

Judges 2:6-15

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[0:00] We're going to sing in Psalm 112. In *Sing Psalms*, you'll find that on page 151. Psalm 112, we'll sing verses 1 to 8, and we'll sing to the tune Chilton Foliate.

Chilton Foliate. If you can spell that, you get a gold star. Psalm 112, verses 1 to 8, and we'll stand to sing.

Chilton Foliate.

Chilton Foliate. Chilton Foliate. Chilton Foliate. Chilton Foliate. Chilton Foliate. Chilton Foliate.

Chilton Foliate. Chilton Foliate. Chilton Foliate. Chilton Foliate. Chilton Foliate. Ch~~il~~
unmute. Chilton.

[1 : 24] Chilton Foliate. Chilton Foliate. Who stands for mercy to the bride Will fight the darkness
Turned the morning light Good is the man who gives And freely reigns To his affairs With
justice he attends Surely our righteous man Will stand slain through His memory forever
will endure Though time is coming He will not be afraid

His heart is firm We trust the Lord for aid He will not be alarmed His heart of death He'll be
his cause In triumph at the last Some words are what we might call happy words Words
that evoke happy and pleasant thoughts and memories Words like ice cream And holidays
And Christmas And one word that certainly would make it onto the list of happy words Is
grandchildren It's fun being a grandchild Most of the time anyway

It's fun being a grandchild Especially a wee one I suppose we're all grandchildren But wee grandchildren I think Have a particularly fun time And it's also great Most of the time To be a grandparent Maybe especially at special occasions Like birthdays and Christmas Where you can spoil the grandkids even more than usual For the avoidance of doubt I would clarify that I'm not a grandparent But I imagine That it's a role I could get used to in due course This morning we were thinking about the stirring words of Joshua But as for me and my household We will serve the Lord Now when Joshua spoke of his household Who did he have in mind?

Who was he speaking of? We made the point this morning That though this was a personal declaration Of commitment to the Lord As for me It was also a representative declaration He was speaking on behalf of others He was speaking on behalf of his household Well who made up his household?

The Hebrew word that is used there in Joshua chapter 24 is simply the word *bayit*. The common word that means house. But it's a word that, depending on the context, does and can carry the idea of household or even of family. Now in the case of Joshua, who, as we noted this morning, at the time that he made this declaration was near his death. He was over a hundred years old. I think we can reasonably assume that the household that he speaks of would have included sons and daughters and grandchildren and servants. Just as a very brief aside, that we're not going to develop. It is intriguing that in the records that we have in the Bible, there are no explicit references to Joshua having any sons or daughters. And there's certainly no suggestion

[5 : 37] That a son would be his successor We might have imagined Joshua having been such a successful And faithful leader of the people That perhaps one of his sons Would follow in his footsteps But there's no suggestion That that happened And indeed no reference No explicit reference To him having sons However Though there isn't any explicit reference It does seem reasonable I would say more than reasonable To presume That he did have sons and grandchildren The reference that we've already commented on His commitment On his own behalf But on behalf of his household also Is I think a very clear one It may be As I was reading through The relevant passages To see if I could try and get some idea Of his family circumstances And it may be that there's material That I omitted That would help But as I was doing a little bit of reading

One passage that I came across Refers to the distribution of the land And where Joshua was given his part in the land And it's possible That the language there Would speak of a situation Where Joshua perhaps for the first time Established his own family And while he was occupied With the duties of leading the people This was a sacrifice he had made We don't know if this is the case But it's possible And then we read in Joshua chapter 19 That Joshua having ensured That all those All the tribes Received their portion He also Not of his own initiative But of the initiative of the people Is also granted his portion in the land And we read there in Joshua 19 In verse 50 And he built up the town That he had been granted And settled there And I wonder If that was an opportunity That he had To start a family Or in any case To continue Growing his family

Well we're not going to Go down that road Or explore that Any further I think the language That we have in Joshua chapter 24 Of his household Is evidence enough To conclude That he was a man Who did have Children And grandchildren Now if we think That's a reasonable Conclusion What would we imagine To have been The spiritual future The spiritual caliber And commitment Of his children And grandchildren He was a man Who evidently Was a man of God A man of integrity A man of unquestionable commitment A man of His word A man who committed himself To worshipping God And to seeking to assure That his household Joined with him In the worship of God And given that is so Is it not reasonable To presume To imagine That his sons And daughters His grandchildren

