

# Destroyed for Lack of Knowledge

Hosea 4:6

One of the keys to safeguarding our faith is education. God has always been interested in the welfare of his people. The means by which he equips us to live for him again goes back to education. You remember in the book of Genesis in chapter 12, God called on a man by the name of Abraham, who became the father of the Hebrew nation, called on him and ultimately said to him that it would be through his seed line that all families, all nations of the earth, would be blessed.

In Genesis chapter 15, God told Abraham that the time would come when his descendants would sojourn in a strange land for four centuries, after which they would come out with great substance. In the book of Exodus. We have a record of God calling on a man by the name of Moses to become the leader, and lawgiver to ancient Israel.

And Moses would ultimately lead the people, along with his brother Aaron, out of Egyptian bondage. So once they were delivered from bondage, God said in the long ago, in chapter 19 of the book of Exodus, he said to Moses, you've seen what I did to the Egyptians, and how I brought you on eagle's wings and brought you to myself.

Now therefore, if you will obey my voice, keep my covenant. He said, you shall be a special treasure to me above all people. For all the earth is mine, and you shall be to me a kingdom and priest, and a whole nation. In many ways this serves as the backdrop to the establishment of the church of the Kingdom of God.

And God has given the church commands or precepts to live by. Now, when we talk about the nation of Israel, to understand that God gave them a law, the law was to govern their behavior, in essence, to keep them faithful to him. If you go back and look at Exodus chapter 19, Moses went back and rehearsed what the Lord had said.

Because the covenant relationship was predicated on their willingness to be submissive to his commands. The response was all that the Lord has said, we will do. You go forward in time to the book of Deuteronomy. Now you're dealing with the second generation of people, those who had come out of Egyptian bondage. Those who were 20 years old and above were destined to dwell in the wilderness for 40 years because of their unbelief.

Now we have another generation of people that's come on the scene. They're going to be entering into that land, flowing with milk and honey. It's in light of that that God, through Moses, sets forth some parameters that will enable them to maintain a relationship with him. And so we come to Deuteronomy chapter six. And Moses said, Hear, O Israel, the Lord our God is one.

And you shall love the Lord your God with all of your heart, with all of your soul, with all of your mind. And he said, these words which I command you today shall be in your heart. Now listen to me, and you shall teach them diligently to your children. You shall talk of them when you sit in your house, when you walk by the way, when you lie down, when you rise up.

And the idea is God saying, I want your homes to permeate with teaching. I want you to teach, to instruct, to educate your children. Why? Well, because again, education is a safeguard to maintaining our allegiance to God. In the book of Judges, we read an interesting passage of Scripture in Judges chapter two, where the Bible tells us that the nation of Israel, they were faithful during the days of Joshua.

Now Joshua had succeeded Moses. Moses, unable to go into the Promised Land because of a failure to obey God. You got to see it, but didn't get to enter it. So in Joshua chapter one, you remember when God said to Joshua, Moses my servant is dead. Now therefore arise. So it would be Joshua that would lead the children of Israel into that land, flowing with milk and honey.

So the record says that the people were faithful during the lifetime of Joshua, all the days of Joshua. Furthermore, they were faithful during the days of the elders who outlive Joshua, two generations of people. But then the record says another generation arose after them which knew not the Lord, nor yet the great works which he had done in Israel.

What happened? They forsook the Lord became unfaithful. So here's a question. What happened? How could it be sad that God's covenant people had become unfaithful to him? I suggest to you that one of the reasons why they became they became unfaithful was because mommies and daddies, mothers and fathers, failed to discharge the responsibility entrusted into their care. And what was that?

Moses said, I want you to teach your children diligently the law of God. You look at the nation of Israel. Sadly, time and again, Israel, a band and the one true God. Time and again they would be faithful. Then they would lapse into unfaithfulness. We come down to the period when the kingdom had divided. Hosea the prophet is writing to the northern kingdom, and Hosea indicts the children of God because of their lack of knowledge.

Now look at Hosea chapter four for a minute. In Hosea chapter four, we have the writer of there bringing an indictment or bringing a controversy, as he said, against the inhabitants of the land. Here's what he's saying. There's no truth, nor mercy, nor knowledge of God in the land. Now, wait a minute. How in the world could Hosea have said about covenant people?

