

JOSHUA 12
A HISTORY LESSON!

Please turn in your Bibles this morning to Joshua chapter 12 as we continue our study through this book on victorious Christian living.

I pray that you have been blessed as we have been going through this book. And, keep in mind that what God promised to Abraham, Isaac and Jacob He has now brought to pass, they are in the land of Canaan, the land that God had promised them!

Joshua is leading the children of Israel, as Moses has died.

And now they must follow the Lord and destroy the enemies of the land of Canaan, a land that they will inhabit.

Over the last several weeks we have seen their victories and their defeats. And the lessons from both are important.

Which leads us to what we will be looking at this morning, a message I have called, ***A HISTORY LESSON!***

And I realize that many people are not into history, especially in our day. They may be thinking, “That is nothing but a bunch of old stuff!”

How true that is. Yes, it is old, that is why it is history. We are looking back on the past and learning from it so we can apply those lessons to our lives today!

Let me share this with you regarding history, because, as you will see, it is important that we know our history.

We are told,

“Those who cannot remember the past are condemned to repeat it.” So George Santayana, Harvard intellectual, whose main contribution to history was to write books no one reads any more. . . .

The Founders of the United States believed that the purpose of studying history was to make us better, better as individuals, better as citizens of a free republic. In other words, the Founders shared the view of the classical Greek and Roman historians, like Herodotus, Thucydides, Livy and Tacitus. The study of history has a moral purpose.

Uh oh- I have made you mad. We do not believe this today. Oh, yes, many books about history are written. Biographies of presidents become best sellers. There are numerous television channels, devoted to history. Along with the electronic media, we are awash in historical information.

But as a society, we do not think historically. We do not use the lessons of the past to make decisions in the present and to plan for the future.

If American political and business leaders thought historically, American troops would not be fighting in Afghanistan and Iraq. The financial crisis would not have happened.

The world of 2011 suffers from a fatal delusion. We believe that we are immune to the lessons – the laws – of history. We believe that our modern science and technology has lifted us above the lessons of history.

However, as the American Founders understood, the lessons of history endure because human nature never changed. All the human emotions are the same today as in Egypt of the pharaohs or China in the time of Confucius: Love, hate, ambition, the lust for power, kindness, generosity, and inhumanity. The good and bad of human nature is simply poured into new vehicles created by science and technology.

- <http://bit.ly/2X71bE9>

In our past studies of Joshua, we have looked at this topic of history as we looked at our nation and what it was founded upon.

And make no mistake about it, this nation was founded under Judeo/Christian principles and as you look at the constitution, it has lasted all these years, more than any other nation, because of that!

But that is not going to be our focus this morning. This morning we are going to be looking at the lessons the Bible has for us, we will be looking at history, the good, the bad and the ugly because through it all, we can learn so much in our walk with the Lord!

Haddon Robinson, observing that the Old and New Testaments were full of history and peppered with the word “*remember,*” wrote: “Unfortunately, many of us ignore history. We have not read the minutes of the previous meetings. Graham Wallas, in *Our social Heritage*, imagines what would happen if every human being instantly lost all knowledge and all habits acquired from previous generations and, at the same time, retained every power of the mind except memory. The result would wipe out civilization and culture and threaten the annihilation of the human race.

Robinson goes on to quote Hendrik Rookmaaker, the Christian art critic, who warned his students: “You cannot begin as though there was nothing before you. There have been many who have struggled before you. Learn from them; be humble. You stand on the shoulders of those others, and you can maybe take their ideas a little further; that is all. Then one day, someone will go beyond you; only be sure that you take your ideas and your work deeper into the Christian way of seeing reality.”

- Robert J. Morgan, Nelson’s complete of Stories, Illustrations & Quotes, pp. 436-437

How true that is. We are to take our *“work deeper into the Christian way of seeing reality.”*

Do we really believe that the world will have the answers to our problems? If we do, and I think sometimes we fall prey to that way of thinking, then we are saying that God does not know what He is talking about!

