

God's Faithfulness from Generation to Generation

SCOTT HOEZEE

In scripture, it soon becomes clear that God's love affair with the human race is, as often as not, a family affair. True, in the New Testament, Jesus made clear that the family of God was more important than our biological families, but biological families still always played a vital role in passing along the faith from one generation to the next. God expected parents to raise their children in the fear and the knowledge of God so that the legacy of faith could be handed down across time. Today on *Groundwork*, we will think about the ways in which this program itself tries to help continue the legacy of faith. As *Groundwork* celebrates its fifteenth anniversary in 2025, we will think about the importance of having a legacy in the faith. Stay tuned.

DARRELL DELANEY

Welcome to *Groundwork*, where we dig into scripture to lay the foundation for our lives. I am Darrell Delaney.

SCOTT HOEZEE

And I am Scott Hoezee; and Darrell, as just noted, *Groundwork*, in this year of our Lord 2025, is celebrating its fifteenth anniversary; and so, we are devoting two programs to thinking about the role something like our radio and podcast program has to play in continuing a legacy of faith.

DARRELL DELANEY

And so, in this episode, Scott, we are going to cover how *Groundwork* came into being, and we are going to share the story of the way that we have spread the gospel using the media and podcasts, and how the story began; but we are not going to stop there, because the second episode, when we get to that, we will talk about how that applies to our everyday lives. Sharing a legacy of faith that is not just supposed to stay with us, but to be passed on; thanks be to God.

SCOTT HOEZEE

Indeed. Well, just a little history here for those who are listening; and if you are listening, you are probably are interested. *Groundwork*, as some of us know, was established as a joint venture between the *Words of Hope* radio program that long had been mainly associated with the Reformed Church in America and the *Back to God Hour* program, as sponsored by the Christian Reformed Church in North America. So, both, Darrell...*Words of Hope* and *Back to God*...went back a lot of years. The Christian Reformed Church first entered the world of broadcast ministry in 1939 with the first episode of the *Back to God Hour*. It was a preaching program that featured the ministry of Reverend Peter Eldersveld. He was probably the most well-known minister in the Christian Reformed Church because of the *Back to God Hour*. He led that program into the early 1960s. He died rather suddenly. He was succeeded for many decades by Dr. Joel Nederhood, and then for some years by Reverend David Feddes.

DARRELL DELANEY

Then by the time *Back to God's* seventieth anniversary happened in 2009, listening tapes, of course, and trends have changed. So, the Back to God Ministries director Robert Heerspink thought it would be a good time to have a more conversational program to teach the Bible. So, he approached the president of Words of Hope, Reverend David Bast, and in 2010, Bob and Dave both launched the first *Groundwork* program on April 16th.

SCOTT HOEZEE

Sadly, only a little more than a year later, Bob Heerspink was diagnosed with an aggressive form of cancer, and Bob died in October of 2011. After a year of rotating guest hosts to record *Groundwork* with Dave Bast, I, Scott Hoezee, was brought in as the permanent cohost of the show in December of 2012. Our first series together with Dave Bast and me was *The Seven Deadly Sins*, which aired in February of 2013. Dave retired from president of Words of Hope in 2017, but he kept recording until May of 2021 here on *Groundwork*; at which time you, Darrell, were brought in as Dave Bast's replacement; and now, you and I have been up to this for just a little over four years already.

DARRELL DELANEY

Yes; four-and-one-half years, and it has been a great run so far, thanks be to God. I know, also too, behind the scenes, *Groundwork* has been blessed with the work of Mark Drenth, our longtime recording engineer. Of course, it was Dodd Morris for a while; and then our post-production supervisor and current recording engineer, Jon Reeder; and from the beginning, *Groundwork's* producer was named Courtney...Courtney Schutt in the early years of the show, but now Courtney Jacob, following her marriage in 2011.

SCOTT HOEZEE

And now, Darrell, by this, our fifteenth anniversary, we have had about 627 episodes and counting. In the last ten years, we have added e-books, Bible study guides, program transcripts, including a live transcript you can follow while you listen to the program. We've got a blog, and more. So, Darrell, *Groundwork* stands upon and continues legacies of faith and on-air ministry from Back to God and Words of Hope; and now, through ReFrame Ministries of the Christian Reformed Church in North America; but Darrell, it is not just those denominational legacies. We really want to focus in this program and the rest of this segment on the wider legacy of our faith as the people of God.

