

Theme: God's people must have a faith that is rooted in the truths He has revealed in the ancient past, is experienced in a life of present trust and obedience, and that labors to build for the generations to come.

## I. Intro - The Centre Can Not Hold

- A. "The Second Coming" by Yeats  
Things fall apart; the centre cannot hold;  
Mere anarchy is loosed upon the world,  
The blood-dimmed tide is loosed, and everywhere  
The ceremony of innocence is drowned;  
The best lack all conviction, while the worst  
Are full of passionate intensity.
- B. In wake of WWI - all seemed to be anarchy, past lost
- C. This actually grew over time; liquid modernity (Bauman)
- D. How do we live out our faith in this environment?

## II. An Ancient Faith

- A. Notice the stress on what God revealed in the past  
I will open my mouth in parables, I will utter hidden things, things from of old — <sup>3</sup> what we **have heard** and known, what **our fathers have told us...** <sup>5</sup> He decreed **statutes for Jacob** and established **the law in Israel**, which he commanded our **forefathers** to teach their children, Psalm 78:2–3, 5
  - 1. All these words point to the ancient past
  - 2. It speaks of what God revealed to the forefathers
  - 3. The Psalm speaks of teaching the coming generations, but the things taught come from the past.
  - 4. The faith is ancient, not new, and to be vibrant it must be firmly rooted in the truth God revealed long ago.

## 5. This is a consistent call in Scripture

To the law and to the testimony! If they do not speak according to this word, they have no light of dawn.  
Isaiah 8:20

These things happened to them as examples and were written down as warnings for us, on whom the fulfillment of the ages has come. 1 Corin. 10:11

Dear friends, although I was very eager to write to you about the salvation we share, I felt I had to write and urge you to contend for the faith that was once for all entrusted to the saints. Jude 1:3

- a. God's revealed Word is the standard by which everything must be judged!
  - b. God's actions in the past are given to teach us how we are to walk today!
  - c. The faith is a deposit given to us to protect and pass on unaltered!
- B. We must have a faith rooted in the ancient past
    - 1. Our age loves the new and trendy and tends to despise that which is old as outmoded or irrelevant.
    - 2. Thankfully there has been some movement towards appreciating the past again - but we have a long way to go!
    - 3. God's people must always have a faith that is rooted in the truths and practices God revealed in the ancient past to our forefathers in the faith.
    - 4. Any individual, family, or church that does not consciously strive to remain rooted in the past will fail to survive into the future.

### III. A Present Faith

#### A. Notice the stress on a present experience of faith

Then they would put their trust in God and would not forget his deeds but would keep his commands. Ps 78:7

1. The goal is not knowledge of the past but a present experience of faith.
2. Present faith is seen in a life of trust and obedience
3. Psalm 78 recounts the ancient past to prompt present faith-filled obedience.
4. The Scripture always calls for a present, living faith rather than a mere dead orthodoxy

And **without faith it is impossible to please God**, because anyone who comes to him must believe that he exists and that he rewards those who earnestly seek him. Hebrews 11:6

For in the gospel a righteousness from God is revealed, a righteousness that is by **faith from first to last**, just as it is written: **“The righteous will live by faith.”** Romans 1:17

I have been reminded of **your sincere faith**, which first lived in your grandmother Lois and in your mother Eunice and, I am persuaded, **now lives in you also**. 2 Timothy 1:5

- a. Hebrews 11 recounts the history of God’s people - to prompt present faith - for we can not please God apart from a present, living faith
- b. Gospel righteousness is by faith from first to last; we live by faith!
- c. Faith from the past has prompted a present faith that now LIVES in Timothy!

#### B. True faith trusts and obeys God in the present

1. The roots of ancient faith are given to nourish the branches of present faith and obedience.
2. God’s people must always have a faith that is vitally experienced in the present producing trust and obedience to God and His commands.
3. Any attempt to simply recount the orthodox faith of the past apart from present living trust and obedience is not faith but merely dead ritual.
4. Any individual, family, or church that does not consciously strive to allow the ancient truth to nourish present faith and obedience will fail to survive into the future.

### IV. A Future Faith

#### A. Notice the stress on future generations

We will not hide them from their **children**; we will tell the **next generation** the praiseworthy deeds of the Lord, his power, and the wonders he has done. <sup>5</sup> He decreed statutes for Jacob and established the law in Israel, which he commanded our forefathers to teach their **children**, <sup>6</sup> so the **next generation** would know them, even the **children yet to be born**, and they **in turn would tell their children**. Psalm 78:4–6

1. All of these words point to future generations!
2. There are at least 4 generations in view in these verses - fathers, children, next generation, their children!
3. God’s people must always be driven by a passion to pass the faith on to future generations!

