



SERMON NOTES & TRANSCRIPT

The Generational Multiplier

Influence, Inheritance and Legacy: How
Faith Passes From One Generation to the
Next

Faith kept in a family grows like a snowball rolling downhill, and if we
get a vision for our family line, God can carry it past the third
generation into a legacy that blesses people we will never meet.

PREACHED BY

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SERIES

We're Generationally Intentional, Week 2 of 2

MAIN TEXT

Hebrews 11:17-22

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Sermon Transcript

Amen. Well, if you have your Bibles with you, I'd invite you to turn to Hebrews chapter 11, Hebrews chapter 11. Last week, we started a brand new two-week series called Generationally Intentional. This is one of the values of our church. This is the fourth value we've talked about, but we are generationally intentional as a church. We are not just focused on the next generation. We are mindful of every generation in the house of the Lord. We want everyone to receive ministry in a way that blesses them in this church. And obviously, that requires a little give and take, because sometimes the thing that'll bless one generation won't bless your generation, but don't worry, we're coming back around.

Amen. And so we're a generationally intentional church. Last week, we talked about creating space for a refuge from the spirit of the age, because there's an Athaliah spirit that is loose in every generation that is trying to prohibit the advancement of the kingdom of God. It's trying to choke out the kingdom life of a generation, and we want to create space that's a refuge from that spirit of the age. I also, last week, walked you through a tour of some areas of the building that need to be improved, fixed, addressed. Two things happened in the first 24 hours.

The first thing that happened is people started to give. We already have people that have given their vision offering for the year, and I will tell you this, at this point, the last time that I checked, we had more people who had sown into the vision offering that are not in our church than are in our church. We've had people from all over the nation sow seed into the kingdom offering or the vision offering this year, believing that God is going to do a great work in this house, and to y'all, we say thank you. We appreciate you. We honor you. Thank you for being part of what God is doing here.

Amen. And so that's the first thing that happened within 24 hours. People began to give. The second thing that happened within 24 hours is we found out there were actually some more issues that need to be addressed in the building. When I got here, we were under the impression that we had a lot of old ceiling tiles that had old stains. The reason we thought this is, one, somebody put it in my mind, and I don't know who that was, but shame on you, number one. Somebody put it in my brain. The second reason was, I don't know if y'all realize this, but since I moved down here, either me or Ashleigh have shut up the windows of heaven, and it hadn't rained since we got here.

Hadn't rained at all till Monday when y'all all got a new pond out in front of your house, and so it just monsooned Monday, and when it started to do that, we found that there was quite a few leaks over in that children's area. Your children are safe. If they come back in bathing suits at the end of service, we just made the most out of it. Amen, but your children are safe. They are in a safe environment, but we are going to have to address the leaks in the roof as well. We also have a leak back here that I have been aware of that we're going to have to address.

This one back here is worse than anything that we have over in the children's area, so we're mindful of this. We're going to be working on it, but I kind of just as these things came about this week, I started to feel a little like Caleb, and I was looking at it, and I just thought, well, we are well able to overcome it. Amen? Amen, so we're able to do it. We're going to make this thing happen in Jesus' name. If you believe that, say amen this morning. In fact, I've had a strange week in that I'm very on mission right now with our church in terms of leading us in a direction.

I have a very clear pathway, but this week multiple times I have had thoughts come to me whether late at night while I was in bed or when I was engaging in a meeting or something, and I've had thoughts come to me, we need to do this,

and I have had just a strange run of I'll have an idea, and then a person who can make that happen will present themselves. No joke, I thought we need to do a certain type of ministry. I'm not telling y'all what it is because I'm not trying to get the cart before the horse here, okay? There's plenty enough churches that have carts following their horses, amen, or carts in front of their horses.

I don't know how to talk. Y'all just deal with it. Amen, but I thought I want to do this ministry, and then I got a message on Facebook from somebody who said, "We're interested in coming to your church. We've had it on our heart to start this ministry." I'm talking within moments. Thought something the other night, went to bed thinking it. Had someone show up at the church and do a drop-in on me, which I don't normally do. I'm not the drop-in pastor. I'm the scheduled appointment pastor, amen, but he dropped in on me. Turns out specializes in the ministry I was thinking about the night before.

I'm having moment after moment like this, this week, and I'm just kind of getting where I think January could be real interesting around this place, amen, amen. This morning, what I want to talk to you about, continuing in this idea of being generationally intentional, I want to talk to you about the generational multiplier, the generational multiplier. I have noticed that if you can keep faith in a family long enough, it's kind of like a snowball rolling down a hill. It just slowly gets bigger and bigger and more powerful and a greater force to be reckoned with the longer you can keep it in the family.

I want to talk to you about that this morning. If you'll look with me at Hebrews chapter 11, starting in verse 17, Hebrews chapter 11, starting in verse 17, it says, "By faith Abraham, when he was tested, offered up Isaac, and he who had received the promises was in the act of offering up his only son, of whom it was said, 'Through Isaac shall your offspring be named.' He considered that God was able even to raise him from the dead, from which, figuratively speaking, he did receive him back. By faith, Isaac invoked future blessings on Jacob and Esau. By faith, Jacob, when dying, blessed each of the sons of Joseph, bowing in worship over the head of his staff.

By faith, Joseph, at the end of his life, made mention of the exodus of the Israelites and gave directions concerning his bones."

HEBREWS 11:17-22 ESV

¹⁷ By faith Abraham, when he was tested, offered up Isaac, and he who had received the promises was in the act of offering up his only son, ¹⁸ of whom it was said, "Through Isaac shall your offspring be named." ¹⁹ He considered that God was able even to raise him from the dead, from which, figuratively speaking, he did receive him back.

²⁰ By faith Isaac invoked future blessings on Jacob and Esau. ²¹ By faith Jacob, when dying, blessed each of the sons of Joseph, bowing in worship over the head of his staff. ²² By faith Joseph, at the end of his life, made mention of the exodus of the Israelites and gave directions concerning his bones.

Today, we're going to look at the patriarchs of our faith, Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. And then when we get to the end of this message, I'm going to show you something that is hidden in this text that the Holy Ghost had showed me one time while I was on the road, in fact. But you're going to have to wait to the end. So, you know, buckle up. About to get good. Amen. But how many of you know that God works through generations? He's not just the God of Abraham.

He's the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. He works through generations. And I just thought I'd blast off a handful of scriptures to prove it to you this morning. Amen. Acts 2:39 says, "For the promise is for you and for your children and for all who are far off, everyone whom the Lord our God calls to himself."

ACTS 2:39 ESV

³⁹ For the promise is for you and for your children and for all who are far off, everyone whom the Lord our God calls to himself.”

The promise is for you, but it's also for your children. Amen. Psalm 100 verse 5 says, “For the Lord is good. His steadfast love endures forever and his faithfulness to all generations.”

PSALM 100:5 ESV

⁵ For the LORD is good; his steadfast love endures forever, and his faithfulness to all generations.

God's faithfulness goes from generation to generation. Hallelujah.

Psalm 102 verse 18 says, “Let this be recorded for a generation to come so that a people yet to be created may praise the Lord.”

PSALM 102:18 ESV

¹⁸ Let this be recorded for a generation to come, so that a people yet to be created may praise the LORD:

It is our responsibility to keep a record of how God moves in our generation so that we can hand it to another. Somebody say amen. Psalm 103 verse 17 says, “But the steadfast love of the Lord is from everlasting to everlasting on those who fear him, and his righteousness to children's children.”

PSALM 103:17 ESV

¹⁷ But the steadfast love of the LORD is from everlasting to everlasting on those who fear him, and his righteousness to children's children,

The gospel is passed from generation to generation. The gospel is the account of the steadfast love of the Lord towards humanity. Psalm 145 verse 4 says, “One generation shall commend your works to another and shall declare your mighty acts.”

PSALM 145:4 ESV

⁴ One generation shall commend your works to another, and shall declare your mighty acts.

This is what I want you to hear, because we're generationally intentional. We don't just pass the things down that the Lord has done. We don't just share how God has been good in the direction of the next generation, but when God moves in a younger generation, bless the Lord, it also is a blessing to a generation that's come before. Amen. Some of you listen to me. Some of you are going to be blessed because you've been praying for your family, and a generation that came after you is going to be responsible for the generation that came after them that you've been praying for coming into the kingdom.

Hallelujah. You will reciprocate and you will be blessed by generational ministry. If you believe it, say amen. I got to calm down. I already feel like I'm ready to go. So the passing of faith happens from one generation to the next, and it

happens through three different levels, and that's what I want to talk to you about today. But the reason I want to talk to you about this specifically is obviously we are having our vision offering today, which I did not name that intentionally. In fact, I don't know if we'll do a vision offering in 2026. I just knew and I got up here a few weeks ago and told you, I believe I need to give you an opportunity to sow here at the end of the year, and I needed to have something to call it.