DARRELL DELANEY

So, let's zoom out and talk about from the beginning. Our tagline has been: We dig into scripture to lay the foundation for our lives. We say it every time we come on to the program. So, let's do that now, here in Genesis Chapter 15, where it reads: ⁵He (God) took him (Abram) outside and said, "Look up at the sky and count the stars—if indeed you can count them." Then he said to him, "So shall your offspring be." ⁶Abram believed the Lord and he credited it to him as righteousness. ¹⁸On that day the Lord made a covenant with Abram and said, "To your descendants I give this land, from the Wadi of Egypt to the great river, the Euphrates."

SCOTT HOEZEE

And Darrell, from that time forward, God kept covenant with Abraham; and then soon with Isaac and Jacob and their descendants. Those descendants would ultimately become the nation of Israel, which Darrell, to put it mildly, didn't always live up to their end of the covenantal bargain, but the good news is: God always kept up his end, and through Jesus eventually he will have found a way to keep up our end of the bargain. But God extended his covenant to the work of Moses, and he made a special covenant with David. God promised that a son of David would always be on the throne; and of course, that ultimate Son of David...the Messiah...the Christ himself...came into the world to save all people from their sins, and that, of course, is Jesus.

DARRELL DELANEY

And Jesus also, on the night in which he was betrayed, he said this in Matthew 26 this is the new covenant. It says: ²⁶While they were eating, Jesus took bread, and when he had given thanks, he broke it and gave it to his disciples, saying, "Take and eat; this is my body." ²⁷Then he took a cup, and when he had given thanks, he gave it to them, saying, "Drink from it, all of you. ²⁸This is my blood of the covenant, which is poured out for many for the forgiveness of sins. ²⁹I tell you, I will not drink from this fruit of the vine from now on until that day when I drink it new with you in my Father's kingdom.

SCOTT HOEZEE

So, in Matthew 26 here, and in the parallel accounts of this in Mark, Luke and John, Jesus really reaches all the way back to Genesis 15, to that passage you read just a few minutes ago. He reaches all the way back to that covenant once made with Abraham; and now he says he is going to make a *new* covenant in his, at that time, soon-to-be-shed blood. So really, Darrell, what we see in that upper room at that last supper...it is really the culmination of a really long legacy of faith, handed down from one generation to the next; and you know, Darrell, that is something we hope *Groundwork* is participating in.

DARRELL DELANEY

So, we serve a covenant-keeping, promise-keeping God, Scott. He introduces himself as the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. Of course, he becomes the God of Paul and the Apostles, and he becomes the God of you and I as well. We trust him; and so, the idea is that the tradition of faith and the stories of faith continue to be passed down from generation to generation.

SCOTT HOEZEE

You go in a lot of churches and there is a communion table and very often the words: Do this in remembrance of me. So, a lot of the faith, Darrell, is remembering; remembering what came before; rehearsing it for our children...we are going to see more of that in the next segment. That is how this legacy of faith that began, in some ways, with even Adam and Eve, but certainly with Abraham, has come down to us today.

Well, in just a moment, we will dig into some other passages that help us understand why it is so valuable to recognize, honor, and share our legacies of faith. Stay tuned.

Segment 2

Darrell Delaney:

You are listening to *Groundwork*, where we are digging into scripture to lay the foundation for our lives. I am Darrell Delaney.

SCOTT HOEZEE

And I am Scott Hoezee. Well Darrell, in the Bible, and in Jewish circles to this day, there is one Old Testament passage so well known it has its own name. It is called the *Shema* and it comes from Deuteronomy 6.

DARRELL DELANEY

Yes; I mean, the word *deuteronomy*...it means second law...and so, when they got out of Egypt and went on their way to the Promised Land, they encamped around the mountain of God and God starts to recap the first five books for Moses to write down for the people so they would know how everyone got here; and it is another intentionality of God, showing the legacy and tradition of creation and showing them how they might live in light of this, in the first five books; and Deuteronomy is one of the books in the Pentateuch, which is the first five books of the Bible.

SCOTT HOEZEE

Exactly; so, as Deuteronomy opens, it has been forty years since God gave the law the first time at Mount Sinai, and a lot of the people who could have remembered that have died. So, forty years later you have mostly a whole new generation who have no living memory of the first time God gave the law. So, right; as you said, Deuteronomy means the second law or really the law the second time around, because Moses is going to repeat it all for the new generation because he wants them... You know, the refrain of Deuteronomy is Moses saying to this new generation: Remember and do not forget—remember and do not forget. And the *Shema* in Deuteronomy 6 is part of it. The Hebrew word *Shema* means listen up or hear, and it is the first word of Deuteronomy 6:4:

Shema, Israel: Hear, O Israel: The Lord our God, the Lord is one. ⁵Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your strength. ⁶These commandments that I give you today are to be on your hearts. ⁷Impress 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. ⁸Tie them as symbols on your hands and bind them on your foreheads. ⁹Write them on the doorframes of your houses and on your gates.

