

Families that Kids Love – Grandparents Who Make a Difference

Joshua 4:4-7

A moment in time. Just a moment in time can change life forever. Some moments have such significance that all we have to do is mention the date itself. December 7, 1941. The day Pearl Harbor was bombed. President Roosevelt referred to it as a day that “would last in infamy”. September 11, 2001. The day the World Trade Center Towers were attacked. I remember exactly where I stood as I first saw the news reports on television that showed the first tower collapse.

Some moments have such significance that we only need to recall the event and we immediately flashback to that moment. The day President Kennedy was shot. His funeral. The salute of a toddler son. Or the day the US Men’s Hockey Olympic Team

upset the Russians at Lake Placid and went on to win the gold medal over the team from Sweden. Can you hear the words of Al Michael's in the closing seconds of that game: "Do you believe in miracles?" Just a moment in time. Not all moments have that kind of significance. What we all want to do is to recognize the God moments in life.

This is the last message in our series "Families that Kids Love". God has been blessing us as we have worked through this series. We began with a message on "Men who are Heroes". Then we looked at "Women of Significance". This was followed by "Marriages that Stay in Romance". And last week Pastor Doug brought us a message on "How to Parent and Still be Loved". This morning we look at "Grandparents who Make a Difference". Now if you are not a grandparent, and if you have no grandchildren ... I invite you to stay tuned in. One of the

best things we can do to strengthen not only our families, but our society, is to learn to invest in the emerging generations.

Families that Kids Love are families that share the God moments. They are families that tell the stories of faith – of how God answered prayer. Families that kids grow to love are the families that connect the senior generations with the younger generations and tell the stories of God’s loving faithfulness. We encourage our children and grandchildren with hope when we tell them the stories of the God moments in our lives. We bless our children and grandchildren with faith when we teach them how to recognize the God moments in their lives.

How do we recognize the God moments in life? The Bible measures time in two ways. As a matter of fact, in the Greek there are two words used to denote time – “chronos” and “kairos”. Have you ever asked, “What time is it?” That is a

reference to chronos time – from which we get the word chronology. This word refers to the world of time and space that we all live in. Chronos time refers to the ticking of the clock as we sit here this morning. In John 11:9 Jesus asked, “Are there not twelve hours of daylight?” Here Jesus was referring to chronos time.

But the Bible refers to time in another way – kairos time. Kairos time refers not to our time zones if you will, but to God’s time zones. Kairos time refers to the fullness of time. Here is an example – in Mark 1:15 Jesus said, “The time has come”. Jesus wasn’t referring to chronos time noting the time of day on His sun dial watch. Jesus was referring to kairos time – saying that God’s time was now complete. It was a God moment. It was a moment in time for a specific purpose of God to be fulfilled.

Kairos time refers to a decisive turning point – a God moment if you will – in our lives and in our world.

Our challenge is to recognize the kairos time God moments in life. In Exodus 3 Moses had a God moment as he stood before the burning bush. The Bible says that the bush was on fire but that it did not burn up. It was a God moment. God began to speak to Moses from out of the fire of this burning bush.

Elizabeth Barrett Browning, a nineteenth century poet wrote:

“Earth’s crammed with heaven, and every common bush afire with God. But only he who sees takes off his shoes; the rest sit round it and pluck blackberries.”

Families that Kids Love have grandparents and members of the senior generation who build relationships with the emerging generations. As friendships grow out of these relationships, the

older begin to teach the younger how to tell time. We begin to teach those who are young how to tell the difference between chronos time and kairos time. We begin to teach those who are young how to recognize the God moments in life.

After recognizing the God moments in life, we then need to remember the God moments in life. I invite you to open your Bibles to Joshua 4:4-7. I want us to look at a story that will help us understand the importance of remembering the God moments. (Read.)

Before we look at the details of this story let's put it in the context of the larger story surrounding it. God's people had been slaves in Egypt for hundreds of years. In their suffering they cried out to God for deliverance. God raised up Moses who

led them out of slavery in Egypt. God's people wandered through the wilderness while God prepared their hearts to enter into the Land He had promised to them – often referred to as the Promised Land. As enough chronos time passed by, they reached a moment of kairos time. Finally, it was God's moment in time for His people. It was the day they were to finally enter into the Promised Land.

Joshua awakens the camp. Word excitedly and quickly passes through from tent to tent – this is the day. Today – after all of this waiting – we are going to enter into the Promised Land.

Each family packed up their belongings and got into formation according to their tribe. Soon they were already to go. They were following their leader Joshua and they were ready. They began moving forward – singing and rejoicing.

Those in the front of this parade of God's people soon saw that there were being marched right up to the edge of the Jordan River. In Joshua 3:15 the Bible says that "... the Jordan is at flood stage all during harvest". They were being marched up to a river at flood stage. The ones in front slowed down and came to a halt. Those behind walked into those in front of them not expecting to stop so suddenly. Their triumphant parade now looked more like a slinky starting and not so smoothly stopping.