I know, a little shocking, but isn’t that the reality? Of course it is!

Peter believed that God has the answers to our problems as he tells us in I Peter 1:2-4, **“Grace and peace be multiplied to you in the knowledge of God and of Jesus our Lord, as His divine power has given to us all things that pertain to life and godliness, through the knowledge of Him who called us by glory and virtue, by which have been given to us exceedingly great and precious promises, that through these you may be partakers of the divine nature, having escaped the corruption that is in the world through lust.”**

So, as we read God’s Word, as we ask the Holy Spirit to show us things from His Word, we can learn from the examples of the men and women from the Bible, we can apply these things to our lives and we can grow in our relationship with our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ!

I have broken Joshua chapter 12 down into two main points. They are,

ENCOURAGEMENT FOR THE ROAD AHEAD - JOSHUA 12:1-6

ENCOURAGEMENT FOR THE NEXT GENERATION – JOSHUA 12:7-24

With that as our background, let's begin reading in Joshua chapter 12, beginning in verse 1, and let's see what the Lord has for us this morning as we look at the topic – ***A HISTORY LESSON!***

JOSHUA 12

VERSES 1-6

Joshua is now re-capping the victories that Moses and the children of Israel had on the east side of the Jordan River.

This is the land that Reuben, Gad and the half tribe of Manasseh requested, outside the Promise Land.

Now, as we read this, we may be wondering why in the world is this even in the Bible?

First of all, this showed where each tribe was to live, the land that they had received.

Yes, here this land was outside the land of Canaan, and it was not something that God wanted them to do, it was not His perfect will for them, but He did allow it, more of His permissive will.

They were to live in the land of Canaan, the land that God had promised them, but because they liked this land better, they did not listen to the Lord and in the end, they were some of the first tribes who went into captivity because they did not have the protection of the rest of the tribes of Israel, they were on their own. Lessons to learn, listen completely to the Lord!

Now, that really doesn't answer the question of what this means to us, what is God saying to us.

For the children of Israel, it was *ENCOURAGEMENT FOR THE ROAD AHEAD*. In other words, God had given them these victories on the east side of the Promise Land, outside of the land of Canaan, and what God has done here, He will also do in the land of Canaan, the land that He has promised to them!

For us today, I think we see here the faithfulness of God. We remember what He has done in the past and it encourages us in the present situations that we are facing!

Let me give you a few examples to show you what I mean by just looking back at the word "**remember**" in the Scriptures. I hope you see that God wants us to remember what He has done, what He has shown us so that we can stand strong in the days we are living in!

In Genesis 9:12-17, after the flood, we are told, "**And God said: 'This is the sign of the covenant which I make between Me and you, and every living creature that is with you, for perpetual generations: I set My rainbow in the cloud, and it shall be for the sign of the covenant between Me and the earth. It shall be, when I bring a cloud over the earth, that the rainbow shall be seen in the cloud; and I will remember My covenant which is between Me and you and every living creature of all flesh; the waters shall never again become a flood to destroy all flesh. The rainbow shall be in the cloud, and I will look on it to remember the everlasting covenant between God and every living creature of all flesh that is on the earth.'** And God said to Noah, '**This is the sign of the covenant which I have established between Me and all flesh that is on the earth.'**"

Keep in mind that before the flood there was no rain.

Now, after the flood we see rain and clouds.

And maybe you are thinking, ***“So what, big deal!”***

It was a big deal. Can you imagine how gun shy they might be every time they saw a cloud in the sky, every time it began to rain! ***“Is it going to happen again?”***

And here is the promise of God to us, God will never destroy the earth again by a flood!

How can I be so sure?

The reason I can say that and the reason they could live without fear is because God gave them a sign and a sign points to something. This sign, the rainbow in the sky points to God’s covenant with us. It shows us the faithfulness of God every time we look up in the sky and see that rainbow; we know that God will not destroy this earth by a flood again. It is His promise to us!