Let's remember He was an old man When he recommitted To God In the way That we have Noticed this morning And so We could reasonably Presume That he already Had grandchildren Is it not Is it not reasonable To imagine That they would have Followed in his footsteps That they too Would have been Men and women Of God Well that would seem To be a reasonable Conclusion But what actually Do we discovered Was the reality And for that We turn to Judges And chapter 2 We've already read The passage That we want to think About this evening And what we find In that passage The sad Solemn And sobering Truth Recorded for us In this passage Is of a lost Generation It is of a generation That did not follow In the footsteps Of Joshua And of others Who shared In his commitment

To the Lord And I want us To think about This evening This lost generation And I want to think Of this lost generation In two ways First of all A lost generation Described Because here in Judges We have a description Of this lost generation But it would be inadequate Only to describe That generation We need to spend Some time And give some thought And effort To explaining This lost generation So these are the two ways We're going to look At this matter A lost generation Described But also Endeavor To explain The reasons For this Lost generation First of all then Let's begin By describing This lost generation And the way We're going to do that Is to notice Two aspects First of all We want to notice Their attitude To God This new generation That arose What was their attitude To God

[10 : 43] But then also The other side Of the coin What was God's attitude To them So at this point What we're doing Is describing Simply turning to the passage And seeing what it says About this generation Their attitude to God And God's attitude To them Well if we begin By noticing Their attitude To God And we'll limit ourselves To what we find In verse 12 That is further Data Relevant Information In other parts Of the passage But for reasons Of time Let's limit ourselves To a pretty Full Or sufficiently full Description Of this generation's Attitude to God In verse 12 We read They forsook They forsook The Lord The God Of their fathers Who had brought Them out of Egypt They followed And worshipped Various gods Of the people Around them They provoked The Lord To anger And then it goes on To say Why it was

That God Was provoked To anger Well there's a few Verbs there That as we look At them Will give us A picture A description Of this lost Generation's Attitude to God First of all We're told That they forsook The Lord They forsook The Lord The picture Is of a people Of a generation Abandoning God But also In this verse There is a clear Indication Of the folly And of the Ingratitude That this Forsaking Implies They forsook The Lord The God Of their fathers As if to say How could they Do that This is the God Of their fathers And yet They forsake him And the writer Of the book Goes on to say The one who had Brought them Out of Egypt As if to emphasize Their ingratitude Here is the God Who had rescued Them from Egypt Who had brought Them to the promised land Who had provided Them with vineyards That they hadn't planted And olive groves That they had Put no effort Into planting And in so many

Other ways That provided for them And what do they do They forsake him They forsook The Lord That was their Attitude to God But what else Does the verse say It says It continues And says They followed And worshipped Various gods What do they do They endeavor To replace The living And true God With a multiplicity Of new And no doubt More exciting Or perhaps Less demanding Gods So it's not a case Of them saying Well We don't believe In any gods No They replace The true God With these Other gods And it reminds us Of the oft Quoted words Of G.K.

Chesterton When people stop Believing in God They don't believe In nothing They believe In anything And this was Certainly true Of the Israelites In this lost generation That we are Describing Or that the Bible Describes for us They abandon They abandon The true God And in His place They follow A multiplicity Of other gods That were no gods At all So their attitude To God Was a forsaking God Of replacing Him With other gods And then we read Also that in The doing of this They provoked The Lord To anger Now I don't think There's any suggestion That this is something That they consciously did Or that there was A deliberate intention On the part Of the people To provoke the Lord But in their forsaking Of God And in their embracing Of these other gods They do of course In fact Provoke God To anger So this was their attitude

To God Now as we read This verse Perhaps from A distance We say Well this all looks Very ugly And of course It is very ugly But I imagine And we can't Perhaps state this With complete confidence But I imagine That the Israelites Members of this generation Who are described As forsaking The Lord I imagine That they did not Consider their actions In the manner That the inspired writer does Of course The inspired writer Writes accurately Describing what they were doing But I imagine If you had asked The Israelites Who were members Of this generation Why are you forsaking The Lord They would have responded Forsaking the Lord No We're not forsaking The Lord We still serve the Lord If you had suggested To them That they were provoking God to anger They'd have said No by no means Oh there's no intention On our part To provoke God to anger And that's not What we're doing at all Perhaps they would have Argued That all they were doing