And that's what I went with. Amen. Sometimes it's real simple, guys. You just pulling out the best, you pull the thesaurus out and start naming stuff. Amen. But when I named that, I wasn't thinking about this, but this week I got a phone call from a young minister. Let me say that differently. I got a call from a young man who is called to the ministry, and I have a sensitivity towards him for some reason. In fact, if I told you his name, you'd probably know who he is. But this young man, I genuinely believe he has the call of God on his life.

And this young man finds the ways to make the dumbest decisions he possibly can. And his life is in a spiraling cycle. He called me the other day. I actually brought him up in a board meeting and I called him the next day. And I was talking to this young man, and he starts telling me some things that he's doing and the things he's doing will make him feel happy. I'm talking about you right now, by the way, I hope you're watching this message. I won't say your name, but it's Eric Jenkins. No, I'm just kidding. That was a guy I went to high school with.

But y'all were like, oh my God. Oh man. But he's doing some things right now that are fulfilling and making him feel like he's moving forward. And they're not, they're keeping him in a cycle. And the comment came out of my mouth, almost prophetically. I told him, I said, "You are being led in your life by your desire and not by vision." And I'm just telling you, if you can lead your life by vision, you can actually get to a place you want to be. If you lead your life by desire, just doing the next thing that you want to do, that you want. I feel my preach coming on this morning and I am going to try to get through this content, but if you lead your life by your desire, you're going to constantly find yourself back or behind your starting point, because it's not going to work out again.

And it's not going to work out again. And it's not going to work out again. But if you can get some vision in your life, you can actually begin to move past some of the stuff. When it goes wrong, you can actually get a vision for your future. And the Bible says this, that after you've suffered for a little while, then he will establish you.

1 PETER 5:10 ESV

¹⁰ And after you have suffered a little while, the God of all grace, who has called you to his eternal glory in Christ, will himself restore, confirm, strengthen, and establish you.

But you got to have vision to do that. Because every time something goes wrong or something messes up, you'll go back to the beginning spot of the bad decisions that you tend to make. So you need vision. You need vision.

And what I'm talking to you about this morning is vision for your family. It's a generational multiplier. Sometimes you just have to get okay with the idea that it may not happen in my lifetime. It may not happen in my day. But if I'll get a vision for what I want God to do in my family and I'll start moving in the direction of that vision, God is faithful to do what he said he would do. Amen. Hallelujah. I heard, just happened to hear this quote this week by a man named John Morgan who started Morgan & Morgan law firm. If any of y'all been injured recently, y'all give them a call.

He can reciprocate for the quote here. But he said this, he's a very simple man. He doesn't take, he just, I think this year, crossed the billionaire list. And he's not into any stuff. He's like, I don't want boats and houses and cars. And he said, "I'll probably never buy a shirt or a suit again in my life." He goes, "I'm not interested." He said, "If it's between filet mignon

and a hamburger steak, I'm going to take a hamburger steak." Just a real simple guy. So how do you get to that level without some type of other ambition?

Because it's not selfishly motivated. And he said this, he said, "We've done this. We've been able to make all of this money. We've been able to generate all of this wealth because we've decided that the only thing that matters is tomorrow, not today." My God, let that get down in your soul. So I want to talk to you about the three levels of the generational multiplier. If you're ready, shout yes. Amen. All right. Number one, number one is a generational inherit, or sorry, a generational influence. It's a generational influence. We don't all come from Abraham, Isaac, Jacob situations.

We don't all come from a situation where because of our family, we grew up in church and we are saved. And I'm grateful that I wasn't completely unaware that church existed, but I was raised far from the house of the Lord. I was raised in a house of turmoil and dysfunction. And so if it wasn't for people who use some of their influence for the gospel, I wouldn't be saved today. But because of them, Ashleigh and myself are both Abrahams in our family. We're where it will begin because people use their influence for the gospel. And some of you have the same testimony where God just seemed to have drawn you out of a dysfunctional situation.

And you know, it's the Lord, because you can't figure out any other good reason that you're saved today. But yet here you are serving the Lord, turning your family around. You're an Abraham in your own family. And it happens not through a direct deposit. It doesn't happen by people who give it directly to us, but it happens through kingdom minded people who have an influence for the gospel, an influence for the kingdom. And that influence happens different ways. Maybe it was the influence. Maybe somebody gave to something one day. Maybe it's the influence that somebody had an idea one day for a ministry, or maybe it's someone was kind to someone in the right moment.

For me, it was literally we had a ministry at our church who came and ate lunch with the kids at the middle school. I don't know that they thought this would come from that, but it's influence. It's just using your influence. And so when we talk about Abraham, because we serve the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, here's a great question for you to tuck away for your own personal Bible study is where did Abraham's faith come from? Because we know Joshua tells us that Terah, Abraham's father, worshipped false gods.

JOSHUA 24:2 ESV

² And Joshua said to all the people, "Thus says the LORD, the God of Israel, 'Long ago, your fathers lived beyond the Euphrates, Terah, the father of Abraham and of Nahor; and they served other gods.

So he didn't get it in the house. He didn't get it at home.

So where did Abraham's faith come from? Well, this is getting into a little bit of extra biblical literature, but many ancient Jewish teachers believe that Abraham learned about the one true God from either Noah or Noah's son, Shem. Now we don't often think about Noah and Abraham being alive at the same time because Noah was Abraham's great, great, great, great, great, great, great, great, great grandfather. That's how old Noah was. Great, great, great, great, great, great, great, great, great grandfather. And Noah, however, was still alive for about the first 60 years of Abraham's life.

So Abraham was into adulthood. Abraham was dealing with his inability to have a child while Noah was still alive. And people believe that at some point either Noah or his son Shem found a way to have influence with Abraham and start to tell him about the one who could solve the problem he had. You have an issue and we know the one. Let me tell you about when I had to build this boat. By the way, I started calling it that because we didn't have a name for it before,

right? Shem shared it with him. Shem shared the stories of what had happened on the ark and afterwards and seeing the world kind of come back to life after the great flood, and they began to tell him about the one true God.

And so even though it didn't come directly through the family, it came through influence. And the great news is that even though there's only one way to the Father, there are people in our city who do not come from a godly household, and there's only one way to the Father, his name is Jesus Christ.

JOHN 14:6 ESV

⁶ Jesus said to him, "I am the way, and the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me.

But there's many on ramps to Jesus Christ. Anybody in this room could be the conduit to see a generation of a family turned around, and it could start with an invite to Christmas. You never know what that kind of stuff is going to do. I'm not kidding. It sounds over the top, but it was a group of college-aged students in our church that came and had lunch with me at a middle school that got this.

What could you giving a Christmas invite card come out to? What could a kid sitting on Santa's lap in our church end up with? What could just somebody seeing the inside of our building and a gospel presentation, how could it turn somebody's family around? You ought to say amen before I harp on it any longer. Hallelujah. There's many on ramps. So that's through influence. There's influence. It's indirect and somehow it catches a person and they start the process of people coming to know the Lord in their family. They start the generational multiplier. The second way is through generational inheritance.

Generational inheritance. The Bible says, Solomon said in Proverbs, that a good man leaves an inheritance for his children's children.

PROVERBS 13:22 ESV

²² A good man leaves an inheritance to his children's children, but the sinner's wealth is laid up for the righteous.

And that is talking about more than wealth. But let me just toss this in real quick. You need to leave something behind for your family. Oh, I know what I need to talk about now. You need to leave something behind for your family. And it's not that hard. I'm going to give everybody a little tip here. Okay. You need to get life insurance and you need to get a personal will. So when you pass away, nobody's fighting over what is theirs.

I've watched brothers and sisters who were 65, 70 years old fight tooth and nail because mama couldn't write it down. Y'all better wake up, or else, I'm for real, I'll bring an attorney in here and have y'all start filling this stuff out before y'all leave. Amen. I'm serious. Y'all get this stuff handled, get life insurance. It's very easy. No matter how old y'all are, you don't have to have a million dollars to leave a million dollars. Amen. So leave your family behind with something, but it's not only wealth. It's also an inheritance of faith. We leave behind an inheritance of faith.

This is a direct deposit from one generation to another. This is when you see your kids give their life to Jesus Christ. And here's two things that I would encourage you to do if you want to see that happen. Number one is you need to involve Jesus in the home. Involve Jesus in the home. Genesis chapter 18. I'm not going to read this. I have it, but I'm just going to tell you what it says. Genesis chapter 18, Abraham looks up one day and he sees the Lord walking towards his house with two other people. He sees it. And Abraham says, "I want you to come into my house."

And they say, okay. And so he has Sarah bake a cake.

GENESIS 18:1-8 ESV

¹ And the LORD appeared to him by the oaks of Mamre, as he sat at the door of his tent in the heat of the day. ² He lifted up his eyes and looked, and behold, three men were standing in front of him. When he saw them, he ran from the tent door to meet them and bowed himself to the earth ³ and said, “O Lord, if I have found favor in your sight, do not pass by your servant. ⁴ Let a little water be brought, and wash your feet, and rest yourselves under the tree, ⁵ while I bring a morsel of bread, that you may refresh yourselves, and after that you may pass on—since you have come to your servant.” So they said, “Do as you have said.” ⁶ And Abraham went quickly into the tent to Sarah and said, “Quick! Three seahs of fine flour! Knead it, and make cakes.” ⁷ And Abraham ran to the herd and took a calf, tender and good, and gave it to a young man, who prepared it quickly. ⁸ Then he took curds and milk and the calf that he had prepared, and set it before them. And he stood by them under the tree while they ate.