Have there been floods around the world? Of course there has, we have seen the evidence for it, we have even seen pictures of these floods that are very devastating.

God never said there would be no rain or floods. What He did say was that he would never destroy the earth with a flood and the sign of this covenant that He has made with us is the ***RAINBOW*** in the sky.

I love that, because, again, when I see that I know, I remember God’s promise to me, to you! I can trust what God has told me!

In Psalm 20:7-9 we are told, **“Some trust in chariots, and some in horses; But we will remember the name of the Lord our God. They have bowed down and fallen; But we have risen and stand upright. Save, Lord! May the King answer us when we call.”**

Just some insight into what this Psalm is all about first. Many feel that this Psalm was spoken prior to David and his men entering into battle.

In verses 1-5 it is the prayer of his people wishing King David success in the battle.

In verse 6 we see the King express his confidence in the Lord who will give them the victory.

And in verses 7-9 we see all join in with confidence in the battle, that God will deliver them from their enemy!

And for me, I think the key here is that they were to “**remember the name of the Lord [their] God.**”

Yes the enemy may be big. They may have many weapons of war. But don't focus on that, remember what the Lord has done in the past to give you the encouragement to go forward in the present situations you face.

I think we see these stories as just that, stories. We don't see them as lessons for us to apply to our lives.

I don't know what you are going through right now. It may be health issues. It may be a job situation. It may be a problem with your spouse. It may be family issues. It may be this or it may be that and the enemy is so big, the situation is so out of control, that you are defeated, and you just feel like giving up! ***DON'T!***

REMEMBER THE LORD, remember all that He has done in your life and use that to encourage you to go forward.

Keep in mind that here in Psalm 20, these words were not spoken out of victory over the enemy. The battle was still before them!

And yet, they felt secure in their victory because their victory was in the Lord. It is as Morgan wrote, “This is the language of faith, not after the battle, but before it.”

May we learn to walk by faith and not by sight, trusting in the One who loves us so much and will give us the victory in the battles we face! In other words, ***REMEMBER THE LORD!***

Also, in Psalm 119:49-50 we are told, **“Remember the word to Your servant, Upon which You have caused me to hope. This is my comfort in my affliction, For Your word has given me life.”**

What we see here in these verses is the power of God’s Word and how it brings us comfort and strength! What a wonderful promise God has given to us and yet how often we don’t apply that promise to our life, that God will comfort and strengthen us even during the most difficult of times!

In other words, we need to ***REMEMBER!***

You see, even in times of difficulty, when the enemy has afflicted the Psalmist, his hope remains in God’s Word and we should have that same attitude.

Don’t let life’s circumstances cause you to doubt the promises of God. For even in difficult times, God’s Word gives us life.

As David said in Psalm 27:1, **“The LORD is my light and my salvation; Whom shall I fear? The LORD is the strength of my life; Of whom shall I be afraid?”**

God’s Word gives to us life, that spiritual life, that abundant life that affects every aspect of our being and in a good way!

I think it is good for us to look back at what God has done in our life because as we do, we will see His hand upon our life!

But also, as we read God’s Word, as we look at what He has done in the past in the lives of His people, it gives me confidence for the present situations that I am facing.

And then in Nehemiah 4:14, as Nehemiah is back in the land of Israel, he is helping them re-build the walls of Jerusalem and there were the mockers who were trying to get them to stop the work. There were those who threatened them so the work would stop. All kinds of opposition and it could get discouraging and I think it did for some if not many of the Jewish people who were out there doing the work.

But listen to what we are told in Nehemiah 4:14, **“And I looked, and arose and said to the nobles, to the leaders, and to the rest of the people, ‘Do not be afraid of them. Remember the Lord, great and awesome, and fight for your brethren, your sons, your daughters, your wives, and your houses.’”**

The enemy is around them. The enemy is discouraging them. The enemy is threatening to attack them. And what does Nehemiah tell them to do?

