

LEST WE FORGET

Judges 2:10-16

INTRODUCTION

- *“If I were asked today to formulate as concisely as possible the main cause of the ruinous revolution that swallowed up some 60 million of our people, I could not put it more accurately than to repeat: ‘Men have forgotten God.’”* (Aleksander Solzhenitsyn, 1993)
- Rudyard Kipling’s poem, *Recessional*, warns the British Empire against becoming proud in her achievements and power, and forgetting that it was God’s hand and God’s power that made Great Britain great:

*Lord God of Hosts, be with us yet,
Lest we forget--lest we forget!*

- God gave that very same warning in the Bible; over and over, God commands His people to remember, to pass on knowledge and history from generation to generation (Deuteronomy 6:4-15)
- Israel was supposed to pass on the knowledge of Jehovah and His laws to the next generation, but they failed, and they suffered dearly because of it
- Likewise, Australian as a nation has largely forgotten God
- We, as the heirs of salvation have a responsibility to pass on the faith that was once delivered to the saints onto the next generation (2 Timothy 2:2)
- “A church is only ever one generation away from extinction.”
- Just as the Anzac ceremonies admonish us not to forget the sacrifice of the fallen, as God’s people, we are admonished not to forget the Lord, and warned of the terrible consequences that befall us if we do

I. THE DANGER WE ARE PRONE TO

- A. Israel had come to the Promised Land and possessed it
 - 1. Israel was commanded to utterly destroy the inhabitants of Canaan (Deuteronomy 20:16-18)
 - 2. Under Joshua, the land was conquered and the enemies subdued (Joshua 14:15)
 - 3. The children of Israel made a covenant with Joshua to serve the LORD (Joshua 24:14-25)
 - 4. The next generation enjoyed peace and rest in the land
 - 5. But in their peace and prosperity, they forgot their God
 - 6. The Book of Judges is a record of Israel's apostasy after Joshua's death, with seven "cycles" of sin, suffering, sorrow, salvation (Romans 7:15,19)
 - 7. "In those days there was no king in Israel: every man did that which was right in his own eyes" (Judges 21:25)
- B. They did not know God
 - 1. The second-generation cannot rely on their parent's faith, they must have their own personal faith in God
 - 2. "God has no grand-children"
 - 3. Knowing Christ *personally* is essential for salvation (John 17:3)
- C. They did not know God's works
 - 1. The children are to be taught the works of God by their parents (Psalms 44:1-2)
 - 2. But too often, this knowledge is not passed on
 - 3. "Eighty-eight percent of children raised in evangelical homes leave church at the age of eighteen never to return."

4. "Know" in this verse can be translated as "acknowledge" (cf. Proverbs 3:6)
5. It was not so much the failure of the parents, but the wilful rejection of their children to believe in God, receive his grace and obey his laws (Romans 1:28)

D. They were ignorant of their history

1. Ignorance of the past leads to complacency and vulnerability to the enemy
2. "Those who cannot remember the past are condemned to repeat it"
3. We are to be vigilant and prepared for enemy attacks (Judges 18:7,27; 1 Peter 5:8)

E. They ceased to fight the enemy

1. God calls his people to fight in the warfare (2 Timothy 2:3-4)
2. The Christian is engaged in a spiritual battle (2 Corinthians 10:4; Ephesians 6:14-18)
3. There is to be no compromise (Jude 3)
4. When fighting stops, sin starts (2 Samuel 11:1-2)
5. Partial victory leads to complete defeat (Judges 1:21-33)

II. THE DISCIPLINE WE ARE PUNISHED WITH

A. Sin brings bondage

B. Those who oppose God, will be opposed by him

1. God chastens his children in love (Hebrews 12:5-6)
2. Affliction has a purifying effect (Psalm 119:67)

III. THE DELIVERANCE WE MUST PRAY FOR

- A. The groanings of the penitent
 - 1. Those that humble themselves before God are heard of him (Isaiah 66:2; James 4:6)
 - 2. God requires not merely sorrow for the punishment, but sorrow for *sin*
- B. God sends his deliverer to save those who call upon him (2 Chronicles 7:14)

CONCLUSION

1. Canadian poet, John McCrae, in his poem “In Flanders Fields”, gave voice to those who sacrificed their lives in war, imploring the living to:

*Take up our quarrel with the foe:
To you from failing hands we throw
The torch; be yours to hold it high.*

2. We are surrounded with a “great cloud of witnesses” (Hebrews 12:1), our spiritual forefathers that warred for Christ and who now worship before his throne in glory
3. Can you say you are one of their successors, washed in the blood of the Lamb, called to be a soldier of Jesus Christ, engaged in the battle?
4. As the end of the age draws nigh, true faith is becoming rarer and rarer (Luke 18:8; Matthew 24:12)
5. Is that true faith found in you?
6. Are you passing it on to the next generation?