



UNLEASHED

Unleashing the Next Generation

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Discussion Notes

The Crossing Church

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OPENING

This week we are continuing a series called “Unleashed.” So often, the biggest thing keeping us from the life God has for us is actually us. What would it look like if we, as a church and as individuals, fully unleashed God’s purpose in our lives? What if we pursued God fully and prayed completely over that pursuit? We are embarking on a journey to discover what living an unleashed life looks like as God uses prayer to release His power in us. Our goal is to spiritually re-engage our hearts and souls and realign with God after the distractions of the summer.

SCRIPTURE¹

Judges 2:6-13 After Joshua dismissed the Israelites, they went to take possession of the land, each to their own inheritance. The people served the Lord throughout the lifetime of Joshua and of the elders who outlived him and who had seen all the great things the Lord had done for Israel. Joshua son of Nun, the servant of the Lord, died at the age of a hundred and ten. And they buried him in the land of his inheritance, at Timnath Heres in the hill country of Ephraim, north of Mount Gaash. After that whole generation had been gathered to their ancestors, another generation grew up who knew neither the Lord nor what he had done for Israel. Then the Israelites did evil in the eyes of the Lord and served the Baals. They forsook the Lord, the God of their ancestors, who had brought them out of Egypt. They followed and worshiped the various gods of the peoples around them. They aroused the Lord’s anger because they forsook him and served Baal and the Ashtoreths.

Psalms 78:1, 3b My people ... listen to the words of my mouth ... things our ancestors have told us.

Psalms 78:4 We will not hide them from their descendants; we will tell the next generation the praiseworthy deeds of the Lord, his power, and the wonders he has done.

Psalms 78:5b-7 He commanded our ancestors to teach their children so the next generation would know them, even the children yet to be born, and they in turn would tell their children. Then they would put their trust in God and would not forget his deeds but would keep his commands.

OBSERVATION

When Abraham was called by God to be the Father of the Israelite nation, there was no written language through which to pass down the deeds and precepts of the Almighty God. Tradition and commands of the Lord were taught to each following generation through verbal language. When God liberated them from the Egyptians, they were a million people who knew very little about the God of Abraham. It took Moses forty years to teach them all they needed to know before entering the Promised Land. As long as this knowledge was faithfully passed down to following generations, the nation stayed close to their God, but when the young people failed to learn about Him, evil crept in and the people did what seemed good in their own eyes. Our nation is also losing its way, and we have entered the cycle of denial, destruction and deliverance, because families are not teaching their children about God, and our society is systematically eliminating Him from our lives. The Millennials are only 4% Bible driven Jesus followers. If that doesn’t tell us where our country is headed, we just aren’t paying attention.

Question: Who taught you to believe in Jesus, who was it who introduced you to a relationship with Christ?

¹ All scripture is NIV unless otherwise indicated

APPLICATION

We are all here because of someone else. Many of us remember a time when a parent read Bible stories to us each night before we went to sleep, or a coach, or friend from school or a neighbor told us about Jesus and what He had done for him/her. Somewhere along the way they influenced us and we are here because of them. The losing of God in our society has not taken hundreds of years. There was a time when 65% of the new generation were Bible driven followers, then within a few years, the percentage dropped to 35% then 16% and now 4%. It is clear that when the story doesn't get told, faith is eventually lost.

Question: In what ways are you becoming aware of this gradual loss of faith in God in your community? And now it is our turn to teach. Think about the kids in our classrooms, or in our neighborhoods, or in our churches. We all know someone who needs to hear from us who Jesus is. We all have a story of how we came to faith in Jesus. They need to know that He offers forgiveness for their sins and salvation through His sacrifice.

Question: Tell us about a situation recently where you have been able to introduce Jesus to someone. What did you say about how Jesus has changed your life?

Anyone who is coming behind us needs to hear about Jesus, not just the children in our house and not just if we are parents, but all children of the next generation. The Church plays an important role in getting the story out as well. Every weekend and Wednesday evening our campus is overrun with the next generation. We are committed to teaching them about Christ. We are investing in them through **ENCOURAGEMENT** as we speak life and vision over them. We tell them what great value we see in them, what potential they have for good, and that we are praying for them.

Question: What gifts has God blessed you with that would benefit a children's ministry? What is holding you back from volunteering in this area?

We provide **OPPORTUNITIES** for them to grow in Christ. Stretching ourselves is often scary but young people need us to challenge them to use their gifts for God, i. e., speaking about Jesus in front of small groups, feeding the hungry, volunteering for help projects and evangelizing.

Question: What opportunities are you offering to those you are mentoring?

We are **DEVELOPING** others as we come alongside them and work with them. Those of us who are older have a role in this development. It is our season to teach others using our wisdom and experience.

Question: Develop a list in your mind of all those people who are coming behind you and need your wisdom. How can you encourage, provide practical opportunities to serve the Lord, and commit to developing them in their faith?

There has never been a more difficult time for being a parent than today. God has uniquely placed us in the lives of our kids, but we don't have to be perfect parents to pass on to them a faith and trust in God to last them a lifetime. Our greatest achievement in life may not be something we do but someone we raise. No matter how young or old we are, we can set an example for others: in speech, in conduct, in love, in faith and in purity. We can change the world from its current downward trajectory to hope for a whole new generation in Jesus.

Of course, the greatest commitment we can make to the future generation is to pray for them and to pray about where God wants us to serve. Our church has many opportunities for us to get involved: in Early Childhood, in Kids Crossing, in Student Ministry, and in small groups.

Question: As you are involved in our 21 day prayer commitment with us here at The Crossing, what are you praying about? As the days go by, in what areas is God urging you to become involved?

PRAYER

Heavenly Father, we pray for courage in reaching out to those who come after us and teaching them about You. The harvest is out there for us if we will only step through open doors of opportunity and invest ourselves in others. In Jesus' name. Amen.