He tells them to **“Remember the Lord, great and awesome . . .”** How important that is. To take your eyes off the situation that you find yourself in and focus back on the Lord because not only is our Lord great, but He is awesome and what seems overwhelming to us, is nothing to Him!

And I also like the motivating factors that Nehemiah reminds them of. This battle is more than just for themselves. It is a battle to protect their sons, their daughters, their wives, their homes. And isn't that really the battle that the enemy comes against today? Of course it is.

And the interesting thing to me is that the attack is really against our God and our faith. You see, if he gets our eyes off of our Lord, then there is really no hope for the situations we are facing!

But as we keep our eyes on the Lord. As we **“Remember the Lord, great and awesome”** there is great victory that we find in our lives.

Listen to what transpired here with the children of Israel as they were building this wall and they focused upon the Lord. We are told, “**And it happened, when our enemies heard that it was known to us, and that God had brought their plot to nothing, that all of us returned to the wall, everyone to his work.**” Nehemiah 4:15.

Instead of worry. Instead of anxiety. Instead of running and hiding. Instead of surrendering. They surrendered their lives to the Lord, they trusted in the Lord giving them this victory and as their enemies heard that, their plans failed, or, as we are told, “**. . . God had brought their plot to nothing.**”

You see, no longer focusing on what the enemy was doing, but as they focused on the Lord their work continued and the wall was built, their families were safe, their homes were secure. In other words, anyone can build a house, but it takes the Lord to build a home and that is what we see here because they ***REMEMBERED!***

Before we move on, let me share this with you about remembering. We are told, Memory is strange. There are some things I would prefer not to remember but find difficult to forget. There are other things that I would love to remember that are all too easily forgotten.

There are some things that are important for societies as a whole not to forget. All over the world, we see war *memorials* with the names of those who have died for their country. Often in Britain these memorials feature the words ‘*Lest We Forget.*’ As George Santayana said, ‘Those who forget the past are doomed to repeat it.’

We do have some control over our memory. There are *some things* we are told in the Bible to ‘*forget.*’ There are *other things* we are repeatedly called to ‘*remember.*’ We can make choices about what we *choose to ‘forget’* and what we *choose to ‘remember.’*

The word ‘remember’ in its various Hebrew and Greek forms occurs over 250 times in the Bible. It is so easy to forget all that God has done for us. It is important to look back at our own lives as well as the history of the church, both local and global, to remember all that God has done.

The major festivals of the church help us to remember the key events in the life of Jesus. At the Last Supper, Jesus instituted the service of communion so that we would not forget the central events of world history – the death and resurrection of Jesus.

- <http://bit.ly/2J1HG60>

In knowing that the word “**remember**” is used some 250 times in the Scriptures, do you think it is an important topic? You bet it is!

And yes, I agree that there are some things we need to forget, to put aside. We should learn from them but not live with them beating us up. Don’t live in the past, learn from the past.

And I think the majority of things that we go through in the Christian life we should remember and use to encourage us in the present situations we are facing.

That is what I see here as Joshua recounts the victories that God gave the children of Israel on the east side of the Jordan River, outside the Promise Land.

And, what that did for the children of Israel, in looking at the past, at looking back at those victories, was to give them ***ENCOURAGEMENT FOR THE ROAD AHEAD!***

Again, this is very important for us to understand and apply to our lives. The reason, as I have said, is because of this principle that comes forth. We learn from the past!

Redpath put it like this, “Sometimes in the course of human experience it is good to sit down and reflect on what has been conquered by the grace of God.”

How true that is. Looking back at all that God has done to give us strength for what we are involved in now and for the battles that are ahead. God gives the victories; these were real to the children of Israel and they are real to us.

Remember that this was to them, ***ENCOURAGEMENT FOR THE ROAD AHEAD!***

VERSES 7-24

Here in Joshua 12:7-8 we are given this broad description of the Canaanite nations that were conquered by the children of Israel under the leadership of Joshua.