But Joshua has courage and he tells the priests, the spiritual leaders of God's people, to step into the Jordan River. I wonder if they looked at each other and then looked back at Joshua. I wonder if they had any questions for Joshua. You know ... like "Joshua, the river is at flood stage. We don't exactly want to drown here. Maybe we should just keep wandering through the wilderness for a few more weeks and wait for the River to slow

down for us. What if we just called for a prayer meeting or something?” Look with me at Joshua 3:15-16, “... Yet as soon as the priests who carried the ark reached the Jordan and their feet touched the water’s edge, the water from upstream stopped flowing ...”. Now friends, does that sound like a God moment to you?

God wanted to help them remember. In Joshua 4:5 we read that God told them to gather twelve stones. Each tribe was to pick out a stone from the dry bed of the Jordan River and carry it to the far shore. The priests were the last ones out of the river bed. They stood there until all of God’s people had safely passed through on dry ground. As they all reached the far shore of the Jordan River, and as the waters of the Jordan returned and rushed again to flood stage, they placed their twelve stones

together on the banks of the Jordan River as they now stood in the Promised Land.

God wanted them to remember. When they had their 100 year anniversary celebration in the Promised Land God wanted the future generations to remember. God wanted these twelve stones to commemorate this God moment. Why? Look with me at Vs 6, “... In the future, when your children ask you, ‘What do these stones mean?’ tell them that the Jordan was cut off before the ark of the covenant of the Lord. When it crossed the Jordan, the waters of the Jordan were cut off.”

The rocks that stood on the far side of the Jordan River served as a commemoration. They commemorated a God moment when God provided for His people. They commemorated a time when God answered prayer. They were there to help future

generations remember the story of the God moment in the lives of their parents and grandparents.

Every family ought to have their own version of the twelve stones that we read of here. Something that commemorates a God moment in the life of your family. Something that helps future generations remember that kairos moment in time when God demonstrated his loving faithfulness. These work best if they are mementos that create curiosity. You know ... you are walking along a river bank and you find twelve rocks carefully piled together. It is kind of like a turtle on a fence post ... you know it didn't get there by itself. How did these rocks get here? Why are these twelve rocks here? And then you have your golden moment. Curiosity has been piqued and you get to remember again the story of God's loving faithfulness. And as we retell the story to those who are young, we are again teaching

them how to tell time. We are teaching them how to know the difference between chronos time and kairos time. We are teaching those who are young not to simply pluck blackberries in the midst of a God moment.

In our office entry hangs a painting of an old white country church. I wish that we could pass that painting around the Deer Flat family. I wish that we could bring it into each home so that those who are young could ask “What is this church?” “Where is this church?” And then with great joy and perhaps with a few tears we would remember the Deer Flat story again. We could say “This is who we are and this is why we are here!” We would recall for them the kairos moments in the lives of those faithful pioneers that brought us to this place. We would tell of those pioneer families that came to a dusty high desert wasteland and saw a treasure valley. We could tell the stories of those

pastors who began teaching the Deer Flat family how to be like Jesus. We could tell the stories of how God used the Deer Flat family to help countless others become more like Jesus.

What is it in your house and in your family that causes the emerging generations to ask of the senior generations, “What is this and why is it here?” If we want our children and grandchildren to recognize the God moments in their lives, we need to help them remember the God moments in our lives.

In families that kids love we are always learning how to better retell the stories of the God moments in life. I want to quickly give you a few suggestions on how that might happen. These are suggestions on how to retell the moments of kairos time in the life of your family and in the life of the Deer Flat family.

First, build relationships. Don't wait for your children and grandchildren to become adults. Begin when they are young. I am not the world's greatest parent or grandparent. I carry with me some regrets where I wish I could have a do over as a parent. But life doesn't allow do over's, unless it is called being a grandparent. This past week our oldest grandchild turned six. Ellen and I phoned that morning and left voice messages as we sang happy birthday to her. Later that afternoon I took a timeout here at the office and called to talk with our granddaughter for a few minutes.

As she greeted me, Kathryn called me "Boo Boo Bear". I am not a very funny guy and I am not the most creative person in the world. But I wanted to find a way to connect at the level of our very young grandchild. So, when I was with her I would get down on the floor and talk to her a bit like Yogi talking to Boo

Boo Bear. It worked. When Kathryn sees me or talks with me on the phone, she often calls me Boo Boo Bear and asks where my picnic basket is. Why the silliness Why the time on the floor ... why the funny voices? I am building a relationship with my grandchildren so that over time I can more and more tell them the stories of the God moments in the life of their family. But first I have to build a relationship.

Being a grandparent is a bit like positional authority. It is something like being a cemetery undertaker. There are a lot of people under you but no one is listening. We who are older must take time and care enough to build relationships with those who are young.

