

Today we have the stories in the book of Judges in the Bible. These are the stories of God's people after settling in at their new home in the Promised Land. The Lord gave them rest on every side, just as He had sworn to their fathers. The big question of the stories in the book of Judges is this: "Can you serve God when you're not in a crisis?" The first sub-question we have before us today is "How do we make sure that we transfer our love of God to our children?"

The book of Joshua ends on a triumphant note. But there are premonitions of trouble ahead because, even though all the nations had been subdued, and Israel enjoyed rest, there were remnants of the godless nations still in Canaan, and Joshua had to warn the people before he died (Joshua 23:11-13).

When the book of Judges opens, we immediately sense a different atmosphere, and we brace ourselves for the worst. Joshua dies, and Judges 2:10 tells us ominously, "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 which he had done for Israel. And the people did what was evil in the sight of the Lord and served the Baals."

I can't help but pause here to apply this tragic word to us parents, grandparents, the grown-ups in the church. How did a generation arise in Israel who did not know the work that the Lord had done for Israel? It could only have happened because the grown-ups, parents, grandparents ignored the teaching of Moses (Deuteronomy 6:7, 11:19), and neglected to speak to their children, grandchildren, and young people under their care, of the mighty deeds of God "when they sat in their house and when they walked in the way, when they lay down and when they rose up."

Parents, grandparents, the grown-ups in the church! Hear the word of the Holy Scripture. God established a testimony in Jacob and appointed a law in Israel, which he commanded our fathers to teach to their children; that the next generation might know them, the children yet unborn, and arise and tell them to their children, so that they should set their hope in God, and not forget the works of God, but keep His commandments (Psalm 78:5-7).

The first critical mistake God's people made after settling in at a new home in the

Promised Land is not passing on the stories of God to their children. Ensuring their children, grandchildren, and the young people under their care to know their God and the amazing things God has done for them was neglected. It was not their priority. The whole generation knew neither God nor what God had done for them. And they did evil things and served many other gods in their ignorance. The whole generation got lost.

We, God's people in the 21st century, are making the same mistake these days. We are losing the younger generation in the church. Young adults who have rejected a religious identity or affiliation have been called "nones" because they choose to be non-religious. Joining the "nones" are what sociologist Josh Packard in his book *Church Refugees* called the "dones," or those who have not lost their faith but no longer attend church. Making up a large percentage of these groups is the youngest generation transitioning from adolescence to adulthood, Generation Z.

Being nice is good, but it is not our call. Being friendly is good, but it is not our call either. We are called to make disciples of Jesus Christ for the transformation of the world, not just by the words of our mouth but by faith in action also. What we say and what we do matter, especially with our young people. Let us tell the story of Jesus to all people, especially young people, and let this story live in us and through us. Allocate at least 10 minutes of your time per day to a person you care for telling the story of Jesus. And then, see how the world around you and the person who heard the story are changing. You will be surprised by the outcome of your 10 minutes of sharing. I pray that each one of us will be blessed by the story-sharing today. Amen.