That’s a good way to work. I want to see somebody come in with a cake next week for the Lord. Amen. And he says, bake a cake. And they sit down with the Lord. Some of y’all need your family to see that you sit down with the Lord in your home. You need to involve Jesus in the house. Church Jesus is not enough. It’s not enough. You want your kids to know beyond the shadow of a doubt that the faith you have is not a social club that you’re involved with, but that it’s a real burning faith.

Hallelujah. Revelations chapter three, verse 20 — Revelation chapter three. I hate it when people put S’s on Revelations, and my Southern’s coming out here. Revelation chapter three, verse 20 says, “Behold, I stand at the door and knock. And if anyone hears my voice and opens the door, I’ll come into him and eat with him, and him with me.”

REVELATION 3:20 ESV

²⁰ Behold, I stand at the door and knock. If anyone hears my voice and opens the door, I will come in to him and eat with him, and he with me.

The King James says that when Jesus comes to the door, he says, “sup,” sup. That’s what Jesus says when he answers the door. Amen. You sup with me and I’ll sup with you. Hallelujah. But you’ve got to involve Jesus in the house.

Your kids need to see that Jesus isn’t just a Jesus at church. The second thing I’d encourage you to do is you need to trust the Lord with your kids. I think this is one of the hardest things for good, well-meaning, godly, Holy Ghost-filled people to understand is that you are not the Holy Spirit. You’re not the Holy Ghost. You have to trust the Lord with your kids. As Abraham, Hebrews 11 talked about this, but as Abraham goes to offer up Isaac to kill him in worship to the Lord, because the Lord had told him to. Now the Lord told him not to do it. He just wanted to see if he would.

Amen. But he’s taking him. He’s taking Isaac to kill him. And this is what Abraham says on the way, totally willing to do it. Abraham says, “God will provide a lamb.”

GENESIS 22:8 ESV

⁸ Abraham said, “God will provide for himself the lamb for a burnt offering, my son.” So they went both of them together.

God will provide a lamb. And I'm here to tell you this morning that your kids are going to go through a process. In fact, your kids are going to scare you silly at times. Your kids are going to do things that are going to have you so worried you're not going to know what to do with yourself at times. But I'm here to tell you that if you'll let God do his work and you'll stop trying to be the Holy Ghost in their life, let the Lord work it out.

That's a promise to you. Let the Lord work it out. I promise you there is a lamb for the sacrifice and his name is Jesus Christ. And that's the lamb your kids are going to find. Somebody give him praise. Amen. And I want to talk to you for just a moment kind of off of the pattern here. And I want to talk to you about where faith kind of becomes a real difficult thing to keep in the family. It typically happens during the third generation. If Abraham serves the Lord, Isaac is probably going to serve the Lord. Like, I pray for my children. I'm praying for Jocelyn and Ali that faith will get in them in a way that is very real.

But they're living in a different environment that we grew up in. But they hear the stories about how we grew up so much that I know they know that the Lord has done a work. And so if Abraham serves the Lord, Isaac will probably serve the Lord. I'm not saying it's easy. I'm not saying that it's without consequence. I'm just saying that it's probably going to happen. However, when you get down to Jacob, it can have a tendency to fall off. We see this pattern throughout the whole Bible. Just a handful of examples. You've got Elijah, Elisha, and then Gehazi.

Elijah is a prophet. Elisha does double the miracles that Elijah does. And then Gehazi is a prophet who is only out for selfish gain.

2 KINGS 5:20-27 ESV

²⁰ Gehazi, the servant of Elisha the man of God, said, "See, my master has spared this Naaman the Syrian, in not accepting from his hand what he brought. As the LORD lives, I will run after him and get something from him." ²¹ So Gehazi followed Naaman. And when Naaman saw someone running after him, he got down from the chariot to meet him and said, "Is all well?" ²² And he said, "All is well. My master has sent me to say, 'There have just now come to me from the hill country of Ephraim two young men of the sons of the prophets. Please give them a talent of silver and two changes of clothing.'" ²³ And Naaman said, "Be pleased to accept two talents." And he urged him and tied up two talents of silver in two bags, with two changes of clothing, and laid them on two of his servants. And they carried them before Gehazi. ²⁴ And when he came to the hill, he took them from their hand and put them in the house, and he sent the men away, and they departed. ²⁵ He went in and stood before his master, and Elisha said to him, "Where have you been, Gehazi?" And he said, "Your servant went nowhere." ²⁶ But he said to him, "Did not my heart go when the man turned from his chariot to meet you? Was it a time to accept money and garments, olive orchards and vineyards, sheep and oxen, male servants and female servants?" ²⁷ Therefore the leprosy of Naaman shall cling to you and to your descendants forever." So he went out from his presence a leper, like snow.

The third generation falls apart. You have Moses, Joshua, and I don't even have a name to give you. That's how much it falls apart. And the whole nation of Israel goes and they serve other gods. They step into the greatest fulfillment of the promise that any of them had ever seen and they run off and worship idols.

JUDGES 2:10-12 ESV

¹⁰ And all that generation also were gathered to their fathers. And there arose another generation after them who did not know the LORD or the work that he had done for Israel. ¹¹ And the people of Israel did what was evil in the sight of the LORD and served the Baals. ¹² And they abandoned the LORD, the God of their fathers, who had brought them out of the land of Egypt. They went after other gods, from among the gods of the peoples who were around them, and bowed down to them. And they provoked the LORD to anger.

Because it falls apart in the third generation. Here's a more familial one. David, Solomon, Rehoboam. David is the king.

He's a man after God's own heart. He's the one who Jesus sits on his throne spiritually. So you've got David and you've got Solomon who's the wisest man who ever lived. The wealthiest man who ever lived. And then you have Rehoboam who within three days had split the kingdom that his grandfather and his father had built.

1 KINGS 12:1-19 ESV

¹ Rehoboam went to Shechem, for all Israel had come to Shechem to make him king. ² And as soon as Jeroboam the son of Nebat heard of it (for he was still in Egypt, where he had fled from King Solomon), then Jeroboam returned from Egypt. ³ And they sent and called him, and Jeroboam and all the assembly of Israel came and said to Rehoboam, ⁴ "Your father made our yoke heavy. Now therefore lighten the hard service of your father and his heavy yoke on us, and we will serve you." ⁵ He said to them, "Go away for three days, then come again to me." So the people went away. ⁶ Then King Rehoboam took counsel with the old men, who had stood before Solomon his father while he was yet alive, saying, "How do you advise me to answer this people?" ⁷ And they said to him, "If you will be a servant to this people today and serve them, and speak good words to them when you answer them, then they will be your servants forever." ⁸ But he abandoned the counsel that the old men gave him and took counsel with the young men who had grown up with him and stood before him. ⁹ And he said to them, "What do you advise that we answer this people who have said to me, 'Lighten the yoke that your father put on us'?" ¹⁰ And the young men who had grown up with him said to him, "Thus shall you speak to this people who said to you, 'Your father made our yoke heavy, but you lighten it for us,' thus shall you say to them, 'My little finger is thicker than my father's thighs. ¹¹ And now, whereas my father laid on you a heavy yoke, I will add to your yoke. My father disciplined you with whips, but I will discipline you with scorpions.'" ¹² So Jeroboam and all the people came to Rehoboam the third day, as the king said, "Come to me again the third day." ¹³ And the king answered the people harshly, and forsaking the counsel that the old men had given him, ¹⁴ he spoke to them according to the counsel of the young men, saying, "My father made your yoke heavy, but I will add to your yoke. My father disciplined you with whips, but I will discipline you with scorpions." ¹⁵ So the king did not listen to the people, for it was a turn of affairs brought about by the LORD that he might fulfill his word, which the LORD spoke by Ahijah the Shilonite to Jeroboam the son of Nebat. ¹⁶ And when all Israel saw that the king did not listen to them, the people answered the king, "What portion do we have in David? We have no inheritance in the son of Jesse. To your tents, O Israel! Look now to your own house, David." So Israel went to their tents. ¹⁷ But Rehoboam reigned over the people of Israel who lived in the cities of Judah. ¹⁸ Then King Rehoboam sent Adoram, who was taskmaster over the forced labor, and all Israel stoned him to death with stones. And King Rehoboam hurried to mount his chariot to flee to Jerusalem. ¹⁹ So Israel has been in rebellion against the house of David to this day.

Falls apart in the third generation. But we also see power in the third generation. Take for instance Timothy, who traveled with the apostle Paul, who was the bishop of Ephesus. A major figure in the early church. He got his faith from his grandmother Lois.

