



grow. pray. study.

August 14, 2022 “The Exchange Zone”

Scripture: Acts 9:26-28 CEB

“Save some manna for future generations”

MONDAY 8.15.22 Exodus 16:11-16, 31-33, Hebrews 9:4-5

Had you been with Indiana Jones when he found the Ark of the Covenant (okay, that was just a movie—no one has ever found that sacred gold-covered wooden chest), you’d have expected it to hold the Ten Commandments (“stone tablets of the covenant”). But you might not have expected a “gold jar containing manna” (whether miraculously preserved or all dried out). God showed a deep interest in “future generations” by telling Israel to keep that jar in their most sacred place.

- We still sometimes call something good that we didn’t expect “manna from heaven,” an allusion to the way Israelite history said this food just appeared in the desert after God promised it. The name was a Hebrew pun. “Manna” echoed the phrase “man hu,” which meant “What is it?” (or even “What is this stuff?”). When has God provided for your good in a way that surprised, or even puzzled, you?
- Surely no one would ever forget food appearing every day. Yet God told Moses to keep some manna as a reminder “for future generations.” Israel needed that reminder. In [Numbers 11:4-15](#) we read that the Israelites whined so much about the manna that Moses asked God to take his life. How can you help “future generations” recall the good things God has done? (Spoiler: “things were better back in my day” rarely helps.) How can your church nurture future generations?

Prayer: Lord God, thank you for the ways (often through your caring people) you have sent “manna” into my life. Help me effectively share those stories with future generations. Amen.

Teach new generations “to put their hope in God”

TUESDAY 8.16.22 Psalm 78:1-8, 71:14-19

God’s people have always valued teaching and learning. Israel’s sacred poets showed that the focus of education was not just to satisfy random human curiosity, but to grasp and pass on the knowledge of God’s powerful acts to future generations. They clearly believed God sees a desire to instruct “the next generation” as central to life’s purpose. And Jesus continued that focus: “Jesus began to teach anyone who would listen regardless of gender status or age.” *

- Psalm 78 said that while learning, of course, has present benefits, it is strongly future-focused. God’s followers, through the centuries, have played a major role in starting many types of schools. That’s because the faith teaches them to care about future generations, not merely their comfort and security. How important is it to you that your faith not just make your life better, but reach those who will be here after you’re gone?
- We often see financial ads that urge saving by picturing “retirement” or old age as a non-stop, self-indulgent vacation. Psalm 71 said the calling to share God’s love and power lasts lifelong: “Even in my old age with gray hair, don’t abandon me, God! Not until I tell generations about your mighty arm, tell all who are yet to come about your strength.” Whether you’re 21 or 81, how are you (or will you start) shaping a legacy of telling future generations about the God you love and serve?

Prayer: Lord God, I want to live a life with the big picture aim of helping present and future generations know your strength and ultimate righteousness. Please help me do that well. Amen.

* Ortberg, John, *Who Is This Man?: The Unpredictable Impact of the Inescapable Jesus*. Zondervan. Kindle Edition. For a more in-depth study of Jesus’ effect on education than we have space for here, see chapter 5, “An Undistinguished Visiting Scholar,” in Ortberg’s remarkable book.

God's calling to all people of all ages

WEDNESDAY 8.17.22 Jeremiah 1:6-8, Joel 2:28-29

Often artwork like Michelangelo's "Moses" shapes our view of whom God can work through, so we expect God to work mainly through powerful senior figures. And God did, calling aged Abram (cf. [Genesis 12:4](#)) and Moses at age 80 when he set out to deliver Israel from slavery (cf. [Exodus 7:7](#)). But God didn't accept Jeremiah's protest that he was too young to be effective as a prophet, and the prophet Joel pictured God pouring out God's spirit on people of all ages.

- Scholar John Goldingay noted that we don't know exactly how old Jeremiah was: "just a young man—maybe in his twenties, maybe even younger. A culture such as Israel's recognizes that wisdom lies with people more senior." But that was part of the point: "God isn't constrained by the way things usually work." * Are you ever tempted to discount someone's testimony because you think they are "too young" (or "too old," for that matter)?
- Joel's message (which the apostle Peter quoted on the Day of Pentecost—cf. [Acts 2:12-21](#)) showed God's intention to work through people of all ages and social standings. "God's call to Jeremiah is not meant as a model of God's call to believers in the sense that we should all seek an experience with God like that of Jeremiah....God does not call all believers to be prophets." ** What has helped you (or might help you) to develop a clearer sense of God's calling on your life?

Prayer: Calling, commissioning God, sensitize me to the ways you pour out your Spirit on me, and on the ways your presence calls me to serve and bless others. Amen.

* John Goldingay, *Jeremiah for Everyone*. Louisville: Westminster John Knox Press, 2015, p. 10.

** J. Andrew Dearman, *The NIV Application Commentary: Jeremiah, Lamentations*. Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2002, p. 52.

