who's someone in your life that knew the story and told you about it?

Who's the individual that's concerned about who and what comes next?

And ultimately, who is the one that rooted you

in faith.

I had the opportunity after VBS was done.

I took too much of Dan's time.

We were just talking to each other and sharing a little bit about kind of our upbringing and our situation, people that we knew.

But that's my grandfather.

Now, granted, God called me to ministry, but it was that man

who really made that calling something that I knew deep down inside I wanted to do.

His life, and those of you who know my story, my grandparents lived with us.

My grandfather served the Lord faithfully for over 40 years.

Actually, I think closer to 50 years.

Back then, pastors lived in what was known as a manse, a house owned by the church.

It's a great deal, very helpful.

You're nearby.

You don't have to worry about those things.

The problem is when you retire, you're homeless.

And since my grandfather only made \$3,600 and a couple chickens back in the early 1900s, he ended up living with us.

And I love my parents, and my parents did a great job, but it was my grandfather who instilled in me to have my hope in the Lord.

who lived the story and talked to me about what it means to serve as a minister of the gospel.

My grandmother, who you can tell is kind of snarky there.

My grandfather's not really looking at it, but she's like, what are you doing?

Looking at the photographer.

Better get a good picture.

She had the personality of a drill sergeant.

And she kept me out of prison.

So we'll just leave it at that.

For those of you who have been to my house, you know I actually rock in my grandfather's rocking chair that I redid.

And what I look at is an entire wall of the generations of our family as a reminder of God's faithfulness to us.

Maybe you don't have that, but guess what?

You can start that.

You can be that so that one day your grandkids, your great-grandkids, your great-great-grandkids can look back and say, that was a generation that

that loved the Lord, and that told the praiseworthy deeds of the Lord to my grandfather, to my parents, to me.

So, come on out next year for VBS.

We'll help you be engaged in the next generation.

Volunteer in our discipleship groups with our student ministry.

Be engaged.

We had to keep all the kids here because half of the children's ministry leader are the men who we ordained today.

These are men not only that are serving you, but also serve the next generation.

You can be a part of that.

Here's your takeaway.

The gospel advances when one generation remembers, the next is raised, and all are rooted in God.

Faithfulness isn't just about now.

It's about who comes after us.

In fact, there's an old story about a man who planted a tree.

He was quite advanced in years, like Ren, and he planted this tree and was asked, you're planting that tree.

That's not going to do you any good.

He says, it's not meant for me.

It's not meant for my good.

It's meant to be shade and good for those who come after me.

We've got something much more precious than an acorn or an oak tree.

We have the very Word of God and the gospel of Jesus that is the only hope for the world.

So let's be those who see it advance into the next generation as we remember and as we raise up these young people and as we root and are all rooted in God.