

Generations

1. Introduction.
 - A. As my wife, Linda (or Lin) and I were starting to put our house on the market last year, I had the desire to share one more time with Bay Ridge as an elder. We closed on our house this past Tuesday and have moved out near our daughter and her family. This is our final Sunday at Bay Ridge as regular members.
 - B. Brief Bio: Linda, my wife, and I have been coming here to Bay Ridge for about 14 years, first commuting from Columbia, MD; then moving to Edgewater to live at Ronnie and Renee's for a year, and finally buying our house in Edgewater.
 - (1). It's been the most I've lived in one place all my life.
 - (2). It's the longest I've been at one church in all my life.
 - (3). I was ordained as an elder in June 2006.
 - C. So as I thought about sharing, I thought of the apostle Paul as he was heading to Jerusalem, knowing he might not see some of the individual churches that he had helped establish in his ministry.
 - (1). My prayer was: what would I pass on to Bay Ridge?
 - (2). What might be the type of thing that I would put in a letter, like Paul put in his epistles/letters to Timothy and Titus.
 - (3). This doesn't mean you won't see us again, but when you do see us, we will be visitors. (Like after our house closing last Tuesday, we went back to our house that we just sold and knocked on the door to be let in by the new owners.)
 - (4). Today we're going to do the following:
 - a. Look at the next generation of the Church.
 - b. Discuss the importance of personal relationship with God as the foundation for the Church.
 - c. Discuss participation in the Church.
 - d. Look at potential dangers for the future Church.
 - e. Give some thanks to those in the Church, some specifically whose example has affected our lives.
 - D. I'm going to need some help today with this teaching. I've titled it: Generations. I'd like us to take a look at the Church, which includes our children who've accepted Christ. As a local church, we need to encourage and prepare those who are going to lead the Church in the next generation.
 - E. Start with main text. **1 Timothy 4:12 Don't let anyone look down on you because you are young, but set an example for the believers in speech, in conduct, in love, in faith and in purity.**
 - F. To get some help with this teaching, I've called a number of parents to invite their children to participate with me.
 - (1). I would like to invite the children to come up at this time.
 - (2). Please do not feel slighted if you were not called for your

child. I did not get hold of everyone I called and it is possible I missed others.

(3). (Get chairs for the stage.)

2. Hello Church.

A. Introduce Each Other.

(1). Have young people stand, wave, and say "Hello Church."

(2). Have the congregation stand, wave, and say "Hello Church."

(3). We'll start with an easy question: **what is your name?**

B. I had you say "Hello Church" to the congregation and had them say "Hello Church" to you. **How did you become part of the Church or what do you think the Church is?** (If there is hesitation, ask if they had been baptized and why.)

C. You became part of the Church when you looked to Christ to pay the price for your sins.

D. **When I say generation to you, what does that mean?**

E. Right now you see your parents or other adults doing different things as part of the Church. They play the music and sing for worship at the beginning of the meeting; they teach, like the Sunday School teachers, they pray for the missionaries or for people who would come up to get prayed for; they came out a week ago to give to people who don't have a place to live; and they have positions like being elders and Council members to help serve and lead this local church.

(1). Someday, you will be doing these same things. As parents and adults, we are supposed to show you how its done and then give you a chance to do these things, because you will be doing this in the Church and showing the same thing to other children in the future.

(2). What you do in the future may be a little different than now; you may sing new songs; you might have a different style, but the Church will continue.

3. Church Foundation - Personal Relationship.

A. Jesus asked his disciples in **Matthew 16** - who do people say that I am? **Who do you think Jesus is?**

B. Peter answered: **"You are the Messiah, the Son of the living God!"** Jesus told Peter that God had revealed that to him. It is this revelation and what you do with that revelation that will determine where the local church goes in the future. This points back to our own walk with God. Let's talk about that.