2 TIMOTHY 1:5 ESV

⁵ I am reminded of your sincere faith, a faith that dwelt first in your grandmother Lois and your mother Eunice and now, I am sure, dwells in you as well.

I'm actually grandmother Lois's pastor. Amen. Hallelujah. Her and Santa come to this church. Amen. Hallelujah. And so his grandmother Lois, his mother Eunice, and then he stepped into that leadership role in the early church. It took off in the third generation. And obviously we see it with Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, who has 12 sons. He is the core of the nation of Israel. He is the core of how God moved in ancient times through Jesus Christ coming and paying the price for our sins. And one reason I think this happens in the third generation is that the enemy sees the potential so there's great attack on it.

But if I was to de-escalate the spiritualizing of it, I actually think that generation just has some unique challenges. It is much easier when you're that far in the lineage of faith to trade an authentic experience for grandmama's stories. To just come to church because daddy wants me to rather than to have a real faith that resonates inside of me. In fact, I would say it this way. It's very easy once you get down to the third generation for a family to start trading the garment of praise for the spiritual coattails of somebody else who came before them.

ISAIAH 61:3 ESV

³ to grant to those who mourn in Zion— to give them a beautiful headdress instead of ashes, the oil of gladness instead of mourning, the garment of praise instead of a faint spirit; that they may be called oaks of righteousness, the planting of the LORD, that he may be glorified.

And they don't get down and do business with God. And we see this with Abraham, Isaac and Jacob. Genesis chapter 12 starting in verse 1 it says, "Now the Lord said to Abram, 'Go from your country and your kindred and your father's house to the land that I'll show you, and I'll make you a great nation. I'll bless you and make your name great, so that you will be a blessing. And I'll bless those who bless you, and him who dishonors you I will curse, and in you all the families of the earth shall be blessed.'"

GENESIS 12:1-3 ESV

¹ Now the LORD said to Abram, "Go from your country and your kindred and your father's house to the land that I will show you. ² And I will make of you a great nation, and I will bless you and make your name great, so that you will be a blessing. ³ I will bless those who bless you, and him who dishonors you I will curse, and in you all the families of the earth shall be blessed."

Right here Abraham gets a word from God and he follows it.

Abraham gets a personal word from God. Genesis chapter 26 in verse 1 it says, "Now there was a famine in the land besides the former famine that was in the days of Abraham. And Isaac went to Gerar to Abimelech king of the Philistines. And the Lord appeared to him and said, 'Do not go down to Egypt. Dwell in the land of which I shall tell you.

Sojourn in this land and I will be with you and I'll bless you, for to you and to your offspring I will give all these lands, and I'll establish the oath that I swore to Abraham.”

GENESIS 26:1-3 ESV

¹ Now there was a famine in the land, besides the former famine that was in the days of Abraham. And Isaac went to Gerar to Abimelech king of the Philistines. ² And the LORD appeared to him and said, “Do not go down to Egypt; dwell in the land of which I shall tell you. ³ Sojourn in this land, and I will be with you and will bless you, for to you and to your offspring I will give all these lands, and I will establish the oath that I swore to Abraham your father.

Isaac gets a personal word from God, and just to let you know that it was a personal word, it was a different word than what his daddy had.

Abraham got to go, Isaac got to stay. It's a different word. It's a personal word from God. Genesis chapter 28 verse 1 says, “Then Isaac called Jacob and blessed him and directed him, ‘You must not take a wife from the Canaanite women. Arise, go to Paddan-aram, to the house of Bethuel your mother's father, and take as a wife from there one of the daughters of Laban your mother's brother.’”

GENESIS 28:1-2 ESV

¹ Then Isaac called Jacob and blessed him and directed him, “You must not take a wife from the Canaanite women. ² Arise, go to Paddan-aram to the house of Bethuel your mother's father, and take as your wife from there one of the daughters of Laban your mother's brother.

So Abraham gets a personal word from God. Isaac gets a personal word from God, and Jacob gets a word from Isaac. Jacob leans on his father's faith, not his own personal faith.

It's easy to trade the garment of praise for the coattails of your family members. I like to write in my Bible. I'm open to, I write it all in my Bible. I call that tearing up your Bible. You need to tear up your Bible. You don't need to tear up your Bible but you need to tear up your Bible. Amen. I like to write in my Bible, and part of the writing in the Bible community, one of the things they talk about a lot, because there's other people that like to write in their Bible and I'm friends with them, they always talk about taking a Bible, writing a bunch of notes in it and passing it on to your kids, and I think that's super sweet.

I think that's sweet, but I don't want my kids to get this Bible. I mean they will. This isn't what I'm, I'm not trying to hand them this. I'm trying to hand my kids the passion and the relationship with the Lord that drives them to tear up their own Bibles in Jesus' name. In fact when they get this Bible I want them to go, “You know, I like this, but it just ain't got the stuff mine's got in it.” Hallelujah. I'm trying to pass that thing on, a real relationship. But part of that, I said this earlier, you've got to let your kids go through the process. You have to let your kids go through the process, because it took Jacob 20 years, but there was a point when Jacob got down and he did business with the Lord and he wrestled with his faith and he came out with a brand new name.

GENESIS 32:24-28 ESV

²⁴ And Jacob was left alone. And a man wrestled with him until the breaking of the day. ²⁵ When the man saw that he did not prevail against Jacob, he touched his hip socket, and Jacob's hip was put out of joint as he wrestled with him. ²⁶ Then he said, "Let me go, for the day has broken." But Jacob said, "I will not let you go unless you bless me." ²⁷ And he said to him, "What is your name?" And he said, "Jacob." ²⁸ Then he said, "Your name shall no longer be called Jacob, but Israel, for you have striven with God and with men, and have prevailed."

Somebody ought to say amen right there. You got to give them time. You got to let them go through the process and it's all going to work out because God is good. So I want to go back to Hebrews chapter 11. We started here, Hebrews 11 verse 17. I want to show you what I saw. Hebrews chapter 11 verse 17 says, "By faith Abraham, when he was tested, offered up Isaac, and he who received the promises was in the act of offering up his only son, of whom it was said, 'Through Isaac shall your offspring be named.' He considered that God was able even to raise him from the dead, for which, figuratively speaking, he did receive him back.

By faith Isaac invoked future blessings on Jacob and Esau. By faith Jacob, when dying, blessed each of the sons of Joseph, bowing in worship over the head of his staff. By faith Joseph, at the end of his life, made mention of the exodus of the Israelites and gave directions concerning his bones." Everywhere in the Bible we are told about either the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, the God of Jacob, or the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob. We always see this grouping of three throughout all of scripture, except right here in Hebrews where we are shown that God is the God of Abraham, Isaac, Jacob and Joseph.

And Joseph, not three generations but four. And I was reading this one day and I saw a pattern here, that Abraham had one son, he blesses one son. Isaac had two sons, he blesses two sons. Jacob had grandsons and he blessed his grandsons.

GENESIS 48:8-20 ESV

⁸ When Israel saw Joseph's sons, he said, "Who are these?" ⁹ Joseph said to his father, "They are my sons, whom God has given me here." And he said, "Bring them to me, please, that I may bless them." ¹⁰ Now the eyes of Israel were dim with age, so that he could not see. So Joseph brought them near him, and he kissed them and embraced them. ¹¹ And Israel said to Joseph, "I never expected to see your face; and behold, God has let me see your offspring also." ¹² Then Joseph removed them from his knees, and he bowed himself with his face to the earth. ¹³ And Joseph took them both, Ephraim in his right hand toward Israel's left hand, and Manasseh in his left hand toward Israel's right hand, and brought them near him. ¹⁴ And Israel stretched out his right hand and laid it on the head of Ephraim, who was the younger, and his left hand on the head of Manasseh, crossing his hands (for Manasseh was the firstborn). ¹⁵ And he blessed Joseph and said, "The God before whom my fathers Abraham and Isaac walked, the God who has been my shepherd all my life long to this day, ¹⁶ the angel who has redeemed me from all evil, bless the boys; and in them let my name be carried on, and the name of my fathers Abraham and Isaac; and let them grow into a multitude in the midst of the earth." ¹⁷ When Joseph saw that his father laid his right hand on the head of Ephraim, it displeased him, and he took his father's hand to move it from Ephraim's head to Manasseh's head. ¹⁸ And Joseph said to his father, "Not this way, my father; since this one is the firstborn, put your right hand on his head." ¹⁹ But his father refused and said, "I know, my son, I know. He also shall become a people, and he also shall be great. Nevertheless, his younger brother shall be greater than he, and his offspring shall become a multitude of nations." ²⁰ So he blessed them that day, saying, "By you Israel will pronounce blessings, saying, 'God make you as Ephraim and as Manasseh.'" Thus he put Ephraim before Manasseh.

But once they got it through that third generation Joseph was able to bless centuries of generations. Almost 400 years that the people of Israel were holding on to the promise of God that had been foreshadowed to Abraham but also to Joseph. That they would be in bondage and in slavery. But there is a day coming that God is going to bring you out, and it was nearly 10 generations that held this word that Joseph had.