Moses has died and now Joshua is their leader and the victories that God gave to Moses, He is giving to Joshua and the children of Israel!

Then, in Joshua 12:9-24 we have these specific victories that God gave to Joshua and the children of Israel.

And you may be wondering why this is so important to us?

These descriptions are also important because they make it clear that these things happened in real time, and in real space. These are not fairy tales that begin with “*once upon a time,*” this is history that begins with specific places and people and rulers.

So what we see here in these verses is that Joshua gives to us the various kings and nations that were defeated by the children of Israel on the west side of the Jordan River in the Promise Land.

Let me give you an overview of this and then I will apply this to our own walk today, because that is important as well. It is important to know that these things took place, but unless we make an application to our own lives, what is the point? We will see how important this is for us in a few minutes.

First, we see the 2 kings in the middle of Canaan spoken of in Joshua 12:9.

Then Joshua tells us of the 14 kings in Southern Canaan that were defeated and that is found in Joshua 12:10-16.

And finally, Joshua tells of the 15 kings of Northern Canaan that were defeated and that is found in Joshua 12:17-24.

These 31 kings occupied an area of land approximately 150 miles north to south and 50 miles east to west.

One writer put in perspective what these wars were all about when he said, “There has never been a greater war for a greater cause. The battle of Waterloo decided the fate of Europe, but these series of contests in far-off Canaan decided the fate of the world.”

How true that is for out of the nation of Israel came the Messiah.

With all these kings conquered – with every one of these “*principalities and powers*” over the land defeated – there is no doubt that the land belongs to Israel, but the individual tribes still have much to possess for their own.

The battle is never over, the fight continues on, which means our eyes need to be on the Lord. We can’t get lazy and not fight, but, as I have said, we must earnestly contend for the faith that has been entrusted to us!

The other point, which is so important for us today, is that recounting their history, their victories would be ***ENCOURAGEMENT FOR THE NEXT GENERATION!***

Let me share this article about teaching our children and the importance of it, because if we are not doing it, someone will! We are told,

I recently read a new study discussing how to raise an honest child. *The Science of Us* discussed the study and what to learn from it, “The real-world takeaway, the researchers argue, is that kids are more inclined to be honest when they know honesty will please their parents.” So children are more likely to be honest when they know honesty matters to you.

It is then a safe leap to say that children are impacted by what their parents teach them. If they stress honesty, honesty will be a value the child cares about.

Sometimes as parents, we might feel hesitant to push our beliefs or values on our children. We might want them to choose moral behavior on their own or we might worry about pushing them the opposite direction when we stress good morals and values. If we stress honesty, it might make them lie to us even more!

The question becomes, however, if *you* don’t teach your child, who will? Because someone, or something, will be the teacher of your child. Humans learn things. So if you do not teach, who will? And do you want to leave that to chance?

Sometimes parents step back and totally luck out. Someone comes along to have a positive influence on the child and the child learns good values.

On the other side, many times parents step back and their child is left trying to find direction from somewhere, anywhere, and is left confused and floundering.

If you don’t teach your child, someone will.

This statement can be taken down to simple tasks, also.

If you don’t teach your child how to share, someone will. That someone might be a three-year-old. Chances are, a three-year-old won’t be the best model on how to “share.”

If you want your child to learn a certain trait, value, or virtue, you need to be the one to teach it. You can proactively find helps—maybe a great storybook or a fun show can help you drive the point home. You can strategically surround your child with good role models of the values and virtues you love. You are the strongest role model and example to your child. Your child will emulate everything about you for a time, right down to the way you clear your throat.

If you don't teach your child, someone will. Don't leave that all to chance. Take initiative and be the one to influence your child.

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In saying that, what does the Bible have to say about teaching our children? I think it has much to say, and we will not be able to cover everything, but I want you to see the importance, because if we don't, we will see how it will affect future generations. And, I hate to say it, but we are seeing that today!

