

Deuteronomy 6:4-9
"Shema"
WRCoB 10.6.19

Three elderly men were out walking.

First one says, 'Windy, isn't it?'

Second one says, 'No, it's Thursday!'

Third one says, 'So am I. Let's get a drink.'

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A man told his neighbor

'I just bought a new hearing aid.'

'It cost me four thousand dollars

But it's state of the art. It's perfect.'

'Really,' answered the neighbor, 'What kind is it?'

'Twelve thirty.'

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Morris, an 82 year-old man

Went to the doctor to get a physical.

A few days later

The doctor saw Morris walking down the street

With a young, beautiful woman on his arm.

A couple of days later

The doctor again saw Morris and said

'You're really doing great, aren't you?'

Morris replied, 'Just doing what you said, Doc

'Get a hot momma and be cheerful.'

The doctor said

“I didn't say, ‘Get a hot mamma and be cheerful.’

I said, ‘You've got a heart murmur; be careful.’”

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I applaud Kevin's efforts

Here in our congregation

To get the technology needed

To help our hearing impaired members.

It improved their quality of worship and participation.

The inability to hear is deeply disturbing and isolating.

Just as we have made every effort in handicap accessibility

Let's continue the work toward hearing accessibility too.

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Our Scripture Lesson

In fact the entire book of Deuteronomy

Is considered Moses' final sermon.

After 400 hundred years of slavery in Egypt

Moses led his people out of captivity

And into the desert for forty years.

They stand ready to enter the Promised Land.

Moses, not able to enter Canaan

Wanted to make sure the people heard God's instruction.

Our Scripture Reading today

Is one of the most important Bible passages in Judaism.

Shema is the title of this passage.

It gets its name from the first word in the verse, *Hear!*

Every Jew learns to recite the *Shema*.

They recite it at the beginning of every worship service.

And they recite it every morning and every evening.

It's like the "Hail Marys," and "Our Fathers" for the Catholic
A constant reminder to put God above all else.

This commandment is so vital, so important
That Moses instructed the people

To place these words on their hearts
To teach them to their children
To talk about them all the time

To bind them as a sign on their hands
As a necklace for the forehead
And at the entrance to their homes.

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As today's video teaches, *Shema* means to hear.

It also means to listen, pay attention, focus on
And respond to what you hear.

The Hebrew word for *obey* is also *Shema*.

The word means both hearing and doing.

The *Shema* teaches us to love God
To think constantly about his commandments
And to live each day by their guidelines.

The *Shema* pushes us to consider the critical need
To pass the faith from one generation to the next.

It is the responsibility of parents
And one of the primary responsibilities of the church.

Christian education we call it.

And the importance of it is understated and overlooked.

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So, how well are we doing?

Is anyone worried about the next generation?

Honestly, very few in the next generation
Will have a basic understanding of the Bible.

Learning the stories of the Bible
Learning the history of our faith
Learning the core values of Jesus
And the purposes of his life and death

Learning who we are as Brethren
Takes more than a few minutes per week.

Today, much of the Christian church is bible illiterate.

Christians generally view the Bible as the Word of God
And consider it to be very important.

But very few actually read it
Or consider it applicable for today.

How illiterate are we?
It reaches the levels of absurdity.

According to the Barna Research Group poll

1-3

- 12 percent of adults believe that Joan of Arc was Noah's wife.
- Another survey of graduating high school seniors revealed that over 50 percent thought that Sodom and Gomorrah were husband and wife.
- A considerable number of respondents to one poll indicated that the Sermon on the Mount was preached by Billy Graham (albertmohler.com).

This should concern us.

The Sunday school hour has become obsolete.

We need to rethink how we do Christian education
And reestablish the urgent and critical need for it.

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Proverbs 22:6 KJV Train up a child in the way he should go: and when he is old, he will not depart from it.

In our envisioning process
And in our Christian Education Commission
We have identified the concern
And are seeking ways to rectify it.

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Church and Sunday school (or some kind of alternative)
Are two areas that instruct younger generations
On the Bible and matters of faith.

But church and Sunday school
Cannot be solely responsible
To educate the young on faith and practice.

It is the responsibility of parents
Grandparents, aunts and uncles and siblings.

Judith grew up with an aunty who made it her responsibility
To teach the stories of the Bible.

She would call the children around her
And tell the stories of the Bible

In such a way that the children were held spellbound.

She brought to life the important stories
Of God and God's relationship to people.

We must pass the faith of our fathers and mothers
Down to the younger generations.

If we fail to pass on the faith passed down to us
The Christian faith will die . . . simple as that!

The Hebrew people were extremely successful
At instilling things of faith into the younger generation.

The reason they were successful
Was they taught about God in a holistic way.

Religious education was life-oriented
Rather than information-oriented.

They used the context of everyday living to teach about God
(adapted from Life Application Bible Commentary).

Find the ways to teach children to love God in the *Shema*.

If you want your children to follow God
You must make God an everyday experience
To show God in all aspects of life.

The *Shema* encourages a holistic approach to faith education

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Deut. 6:6-9 NIV These commandments that I give you today are to be upon your hearts . . .

6-14

- **Impress them on your children**
- **Talk about them when you sit at home**
- **And when you walk along the road**
- **When you lie down**
- **And when you get up**
- **Tie them as symbols on your hands**
- **Bind them on your forehead**
- **Write them on the doorframes of your houses**
- **And on your gates**

Integrate the love of God in all aspects of life

At home

At church

In nature

Among people and alone.

Begin each morning

And end each evening

Forever reminding them of the love of God.

Teach children the centrality of faith in everything we do . . .

In our words and in our actions.

We all are responsible for this.

Remember the word *Shema*.

It means to hear, pay attention, listen

Focus on, and respond to

Our children need to *HEAR* about the love of God.

If we don't speak, teach, or emulate the love of God

How will they *Shema* (hear)?

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The use of hearing aids is so vital

For those of who are hearing impaired.

And it pleases me to no end

That we are seeking to remedy this

Through technological advancements.

We, as a church community
Need to explore ways we advance the faith
From one generation to another.

So that they, too, will be able to hear
About the love of God
And the gospel of Jesus Christ.

If we don't, who will?

Hear, O West Richmond!