

Series: Biblical Heroes and Zeros – week 10

CDOBC – beginning on 10/17/10

Title: **“The Generation after Joshua”**

January 23, 2011

Joshua, Judges 21

OBJECTIVE: To help believers understand not only their salvation, but the call of God on their entire life after conversion.

Announcements

- Welcome / guests – communication cards
- "Mommy and Me" on Sunday? The kickoff is Feb. 4th, 10:00 am and they'll be meeting in the 2 and 3 year old room.
- Needed: Volunteers and tools for the Grand Prix workshop – Feb. 5th 9:00 – Noon
- We're Back! Starting next Sunday the Between Time Snack Bar will be serving donuts, bagels, juice and water on the last Sunday of every month.
- Directory update...proof
- Rodeo-Fest! Feb. 20th
- Golf Outing – March 19th @ The Views Golf Club

Opening prayer

This morning we're not looking at a Biblical hero, we're going to take a look at a Biblical zero – or more accurately, at a bunch of zeros!

The zero I want to look at this morning is actually an entire generation of people – a generational group of zeros – they are the generation who lived after Joshua.

The reason they are zeros, is that they failed to place their faith in the one true God, and as a result, they lived in drastic disobedience to God's commands, and brought upon themselves the judgment of God.

Open your Bible to Judges 2:10-15

Why did this new generation not know “...neither knew the LORD nor what He had done for Israel.”?

I don't think that Joshua's generation failed to tell them about the Lord and His work throughout history. Now a case can be made that Joshua didn't prepare/mentor someone to take his place of leadership after his death – and by extension, maybe Joshua's generation didn't do a very

good job of passing their faith on to the next generation. But verse 12 and 13 seem to indicate that this new generation was told about God and His rescuing work, but they chose to forsake Him – they chose to ignore or abandon Him. It's pretty difficult to reject what you never knew, so I see the 'forsaking' in vs. 12 and 13 as an active rejection and rebellion of the faith the previous generation clung to.

Devotion to God and a living faith in God seems to have died off with Joshua's generation.

They were zeros because:

They forgot what the Lord had done. *vs. 10*

Not because they weren't told, but it appears it wasn't important to them.

They rejected what the Lord had said. *vs. 11-13*

The grass looked greener where the other people lived. Their life looked more fun – it looked more satisfying, so they abandoned the truth and commands of the one true God and followed the desires of their flesh.

"People cannot thrive on the spiritual power of their parents; each generation must personally experience the reality of God." *Expositor's Bible Commentary*

What happened here is the perfect sequence to become a Biblical zero. Don't accept the faith of your parents, ignore the work of God in history, and forsake the commands of God and instead, do whatever makes you happy in the moment.

Now, how does this connect with us today? I think this passage in Judges can be instructive for us in two areas.

First, there are many young people in the church who seem all too willing to reject the faith of their parents, thinking there are greener pastures out in the world that will bring greater joy, pleasure, and

happiness than their current pasture in the church. **Second**, there are a fair number of Christians in the church that don't understand the call of God on their life – not just for their salvation, but for their entire life. Knowing the history of Israel we have in the O.T., the nation struggled with a sense of spiritual snobbery...with a sense of spiritual entitlement. It's as if they looked at their physical pedigree from Abraham – they looked at the Jewish blood running through their veins, and believed that God had chosen them due to their physical association. An attitude that said:*Since they were Jewish, then God was forever on their side.* I believe there are many in the church today who view themselves in a similar way. They look at their conversion, and they think they are on a spiritual straight line to heaven. They have taken care of their “business” with God – and they either aren't interested in anything God has to say beyond the fire insurance He offers, or they are unaware of what God demands of their life – their life after conversion. Just like the nation of Israel, they will profess a belief in God (in Christ), but their life is no different from the people all around them!

In order to better understand the call of God on the life of each believer, turn with me to Colossians 1:9-14 (Read passage).

Christians are called to a spiritual life vs. 9

“...we have not stopped praying for you...”

In vs. 1-8, Paul greets the believers in Colosse, and he recounts their conversion to the truth about Christ, that they heard through the ministry of Epaphras. Now, in vs. 9, he begins to elaborate on his reaction to the news of their faith – the news of their new life in Christ.

This is a significant point. Some think that the whole point of the church – the whole point of our ministry is to see someone place their faith in Jesus Christ – to admit their sin to the Lord, to believe Jesus' death on the cross was to pay the price for their sins. For

many believers in the church, it stops there...mission accomplished! Another soul in the Kingdom!

If that were true – if conversion was the end game, then why does Paul say that they haven't "...stopped praying for you..."? What would be the reason for additional prayer if they have already come to faith in Christ?

Because the moment of someone's conversion marks the beginning, not the end of their Christian life.

Paul's prayer for the new believers is not only a prayer of thanksgiving for their newfound faith, but it's a prayer that looks forward and asks God to begin renewing their mind with knowledge of Him.

One of the great assignments for the Christian is to fill their mind with the knowledge of God – which then leads to knowing the will of God. Notice that this is "spiritual wisdom and understanding", not just intellectual wisdom and understanding. Yes, knowledge of God is an intellectual pursuit, but it's a spiritual pursuit as well, and the purpose of gaining knowledge of God is to discern His will for us.