In fact, I came across this saying, which is very true. If we don't teach our children to follow Christ, the world will teach them not to! How true that is.

So let's look at what the Bible has to say to encourage us to teach our children to grow up loving and serving the Lord, to have those biblical principles be a part of their life.

And don't forget, "Children are great imitators. So give them something great to imitate."

Deuteronomy 32:7 will kind of set the stage for this and this verse tells us, "**Remember the days of old, Consider the years of many generations. Ask your father, and he will show you; Your elders, and they will tell you.**"

Keep in mind that this is part of the Song of Moses. And in this song we see this word "**Remember**" once again.

Remember what?

Moses wants them to remember God's love for them. How He would bring them into a land flowing with milk and honey. How he was the One leading them on their journey and when it got tough, He carried them along, encouraging them and helping them to fly, to soar as they spread their wings knowing that God was under them!

And Moses wants the children to ask their father, to ask the elders of the wonderful things of God so that they can learn from them, grow from them, and fall in love with the God who loves them so much!

In Deuteronomy 4:7-10 we are told, **“For what great nation is there that has God so near to it, as the Lord our God is to us, for whatever reason we may call upon Him? And what great nation is there that has such statutes and righteous judgments as are in all this law which I set before you this day? Only take heed to yourself, and diligently keep yourself, lest you forget the things your eyes have seen, and lest they depart from your heart all the days of your life. And teach them to your children and your grandchildren, especially concerning the day you stood before the Lord your God in Horeb, when the Lord said to me, ‘Gather the people to Me, and I will let them hear My words, that they may learn to fear Me all the days they live on the earth, and that they may teach their children.’”**

They were not only to take the things of God and obey them, but they were to teach them to their children, to pass the things of God on and we are to do the same with our children.

He also wants them to remind their children of the things that took place at Mount Sinai, that God is personal, He loves them and has given to them His commandments to live by!

If we expect our children to just learn about God from Sunday School or Vacation Bible School, we are in trouble. As parents, and even grandparents, I guess we would be the elders, our children and grandchildren need to see that God is real in our lives. They need to see that God is important to us. They need to see that God loves them so much. They need to see the Word of God lived out in our lives because, as it is, they will see Jesus in us!

I hope you are seeing how important this is, that our faith passed on to the next generation will give them encouragement to live out their faith in Jesus!

I am sure many of you are familiar with these verses in Deuteronomy chapter 6, where we are told, **“Hear, O Israel: The Lord our God, the Lord is one! You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your strength. And these words which I command you today shall be in your heart. You shall teach them diligently to your children, and shall talk of them when you sit in your house, when you walk by the way, when you lie down, and when you rise up. You shall bind them as a sign on your hand, and they shall be as frontlets between your eyes. You shall write them on the doorposts of your house and on your gates.”** Deuteronomy 6:4-9.

These verses are also known as the *SHEMA*, which means to *“hear.”* And they would say these verses, this prayer in the morning and in the evening, they would teach it to their children; it was an important part of their lives!

What I want you to see here is that there are several ways we are to teach our children about the things of God.

First of all, we are to talk about God to our children in our homes, when we are outside our homes, when it is time for bed and when we rise up in the morning. What does that mean?

The Lord should be a part of our daily conversation with our children. We can talk about work and maybe something happened and what the Lord showed you. You see, is God living and active in your life? He should be and our children should see that!

We should also talk about the Lord with our children outside our homes. Things happen, people may say something that is not nice, someone may do something that is not right, how do we respond? What do we say? In whatever we do, we should show them that it is the Lord who is guiding us!

How about when it is time for bed? You see, before the lights go out in your home do you spend time with your children, praying, thanking God for the day, praying for people? We should be.

And lastly, when we rise up in the morning we should be talking about the Lord with our children. In other words, do we pray before work, before school with our children? We should. Again, if the Lord is not that important to us, if He is only good for Sunday's, then He will not be important to our children.

