

The Story (8): The Second Generation Syndrome

(Judges 2-3)

I. Introduction

- A. Years ago, our transmission died; Guy at Leggett and Jones doesn't do transmissions
 - 1. Tony knows a guy; my guy is "Guy," I asked him if he'd recommend a good place
 - a. He said, "No." No? He explained there used to be two good places in the area
 - b. In both cases, the owner retired or died, and his sons took over the businesses
 - 1) The sons ran both shops into the ground—bad work, bad service, bad prices
 - 2) One shop went out of business; the other was so bad he wouldn't recommend
 - 2. The American Dream is to start your own business and build it into a success
 - a. That was my Dad's dream; he started Tucker Office Equipment when I was 7
 - 1) Many mornings he was gone when I got up; I went to bed before he got home
 - 2) He wore three hats all the time—salesman, business man, typewriter mechanic
 - b. I saw what it takes to be a success-- work, ingenuity, good luck, putting others first
 - c. And then you get up the next day and you have to do all of that all over again!
- B. You work hard to be a success and fall victim to "*Ecclesiastes Complaint*" ([Eccl 2:17-19](#))
 - 1. "*Who knows if they will be wise or foolish?*" Why Dad sent me to learn how to preach
 - a. You work to make your business a success and then you leave it to your kids
 - 1) Kid doesn't work as hard or as well; they don't care as much about a reputation
 - 2) Before you know it, there are no good transmission shops in the area
 - b. Many who bought the business killed it in 5 years; I couldn't have done much worse
 - 2. We could us the scientific term "*entropy*" here, the tendency of any system to decline
 - a. We'll call it the "*Second-Generation Syndrome*." It's really has to do with **focus**.
 - b. The focus of the first generation is on the business or the movement or the idea
 - c. But turn the business, movement or idea over to new generation, something changes
 - 1) The 2nd generation is often more focused on enjoying what's been left to them
 - 2) They take things for granted, they let important things slip, and they cut corners
 - 3. "*Great Generation*" appreciated freedom in a way their children could not—won it
 - a. The Baby Boomers came along and seemed to take those freedoms for granted
 - b. We were more focused on the wealth & success that the War Generation gave us
 - 1) So it goes; each generation builds on last, but sometimes we build backwards
 - 2) Every generation must make the story their own; something you can't inherit

C. As we continue *The Story*, we come to “*The Second-Generation Syndrome*” in Israel

1. The first generation followed Joshua across Jordan and fought for the Promised Land
 - a. They walked around the walls of Jericho; they faced the giants that were in the land
 - b. The war had lasted 7 years from the spies going into Jericho until the final battle
 - c. Then the land was divided, and the real work began—the settling of Promised Land
2. The influence of Joshua was felt a long time in that Promised Land ([Josh 34:31](#))
 - a. As long as the people were led by men who had known Joshua, they served God
 - b. That can’t be said about too many leaders that we’ll read about in the story
 - 1) 2 Kings says that Josiah was the most pious and righteous of kings ([23:25](#))
 - 2) One generation later, Josiah’s nation was destroyed, taken captive to Babylon
3. So Joshua was a great leader, but a generation soon arose then did not know him
 - a. They didn’t know the great wars; they didn’t know the sacrifices made for freedom
 - b. Worse, they didn’t know the God who gave freedom (**Reading:** [Judges 2:10-13](#))
 - c. What led to this great failure so soon after the Israelites reached the Promised Land

II. The Second-Generation Syndrome

A. **First**, the second-generation were satisfied with the gains and victories of the past

1. After the land is divided among the tribes, Joshua gives a summary ([Josh 21:43-45](#))
 - a. God did His job; He always does. Israel did not ([Judges 1:21, 27, 29, 30, 31, 33](#))
 - b. They didn’t drive the Canaanites out; that meant they didn’t get rid of the idols
 - 1) These idols would be a **TEST** to see if they would obey God ([Judges 2:22](#))
 - 2) They would also become a **TRAP** that would lead them astray ([Judges 2:3](#))
 - c. A TEST that can make us stronger; it can also become a TRAP than ensnares us
2. What God wanted was for the second generation to continue the conquest
 - a. They were to continue their holy war against the Canaanites and their idol gods
 - 1) The first generation had begun God’s work, but they had not completed it
 - 2) The second generation was to take what the first had done and build on it
 - b. That is not what happened; what happened was exactly the opposite ([Judges 3:5-6](#))
 - 1) They settled down and settled in alongside of the pagan Canaanite people
 - 2) They started taking husbands and wives from among them the Canaanites
 - 3) And it wasn’t long before they were also taking the Canaanite gods as well
 - c. Rather than continue the conquest, settled in to become like the people around them