Christians are called to an *intentional* life vs. 10a

"And we pray this in order that you may live a life worthy of the Lord and may please Him in every way..."

Once again – the knowledge of God and His will is not for your own self-improvement – but ultimately, it's to please God, and we please Him by living our life in a way that is worthy of Him. This presents a great problem for us!

It's impossible to live a life worthy of God, because that would require a perfect, sinless life. But the Bible repeats this directive in numerous passages.

1 Thess. 2:12

"...urging you to live lives worthy of God, who calls you into his kingdom and glory."

Eph. 4:1

“...I urge you to live a life worthy of the calling you have received.”

Phil. 1:27

“Whatever happens, conduct yourselves in a manner worthy of the gospel of Christ.”

As you can see, this idea is not unique to Colossians, but it’s an idea the Apostle communicated in many of his letters to many different churches.

What does it mean to live a life worthy of Him?

The way we live our life is vitally important to God. He cares about more than our conversion. He also cares deeply about the results of our conversion!

The Bible teaches that faith in Christ is the foundation – the cornerstone of our life. Without faith, we have no future – no eternal purpose and joy. However, when we place our faith in Jesus for the forgiveness of our sins, we are also taking on a new life – a new way of living – a new way of thinking – a new way of relating to others – a new way of relating to God. But none of this happens overnight...none of it happens automatically...it takes effort and work.

So Paul calls us to “live a life worthy of the Lord and may please him in every way.”

So, how do we live this life?

You can’t live it on your own – without Christ – without His truth – without His power, the power of the Holy Spirit. This is one of the reasons we see so much failure in the O.T. – because the believers in the O.T. didn’t have the indwelling presence of the Holy Spirit. They had to live by faith – and their relationship with God was rooted in faith, but to live out the commands of God and “live a life worthy of the Lord and may please him in every way” was an impossible task. This is why even the great saints in the O.T. were also great failures at times in their life (Jacob’s lies, David’s adultery and murder, Solomon’s materialism and polygamy).

But for us in the N.T. age – the Church Age, we also come to God through faith alone in Christ Jesus, but we have the Holy Spirit’s presence in our life to help us understand the truth and knowledge of God, and to guide us into righteousness and convict us of sin. So, the way we live a life worthy of the Lord is to pursue obedience by the power of God – not our own power.

We use the power of God’s truth – His Word.

We use the power of Christ in us – the Holy Spirit in us.

We will fail if we try and live the Christian life without Christ – without the Spirit.

Martin Luther wrote:

*“Did we in our own strength confide
Our striving would be losing.” (A Mighty Fortress)*

Notice that we are to please God “...in every way...”(vs. 10)

This term means that we are to please God in all aspects of our life – not just at church or church-sponsored activities. We are to please Him at work, at school, while talking to our neighbors, when we are playing sports, recreation, entertainment, politics, parenting – everything!

Our faith is not just for our eternal life in Heaven, but it’s to help us live our lives in a way that pleases God!

The conflict and struggle for the Christian is the fleshly desire to use our life to please self, versus the command to please God.

Let’s continue on this path, and find out **how** we please the Lord in every way:

“...bearing fruit in every good work, growing in the knowledge of God, ¹¹ being strengthened with all power according to his glorious might so that you may have great endurance and patience, and joyfully ¹² giving thanks to the Father, who has qualified you to share in the inheritance of the saints in the kingdom of light.”

Christians are called to a productive life vs. 10b-12

Paul gives us a list here of Christian productivity:

1. Bearing fruit
2. Growing in knowledge of God
3. Becoming stronger
4. Having endurance, patience, and joy
5. Giving thanks for our heavenly inheritance

“People often want to know how to be more spiritual or more pious, but the underlying goal ought to be to know God more intimately and to please Him...it’s possible to be very spiritual and religious, at least on the surface, without being devoted to pleasing God, and especially according to the principles of His Word. The Pharisees were very religious and appeared to be very spiritual, but for most of them, it was only external and they failed miserably.” (Source: J. Hampton Keathley, III - <http://bible.org/seriespage/walking-worthily-lord-please-him-all-respects-col-110a>)

Christians are called to a liberated life vs. 13-14

You are free from your past. Christ has rescued you from your sin, and brought you into His Kingdom.

You are no longer bound to your sins – He has enabled you to turn your back on those sins and to live a new life – a liberated life.

Application

Take possession of your faith.

Don’t be half-hearted or ritualistic with your faith. You can’t live on your parent’s faith. Your faith must be real and

personal. You may have a great spiritual heritage because of the family or church you grew up in, but faith in Christ must be something you take hold of.

Apply God's truth and wisdom to daily life.

If you are a Christian, you have been liberated from darkness. God has placed you in His Kingdom – the Kingdom of Light. This means we need to live according to the Kingdom we inhabit! Coming to faith in Christ is a glorious thing...but it's the beginning of a whole new life where you lean and live out the truth and grace of Christ each day.

Place your faith in Christ.

Admit your sins to God...**A**dmit you are a sinner.

Believe that Jesus died for your sins...**B**elieve that He paid the price for your sins.

Choose to follow Him...**C**hoose to live according to the knowledge of the will of God.

Close in prayer