GENESIS 50:24-25 ESV

²⁴ And Joseph said to his brothers, "I am about to die, but God will visit you and bring you up out of this land to the land that he swore to Abraham, to Isaac, and to Jacob." ²⁵ Then Joseph made the sons of Israel swear, saying, "God will surely visit you, and you shall carry up my bones from here."

Number three, what we're talking about is generational legacy. Legacy. This is why you got to get a vision for your life, because I believe that you can see in your family a dynasty of born-again, Spirit-filled offspring emerge. I'm not talking about one person in the family serves the Lord with you. I'm not talking about grandma and this grandson over here both in church. I'm talking about a moment that you stick with God long enough that you see family members that you don't even know exist because you're looking down from heaven and they're still serving the Lord.

I'm talking about generational legacy for the kingdom. Hallelujah. I'm excited about it even if you aren't. Talking about generational legacy. Something that goes on and on and on. An Energizer bunny anointing, keeps going and going. Talking about a long line. Your children can be saved. Your grandchildren can be saved, and something can happen in this time with your family that your great, great, great, great, great, great, great, great, great, great grandkids can be serving the Lord too. Amen. Talking about generational legacy, and I just want to encourage somebody this morning.

I do feel this in my spirit, that maybe you feel like you've messed up with your kids, and maybe you feel like you've gotten off track at some point and you got away from doing what you need to do with your kids. Let me tell you something about kids. Let me encourage you. The wrong decision with your kids is real easy to get into. It's going to happen. You're going to mess up with your kids. But if God, rich in his mercy, would send his only son Jesus Christ to the cross, I'm telling you, if he'll shed his blood for you to be redeemed, God can do a great work in your children's lives as well.

EPHESIANS 2:4 ESV

⁴ But God, being rich in mercy, because of the great love with which he loved us,

Not because of your mistakes but because of his goodness and his power and his rich mercy. Hallelujah. I'm going to tell you right now, the Bible says in Romans chapter 8 there is therefore now no condemnation.

ROMANS 8:1 ESV

¹ There is therefore now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus.

Some of you need to stop worrying about the bad decisions you made with your kids and you need to start worrying about the decisions you're making today. It's not about, well, I didn't have my kids in church, and, oh well, we never did family devotion, oh, and I didn't pray with my kids. No. How do you get Jesus in the house today? How do you do? That's where you pick up, and it all starts with where you are now. And I would ask you, where are you standing in the generational legacy of your church or your family?

Where are you standing in the lineage of faith that's developing? Are you an Abraham? Are you taking Jesus into the house? I think as Abrahams we struggled with this, because we were raised in a home that was so funky that just as long as it ain't going crazy in the house, I don't have to have — and listen, it don't have to be over the top, and I'm not saying that I'm doing it right, but let me just tell you, we don't do family devotional around the dinner table. We don't watch small group curriculum with the kids. But I'll tell you this, we pray. There's Bibles all over the living room and they're usually sitting open, and we watch a lot of preaching and we listen to a lot of podcasts. And if they get in the car with me they know they're probably going to hear something that's got something to do with Jesus, and if they get in the car with their mother they're going to hear 90s gangster rap, amen. But don't worry, I'm working on it. Amen. Hallelujah. Praise the Lord.

Sorry about that. But no, I'll tell you, just what are you doing to bring the Lord in the house? You won't do it all right, but you can do something right. You can do something right. Are you keeping them in church? Are you getting them here? Just get them here. If they're young enough, make them come. If they eat your food, make them come. If they use your gas money, make them come. They make you do stuff. Jocelyn had me running all over Alabama the last few days, okay. I just sat out in 40 degree weather for four hours for this child. Hey, get up, we're going to church. Amen. Some days we're just going to do it.

Are you an Isaac? Are you holding the standard? Are you holding the standard? Are you giving in on every little thing? Are you holding the standard in your family? Are you a Jacob? Are you doing business with God? And listen to me, if you're here this morning and your family's been in the faith for a long time, I'm going to ask you this: have you had a real encounter with a real Jesus, or have you just been coming to church and singing the songs, and you kind of know how to do it, and you go home and it makes me all happy, and so I'll do it? Or have you taken the moment to wrestle

with God, taken the moment to do business with the Lord? If you haven't, I'm telling you, you think you know how good it is. If you'll get honest with the Lord and let him actually infiltrate every area of your life, everything about you, your relationships, your job, your income, your faith, your hope, it'll all go to the next level in Jesus' name. Amen.

Are you a Joseph? Are you carrying the legacy? Are you carrying the prophetic vision for your family? Have you said over your family, "No, we are going to serve the Lord, and we'll do it for generation after generation after generation"? Hallelujah. Thank you Lord. I feel like we're about to step into something in the next few months that I don't know how to just, I don't know how to describe it. God's about to do a great work here. Some of y'all are going to see some stuff that you've been praying for for years. It's about to happen. We're in a unique season where we can cast different bait. In every season of change you get a window of opportunities. You just get a window of opportunities. You can do things and say things that you may not ever been able to do before.

You don't have to always sell everything that's going on. If it'll get your kids to come to church, I don't have to be anointed, tell them I'm funny. If they'll get your kids to come to church, tell them, "Hey, every time we do worship it's awesome." I had somebody write a message in one day. They said, "We don't like doing lots of songs." Okay, well, you get to decide when you answer that question if it's a lot or not. You don't have to tell them how many we sing. Just, "Oh, we don't do a lot." They say, "We like a lot of worship." "Oh, we do a lot." You get to make the decision. What things are changing? Hey, a lot is happening in our church, you should come check it out. Even if stuff ain't changing — we're about to change the seats out a little bit. We're putting them where all the backs have the plastic things on them, and we're taking the ones out that don't have the plastic. But stuff's changing. All you got to tell them, stuff's changing, why don't you come see it? Stuff's happening.

But we're in a season where we can use the opportunities that God is giving us to see a return we've been praying for. Use everything. Exploit it all. Your kids shall be saved. I think that's a word. Exploit it all. We've given you Christmas cards to invite people. I will tell you, I'd be shocked if y'all have taken 33 of them. Exploit the cards. Take a hundred of them and do something. I don't even care what you do with them. Just drizzle them all at the entry at Rouses. I don't care, just do something. But do it in faith. Pray in tongues while you do it, that'll be better. But take advantage of it.

We're about to have an opportunity here in a few minutes to sow. Some of you can sow into the next level. You can sow change into your life. Another church today is doing a vision offering. They're calling it something different, but they're doing it. There are pastors from all over the nation who are flying in to give in their vision offering because they're believing God to do something in their church. There is a power to sowing. If you have a need, there's a seed for that need. I want you to lift your hands all across the room and I want to pray for you this morning, especially for those of you who are not sure how you're going to see your family come to know the Lord. The good news is you don't have to see it, you just have to receive it.

Heavenly Father, I ask you right now that you would, in your rich mercy, that you would set the peace that passes all understanding on every parent and grandparent and person who is believing for a breakthrough in their family, for generational blessing and generational salvation and generational kingdom work, generational influence, inheritance, legacy.

PHILIPPIANS 4:7 ESV

⁷ And the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.

God, I pray that you would begin to reassure every person who's believing for that, that you are faithful to your promise, that you do what you said you would do, and that this morning the word in the house is that you and your family shall be saved.

ACTS 16:31 ESV

³¹ And they said, "Believe in the Lord Jesus, and you will be saved, you and your household."

Father, we thank you for people who have been faithful, faithful in serving you, faithful in bringing you into their house, faithful in seeking your face. And God, I ask you that every tear that has been sown in prayer would be reciprocated today with generations of family members coming to know you and carrying the legacy of faith. Father, I pray for every lost son, daughter, grandson and granddaughter today. We declare that they shall be saved. And Father, we ask that we'll see it in our lifetime. Every family member that someone in this room is praying for, God, we pray right now and we declare right now that they will see it in their lifetime, that that person shall be saved. We call prophetically every far-off family member, every prodigal family member, to come home in this season, in Jesus' name. Amen.

Preaching Notes

Before You Preach

This message closes a two-week series on the church's value of being generationally intentional. Week one looked at Joash and the call to create a refuge from the spirit of the age for the next generation. This week widens the lens to the whole family line.

The message moves through three levels by which faith passes down: generational influence, generational inheritance and generational legacy. In the middle it pauses on the third generation, the point where faith most often breaks down, and then returns to Hebrews 11 for the payoff: the list carries the familiar trio of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob on to a fourth name, Joseph. Hold that detail back until the end. Tell the room early that something is hidden in the text and they will have to wait for it.

It was preached on the day of a year-end vision offering and ends with prayer over lost and prodigal family members. Leave room for that prayer. Many people in the room will be carrying a family member on their heart.

Introduction

We are a generationally intentional church. We are not only focused on the next generation. We are mindful of every generation in the house of the Lord, and that requires some give and take: the thing that blesses one generation will not always bless yours, but it will come back around.