4. The Scripture consistently calls for us to pass the faith to future generations so that they might know, believe, embrace, and pass on the faith themselves. Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your strength. <sup>6</sup> These commandments that I give you today are to be upon your hearts. <sup>7</sup> Impress them on your children. Talk about them when you sit at home and when you walk along the road, when you lie down and when you get up. Deuteronomy 6:5–7

And the things you have heard me say in the presence of many witnesses entrust to reliable men who will also be qualified to teach others. 2 Tim 2:2

- a. The greatest commandment is immediately followed with the command to pass it on to the next generation!
- b. Note that passing it on to the next generation is an all-consuming task - home, road, lie down, etc.
- c. The same is true for spiritual children - and note at least 4 generations are in view again!

#### B. The faith must be passed on to future generations to survive

1. The roots of ancient faith are given to nourish the branches of present faith so that it can bear the fruit of future faith!
2. God's people must always have a faith that looks to and builds for the future, making sure that the faith is handed down to future generations.
3. Any individual, family, or church that does not live with a passionate commitment to see the faith passed to future generations is radically disobedient to the heart of God and irrelevant to the building of God's Kingdom.

## V. Applying the Word

### A. Developing an ancient present future faith personally

1. A healthy faith has all 3 elements: ancient, present, future
2. As an individual believer, I must consciously seek to develop in all three of these areas or my faith will be immature and deformed.
3. As an individual believer, am I learning and building upon the ancient teachings and truth of the faith?
  - a. This primarily begins with a daily intake of Scripture
  - b. Use the catechism, church history classes to grow in this area
  - c. Pay attention to older hymns and creeds that are part of our worship - learn from them!
4. As an individual believer, am I experiencing a growing present trust and obedience to Christ?
  - a. Apart from this "faith" is mere intellectual curiosity
  - b. The goal of the faith given to us is to produce present personal trust and obedience!
  - c. This is where the sense of being an exile will be revealed and experienced the most.
5. As an individual believer, am I laboring to build for the generations to come?
  - a. Parents - you MUST disciple your children personally!! We have given tools to help you do this!
  - b. Am I helping train coming generations through children's ministry?

- c. Am I praying, serving, and giving to help the church grow strong into the future, or am I merely consuming a religious product for personal edification?

6. Ask the Spirit to help you grow in these areas!

## B. Building an ancient present future faith church

1. A healthy church has all 3 elements: ancient, present, future
2. A healthy local church must consciously seek to develop a faith that is anchored in the ancient teachings and practices of the faith, stirs up present trust and obedience, and that labors to build for the generations to come.
3. Each individual believer will tend to prefer one or other of these aspects - but the church must consciously and consistently seek to build upon all three aspects.
4. As church members, we must demand that the men shepherding this congregation understand and grow in all three of these areas.
5. As a follower of Christ, never settle for a congregation that only develops one or two of these areas - demand all three!
6. Pray for the Spirit to help BRCC grow in all of these areas!

## C. The ancient present future Table

1. The Table has all three of these elements
  - a. Here we remember God's work in redeeming us
  - b. Here we receive present grace from God as we spiritually feed upon Christ in faith

- c. Here we look forward to when Christ returns and we celebrate the Great Marriage Supper of the Lamb!

## 2. Come to the Table of the Lord!

### Ancient Present Future Faith

Psalm 78:1-7

September 12, 2021

Communion

Psalm 128:5-6

Teaching keywords: Multi-generational perspective and ministry; discipleship; Christian life; marriage and family

May the Lord bless you from Zion all the days of your life; may you see the prosperity of God's people, <sup>6</sup> and may you live to see your children's children. Peace be upon the Church of the Living God! Psalm 128:5-6

O my people, hear my teaching; listen to the words of my mouth. <sup>2</sup> I will open my mouth in parables, I will utter hidden things, things from of old — <sup>3</sup> what we have heard and known, what our fathers have told us. <sup>4</sup> We will not hide them from their children; we will tell the next generation the praiseworthy deeds of the Lord, his power, and the wonders he has done. <sup>5</sup> He decreed statutes for Jacob and established the law in Israel, which he commanded our forefathers to teach their children, <sup>6</sup> so the next generation would know them, even the children yet to be born, and they in turn would tell their children. <sup>7</sup> Then they would put their trust in God and would not forget his deeds but would keep his commands. Psalm 78:1-7