

Arise for Who's Next [Psalm 78:2-8]

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Big Idea: We don't arise for us. We arise for who's next.

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// INTRODUCTION

Last week... God's blessings come when we trust His perspective on what's next more than our nostalgia for what was.

Question: WHO are we arising for? Answer given up front: not us.

// PSALM 78:2-8

Read aloud as a congregation, Psalm 78:1-7.

*¹O my people, listen to my instructions. Open your ears to what I am saying, ²for I will speak to you in a parable. I will teach you hidden lessons from our past—
³stories we have heard and known, stories our ancestors handed down to us. ⁴We will not hide these truths from our children; we will tell the next generation about the glorious deeds of the LORD, about his power and his mighty wonders. ⁵For he issued his laws to Jacob; he gave his instructions to Israel. He commanded our ancestors to teach them to their children, ⁶so the next generation might know them— even the children not yet born— and they in turn will teach their own children. ⁷So each generation should set its hope anew on God, not forgetting his glorious miracles and obeying his commands. [Psalm 78:1-7]*

// PRAY

The Hebrew word for “so the next generation might know” (v.6) is literally *arise*, the same word as Joshua 1:2. The point of this season was never just for the people currently in the room.

Psalm 78 is a maskil (teaching psalm) by Asaph. He states his purpose up front, then spends the next 65 verses retelling Israel's failures on purpose.

Israel's repeated failures in the wilderness (fleeing battle, rebelling after provision, testing God, lip-service faith, repeated rebellion).

⁸Then they will not be like their ancestors— stubborn, rebellious, and unfaithful, refusing to give their hearts to God. [Psalm 78:8]

Not a highlight reel... written so the next generation won't repeat these failures.

Zoom in on the tribe of Ephraim: armed for battle, but they ran.

¹¹*They forgot what he had done— the great wonders he had shown them.*
[Psalm 78:11]

The real problem wasn't unbelief; it was forgetfulness. Honest remembering includes the parts that went wrong, including at ACAC.

Sets up the question: what happens when a generation forgets what God has done?

// THE GENERATION AFTER JOSHUA

Deuteronomy, Joshua, and Judges are one continuous story. Fast-forwards to just after Joshua's death.

⁷*And the Israelites served the LORD throughout the lifetime of Joshua and the leaders who outlived him—those who had seen all the great things the LORD had done for Israel.* [Judges 2:7]

Joshua's generation, and the elders who outlived him, stayed faithful their whole lives.

¹⁰*After that generation died, another generation grew up who did not acknowledge the LORD or remember the mighty things he had done for Israel.*
[Judges 2:10]

The very next generation didn't know the Lord. This is Psalm 78 happening in real history, one generation later.

"Grew up" in v.10 is the same Hebrew word, arise, as Joshua 1:2 and Psalm 78:6.

Rising up is not the same as remembering rightly — a generation can be active and engaged and still miss the whole point.

Applied to ACAC: a full calendar of ministry activity isn't the same as actual discipleship.

Introduce Deuteronomy 6:4-7 [the Shema] as the most important prayer/command for God's people in the Old Testament.

⁴*"Listen, O Israel! The LORD is our God, the LORD alone. ⁵And you must love the LORD your God with all your heart, all your soul, and all your strength. ⁶And you must commit yourselves wholeheartedly to these commands that I am giving you today. ⁷Repeat them again and again to your children. Talk about them when you are at home and when you are on the road, when you are going to bed and when you are getting up."* [Deuteronomy 6:4-7]

Every ordinary moment is an opportunity to pass faith to your children.

We don't arise for us. We arise for who's next.

// THIS SEASON FOR ACAC

Applying arising to ACAC's next season. [Not an exhaustive list — still a work in progress.]

FAMILY & KIDS

- Joel Matonak promoted to Family Ministries Pastor — a strategic, intentional position to help parents raise kids to follow Jesus.
- Something long overdue starting in November: we're launching a new group for parents walking through life with an LGBTQ child, more common in this church than you might realize. It's not a program built to hand out answers. It's a space, led by a couple from within our own church family, for parents who love their kids and want to walk that love out well, alongside others who understand what that actually feels like. If that's you this morning, you don't have to carry it alone.
- No ministry or program replaces parents as the primary discipler of their kids. Also renewing commitment to elementary-age kids knowing and experiencing Jesus early.

STUDENTS

- Bringing middle and high schoolers into more of the main weekend service, and into serving alongside adults, not just being served.
- New partnership with YoungLife, including free office space on campus, to build relationships with students in public schools. [Personal testimony of impact on Kady/Alex.]
- Committed to building relationships with local schools more broadly, wherever God opens a door.

NEXT GENERATION OF LEADERS

- ~500K lead pastors expected to retire in the next 10 years; ~70% of churches projected to be in leadership transition. Seminaries aren't producing enough young pastors.
- ACAC is starting a residency program to address the pipeline gap, especially suited to diverse, urban churches like ours.
- Also raising up ACAC's own next generation of global missionaries.

// TO THE OLDER GENERATION

This isn't just about younger people... none of it works without the generation that's already been faithfully serving. You are not the previous chapter.

"Teach the older men to exercise self-control, to be worthy of respect, and to live wisely... Teach the older women to live in a way that honors God... and train the younger women to love their husbands and their children... In the same way, encourage the young men to live wisely." [Titus 2:2-6]

Paul's instruction is to teach and train, not step back.

¹⁷O God, you have taught me from my earliest childhood, and I constantly tell others about the wonderful things you do. ¹⁸Now that I am old and gray, do not abandon me, O God. Let me proclaim your power to this new generation, your mighty miracles to all who come after me. [Psalm 71:17-18]

The prayer we need from the older generation... useful because of experience, not despite age.

What does this look like?

- MENTORING a college student, young adult, or newly married couple.
- ENCOURAGING a student or young family in the lobby instead of walking past.
- EQUIPPING, TEACHING a class, LEADING a small group, SERVING in kids or student ministries, or ENGAGING with our young adults on Monday night.
- FUNDING what's next, like giving towards a residency program, family ministries, or whatever it takes to make this real rather than just an idea being preached.

Must be proactive... don't wait to be asked. And give the next generation room to do it differently than you would, even room to fail.

Tease next week's teaching on new wine in old wineskins.

// CLOSING

Recap the season's initiatives... family ministries, kids, students, YoungLife and local schools, a residency, the next generation of missionaries. Not about programs; about ACAC refusing to let the story stop with the people currently in this room.

Every generation has a part. Not a pledge drive but arising for who's next will cost something real: time, attention, and yes, money.

We don't rise for us. We arise for who's next.

// PRAY