I have noticed that if you can keep faith in a family long enough, it is like a snowball rolling down a hill. It slowly gets bigger and more powerful, a greater force to be reckoned with, the longer you can keep it in the family. That is the generational multiplier.

HEBREWS 11:17-22 ESV

¹⁷ By faith Abraham, when he was tested, offered up Isaac, and he who had received the promises was in the act of offering up his only son, ¹⁸ of whom it was said, "Through Isaac shall your offspring be named." ¹⁹ He considered that God was able even to raise him from the dead, from which, figuratively speaking, he did receive him back. ²⁰ By faith Isaac invoked future blessings on Jacob and Esau. ²¹ By faith Jacob, when dying, blessed each of the sons of Joseph, bowing in worship over the head of his staff. ²² By faith Joseph, at the end of his life, made mention of the exodus of the Israelites and gave directions concerning his bones.

Today we look at the patriarchs of our faith: Abraham, Isaac and Jacob. At the end of the message, come back to this text. There is something hidden in it.

GOD WORKS THROUGH GENERATIONS

He is not just the God of Abraham. He is the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob. Blast off a handful of scriptures to prove it:

- “For the promise is for you and for your children” (Acts 2:39).
- “His steadfast love endures forever, and his faithfulness to all generations” (Psalm 100:5).
- “Let this be recorded for a generation to come, so that a people yet to be created may praise the LORD” (Psalm 102:18). It is our responsibility to keep a record of how God moves in our generation so we can hand it to the next.
- “The steadfast love of the LORD is from everlasting to everlasting on those who fear him, and his righteousness to children’s children” (Psalm 103:17).
- “One generation shall commend your works to another, and shall declare your mighty acts” (Psalm 145:4).

It runs both directions. We pass down what God has done. But when God moves in a younger generation, that is a blessing to the generation that came before. Some of you have been praying for your family for years, and a younger generation is going to be the one that reaches the family members you have been praying for.

LED BY VISION, NOT DESIRE

Illustration: the young man in the cycle. Pastor Jason recently spoke with a young man who is called to ministry but keeps making choices that leave him in a spiraling cycle. The words that came out, almost prophetically, were these: “You are being led in your life by your desire and not by vision.”

If you lead your life by desire, doing the next thing you want to do, you will keep finding yourself back at or behind your starting point. If you get vision, you can move past the things that go wrong. Peter writes that “after you have suffered a little while,” God “will himself restore, confirm, strengthen, and establish you” (1 Peter 5:10). You need vision to get there.

Today is about vision for your family. Sometimes you have to make peace with the idea that it may not happen in your lifetime. But if you get a vision for what you want God to do in your family and start moving in that direction, God is faithful to do what He said He would do.

Illustration: tomorrow, not today. Pastor Jason heard a quote that week attributed to John Morgan, founder of the Morgan & Morgan law firm, a man known for living simply despite great wealth: “We’ve been able to generate all of this wealth because we’ve decided that the only thing that matters is tomorrow, not today.”

The passing of faith happens from one generation to the next through three levels.

1. Generational Influence

Not everyone comes from an Abraham, Isaac and Jacob situation. Many people did not grow up in church. Pastor Jason was raised far from the house of the Lord, in a house of turmoil and dysfunction. If it were not for people

who used their influence for the gospel, he would not be saved today. He and Ashleigh are both “Abrahams” in their families: the place where it begins.

Generational influence is not a direct deposit from family. It comes through kingdom-minded people outside the family who use their influence for the gospel. Someone gives to something. Someone has an idea for a ministry. Someone is kind in the right moment.

Illustration: lunch at the middle school. For Pastor Jason, it was a ministry of college-aged students from a local church who came and ate lunch with kids at his middle school. They may never have known what would come from it.

WHERE DID ABRAHAM'S FAITH COME FROM?

A question for your own Bible study: where did Abraham get his faith? Not at home. Joshua tells us that Terah, Abraham's father, “served other gods” (Joshua 24:2).

Here we step into extra-biblical tradition. Many ancient Jewish teachers believed Abraham learned about the one true God from Noah or from Noah's son Shem. We do not usually think of Noah and Abraham as alive at the same time, but Noah was ten generations before Abram (Genesis 11:10-26), and by the ages given in Genesis, Noah was still alive for roughly the first 58 years of Abram's life. Abraham was already an adult, already facing the grief of having no child, while Noah and Shem were alive. Maybe someone said, “You have a problem, and we know the One who can solve it. Let me tell you about the flood.”

Even though it did not come through his family, it came through influence.

MANY ON-RAMPS

There is only one way to the Father, and His name is Jesus Christ (John 14:6). But there are many on-ramps to Jesus. Anybody in this room could be the conduit for a whole family to be turned around, and it could start with an invitation to a Christmas service. What could a single invite card lead to? What could a child's first visit to church lead to? What could one gospel presentation do for a family line?

Influence is indirect, but somehow it catches a person, and that person starts the generational multiplier.

2. Generational Inheritance

“A good man leaves an inheritance to his children's children” (Proverbs 13:22).

That is about more than money, but it includes money. A practical word: get life insurance and make a will, so that when you pass away nobody is fighting over what is theirs. Pastor Jason has watched brothers and sisters in their 60s and 70s fight tooth and nail because their mother never wrote it down. You do not have to have a million dollars to leave a million dollars.

But the deeper inheritance is faith. Inheritance is a direct deposit from one generation to another: the moment you see your kids give their lives to Jesus Christ. Two things help.

INVOLVE JESUS IN THE HOME

In Genesis 18, Abraham looks up and sees the Lord coming toward his tent with two others. He invites them in, hurries to Sarah and has her make cakes, and they eat together (Genesis 18:1-8).

Your family needs to see you sit down with the Lord at home. “Church Jesus” is not enough. Your kids need to know beyond a shadow of a doubt that your faith is not a social club but a real, burning faith.

REVELATION 3:20 ESV

²⁰ Behold, I stand at the door and knock. If anyone hears my voice and opens the door, I will come in to him and eat with him, and he with me.

The King James says Jesus will “sup” with you. Jesus wants to come in and eat. Involve Him in the house.

TRUST THE LORD WITH YOUR KIDS

One of the hardest things for good, well-meaning, Spirit-filled parents to understand is that you are not the Holy Spirit. You have to trust the Lord with your kids.

As Abraham walked Isaac up the mountain, fully willing to obey, he said, “God will provide for himself the lamb” (Genesis 22:8). Your kids are going to go through a process. At times they will scare you silly. But if you stop trying to be the Holy Spirit in their lives and let God do His work, there is a Lamb for the sacrifice, and His name is Jesus Christ. That is the Lamb your kids are going to find.

3. The Third Generation

Faith usually becomes hardest to keep in a family in the third generation. If Abraham serves the Lord, Isaac will probably serve the Lord. It is not easy or automatic, but it is likely. When you get down to Jacob, it can fall off. Scripture shows the pattern again and again:

- **Elijah, Elisha, Gehazi.** Elisha asked for “a double portion” of Elijah’s spirit (2 Kings 2:9). Gehazi, Elisha’s servant, was out for selfish gain (2 Kings 5:20-27).
- **Moses, Joshua, and a generation with no name.** After Joshua, “there arose another generation after them who did not know the LORD” (Judges 2:10). They stepped into the greatest fulfillment of the promise any of them had seen, and ran off to serve idols.
- **David, Solomon, Rehoboam.** David, a man after God’s own heart. Solomon, the wisest and wealthiest man who ever lived. Then Rehoboam, who told the people to come back in three days, answered them harshly, and split the kingdom his father and grandfather had built (1 Kings 12:1-19).

But there is also power in the third generation. Timothy, who traveled with the apostle Paul, received a faith that “dwelt first in your grandmother Lois and your mother Eunice” (2 Timothy 1:5), and church tradition remembers him as a leader of the church at Ephesus. And Jacob, the third generation from Abraham, had twelve sons who became the core of the nation of Israel.

TRADING THE GARMENT OF PRAISE FOR COATTAILS

Why the third generation? The enemy sees the potential and attacks it. But it is also simply harder. That far into a lineage of faith, it is easy to trade an authentic experience for grandmother's stories, to come to church because Daddy wants you to rather than because faith is real inside you. It is easy to trade "the garment of praise" (Isaiah 61:3) for the spiritual coattails of somebody who came before you. And people stop doing business with God.

Watch it in Abraham, Isaac and Jacob.

GENESIS 12:1-3 ESV

¹ Now the LORD said to Abram, "Go from your country and your kindred and your father's house to the land that I will show you. ² And I will make of you a great nation, and I will bless you and make your name great, so that you will be a blessing. ³ I will bless those who bless you, and him who dishonors you I will curse, and in you all the families of the earth shall be blessed."

Abraham gets a personal word from God, and he follows it.

GENESIS 26:1-3 ESV

¹ Now there was a famine in the land, besides the former famine that was in the days of Abraham. And Isaac went to Gerar to Abimelech king of the Philistines. ² And the LORD appeared to him and said, "Do not go down to Egypt; dwell in the land of which I shall tell you. ³ Sojourn in this land, and I will be with you and will bless you, for to you and to your offspring I will give all these lands, and I will establish the oath that I swore to Abraham your father.