[15 : 29] Was well yes They served the Lord The God of their fathers Of course they do But you know They're mixing With other peoples And they're discovering New religions And new gods And new customs And new traditions And they're embracing The customs And the traditions Of those with whom They live The nations that surround them They're sharing Their devotion They still worship God The God of their fathers But why not worship Other gods as well What harm can there be In that But even As we imagine That that might have Been their defense Inadequate as it is We might still think Well this seems Very alien to us You know that's not The kind of thing We would do Surely But is the attitude Of the Israelites Really so different To the prevailing view In much of the mainline Christian church In the West In Scotland today Let me ask you

This question And you can come up With the answer That you consider To be the answer to it How many Christian leaders In mainline Protestant denominations In our land today How many Christian leaders Would be prepared To soberly But clearly Speak of other religions As false religions When was the last time You heard that kind of language You just don't hear That kind of language now You can't speak Of other religions As false religions You can't say that How intolerant What a lack of respect But you see That kind of attitude Really is following In the footsteps Of this lost generation No we can't Condemn others You know There are many ways To God Many roots to God Many ways To practice faith And so Are we so different To this generation That we read of In Judges Well that

Regarding their attitude To God A description Of this lost generation What was their attitude To God They forsook God They may have Protested that they Weren't doing that But that is what They were doing They were forsaking God They were seeking To replace them Or in any case Add others To share In their worship And they were provoking The Lord To anger But that then Takes us to the Other side of the coin What of God's attitude To them And we have that Described for us In the passage as well In verse 14 And following We read there In His anger Against Israel The Lord Handed them over To raiders Who plundered them He sold them To their enemies All around Whom they were No longer able To resist Whenever Israel Went out to fight The hand of the Lord Was against them To defeat them Just as He had Sworn to them They were in great Distress Well there's a couple Of statements That I would just draw out

That help us to Identify God's attitude To them To this generation That arose This lost generation We're told that The Lord Handed them over To raiders I wonder when The Israelites Were victims Of this misfortune When raiders came And attacked them And plundered them I wonder if they Imagined that this Was God Who was handing Them over To these raiders I can't imagine That was the conclusion They came to They would have Lamented their misfortune That they were Ill prepared And they would have To be more careful To defend themselves And to protect themselves Little did they imagine That it was God Who was handing them Over to these Pagan raiders The very same God Who had handed The promised land To them Was now handing them Over to their enemies Some might protest Today especially

People might protest What do we make Of a God Who hands over His people To such a plight You know However badly They behaved However much They had forsaken Him How could a loving God do this How could he Hand them over To those who Plundered them Well the God Who could do that Is a just God He is a God Who would Draw his people Back by the means That he wisely Determines You see God Can draw us back To himself By gentle means But he can also Draw us back By painful means But the purpose Remains the same And it is a Gracious purpose And here God Hands them over To their enemies That they might Learn a lesson That they might be Challenged as to Their rebellion This was the Lord's Attitude to them And their disobedience He handed them Over to raiders We're told also In the following verse That the hand of the Lord Was against them It's very somber language The hand of the Lord

[20 : 33] Was against them What an awful reality That the God of Israel Was against His own people The God who describes Himself as Emmanuel God with us God for us Is now the God Who is against His people Well the people Certainly could not say That they had not Been warned What did we notice This morning When Joshua Was calling the people To a renewed Commitment to God And they said Yes we will serve God And yet Joshua Insisted He said to them In verse 19 Of chapter 24 You are not able To serve the Lord He is a holy God He is a jealous God He will not forgive Your rebellion And your sins If you forsake the Lord And serve foreign gods He will turn And bring disaster on you And make an end of you After he has been good to you Well that is exactly What is happening They had been warned They had been warned This is what will happen Don't commit to God Lightly There will be consequences Of your rebellion