There's no truth, nor mercy, nor knowledge of God in the land. How could that have been the case? I mean, there were safeguards in place to have prevented their lack of knowledge in spiritual things. Well, the problem was, again, somebody didn't do their job. Just like in the days of the judges when the Bible says they were faithful during the lifetime of Joshua, faithful during the lifetime of the elders who outlive Joshua.

But then you've got another generation coming on the scene, and they didn't know the Lord. So in Hosea chapter four, verse six, Hosea said in the long ago, my people are destroyed for lack of knowledge. I mentioned a moment ago, we're talking about covenant people here. How in the world could God had how how in the world could God have said, there's no truth nor mercy, nor knowledge of God in the land?

I thought they were given the the oracles of God. Well they were. And yet again somebody failed to teach. Turn over to Hosea, chapter eight, verse 12. There the prophet said, I have written for him the great things of my law. But listen to what he said. They were considered counted. A strange thing. You know what an amazing.

But there are folks sometimes that have grown up in the Lord's church, and they, like Israel of old, lack true, genuine knowledge in spiritual things. In Josiah's day, Hosea said in chapter eight, verse seven, he said, they've sown the wind, and they will reap the whirlwind. The northern kingdom went into Assyrian captivity in about 722 721 B.C., never to return.

And that was because of their spiritual poverty. You would think that the southern kingdom, Judah, that is the sister to the northern Kingdom. You would think that the southern kingdom would have learned something from her older sister. But she didn't learn a thing. No. About

100 years later, the southern kingdom went into captivity. And why did they go on to captivity?

Unfaithfulness to God. Matter of fact, in Jeremiah chapter two, Jeremiah said in the long ago, my people have forgotten me. Days without number. In Jeremiah chapter four, Jeremiah said, talking about the children of Israel. He said there was to do evil, but to do good. They have no knowledge. That's in about verse 20 to Jeremiah chapter four. And they listen to this in Jeremiah chapter five.

Jeremiah said, the prophets prophesy falsely. The priest bear witness by their own means. And then he said, my people love to have it. So you're not amazing. Here were people that they would rather hear false doctrine, false prophets, than genuine teaching that originated with the Lord. In chapter six, Jeremiah said, many, many years ago he said, were they ashamed when they committed these abominations?

His answer was no. They were not at all ashamed. Neither could they blush. But then listen to the wise counsel in verse 16, Jeremiah on behalf of God, said, stand in the way and see. And as for the old past weariness the good way. And walk there in. And he said, you shall find rest unto your souls. Now here's the great invitation, God saying, I want you to ask for the old person.

I want you to walk in those ways and listen. If you'll do that, it'll go well with you. But here was their response. We will not walk very and well. Guess what? You're headed to captivity, and you're going to be there for 70 years now, God spared a remnant in order to bring the Christ, the Son of God, into the world.

And thankfully, the Christ made his way into the world. We have documentation of that in the gospel record, but let's look at the New Testament for a moment or two and see if we can't learn something from the old. Now, back in Exodus chapter 19, God said to the nation of Israel, you shall be to me a kingdom and priest and a holy nation.

Could I ask the question today? Who is God's holy nation of people? Oh, I know that there are people in the world today. They have the idea that God's chosen people are still the Jewish people, that there's some affinity here on behalf of God for Palestine. Listen, God's people are not defined by geography. No, God's people really and truly are the church.

Well, how do I know that? Because in first Peter chapter two, Peter said, you're an elect race, a royal priesthood. Listen to him a holy nation, a people for God's own possession, whom he's called forth out of darkness into his marvelous light and there's a great definition of the church, the ecclesia, the called out, called out of darkness into the light of Christ.

We today, as members of the Body of Christ, we are a part of a kingdom. We are a priesthood of believers. Under the Old Covenant, the tribe of Levi functioned as priest on behalf of God. Today, every creed, every Christian is a priest, and we are said to offer up spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ, as found in First Peter chapter two, verse five.

So we are a priesthood of believers. We are a kingdom and we are described as a holy nation. Well, the holy nation that we're talking about is global. Wherever the seed of the kingdom is sown, and that seed finds root and honest and good hearts, and yields fruit. You have the church. And that's a beautiful thing. So what about the church?

And how do we insulate the church today from apostasy? Look at some of the problems that we

have in the Lord's church in the 21st century. There was a day in time in churches of Christ, and I don't think I'm telling you anything that you haven't heard in the past, but there was a day in time in churches of Christ that we were known by and large as Bible quoting, Bible toting people.

