

*The children and youth of FPCD presented the Christmas play "A Simple Christmas Pageant" during worship.*

Thank you, children and youth; those of you who have children, those of you who bring children and grandchildren, those of you who love children, thank you. Every child who is here is here because of an adult. If you have enjoyed this pageant, if the Christmas story and Christmas carols mean something to you, please stand. Children, let's thank them. Now you may find your families or take a seat in the nearest chair.

"So the Word became human and made his home among us. He was full of unfailing love and faithfulness. And we have seen his glory, the glory of the Father's one and only Son." The apostle John tells us, "From his abundance we have all received one gracious blessing after another" (Jn 1:14, 16).

One of those blessings happens generation to generation; between adult and child.

Last week as I prepared for the message on Mary, I was struck by a verse, *Mary, blessed are you for believing that what the Lord has said will be fulfilled, and blessed is your child.* The faith of the parent blesses the child.

The Bible talks over and over again about the faith of the parent blessing the child.

In the play, St. Nicholas said, "The faith of my mother and father led me to become a priest." When he inherited their wealth, it did not bring him joy. But faith, his relationship with Jesus, brought him joy. As he emulated Jesus, he felt full.

Generation to generation.

My parents taught me how to be involved in a church. Then, as a young adult I was befriended by an older woman who became my spiritual mentor. She showed me how to be a Christian wife. You have no idea how important you are as an older, more mature Christian to a younger person.

Elizabeth was such a mentor for Mary. She encouraged her and affirmed her for believing the angel Gabriel.

Such relationships are throughout the Bible.

Naomi mentored Ruth in the faith. Ruth clung to Naomi after both their husbands died and circumstances were so bad. She went with her back to her homeland, to Israel. Naomi then loved her, took care of her, and taught her just what to do.

Eli taught little Samuel, Hannah's young son, how to listen to God. Do you remember that one? Samuel was probably five or six and heard someone calling his name in the night. He ran in and woke up Eli, but Eli hadn't called him. Finally it dawned on Eli the priest that God was speaking to the boy. Eli knew how to guide him. There's no more beautiful story than that.

Mordecai disciplined his niece Esther. She was a young adult with no parents to guide her as she was an orphan. How would she have known that God was calling her had not Modecai taken an interest in her to help and guide her?

Generation to generation. This is Biblical. This is how the faith grows.

Paul disciplined Timothy and taught him how to be a pastor.

You are invaluable to the faith of someone in your life. Maybe a child. Maybe a young adult. God has put you there. Ask God to show you who it is, if you do not know. Then reach out to them. If you can't find anyone I will help you.

Jesus lived his whole life to show us the Father. You show others how to have faith in Jesus. It's a wonderful plan! John says, "No one has ever seen God. But the one and only Son is himself God and is near to the Father's heart. He has revealed God to us" (1 Jn 1:18).

Jesus made God known because He was with God in the beginning. He is the Word. He walks with you every day.

So where do you begin? You might begin by telling this story. It is a miracle, and a mystery; a promise become real. Tell it often. Once I taught a Bible study to young preschool children. We acted out this story. We sang "Mary Had a Baby" while each child carried the baby Jesus, wrapped in a blanket to a manger and laid Him there. This one little boy carried Him up under his arm and just whapped Him right down in that bed of straw, singing at the top of his lungs, *Mary had a ba-by*.

Jesus is strong and courageous. It's a good thing. Tell His story to your child – or someone every night.

It will change your life forever.

AMEN