DARRELL DELANEY

So, pretty much whatever opportunity you get with your children, you are supposed to share who God is and what he has done. This idea and this notion are actually the essence of what legacy is. When you remember who God is and what he has done in your life...your parents' life...and then you begin to pass it to the next generation. This is what Moses is doing in this context, and he is also training the people who had never heard this to do the same in their families.

SCOTT HOEZEE

Above all, God wants his ways and his law and his word and the memory of all that God has done to be engraved in our hearts, but you know, in that passage that we just read, Moses also mentions having it on your hands and your foreheads, and some of us may know that in some Jewish circles, they actually create something called *phylacteries*...

DARRELL DELANEY

Phylacteries, yes.

SCOTT HOEZEE

Which were little leather boxes into which they would slip a piece of parchment with a Hebrew letter on it standing for a commandment or something, and they would literally, on certain Holy days, they would tie them to their foreheads. They tie them right on their hands. Moses says: Inscribe it on the doorposts of your house and on your gates. So, to this day in some Orthodox Jewish homes, on every doorframe, going into the house and within the house, there is something called a *mezuzah*...again, a small, little metal box embossed with a Hebrew letter...and you are supposed to touch that every time you enter and leave a room; again, as a reminder of the Word of God. Keep it in front of you all the time. Keep it in front of your children all the time. That is what Moses is saying.

DARRELL DELANEY

And Moses knew that...I mean...dependence on God was going to be absolutely important in this situation. They were in the wilderness right now when he is writing this stuff down, when God is literally giving him the law. They are getting ready to go into the Promised Land, and they need to understand these things about God so they know how they might live when they get into that new context. And as we look at the legacy of what God has done in our lives, we need to be dependent on God in our everyday lives and in our decisions as well.

SCOTT HOEZEE

See, Moses knew that when they were in the wilderness, as you just said, shuffling through, you know, scorching sands and a place that does not have an abundance of food and water, of course they knew they were dependent on God. The manna had to fall. Sometimes water had to come miraculously gushing out of a rock. Sometimes God would drop quail so they could have some meat to eat. So, dependence on God was obvious in the wilderness; but Moses knew that once they got to a promised land flowing with milk and honey, they could forget; and that is why a couple of chapters beyond the Shema, we get a key passage in Deuteronomy 8.

DARRELL DELANEY

In Deuteronomy 8, picking up at verse 10, it says: When you have eaten and are satisfied, praise the Lord your God for the good land he has given you. ¹¹Be careful that you do not forget the Lord your God, failing to observe his commands, his laws and his decrees that I am giving you this day. ¹²Otherwise, when you eat and are satisfied, when you build fine houses and settle down, ¹³and when your herds and flocks grow large and your silver and gold increase and all you have is multiplied, ¹⁴then your heart will become proud and you will forget the Lord your God, who brought you out of Egypt, out of the land of slavery. ¹⁷You may say

to yourself, “My power and the strength of *my* hands have produced this wealth for me.”¹⁸ But remember the Lord your God, for it is he who gives you the ability to produce wealth, and so confirms his covenant, which he swore to your ancestors, as it is today.”

SCOTT HOEZEE

So, Darrell, the Promised Land was the ultimate fulfillment of so many of God’s promises, all the way back to Abraham; but the Promised Land was, at the same time, a place where the comforts and distractions of everyday life might make their awareness of God fade a little bit. People might take what they have that are really the gifts of God, but conclude: No, I earned this. I built this. God had nothing to do with this. Moses was really, really afraid that that was going to happen. So, remember and do not forget is that refrain all through Deuteronomy. You know, I mean, in a comfortable place and in a comfortable time, a person could go long stretches during more days than not and maybe during whole weeks when they don’t give God’s Word or God’s law much thought; and Moses wanted to head that off.

DARRELL DELANEY

Yes, it is interesting; there is an old saying that says: Some of us would not pray unless we went through something challenging. Because when we are riding high and when God is blessing us and we are feeling abundant and there is no danger, sometimes we kind of lax off and say: Oh well, I guess we are okay; and then we look at the blessings and the tangible things that God has done in our lives, and look at our families and we say: Oh, wait; maybe I had something to do with this. And actually, that is what Moses is warning against. The legacy of faith is a gift that has been passed on. Any blessings that we have in our lives are gifts that we need to thank God for, and remain humble about, because he does not have to give us those things and he does not have to do these things, but because he is a faithful God, he does.