3. Daniel Boorstin once said, “*The disciples of discoverers are enemies of discovery.*”
 - a. This is the “*Second-Generation Syndrome.*” We camp on what has gone before
 - b. In Reformation, Luther and others proclaimed *sola scriptura* and pushed for truth
 - 1) What did those who came after him do? Camped on what he discovered
 - 2) He wanted them to go on discovering; formed a creed around his discovery
4. The same happened in our own movement that we call “*Restoration Movement*”
 - a. Campbell and others stressed *sola scriptura* and sought to restore NT Christianity
 - b. The next generation codified those discoveries rather than continuing to discover
5. Some today judge faithfulness as camping-out on positions marked out by pioneers
 - a. Well, you can campout or you can pioneer, but you can’t be both at same time
 - 1) You can tell the pioneers; they are the ones with the arrows in their back!
 - 2) Many of the arrows are from your own side who didn’t want you going further
 - b. **Example:** When we started talking about praise team— “*That’s the same as choir*”
 - 1) They added, “*We decided choirs were wrong 100 years ago.*” Oh, really?
 - 2) Besides being wrong, that’s wrong! *We must study and explore and move!*
 - 3) To be a movement, we must move— sometimes forward and sometimes back
 - c. We can’t settle in, settle down and just get comfortable. That’s what Israel did!

B. **Second**, this second generation wanted the blessing of God without doing work of God

1. Moses warned them that it would be easy for them to lose focus (**Deut 6:10-12**)
 - a. As they wandered in the wilderness, they needed God and they knew they did!
 - b. How do you feed a 1-2 million in a desert? You can’t pull in to a McDonalds!
 - 1) They had to depend on God’s provision because God was all that they had
 - 2) Sure, they complained about the manna at times, but they ate it nonetheless
 - c. But what about when they got to the milk and honey? They wouldn’t need God!
2. The word you hear today is **entitlement**; some feel entitled to success and prosperity
 - a. Kids can see what their parents have, get used to being handed too much— *entitled*
 - b. They want the product of prosperity without the work that it takes to get there
3. That’s what God accuses this second generation of Israel of doing (**Judges 2:20-21**)
 - a. They wanted the blessings of Canaan without obeying the God who gives them
 - b. Their parents had kept the covenant; they wanted to rest on the parent’s laurels
 - c. But it doesn’t work that way, does it? We must all follow God for ourselves!

III. Conclusion

- A. What do we do about second-generation syndrome? We must recognize symptoms—
1. **First**, there is a tendency to **focus on** and **fight over** the external forms of faith
 - a. There is more emphasis on the periphery, the forms and format of faith
 - b. Which means there is less focus on the center of God's story... and of our hearts
 2. **Second**, there is a loss of urgency about the importance of our faith
 - a. That doesn't mean we stop coming to church... but we stop taking church with us
 - b. We may sing "*Seek Ye First*," but we don't live outside of church like we really are
 3. **Third**, there is a willingness to compromise our faith with the standard of the world
 - a. Our standards of success and of morality are no longer formed by God's word
 - b. They gradually morph until they look pretty much like that of the world around us
- B. What do we do about that? What is the solution to the second-generation syndrome?
1. What 2nd generation of Israel lost was a vision of the glory and goodness of God
 - a. Mighty acts of God become for them only a story, and it wasn't really their story
 - b. Their focus was all on them; they did not realize all that God had done for them
 - c. They needed vision; they needed to see the glory, greatness and goodness of God
 2. And I think that is what we need to do today; we need to remember who God is
 - a. In **Romans 9-11**, Paul is making a complicated argument about the promises of God
 - b. He is answering, "*If the Jews aren't chosen people, then did God break his promise?*"
 - 1) His answer is a technical Rabbinic argument showing that God keeps promises
 - 2) As Paul ends point, he's carried away on the wings of worship (**Rom 11:33-36**)
 3. The second-generation must recapture this glimpse of glory and goodness of God
 - a. Faith can't be about church, about forms-n-formats; it certainly can't be about me
 - b. Years ago, I clipped a quotation from Guy N. Woods out of the *Gospel Advocate*
 - c. This isn't a representative sampling how he usually wrote, but this stayed with me

To know Him is eternal life. The heavens above ceaselessly preach of His glory, the vast ferment daily exhibits His handiwork. His wondrous word reveals His character, our obligation, and the world's destiny. May the divine music of the spheres ring in our ears, soothe our hearts and bring us to Him through His word. God grant us that we may join in the heavenly chorus, and with David say,

*I will sing with Jehovah as long as I live: I will sing praise to my God while I have any being.
Let my meditation be sweet unto Him: I will rejoice in Jehovah (Psalm 104:33-34)*