And yet they rebel And God is true To His word And He comes down Upon them In judgment And He is against them And how is their condition The condition Of this lost generation How is it summarized Well there at the end Of verse 15 They were in great distress The sons and daughters Of Joshua Maybe Certainly The grandchildren Of Joshua They were in great distress What a sad picture That here The members Of the household Of Joshua And their generation They are in great distress It's sad even To imagine it Of Joshua Who lived so long ago But then when we bring it To our own day And our own time And our own circumstances And we think Well what of our children What of our grandchildren Might they also suffer Such a fate Might they also know What it is To be in great distress You see if it had happened

Then it can happen now Not for a moment Suggesting it will In fact we are going to Notice how we can be Used of God To ensure that it doesn't happen But it can It does And it can And we should Take great care This generation They were in great distress So that is A lost generation explained But we have to move on And sorry That's a lost generation described But we also want to think about A lost generation explained We really haven't given ourselves Sufficient time To deal with this adequately But we'll mention a few things The first thing I want us To just notice Because it adds A degree of poignancy And it adds to The tragedy of it If we pose the question When did this happen?

You know When did this happen? This generation That is spoken of Now it's not easy To establish this With precision We have of course The statement in verse 10 Of Judges chapter 2 After that Sorry After that whole generation Had been gathered up To their fathers The implication being The generation of Joshua After that whole generation Had been gathered up To their fathers Another generation grew up Who knew neither the Lord Nor what He had done for Israel And it seems reasonable To understand that To be the immediately Succeeding generation But even then We're not left with A precise explanation Of how many years passed Say between the death of Joshua And this apostasy That is described But in addition to What we have in verse 10 Another angle From which to approach this Is to try and date The significant events That would allow us To establish Some notion Of the time That elapses

Between the death of Joshua And the apostasy Described Now the timing Of this period In the Bible's history Is fraught with difficulty There are different views That are held by Those who hold A high view of Scripture But I think we could say That there is a General consensus That the conquest Occurred round about 1400 B.C.

[24 : 49] And it's also Generally recognized Or there's a general consensus That the period of the judges Begins in about 1375 B.C. So do the math There's only 25 years Generally recognized Between the conquest And the period of the judges Now remember What we were seeing This morning Following the conquest We have a period Of 20 to 30 years Before the renewal Of the covenant So if these dates Are even approximately accurate The conclusion Is really a very shocking one To put it brutally Joshua dies And everything goes to pot At an astonishing pace You know we're not talking About decades here Joshua dies And the thing just Forgive the language It goes to pot It really is Very dramatic But even if it were Slightly longer Even if we are talking 10, 20, 30 years It still is quite astonishing

The pace at which things Go downhill If we are generous And we would be Being generous here If we are generous We might try and exclude Joshua's children From this apostasy Many of them Perhaps were adults At the time that he died But his grandchildren Without doubt Would have been among those Who behaved In the manner That we have had Described Which begs the question Why did this happen?

Why do we have this Dramatic and terrible Decline In the state Of true religion In Israel? Why did this happen? Well some sobering lessons And I'll mention them And leave them Perhaps for you To ponder on And to develop more In your own time One lesson I think That we can draw From the evidence That we have Is first of all The danger of loyalty To men Rather than of loyalty To God The danger of loyalty To men Rather than of loyalty To God Notice in verse 7 What we read The people served the Lord Throughout the lifetime Of Joshua And of the elders Who outlived him It would seem That in a measure The piety of the people Was more out of loyalty To Joshua They were grateful To Joshua They maybe loved Joshua Here was the man Who had brought them Into the promised land They wanted to please Joshua Perhaps they even fear Joshua But Joshua dies

And we don't find much Of any fear of God We don't find much desire To please God Not any gratitude to God You see There is this danger That our loyalty Can be to men Rather than to God And that would seem To have been true Of the people described But another lesson That we need to draw From this Is this The need for each New generation To experience Or see The great things That God does Again in verse 7 Of Judges chapter 2 The people served the Lord Throughout the lifetime Of Joshua And of the elders Who outlived him Who had seen All the great things The Lord had done For Israel In Joshua You have almost exactly The same language But it's a different verb It says Who had experienced The great things That God had done For Israel The implication is That this new generation Had not seen They had not experienced Now evidently