We also read in these verses, **“You shall bind them as a sign on your hand, and they shall be as frontlets between your eyes. You shall write them on the doorposts of your house and on your gates.”**

What is that all about?

The Word of God applied to our lives should be seen in the work that we do with our hands. Do your children see that all you do is to the glory of God or do you cut corners and not do things as you should? You see, they are watching and what are they seeing?

Also, what about our eyes, what are we watching, what are we looking at? If we truly let the Word of God come into our lives, then all that we see with our eyes will be for the glory of God and not for the flesh! Our children are watching what we watch!

And lastly, our homes should be filled with the Word of God so that no matter where our children go, they see the importance of God's Word in our lives!

Now, if we don't teach these things of God to our children, listen carefully to what can happen to that next generation.

We are told in Judges 8:33-34, **“So it was, as soon as Gideon was dead, that the children of Israel again played the harlot with the Baals, and made Baal-Berith their god. Thus the children of Israel did not remember the Lord their God, who had delivered them from the hands of all their enemies on every side.”**

The things of God were not passed down to the next generation and thus, when the man of God, Gideon died, the people did their own thing and they did not follow the Lord, they did not **REMEMBER** the Lord their God and all He had done for them!

Also, in Judges 2:10 we are told, **“When all that generation had been gathered to their fathers, another generation arose after them who did not know the Lord nor the work which He had done for Israel.”**

When Joshua and the leaders in Israel died, that next generation once again did not know, or they did not **REMEMBER** all that Lord God had done for them! It was not passed down to the next generation and it was devastating. And you can read the book of Judges and see how bad it truly was.

Let me share with you what has happened and then we will look at the results of that. We are told,

While in the early 1960s babies typically arrived within a marriage, today fully four-in-ten births occur to women who are single or living with a non-marital partner. At the same time that family structures have transformed, so has the role of mothers in the workplace – and in the home. As more moms have entered the labor force, more have become breadwinners – in many cases, *primary* breadwinners – in their families.

As a result of these changes, there is no longer one dominant family form in the U.S. Parents today are raising their children against a backdrop of increasingly diverse and, for many, constantly evolving family forms. By contrast, in 1960, the height of the post-World War II baby boom, there was one dominant family form. At that time 73% of all children were living in a family with two married parents in their first marriage. By 1980, 61% of children were living in this type of family, and today less than half (46%) are. The declining share of children living in what is often deemed a “traditional” family has been largely supplanted by the rising shares of children living with single or cohabiting parents.

Not only has the diversity in family living arrangements increased since the early 1960s, but so has the fluidity of the family. Non-marital cohabitation and divorce, along with the prevalence of remarriage and (non-marital) recoupling in the U.S., make for family structures that in many cases continue to evolve throughout a child’s life. While in the past a child born to a married couple – as most children were – was very likely to grow up in a home with those two parents, this is much less common today, as a child’s living arrangement changes with each adjustment in the relationship status of their parents.

For example, one study found that over a three-year period, about three-in-ten (31%) children younger than 6 had experienced a major change in their family or household structure, in the form of parental divorce, separation, marriage, cohabitation or death.

- <https://pewrsr.ch/2ZNWigj>

That should be shocking and yet, we know it is true. We have seen the demise of the family unit, something that God has ordained, and now we are seeing the results of that.

Also, in Charles Swindoll's book, *The Quest for Character*, we are told,

“sociologist and historian Carle Zimmerman, in his 1947 book *Family and Civilization*, recorded his keen observations as he compared the disintegration of various cultures with the parallel decline of family life in those cultures. Eight specific patterns of domestic behavior typified the downward spiral of each culture Zimmerman studied: Marriage loses its sacredness . . . is frequently broken by divorce; traditional meaning of the marriage ceremony is lost; feminist movements abound; there is increased public disrespect for parents and authority in general; an acceleration of juvenile delinquency, promiscuity and rebellion occurs; there is refusal of people with traditional marriages to accept family responsibilities; a growing desire for, and acceptance of, adultery is evident; there is increasing interest in, and spread of, sexual perversions and sex-related crimes.”