C. **How do you talk with God?**

D. **Does God talk back? Does God talk back to you at all through the Bible?**

E. **Do you think God and Jesus like you to come and talk to them?**

- (1). **Mark 10:13-16** People were bringing little children to Jesus for him to place his hands on them, but the disciples rebuked them. ¹⁴ When Jesus saw this, he was indignant. He said to them, "Let the little children come to me, and do not hinder them, for the kingdom of God belongs to such as these. ¹⁵ Truly I tell you, anyone who will not receive the kingdom of God like a little child will never enter it." ¹⁶ And he took the children in his arms, placed his hands on them and blessed them.
 - (2). You know about David. **What did he do when he was a child?** He was a shepherd and he used to sing songs to God. In **Samuel 16:7** David was chosen to be anointed as a future king by Samuel, and this is what was said by God when they were going to choose David's oldest brother: **But the LORD said to Samuel, "Do not consider his appearance or his height, for I have rejected him. The LORD does not look at the things people look at. People look at the outward appearance, but the LORD looks at the heart."**
 - (3). People might be able to see the outside and say you're small or other things about how you look. Even in the local church, they might say that I sing out of tune or that I don't say things the right way. (Sometimes I say and do the wrong things.) I have some rough spots in the way I do things. But I know that God is looking at my heart, and when I seek him and pray to him, I feel his presence. I hear him say: "I love you son." I wish sometimes that I could take others with me when I am having a special time with God. Sometimes, like right now, it happens.
 - (4). **Romans 8:31** says **If God is for us, who can be against us?** **Romans 8:39** says **Nothing can separate us from the love of God that is found in Christ Jesus.**
 - (5). Ask God to show himself to you and to help you hear his voice. Find a quiet place to be with him and find his peace, for example: **Psalms 5:1-3 Give ear to my word, O LORD.** This foundation is what builds the Church. This relationship protects you from the wrong things in the world.
4. Personal Relationships Shared With Others - The Church.
- A. As you continue to get to know God, read about Him in the Bible, pray, and spend time trying to listen to him, you will want to share these things with others. **Do you have anybody that you can talk to about God? Do you ever pray with other people?**
 - B. **Ephesians 2:21-22** **In him the whole building is joined together and rises to become a holy temple in the Lord. ²² And in him you too are being built together to become a dwelling in which**

God lives by his Spirit.

- (1). The church is built when individuals, who know Christ, come together to share their relationship with God.
 - (2). When I was in High School, I had two friends that I spent a lot of time with, Robin and Dave. (Hi Rob and Dave [and Danny]!) We were in the marching band and other classes together. We went to three different local churches, but we were also part of a group of young people, Lititz Youth Ministry, that got together to sing and learn more about God. And we would talk about God at different times. All three of us are still following God and are helping build the Church.
 - (3). Look around you up here on the stage - they are part of the church with you. **How many of you have brothers and sisters? Did you choose them to be your brothers and sisters?** You did not choose your church family either; God chose them. Pray for each other and talk about your relationship with God among each other. As you do this, you will build up the Church and participate in the Church.
 - (4). Christians, who have different abilities and skills, build the Church. Those abilities allow you and I to share Christ, not just in a physical church building. **What are some of your skills and abilities?**
5. There is another reason why you want to have a strong relationship in Jesus and with the Church.
- A. **When I say the world is bad, evil or wicked, what do I mean?**
 - B. **Matthew 7:13-14 "Enter through the narrow gate. For wide is the gate and broad is the road that leads to destruction, and many enter through it. ¹⁴ But small is the gate and narrow the road that leads to life, and only a few find it."**
 - (1). Since you know Jesus, you are walking on a narrow road; there are not a lot of people who want to walk on that road. But you can see the bigger road they are walking on and a lot of them are walking on it.
 - (2). First, they will try to distract you from your foundation, your personal relationship with God.
 - a. The book of Ecclesiastes speaks of Solomon searching out the meaning of life by testing lots of things, labor or work, looking for wisdom and knowledge, trying to get things for pleasure or make me happy, accumulating wealth, even trying to spend all of one's time helping the oppressed. The conclusion of life was to fear God and keep his commandments, not to get distracted by all of these other things.
 - C. The world has a different view of life than you do. We know that all

of us are wicked and we needed Jesus to remove our sin from us. But the world does not want Jesus to remove their sin. So people in the world do things to get power, money, or do other things to control others. They want to follow their own sin and they would prefer that you follow in that sin, or at least don't say anything about it. And sooner or later, your views from God are going to clash with the world. The Church will clash with the world.

(1). **Does anyone know what they are doing to Churches and Christians around the world? Why?**

(2). **Is our country friendly to the Church?**

(3). Things are changing. But Christians and the Church cannot change their view of God and Scripture to fit the view of the world. But you will have to pray and offer grace to a world that will not agree with what you know.

(4). One of the potential dangers that the Church will face is that Christianity will be viewed as just another religion that causes problems.

a. Schools and colleges will not allow a Christian perspective.

b. The Christian view may be considered hostile in a work environment.

c. There will be attempts to compromise God's way with the world's way.

d. There may be a transition from ridicule and mockery to persecution and punishment.

D. When the early church got persecuted, they got together and prayed and in **Acts 4** God filled them with his Spirit and they spoke boldly. Carrying signs and protesting for a Christian cause does not affect the world like personal relationships with Christ and praying together as the Church. It is our responsibility to pray for your future.