People knew in the denominational world that if you want to know something about the Bible, all you have to do is find a member of the Lord's church and they can answer your questions. Well, why was that? Because in our classrooms, we taught the truth of God faithfully. Our pulpits, our pulpits were saturated with Scripture. We had men standing in pulpits all over our brotherhood, and they were preaching a thus saith the Lord.

As Paul said in Second Timothy chapter four, Timothy, I want you to preach the word, as one preacher said. That includes everything the word includes. It excludes everything else. Well, that's what we're talking about. Well, the church was strong and vibrant and militant, and many people were obeying the gospel. Why? Because they heard the pristine message of the cross.

They were taught the gospel and they were grounded in the gospel of Christ. So what about the church today? How can the church prevent from being led into apostasy in the 20th chapter of the Book of Acts? We have an interesting account. The Apostle Paul is in Miletus. He summons the elders of the church from Ephesus to come to him.

When they arrive, he recounts his ministry with them in the past. And you remember, he said, I kept back nothing that was helpful or profitable. But I told you publicly and from house to house. In other words, Paul saying that I taught you the Word of God. I didn't withhold anything that would profit or help you spiritually. I did that publicly.

I did it privately. Now drop down. Look at verse 26. In verse 26, I think about Ezekiel, the prophet who talked about being a watchman on the walls while Paul was a watchman. And Paul had faithfully discharge his duties as a gospel preacher. He said, I'm free from the blood of all men. He said, I'm not shunned or avoided to declare to you the whole council of God.

Why would Paul present a balanced diet of the Word of God to those who belong to the church in Ephesus? Let me tell you why. Because education is the key to faithfulness. We've got to be rooted and grounded in truth. As a matter of fact, if we're not rooted and grounded in the truth, we, as Paul said, are going to be tossed about with every wind of doctrine.

And we don't want that to happen. So here's Paul saying, look, I have not shunned. I have not. I've not avoided declaring to you the whole council of God. Now look at verse 28. In verse 28, Paul said to the elders, take heed to yourselves and to all the flock over which the Holy Spirit has made you overseers, to feed or to shepherd the church of God which he purchased with his own blood.

Elders have the responsibility of feeding the church. Well, what are they to feed the church? They are to feed the church. The word of the living God. When the Lord Jesus was tempted by the devil three times, the devil made a pass at him, trying to get him to give in to temptation and each and every time Jesus responded by saying, it is written as members of the body of Christ, if we want to withstand temptation, withstand the forces of the world, then what that says to me is we've got to be equipped with the Word of God.

The psalmist said, your word have I laid up in my heart that I might not sin against you? That's found in Psalm one 1911. We've got to be people who are grounded in truth. So turn to First Peter, chapter two, verse two. Peter said as a newborn baby desire the sincere milk of the word. And why, Peter, why would I want to feed on the on the Word of God?

He said that you might grow there by now. Anybody that's had a child knows that when an infant is born into this world, that infant receives nutrition by his or her mother's milk. And as a result of that, what happens? You've got fiscal growth. You've got intellectual growth or mental growth, but there's growth taking place. Well, by the same token, if we're feeding on the milk of God's Word as a baby in Christ, we're growing.

And then over in Second Peter chapter three. Listen to what Peter said, but grow in grace and knowledge in the Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. So here we are commanded to grow. Well, if we're going to grow, that tells me that we've got to be spending time in the Word of God. Which brings us back to Second Timothy, chapter four.

Acts chapter 20. When Paul talked to the elders of the church from Ephesus, you remember, he told them that an apostasy would occur from within. And he said, men would arise among yourselves, and they're going to speak perverse things. And what are they going to do that to draw away disciples after themselves? But not first started to, because in verse 32, Paul gives the formula for faithfulness as members of the body of Christ today in the 21st century.

We need to think about what Paul said. Furthermore, we need to not only think about it, but we need to make sure that we implement this rule of action into our lives, into the fabric of the church. Paul said, and now I commend you to God and to the word of his grace. Listen, what he said, which is able to build you up, give you an inheritance among all those who are sanctified.

Let's just pause there for a minute. Paul said, I'm commending you to the Word of God and to the word of his grace, which is able to build you up spiritually. The word able there is translated power in Romans 1:16. You remember when Paul said, I'm not ashamed of the gospel for it is the power of God and of salvation.

What he's saying is that the Word of God has the power, the ability to leave one to salvation. So in Acts 20, verse 32, what he's saying is the Word of God has the power or the ability not only to save the soul, but to keep the soul saved. So what we've got to do is get back to teaching and preaching.