The encourager who paved the way for the greatest apostle

THURSDAY 8.18.22 Acts 9:26-28

The back story: Saul fiercely opposed the early Christians (cf. [Acts 8:3](#)). Then the living Jesus met him, and redirected Saul's energy into preaching the reality that the risen Jesus was God's promised deliverer (cf. [Acts 9:20-21](#)). But when he went back to Jerusalem, the Christians there were, as we'd expect, afraid to receive him into their community. But they trusted Barnabas, and it was only when he vouched for Saul's transformation that they opened their doors and hearts to their former enemy.

- Scholar William Barclay paid tribute to the role the less prominent Barnabas played: "The Church owed Paul to the large-hearted charity of Barnabas....Barnabas took him by the hand and stood sponsor for him." Barnabas had two key qualities: "He was a man who insisted on believing the best of others" and "He was a man who never held anyone's past against him." * Has anyone ever made something important possible by vouching for you? For whom can you do that?
- The man's given name was Joseph. "Barnabas" was a nickname the apostles gave him (cf. [Acts 4:36](#)), and it meant "one who encourages." While Saul was still persecuting the Christians, Joseph had already shown his inner qualities and earned the nickname by which we most commonly know him. Reflect: what is a nickname with a positive meaning you'd hope others might come to know you by? Whom do you know who might properly receive the nickname "Barnabas"?

Prayer: Generous God, you believe in me even when I struggle to do the same. Grow in me the quality that Joseph had—make me a "Barnabas" who believes in and encourages others. Amen.

“Don’t let anyone look down on you”

FRIDAY 8.19.22 Acts 16:1-3, 1 Timothy 4:9-14

On his second missionary journey, the apostle Paul met a younger man named Timothy. Timothy became a deeply valued associate (cf. [1 Thessalonians 3:1-2](#)). Paul trusted him to lead churches (cf. [1 Timothy 1:3](#)), even after Paul was gone (cf. [2 Timothy 2:1-2](#)). Paul urged Timothy not to let his youth make him shy from responsibility, but to lead with confidence and trust in the gifts God gave him (which clearly did not depend on him reaching some minimum age).

- How do the Biblical stories show that you are never too old (e.g. Abraham, Moses) or too young (e.g. Jeremiah, Timothy) to do what God calls you to? If you are on the younger end of the age spectrum, do older people ever intimidate you, making you fear to offer your gifts and insights? If you are older, what helps you avoid the tendency to discount younger Christians whose thinking, style of dress or music is not the same as yours?
- What examples of either spiritual courage or timidity are parts of your spiritual journey? In what ways have parents, grandparents, teachers, friends and other people given you confidence to fearlessly value and use your God-given strengths? How have the good examples shaped your life and service? How can you mentor and encourage someone who is younger than you?

Prayer: Lord Jesus, in this age-conscious culture, remind me that from your eternal view, age is one of the least of your concerns. Empower me to live without fear, now and in all my years of earthly life. Amen.

God’s multi-generational church

SATURDAY 8.20.22 Ephesians 2:4-7

“God is rich in mercy.” “You are saved by God’s grace.” That was the beating heart of our faith, said the letter to the Ephesians. God saved us FROM a broken, self-seeking way of life. But that wasn’t the end of the story; it was just the beginning. What Jesus called “the kingdom of God” aims to restore not just individuals, but this whole broken world to God-given wholeness. God didn’t save any of us just to do something nice for us. If in fact “God did this to show future generations the greatness of his grace,” then a part of our response to God’s grace must surely be to thoughtfully aim to leave a legacy that plays a role in showing future generations how good God has been to us.

- John Wesley, Methodism’s founder, applied Ephesians 2 to everyday life in his “second general rule”: “By doing good; by being in every kind merciful after their power; as they have opportunity, doing good of every possible sort, and, as far as possible, to all men.” Sometimes we feel as though we are just getting by day-to-day. Let Wesley’s phrase “doing good of every possible sort” spark your creativity. What new sorts of goodness, not just for the present but for future generations, might God be nudging you to consider making a part of your life and planning? What might you do during the remainder of 2022 to “pay forward” the grace and love God has poured into your life?

Prayer: Lord Jesus, thank you for all that you have saved me from. Guide me day by day into a way of living that honors and carries out the purposes you saved me for, now and in the future. Amen.

Prayer Requests – cor.org/prayer *Prayers of peace and comfort for:*

Please pray for our church family members who are serving in the military, and those listed below who have recently lost loved ones.

To **Karen Orosco** and family following the death of **Angela Falgiani** (Sister).

To **Gwendolyn West** and family following the death of **Richard West** (Brother), who died.

To **Judy Wimmer** and family following the death of **Howard Wimmer** (Husband), who died 8/5/2022.

To **Donna Young** and family following the death of **Ryan Young** (Son), who died 7/10/2022.

If you would like prayer, please submit a prayer request [online](#), and our pastors and prayer team will pray for you.