Isaac gets a personal word from God, and it is a different word from his father's. Abraham was told to go. Isaac was told to stay.

GENESIS 28:1-2 ESV

¹ Then Isaac called Jacob and blessed him and directed him, "You must not take a wife from the Canaanite women. ² Arise, go to Paddan-aram to the house of Bethuel your mother's father, and take as your wife from there one of the daughters of Laban your mother's brother.

Jacob gets a word from Isaac. Abraham gets a personal word from God. Isaac gets a personal word from God. Jacob leans on his father's faith, not his own.

Illustration: tear up your own Bible. Pastor Jason writes all over his Bible. In the Bible-journaling world, people love the idea of filling a Bible with notes and passing it on to their kids. That is sweet. But his goal is not to hand his kids his Bible. It is to hand them the passion and relationship with the Lord that drives them to tear up their own. When they get his Bible one day, he wants them to say, "I like this, but it ain't got the stuff mine's got in it."

Let your kids go through the process. It took Jacob 20 years, but there came a point when he got down and did business with God. He wrestled, and he came out with a brand-new name (Genesis 32:24-28). Give them time. God is good.

4. The Fourth Generation: Joseph

Go back to Hebrews 11:17-22.

Throughout Scripture we hear of the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, the God of Jacob, or the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob: a grouping of three. But here the list keeps going. Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, and Joseph. Not three generations but four.

Look at the pattern:

- Abraham passed the blessing to one son (Genesis 25:5).
- Isaac blessed two sons, Jacob and Esau.
- Jacob blessed his grandsons, the sons of Joseph (Genesis 48:8-20).
- Joseph, once faith made it through the third generation, spoke a word that carried his people for centuries. He “made mention of the exodus of the Israelites and gave directions concerning his bones” (Hebrews 11:22; Genesis 50:24-25).

For about 400 years, through many generations of bondage in Egypt, Israel held on to the promise God had spoken to Abraham (Genesis 15:13) and that Joseph had pointed to: a day was coming when God would bring them out.

5. Generational Legacy

This is why you have to get a vision for your family. You can see a dynasty of born-again, Spirit-filled descendants emerge. Not one person in the family serving the Lord. Not just grandma and one grandson in church. Stick with God long enough that one day you will look down from heaven at family members you never met, still serving the Lord.

That is generational legacy for the kingdom. Your children can be saved. Your grandchildren can be saved. Something can happen in your family in this season that your great-great-great-grandchildren will still be living in.

IF YOU FEEL YOU HAVE MESSED UP

Maybe you feel you have messed up with your kids. Maybe you got off track. Every parent makes wrong decisions. But God, “being rich in mercy” (Ephesians 2:4), sent His Son to the cross for you. He can do a great work in your children’s lives, not because of your mistakes but because of His goodness, His power and His rich mercy.

“There is therefore now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus” (Romans 8:1). Stop worrying about the decisions you already made and start paying attention to the decisions you are making today. The question is not, “Why didn’t we do family devotions?” The question is, “How do I get Jesus into the house today?” Start where you are.

WHERE ARE YOU STANDING?

- **Are you an Abraham?** Are you bringing Jesus into the house? It does not have to be over the top. Pastor Jason's family does not do devotions around the dinner table. But they pray, there are open Bibles all over the living room, they listen to a lot of preaching, and if the kids get in the car with him they will probably hear something about Jesus. You will not do it all right, but you can do something right. Keep them in church. If they are young enough, make them come. If they eat your food and use your gas money, make them come.
- **Are you an Isaac?** Are you holding the standard, or giving in on every little thing?
- **Are you a Jacob?** Are you doing business with God? If your family has been in the faith a long time, have you had a real encounter with a real Jesus, or do you just know how to do church? Wrestle with God. Let Him into every area of your life.
- **Are you a Joseph?** Are you carrying the legacy and the prophetic vision for your family? Have you said, "We are going to serve the Lord for generation after generation"?

USE EVERY OPPORTUNITY

In every season of change, you get a window of opportunity. Use it. Invite people to what God is doing. Take a stack of Christmas invitation cards and do something with them, in faith. Your kids shall be saved.

There is power in sowing. If you have a need, there is a seed for that need.

Conclusion

Have people lift their hands, especially those who do not know how they will see their family come to the Lord. The good news: you do not have to see it. You just have to receive it.

Pray for the peace of God, "which surpasses all understanding" (Philippians 4:7), over every parent and grandparent believing for their family. Thank God for those who have been faithful in bringing Him into their homes. Pray that every tear sown in prayer would be answered with generations coming to know Him. Pray for every lost son, daughter, grandson and granddaughter, and call every far-off and prodigal family member home. Declare the word over the house: "Believe in the Lord Jesus, and you will be saved, you and your household" (Acts 16:31).

Scripture List

Every passage read, cited or alluded to in the message, in the order it comes up.

Read

Read aloud in the message.

HEBREWS 11:17-22

¹⁷ By faith Abraham, when he was tested, offered up Isaac, and he who had received the promises was in the act of offering up his only son, ¹⁸ of whom it was said, “Through Isaac shall your offspring be named.” ¹⁹ He considered that God was able even to raise him from the dead, from which, figuratively speaking, he did receive him back. ²⁰ By faith Isaac invoked future blessings on Jacob and Esau. ²¹ By faith Jacob, when dying, blessed each of the sons of Joseph, bowing in worship over the head of his staff. ²² By faith Joseph, at the end of his life, made mention of the exodus of the Israelites and gave directions concerning his bones.

GENESIS 12:1-3

¹ Now the LORD said to Abram, “Go from your country and your kindred and your father’s house to the land that I will show you. ² And I will make of you a great nation, and I will bless you and make your name great, so that you will be a blessing. ³ I will bless those who bless you, and him who dishonors you I will curse, and in you all the families of the earth shall be blessed.”

GENESIS 26:1-3

¹ Now there was a famine in the land, besides the former famine that was in the days of Abraham. And Isaac went to Gerar to Abimelech king of the Philistines. ² And the LORD appeared to him and said, “Do not go down to Egypt; dwell in the land of which I shall tell you. ³ Sojourn in this land, and I will be with you and will bless you, for to you and to your offspring I will give all these lands, and I will establish the oath that I swore to Abraham your father.

GENESIS 28:1-2

¹ Then Isaac called Jacob and blessed him and directed him, “You must not take a wife from the Canaanite women. ² Arise, go to Paddan-aram to the house of Bethuel your mother’s father, and take as your wife from there one of the daughters of Laban your mother’s brother.

Cited

Named or quoted along the way.

ACTS 2:39	³⁹ For the promise is for you and for your children and for all who are far off, everyone whom the Lord our God calls to himself.”
PSALM 100:5	⁵ For the LORD is good; his steadfast love endures forever, and his faithfulness to all generations.
PSALM 102:18	¹⁸ Let this be recorded for a generation to come, so that a people yet to be created may praise the LORD:
PSALM 103:17	¹⁷ But the steadfast love of the LORD is from everlasting to everlasting on those who fear him, and his righteousness to children’s children,
PSALM 145:4	⁴ One generation shall commend your works to another, and shall declare your mighty acts.
JOSHUA 24:2	² And Joshua said to all the people, “Thus says the LORD, the God of Israel, ‘Long ago, your fathers lived beyond the Euphrates, Terah, the father of Abraham and of Nahor; and they served other gods.
PROVERBS 13:22	²² A good man leaves an inheritance to his children’s children, but the sinner’s wealth is laid up for the righteous.
GENESIS 18:1-8	¹ And the LORD appeared to him by the oaks of Mamre, as he sat at the door of his tent in the heat of the day. ² He lifted up his eyes and looked, and behold, three men were standing in front of him. When he saw them, he ran from the tent door to meet them and bowed himself to the earth ³ and said, “O Lord, if I have found favor in your sight, do not pass by your servant. ⁴ Let a little water be brought, and wash your feet, and rest yourselves under the tree, ⁵ while I bring a morsel of bread, that you may refresh yourselves, and after that you may pass on—since you have come to your servant.” So they said, “Do as you have said.” ⁶ And Abraham went quickly into the tent to Sarah and said, “Quick! Three seahs of fine flour! Knead it, and make cakes.” ⁷ And Abraham ran to the herd and took a calf, tender and good, and gave it to a young man, who prepared it quickly. ⁸ Then he took curds and milk and the calf that he had prepared, and set it before them. And he stood by them under the tree while they ate.
REVELATION 3:20	²⁰ Behold, I stand at the door and knock. If anyone hears my voice and opens the door, I will come in to him and eat with him, and he with me.

Alluded to

Drawn on without naming the reference.

1 PETER 5:10

¹⁰ And after you have suffered a little while, the God of all grace, who has called you to his eternal glory in Christ, will himself restore, confirm, strengthen, and establish you.

JOHN 14:6

⁶ Jesus said to him, "I am the way, and the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me.