6. Thanking the Church.

A. Now that we are moving to a new place to participate in a new local church, my wife and I would like to thank some people here at Bay Ridge Christian Church. Paul does this with final greetings at the end of some of his letters. The danger for us is that we might leave people out and offend someone. **Who are some of the people you would thank in the Church?**

B. So first of all, we want to thank the whole church here, for their relationships, prayers, and support in many ways. There are debts to some that I could never repay.

C. Second, I want to ask for forgiveness if I have left any offense left unresolved. Feel free to approach me afterwards if that is the case and I will ask for forgiveness specifically. I realize that in my own sin and insensitivity I have offended people. Please feel free to

- approach me so there are no unresolved offenses left with you.
- D. Linda will share some of her thanks.
- E. I'd like to say thanks to some who are not often in the limelight.
- (1). I'd like to say thanks to Bridget for her example of serving. She is one of those very shy people who is always reaching out to others. When we had the Derecho a couple of summers ago and people were out of electricity, we started calling BRCC members. I found out that Bridget was already in contact with some whom I was trying to make sure were okay. (She also recognizes good chocolate from Lititz.)
 - (2). I'd like to say thanks to Ruth. I think it was after I taught my first time at BRCC that Ruth started giving me some books to expand my frame of reference. Thanks Ruth.
 - (3). Thanks to Willie for serving people in and out of the church. I see that being passed to your son, Will. You also have some creativity in your family, with Karen's knitting and Katie's drawing. Continue to serve Christ with those gifts.
 - (4). Thanks to the long-suffering attendees of our Systematic Theology class which we finished yesterday. That includes Theresa, Colleen, Beth, Clare, Mark, and Paul. They had great questions and discussions, even if I didn't know the answers. Theology is more than a bunch of words; it is how we live. Thanks also to Bret, who filled in all the spaces of knowledge that I left open. (Bret, I have Chapters 6-7-8 in January of 2008, so we went back at least six years.) The only thing that seemed longer than that was when I attempted to go through Romans in our small group.
 - (5). **Do you know what an evangelist is? Do you know any evangelists?** Ed, I appreciate your evangelism examples. You are bold, I encourage you to continue to train up others.
 - (6). Thanks to all of the workers in the children's ministry. I don't think I have ever taught the youth or been in the nursery to help. I helped my wife with one Sunday school class with the little girls. You have a gift with the children.
 - (7). Thanks to all of the various Council members who I've served with over the years. We've had some long meetings and I've helped make them long at times. That includes Frank and Duke, the financial bean counters.
 - (8). Thanks to Jeff and Sandy, Monty and Sandy, Dave and Karen for their praying over the years.
 - (9). Speaking of generations, thanks for the Parletts, Tom and Nellie and Donnie and Myrtle. I see the legacy you are passing down to the generations, an example of following God with your whole heart and serving the Church. I've been a paintball target, swam in your pool, and went to the bonfires; have had numerous meals and picnics; participated

in various elders meetings, and lived at Ronnie and Renee's for a year. We've played there, prayed there, and stayed there. You give an example of the Church family.

- (10). Thanks to the elders with whom I've served for about seven and a half years. They seek to serve God and you. I've been blessed by their example.
- (11). Finally, I want to thank Tom, Priscilla, and their family for their friendship and allowing me to be part of their lives. We got a solid foundation for our friendship while moving stones at the foundation of their house. I've been impressed with their integrity and serving. Tom knows my buttons to push. For the young people here, Tom is the kind of friend you want to have to encourage you to know God more. And when you are out facing different struggles in life, he is dependable to watch your back. Thanks Tom.
- (12). If I haven't mentioned your name, it is not because I do not care, I also have a time limit. But you are the Church and Christ's representation in this area.

7. Closing.

A. Thanks you for participating today. We serve Christ when we serve you and encourage you to carry the Church into the future.

- (1). When you look out there, you aren't looking at a nameless bunch of people, you are looking at praying moms, people who do church budgets, Christians sharing the gospel in the government and others in the prison, people who have struggles but seek God to overcome those struggles. Learn from them and pray for them.
- (2). To you in the congregation, you see those who through Christ are taking the Church into tomorrow. Pray for them, encourage them, and give them an opportunity to experience God.
- (3). To those up front, stand up again, wave, and say "Hello Church!"
- (4). Stay standing, for those in the congregation, please stand, wave, and say "Hello Church!"
- (5). Let's pray.
- (6). Benediction: **Psalm 24:3-6 Who may ascend the mountain of the LORD? Who may stand in his holy place? ⁴ The one who has clean hands and a pure heart, who does not trust in an idol or swear by a false god. ⁵ They will receive blessing from the LORD and vindication from God their Savior. ⁶ Such is the generation of those who seek him, who seek your face, God of Jacob.**