SCOTT HOEZEE

Exactly; and you know, we live in a pretty comfortable land...a lot of us do, anyway. A lot of Christians in the world have it very hard these days, but some of us don’t. We have what we call creature comforts all around us; and again, we always have to remember that at any given time we could always be just one generation away from losing that long legacy of faith. If we don’t dig into scripture to lay the foundation for our lives, as we try to model here on *Groundwork*, and as preachers and youth leaders, as elders, deacons, Sunday school teachers, and so many others do in churches everywhere...without all that, we can forget; we can let our awareness of a living God fade. We can lose our awareness, too, that we live *coram deo*...we live every day before the face of God and we want to remember that because that is the legacy of our faith and it is a gift.

DARRELL DELANEY

And we want to continue talking about this for generations to come as we wrap up the program with some more scriptures and reflections. So, stay tuned.

Segment 3

SCOTT HOEZEE

I am Scott Hoezee, with Darrell Delaney, and you are listening to *Groundwork*; and Darrell, let’s dig right back into scripture on this fifteen anniversary program for *Groundwork*. We are thinking about the legacy of faith, and we can think about that more from something very interesting in Joshua 4. Joshua 4:1: When the whole nation (of Israel) had finished crossing the Jordan, the Lord said to Joshua,² “Choose twelve men from among the people, one from each tribe,³ and tell them to take up twelve stones from the middle of the Jordan, from right where the priests are standing, and carry them over with you and put them down at the place where you stay tonight.”⁴ So Joshua called together the twelve men he had appointed from the Israelites, one from each tribe,⁵ and said to them, “Go over before the ark of the Lord your God into the middle of the Jordan. Each of you is to take up a stone on his shoulder, according to the number of the tribes of the Israelites,⁶ to serve as a sign among you. In the future, when your children ask you, ‘What do these stones mean?’⁷ tell them that the flow of the Jordan was cut off before the ark of the covenant of the Lord. When it crossed the Jordan, the waters of the Jordan were cut off. These stones are to be a memorial to the people of

Israel forever.”⁸ So the Israelites did as Joshua commanded them. They took twelve stones from the middle of the Jordan, according to the number of the tribes of the Israelites, as the Lord had told Joshua; and they carried them over with them to their camp, where they put them down.⁹ Joshua set up the twelve stones that had been in the middle of the Jordan at the spot where the priests who carried the ark of the covenant had stood. And they are there to this day.

DARRELL DELANEY

This story...I love it. When I preached on this, we talked about a legacy of a church who had been over one hundred years old; and everyone...we were told metaphorically: Bring your stones to the altar and share with the younger generation what God has done.

SCOTT HOEZEE

Nice.

DARRELL DELANEY

So, it is a beautiful thing in this passage to be reminded of the legacy of faith—of God’s faithfulness—which is the story we are telling everyone, and that is what they are told to tell their children. So now, they are creating an opportunity when the children see the stones. They say: What do these mean? They get to tell the story over and over again.

SCOTT HOEZEE

Yes; so, this is a literal legacy because, you know, the crossing of the Jordan River, like the previous crossing of the Red Sea on dry ground that we read about in Exodus, both of those were a mighty miracle of God, but also a major step forward in the fulfillment of God’s covenant promises to Abraham, and so, it had to be memorialized; and as you just said, the children are going to say: Hey, where did that pile of stones come from? What does that mean, Mom? What does that mean, Dad? Then Mom and Dad had to be ready to tell them; and if Mom and Dad were ready to tell them, it is probably because their mom and dad had told them, and now your children will be ready to tell their children. I guess passing on the legacy of faith was creating really good momentum, right down through generations to generations.

DARRELL DELANEY

I love to tell the story, right?

SCOTT HOEZEE

Yes.

DARRELL DELANEY

You know, and so, *Groundwork* has been part of that because we have been telling the story of God through these various different ways, and we do this weekly where we share from scripture what God has done to remind the people of the character of God and how God is definitely relevant in their everyday lives. So, it has been really exciting to see how God has used that in each and every one of our lives.

SCOTT HOEZEE

You know, in a lot of churches we...you know, all of us Christians...we have done a good job verbally to pass along the legacy of faith, and certainly here on *Groundwork*, Darrell. We are a radio show...we are a podcast show. Words are all we’ve got; we cannot even give you any visuals here over the air or on computer streaming. So, anyway, the Church has done a good job with what we try to do here on *Groundwork*, and that is to verbally...using our words and our storytelling abilities to pass on. But sometimes, as here in Joshua 4, maybe having more tangible objects help us to remember the legacy of faith a little bit as well.