GENESIS 22:8

⁸ Abraham said, "God will provide for himself the lamb for a burnt offering, my son." So they went both of them together.

2 KINGS 5:20-27

²⁰ Gehazi, the servant of Elisha the man of God, said, "See, my master has spared this Naaman the Syrian, in not accepting from his hand what he brought. As the LORD lives, I will run after him and get something from him." ²¹ So Gehazi followed Naaman. And when Naaman saw someone running after him, he got down from the chariot to meet him and said, "Is all well?" ²² And he said, "All is well. My master has sent me to say, 'There have just now come to me from the hill country of Ephraim two young men of the sons of the prophets. Please give them a talent of silver and two changes of clothing.'" ²³ And Naaman said, "Be pleased to accept two talents." And he urged him and tied up two talents of silver in two bags, with two changes of clothing, and laid them on two of his servants. And they carried them before Gehazi. ²⁴ And when he came to the hill, he took them from their hand and put them in the house, and he sent the men away, and they departed. ²⁵ He went in and stood before his master, and Elisha said to him, "Where have you been, Gehazi?" And he said, "Your servant went nowhere." ²⁶ But he said to him, "Did not my heart go when the man turned from his chariot to meet you? Was it a time to accept money and garments, olive orchards and vineyards, sheep and oxen, male servants and female servants? ²⁷ Therefore the leprosy of Naaman shall cling to you and to your descendants forever." So he went out from his presence a leper, like snow.

JUDGES 2:10-12

¹⁰ And all that generation also were gathered to their fathers. And there arose another generation after them who did not know the LORD or the work that he had done for Israel. ¹¹ And the people of Israel did what was evil in the sight of the LORD and served the Baals. ¹² And they abandoned the LORD, the God of their fathers, who had brought them out of the land of Egypt. They went after other gods, from among the gods of the peoples who were around them, and bowed down to them. And they provoked the LORD to anger.

1 KINGS 12:1-19

¹ Rehoboam went to Shechem, for all Israel had come to Shechem to make him king. ² And as soon as Jeroboam the son of Nebat heard of it (for he was still in Egypt, where he had fled from King Solomon), then Jeroboam returned from Egypt. ³ And they sent and called him, and Jeroboam and all the assembly of Israel came and said to Rehoboam, ⁴ “Your father made our yoke heavy. Now therefore lighten the hard service of your father and his heavy yoke on us, and we will serve you.” ⁵ He said to them, “Go away for three days, then come again to me.” So the people went away. ⁶ Then King Rehoboam took counsel with the old men, who had stood before Solomon his father while he was yet alive, saying, “How do you advise me to answer this people?” ⁷ And they said to him, “If you will be a servant to this people today and serve them, and speak good words to them when you answer them, then they will be your servants forever.” ⁸ But he abandoned the counsel that the old men gave him and took counsel with the young men who had grown up with him and stood before him. ⁹ And he said to them, “What do you advise that we answer this people who have said to me, ‘Lighten the yoke that your father put on us?’” ¹⁰ And the young men who had grown up with him said to him, “Thus shall you speak to this people who said to you, ‘Your father made our yoke heavy, but you lighten it for us,’ thus shall you say to them, ‘My little finger is thicker than my father’s thighs.’” ¹¹ And now, whereas my father laid on you a heavy yoke, I will add to your yoke. My father disciplined you with whips, but I will discipline you with scorpions.” ¹² So Jeroboam and all the people came to Rehoboam the third day, as the king said, “Come to me again the third day.” ¹³ And the king answered the people harshly, and forsaking the counsel that the old men had given him, ¹⁴ he spoke to them according to the counsel of the young men, saying, “My father made your yoke heavy, but I will add to your yoke. My father disciplined you with whips, but I will discipline you with scorpions.” ¹⁵ So the king did not listen to the people, for it was a turn of affairs brought about by the LORD that he might fulfill his word, which the LORD spoke by Ahijah the Shilonite to Jeroboam the son of Nebat. ¹⁶ And when all Israel saw that the king did not listen to them, the people answered the king, “What portion do we have in David? We have no inheritance in the son of Jesse. To your tents, O Israel! Look now to your own house, David.” So Israel went to their tents. ¹⁷ But Rehoboam reigned over the people of Israel who lived in the cities of Judah. ¹⁸ Then King Rehoboam sent Adoram, who was taskmaster over the forced labor, and all Israel stoned him to death with stones. And King Rehoboam hurried to mount his chariot to flee to Jerusalem. ¹⁹ So Israel has been in rebellion against the house of David to this day.

2 TIMOTHY 1:5

⁵ I am reminded of your sincere faith, a faith that dwelt first in your grandmother Lois and your mother Eunice and now, I am sure, dwells in you as well.

ISAIAH 61:3

³ to grant to those who mourn in Zion— to give them a beautiful headdress instead of ashes, the oil of gladness instead of mourning, the garment of praise instead of a faint spirit; that they may be called oaks of righteousness, the planting of the LORD, that he may be glorified.

GENESIS 32:24-28

²⁴ And Jacob was left alone. And a man wrestled with him until the breaking of the day. ²⁵ When the man saw that he did not prevail against Jacob, he touched his hip socket, and Jacob's hip was put out of joint as he wrestled with him. ²⁶ Then he said, "Let me go, for the day has broken." But Jacob said, "I will not let you go unless you bless me." ²⁷ And he said to him, "What is your name?" And he said, "Jacob." ²⁸ Then he said, "Your name shall no longer be called Jacob, but Israel, for you have striven with God and with men, and have prevailed."

GENESIS 48:8-20

⁸ When Israel saw Joseph's sons, he said, "Who are these?" ⁹ Joseph said to his father, "They are my sons, whom God has given me here." And he said, "Bring them to me, please, that I may bless them." ¹⁰ Now the eyes of Israel were dim with age, so that he could not see. So Joseph brought them near him, and he kissed them and embraced them. ¹¹ And Israel said to Joseph, "I never expected to see your face; and behold, God has let me see your offspring also." ¹² Then Joseph removed them from his knees, and he bowed himself with his face to the earth. ¹³ And Joseph took them both, Ephraim in his right hand toward Israel's left hand, and Manasseh in his left hand toward Israel's right hand, and brought them near him. ¹⁴ And Israel stretched out his right hand and laid it on the head of Ephraim, who was the younger, and his left hand on the head of Manasseh, crossing his hands (for Manasseh was the firstborn). ¹⁵ And he blessed Joseph and said, "The God before whom my fathers Abraham and Isaac walked, the God who has been my shepherd all my life long to this day, ¹⁶ the angel who has redeemed me from all evil, bless the boys; and in them let my name be carried on, and the name of my fathers Abraham and Isaac; and let them grow into a multitude in the midst of the earth." ¹⁷ When Joseph saw that his father laid his right hand on the head of Ephraim, it displeased him, and he took his father's hand to move it from Ephraim's head to Manasseh's head. ¹⁸ And Joseph said to his father, "Not this way, my father; since this one is the firstborn, put your right hand on his head." ¹⁹ But his father refused and said, "I know, my son, I know. He also shall become a people, and he also shall be great. Nevertheless, his younger brother shall be greater than he, and his offspring shall become a multitude of nations." ²⁰ So he blessed them that day, saying, "By you Israel will pronounce blessings, saying, 'God make you as Ephraim and as Manasseh.'" Thus he put Ephraim before Manasseh.

GENESIS 50:24-
25

²⁴ And Joseph said to his brothers, “I am about to die, but God will visit you and bring you up out of this land to the land that he swore to Abraham, to Isaac, and to Jacob.”
²⁵ Then Joseph made the sons of Israel swear, saying, “God will surely visit you, and you shall carry up my bones from here.”

EPHESIANS 2:4

⁴ But God, being rich in mercy, because of the great love with which he loved us,

PHILIPPIANS 4:7

⁷ And the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.

ACTS 16:31

³¹ And they said, “Believe in the Lord Jesus, and you will be saved, you and your household.”

ABOUT THE PREACHER



Pastor Jason Mayfield

SENIOR PASTOR, CITYLIGHT CHURCH

Pastor Jason Mayfield is the Senior Pastor of Citylight Church in Saraland, Alabama, where he and his wife, Ashleigh, lead a church devoted to Building Lives on Jesus. His preaching is rooted in the Bible, full of hope, and grounded in one conviction: an incredible life is built on the finished work of Jesus Christ.

For more than 20 years, Pastor Jason has given his life to the local church. He has been credentialed with the Assemblies of God for 21 years and ordained for 14, and he has led revitalization in churches that went on to rank among the Top 100 Fastest-Growing Churches in America. He carries a deep conviction that the church can be both excellent and supernatural, and a passion for revival.

He is an author and the creator of Tear Up Your Bible and POWER 27, a daily rhythm of Bible reading, prayer and worship. His resources have helped more than 100,000 people go deeper in the Scriptures. Above every title, his greatest joy is seeing people meet Jesus, be filled with the Spirit, and grow into everything God has called them to be.

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