- R. C. H. Lenski, *The Interpretation of St. Matthew's Gospel*, p. 168

We see that as we move away from God and what He has commanded us, we deteriorate to all kinds of ungodly, wicked behavior.

And, today, we have this big guilt trip that we are not to discipline our children, and that has been going on for a long time and now we are reaping what we have sown.

To show you what I mean about discipline and what can happen when there is none, listen to this 1926 report from the Minnesota Crime Commission and you can see the results of what they warned us about and how we did not listen. Again, this was from a 1926 report!

The report states,

“Every baby starts life as a little savage. He is completely selfish and self-centered. He wants what he wants when he wants it – his bottle, his mother’s attention, his playmate’s toy, his uncle’s watch. Deny him these wants, and he seethes with rage and aggressiveness, which would be murderous, were he not helpless. He is dirty. He has no morals, no knowledge, no skills. This means that all children, not just certain children, are born delinquent. If permitted to continue in the self-centered world of his infancy, given free reign to his impulsive actions to satisfy his wants, every child would grow up a criminal, a thief a killer, a rapist.”

- Ray Stedman, From Guilty to Glory

We not only need to remember the things of God, look back and see what God has done in our lives to encourage us. But we must also teach these things to our children or the family, the country will end up in chaos! Again, it is what we are seeing today.

And if you doubt that, several weeks ago Sue sent me a text about this group of young people, young adults who were mocking God in a vulgar way and this was not just one or two people, they all were doing it and laughing and I can’t even tell you what they were doing because it is so evil, it is so wicked, it is so bad.

But, if you don't train them up in the things of God, they will end up mocking the One who loves them so much!

May we do what Psalm 78:1-4 tells us, **“Give ear, O my people, to my law; Incline your ears to the words of my mouth. I will open my mouth in a parable; I will utter dark sayings of old, Which we have heard and known, And our fathers have told us. We will not hide them from their children, Telling to the generation to come the praises of the Lord, And His strength and His wonderful works that He has done.”**

May we teach our children the wonderful things that the Lord our God has done in our lives. Yes, the Bible stories are important to teach our children, but God is not dead. God is still living and powerful and He is working in the lives of His people. Never forget that and never forget to teach that to your children!

Or, “If we don't teach our children to follow Christ, the world will teach them not to.”

As I begin to close this study, let me share this story of a lost heritage. We are told,

The October 22, 1996, headlines of the *London Times* cried: ***Lost Forever: A Nation's Heritage Looted By Its Own People***. “Afghanistan's National Museum in Kabul is rubble,” said the newspaper. “It once held one of the earth's greatest multicultural antique collections: Persian, Indian, Chinese, Central Asian, and beyond.

But Mujahidin rebels blasted into vaults and shattered display cases, looted the relics, and sold them here and there around the world for quick cash. Rockets slammed into the museum's roof, burying ancient bronzes under tons of debris. Pottery from prehistory was thrown into bags like cheap china.

The Bagram collection, one of the greatest archaeological finds of the twentieth century, disappeared. Nearly forty thousand coins, some of the world's oldest, vanished. The museum, once a repository for Afghan history, became a military post, and the storied past has now been ruined by the unbridled present. A nation has lost its history. With no history, there is no heritage. And with no heritage from the past there is no legacy for the future.”

- Robert J. Morgan, Nelson's complete of Stories, Illustrations & Quotes, p. 435

As we have seen this morning, the Word of God and the lessons God has shown us through His Word and through our lives, gives us ***ENCOURAGEMENT FOR THE ROAD AHEAD!***

And not only that, but as we pass on the things of God to our children, our grandchildren, we are putting forth ***ENCOURAGEMENT FOR THE NEXT GENERATION!***

May we not lose our godly heritage in our homes, in this nation. But it truly is up to us to live what we say we believe and be encouraged to forge ahead in what God has for us!