Second, I suggest that we build lines of communication. Once we have begun to build into the relationship we can begin to add

to it. Technology is key in building lines of communication with the emerging generations. If you want to build strong lines of communication with your children and grandchildren, don't fight technology and stop fussing about technology. We need to learn to embrace technology. Let me see if I can offer some examples:

In many third world countries they are by passing land lines with above ground or underground telephone cables and going directly to cell phone technology. It is easier and cheaper. Here is my point ... for those of you who have not yet embraced e-mail as a way to communicate with the younger generations – don't worry. The best way to communicate with the emerging generations is no longer e-mail but text messages. Want to impress your children and grandchildren? Start sending them text messages.

And by the way, if extended families would agree to share the same cell phone provider you will often find that you get free minutes. You can talk to one another to your heart's content – and the minutes can easily be free.

Another example: know their culture. If you have young granddaughters and you want to understand the impact of culture on their life, sit down at your computer and google Hannah Montana. Some of you may remember the one hit wonder Billy Ray Cyrus. Ole Billy Ray has a daughter now making more money than he ever made. If you want to build lines of communication with the younger generation, you need to be aware of what is driving their culture.

Another example: Ellen and I spent \$90 and purchased a web camera for our computer. Many laptops now come with these cameras built in. You can purchase a simple little camera like this and mount it on your computer monitor. And then there is free software like Skype or Sightspeed that you can download to your computer allowing you free and unlimited video conferencing. Some of you are looking at me like I just began to speak in Swahili, but I invite you to bear with me. Ellen and I can sit at our computer and have a video conference with our grandchildren in Boston or in Rochester, NY. We can see them and they can see us. We can talk to them and they can talk to us. And after we purchase the camera, the rest is free. We can talk every day for as long as we want and it is free. We can read stories to them, we can ask about their day, we can pray with them ... the opportunities are endless.

Another example: choose your attitude. Quite frankly, too many people in our world grow old and cranky. Our world needs seniors who have the heart of Caleb found in Joshua 14 and 15 who at the age of eighty asked God to give him one more mountaintop! Our young people don't need our legalism and they don't need our fears. They need hope and encouragement. They need gracious examples of a positive spirit. As Pastor Doug said so well and so correctly last week, our actions speak louder than our words. If we want to tell the younger generation about God's faithfulness then we need to live lives of faith. If we want to tell those who are young of a loving God then we need to live lives of love. It would behoove those who are older who want to bless those who are younger to remember that more is caught than is taught.

Another example: and perhaps most important of all ... if at all possible, spend time together. Ellen and I love Bruce and Bonnie Johnson for many reasons. One of the reason we love them so is because of their commitment to spend time with their grandchildren. Whether it is at an athletic event, a concert, dinner together, or a table game where they are all watching Bruce's competitive side come out – they are building lines of communication with their grandchildren. There is no substitute for time spent together.

I believe we all want families that our kids will love. And a significant part of those families are grandparents who make a difference. In some families it is a biological grandparent. Other families choose to “adopt” grandparents from the senior generation. But either way, one of the ways we create families

that our kids will love is to be grandparents who make a difference.

And why is this so important? This is so that we can retell the story of the God moments in life. We want to teach our children to tell time. No, not simply how to read a clock. We want to teach the emerging generations how to know kairos time. We want to teach those who are young how to recognize the God moments in life.

We want to carry a few strategically placed reminders through life that will help us remember the God moments. Why? We want those who are young to see these reminders and to ask, “What is this?” and “Why is it here?”.

We want to build relationships and lines of communications so that we can retell the stories of God's loving faithfulness in the lives of our families. Let's close with our story from Joshua 4. Let's go back to Vs 21 and following: "... In the future when your descendants ask their fathers (and mothers), 'What do these stones mean?' tell them ...". We carry strategic reminders through life and we build relationships and lines of communication because we want those who are young to ask. What did God do? Why did God do this? Look with me once more at Vs 22, "Tell them, 'Israel crossed the Jordan on dry ground. For the Lord your God dried up the Jordan before you until you crossed over. The Lord your God did to the Jordan just what He had done to the Red Sea when He dried it up before us until we crossed over. He did those so that all the people of the earth might know that the hand of the Lord is powerful and so that you might always fear the Lord your God.'"

Do our children and grandchildren know? Do they now that the hand of the Lord is powerful? Do they know that we should always fear the Lord our God? Do they know the stories of the God moments in our lives? Do they know how to tell time – how to tell kairos time and to recognize the God moments in their own lives? Do they know not to stand around and pluck blackberries when God is trying to speak into their lives? Do they hear us retelling the stories of the God moments in our families and in the Deer Flat family?

Families that kids love often include grandparents and members of the senior generation who make a difference – an eternal difference in their lives. Maybe some of us would like to join Pastor Jeff for his lunch meeting after second service to get some more information about ministry needs to our youth. To

our grandparents and to the AARP generation – will you give your lives to help those who are young to recognize and remember and then retell the stories of the God moments in our lives and in their lives? I would like to pray with you.

Closing prayer and invitation.