DARRELL DELANEY

Yes; so, you know, I am thinking about the baptismal font; I am thinking about the covenant table of communion; I am thinking about the pulpit even of those things. Some churches have stained-glass windows that show the stations of Christ. There are many different ways that these things have been visualized around; and as long as we are not ending up worshipping those as idols or whatnot...

SCOTT HOEZEE

Right.

DARRELL DELANEY

We are fine with the reminder that they are pointing to the gospel; and so, we try to do that, especially with children at worship; and when we teach little people, we think about how to symbolize and crystalize these things into tangible things. Even when Jesus teaches, he uses agrarian language.

SCOTT HOEZEE

Yes.

DARRELL DELANEY

The sheep, the gate, the door, the water. These things that they run into every day, so it would be a reminder of everything he is teaching.

SCOTT HOEZEE

And you know, in traditions like the Reformed tradition that we are a part of, Darrell, we baptize infants and children who are never going to remember their baptism. Now, these days they might have a video they can watch years later; but I like it that some churches have begun a tradition where they will give the parents a physical memento. Sometimes it is like maybe a Christmas tree ornament or a wall hanging...

DARRELL DELANEY

A certificate.

SCOTT HOEZEE

A certificate. Some churches do like a suncatcher...sort of like a colorful glass thing that you can hang in the window, and maybe it has the date of the child's baptism engraved on it. These are sort of like those stones in Joshua 4. We are supposed to hang onto these things, and then when our children see these and say: Hey, Mom and Dad, what does this mean? Well, it means you were baptized—here on this date you were baptized—and we get to tell that story. In fact, I know that there are some churches... I think when I was a kid, sometimes in Sunday school, if you had a birthday that week, they would kind of maybe celebrate that with a cupcake or something; but some churches have said: You know what? You can celebrate your actual birthday at home. Here at church, let's celebrate the anniversary of your baptism day, because that, in a way, is your new birthday.

DARRELL DELANEY

Spiritual birthday...born again...and so, you know, born again is definitely a concept that derives directly from scripture; and we can read about it here. Nicodemus is talking to Jesus in John Chapter 3, and this is where Jesus says to him: ³Jesus replied, "Very truly I tell you, no one can see the kingdom of God unless they are born again." ⁴"How can someone be born when they are old?" Nicodemus asked. "Surely they cannot enter a second time into their mother's womb to be born!" ⁵Jesus answered, "Very truly I tell you, no one can enter the kingdom of God unless they are born of water and the Spirit. ⁶Flesh gives birth to flesh, but the Spirit gives birth to spirit. ⁷You should not be surprised at my saying, 'You must be born again.' ⁸The wind blows wherever it pleases. You hear its sound, but you cannot tell where it comes from or where it is going. So it is with everyone born of the Spirit."

SCOTT HOEZEE

So again, perhaps celebrating the date of our *new* birth birthday—our baptism day—is a way to continue to pass on the legacy of faith; but you know, Darrell, the point is however we do it, I think we can probably all agree that knowing and passing along the legacy of our faith in Christ Jesus the Lord is as important a practice as we can think of.

Then we have been thinking about different ways now, in this program, that they tried to do in Israel. Now we are trying to think about which we are trying to do it in the Church today. You mentioned the concrete...even the furniture of church. You know, some churches...I think some people in the Protestant world think this is just too Catholic, but some churches keep a baptism font at the head of the aisle filled with water, and you are supposed to dip your fingers in the water and maybe touch it to your forehead or something as a remembrance of your own baptism. We need that.

DARRELL DELANEY

Yes, we do need it. We are short-memory creatures and we do need to be reminded of God's faithful acts and deeds each and every time we enter that space and every time we leave that space as we go out in mission. We will talk about that in the next episode...

SCOTT HOEZEE

Yes.

DARRELL DELANEY

But *Groundwork* has been at it for this past fifteen years to be able to communicate the stories of faith and the faithfulness of God. We see that in the two-thousand-year history of the Christian Church, and you know, we see it through Jesus Christ himself giving us this great commission; and *Groundwork*, even though it is a small ripple, we continue to be a blessing as much as we can throughout generations. Thanks be to God.

SCOTT HOEZEE

Well, thanks for listening and digging deeply into scripture with *Groundwork*. We are your hosts, Scott Hoezee and Darrell Delaney. Join us again next time as we continue to study scripture to understand how our shared faith legacies are still active and alive through us today.

Connect with us at our website: groundworkonline.com. Share what *Groundwork* means to you; make suggestions for future *Groundwork* programs.

DARRELL DELANEY

Groundwork is a listener-supported program produced by ReFrame Ministries. Visit reframeministries.org for more information.

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Printed on June 3, 2026