Because of their age They couldn't have experienced The crossing of the Jordan Or the conquest of the land They hadn't been born You can't blame them for that But is it the case That God stopped doing Great things Once they had conquered the land Or was it not the case That He continued To do great things Perhaps not as dramatic But continued to do great things In providing for them In showing them His love And care And provision But this new generation Did not see What He was doing They did not experience The great things That He was doing Their faith Was a second hand faith Grounded in what others Had seen And what others Had experienced And there we must be careful too We can't develop it any further But there's the basic lesson The need for each new generation To experience or see The great things that God does But then thirdly A third lesson That would perhaps explain Why this happened And that is the importance Of teaching a new generation The Word of God What do we read there in verse 10

[29 : 24] After that whole generation Had been gathered to their fathers Another generation grew up Who knew neither the Lord Nor what He had done for Israel Particularly the second part there They knew not What God had done for Israel Now this is a shocking indictment On the absence Of the systematic teaching Of God's Word to the young And the absence It would seem Of family Religious instruction Family worship As God had instructed In Deuteronomy How is it possible That Joshua And the sons of Joshua Had not passed on The knowledge of God To their children This is what we're told They knew not The things That God had done I don't think we need To conclude That they knew nothing That they knew Absolutely nothing Of course they must have known That the outline Of what God had done But there wasn't A profound A deep A significant

Knowledge Or understanding Of what God had done The issue was not That the Word of God Was unavailable In chapter 24 It makes clear That the people Had possession Of the Word The issue is That the young Were not being instructed In God's Word And of course The lesson for us Is so evident That we don't need To dwell on it The responsibility That we have As a church And in our individual homes To instruct our children In the faith In the Word of God That as they grow up They would be a generation That do know The things That God has done But we have another lesson And we are drawing things To a close Another lesson That would Throw some light On this Tragic decline That we have described But that would help us To ensure That we do not suffer Such a similar decline And the next lesson Is this The need For a personal Encounter with And commitment

To God The same verse That we've read In verse 10 When it speaks Of this new generation Who knew Neither the Lord Nor what he had done For Israel We've just commented On them not knowing What the Lord Had done for Israel But the verse also states That they knew Not the Lord Now again We can't understand This statement As declaring That the people Knew nothing About the Lord That's inconceivable That in such a short time There would have been A collective amnesia As to the existence Of the God of Israel That simply Isn't credible They knew of him They knew of his existence And indeed They must have known Something about him But they knew Not the Lord They knew not the Lord There was no personal Relationship With God They didn't know God As their God They did not praise God They did not pray to God There wasn't Experiential religion There wasn't A relationship with God

They may have known Of God But he was a stranger To them They knew not God This generation That arises And maybe one final thing That we would say That would explain The tragic description We have And that would Serve as a warning To us And that is this The powerlessness A formal religion Vis-a-vis Vis-a-vis The world Around us Then in verse 12 When we read That they forsook The Lord The God of their fathers Who had brought them Out of Egypt We then read They followed And worshipped Vadias gods Of the peoples Around them Now the fact That there were Peoples around them Was not in and of itself A problem The issue is That the Israelites Were required To maintain A separation From them In many regards Not in all matters They were not to worship Of course their gods They were not to intermarry We could mention other matters But we leave it there And this would have been possible

For a people With clear convictions And a personal loyalty To the Lord But for a people Who were going through The motions Of formal religion Separation was impossible They were powerless To prevent Being influenced And molded And corrupted By the peoples Around them And again I think we're all Sufficiently capable Of drawing the implications For ourselves Indeed Smelling the coffee Around about us Is that not precisely What we see In the church today Powerless religion Incapable Of distinguishing itself From the world In which we are And becoming simply A reflection Of the society That we live in And indeed Preaching the values Of those that surround us Rather than The values of God And the truth of God As found in His Word And so there are Sobering lessons That we need to take seriously That we With God's help And by God's grace

[34 : 30] Would not Experience The great distress Not perhaps Of being part Of a generation Who abandons The Lord But of having to witness Those whom we love Being part of such A generation Do we love Our children?

Do we love Our grandchildren? Be they actual Or anticipated? If we do We must take Serious note Of the sad Solemn And sobering Decline of Israel As related to us In this passage Let us pray Heavenly Gettingrd kepada us Why Storage insisted Breathe In that Blow Black But of L reports In that Treatment Every Enough grows fak Means Such Sp ■■■ A focused Made God love■■■ zusammen Totally if Way Way About L Just■■■ Continuing