Our classrooms need to. Our classrooms need to be filled with what the Bible teaches. That is, we need competent teachers instructing our young people, our children, young adults are more mature Christians. Teaching needs to take place in the classroom and yes, from the pulpit. Again, as Paul said, I want you to preach the word. I think we live in a day in time when in many places we're more concerned with style than substance.

Look, style is not going to save anybody. Substance is what saves. And what substance am I talking about? The Word of God. As Paul said, I want you to preach the word. Now let's just back up from there and think for a moment or two. Instruction is not just an imperative in the local church, but we have to have ongoing teaching where in the home.

One of the real breakdowns in the church today, our young people aren't being taught. They like Joe, see us people in his day and time. They're being destroyed for lack of knowledge. Is it possible that as parents and grandparents in the Lord's church, that we have had the idea of that our Bible class teachers, our youth ministers, that they're going to be the ones that teach our children the truth of God?

Now, I understand they got a part, but look, the primary responsibility rests upon the parents. That's us. We have to listen to what Paul said. And you fathers, provoke not your children to wrath, but bring them up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord. Paul's

trying to parents there. As parents, we have the responsibility of rearing our children in the Lord.

In Ephesians six, verse one, Paul said, children, obey your parents in the Lord, for this is right. Well, where then, and how are children going to learn obedience? Where are they going to learn that they need to learn it in the home? As a parent, if I fail to teach my children submission to authoritative positions, for example, if I allow my children to just act like heathens.

That's going to be to their detriment if I'm not teaching them and setting before them guidelines and parameters. If I don't back that up with some type of discipline, then chaos is going to ensue. That's a mandate. We've got to do that. Well, if our children don't learn to respect authoritative figures in the home when they go to school.

How are they going to act like, wow, people? We've got children today in schools that have no sense or no semblance of respect for authority. And then as they grow older and they go out into the workplace, you really think they're going to be respectful of authoritative figures? I don't think so. What about civil authorities? They're going to respect them.

Probably not. And listen, if our children don't learn to respect authoritative figures of the home, in the school, in society, among civil leaders and so on, do you really think they're going to be respectful of the word of the living God? Absolutely not. Where does all that begin? It begins in the home and second down of the chapter one Peter a rather, the apostle Paul talked about Timothy and the genuine faith that dwelt in him, but not what he said.

He said that faith first dwelt in his grandmother Lois. Then he said in his mother Eunice. And then he went on to say, and I am persuaded in you also genuine faith does not come by accident. In chapter three, verse 15. In writing to Timothy, Paul said, and that from infancy, and that from a babe, he said, you've known the Holy Scriptures which are able to make you wise unto salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus.

He went on to say, All Scripture given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, reproof, correction, instruction in righteousness, that the man of God might be complete, thoroughly equipped unto every good work. You want your children to go to heaven, don't you? I do. Well, our children can go to heaven and never graduate from college. Our children can go to heaven and never master science or mathematics.

But they can't go to heaven if they're not a Christian. And that training begins in the home. And that means we're trying to train our children to become faithful members of the body of Christ. And if we fail to teach our children to be faithful to God, that's going to impact the church. Because when we obey the gospel, we are the church.

And there are congregations today that are floundering, they're hurting. And, you know why? Because they lack a working knowledge of Scripture. The church is to be the pillar and ground of the truth. That's what Paul said in first Timothy chapter three at verse 15. And Paul said, I'm writing these things so that you might know how to conduct yourself.

Behave yourself in the house of God, which is the church of the living God. There are congregations today that are derelict in their duties to the Lord. And one of the reasons is because the membership and sometimes, sadly, even the eldership and those who are occupying the pulpit are devoid of a lack of genuine Bible knowledge. That's why Hosea said in the long ago, my people are destroyed for lack of knowledge.

And chapter eight, verse 12, he said, I've given to them the great things of my law. They were counted as a strange thing very quickly before our time goes. Education is the key to faithfulness. When we're not preaching and teaching and grounding our members in the truth of God. I'm telling you, trouble will come to the surface. We are reaping the whirlwind of failing to teach and instruct our people in the Word of God.

Let's get back to being faithful to preaching the word. As Brother Marshall, people used to say, we preach it when people like it and when they don't like it. God has given us his word. That word is the North Star. As long as we are faithful to his Word, we have the assurance all is well. But if we abandon it, we're in deep trouble.

Thank you for being a part of our program today. May the Lord bless and keep you.