

**Outreach Sunday**  
***Rick's Notes***  
**January 6, 2013**

**PRELUDE – “Finding Who We Are” (2)**

**Worship Song – Today / T & G (5)**

Good morning, everyone.

Today is a very special day here at NHCC for a couple of reasons.

1. First of all, as you can see, we're going to baptize some folks this morning (in our 9:30 and 11:00 services).
2. Secondly, we are just one week away from the first Sunday of

Grand Opening season and, as part of this service, we have some fun things we're going to do to prepare for that. In fact, we're going to end this service a little bit earlier than usual so everyone has time to fully participate. I'll say more about that in just a bit ... but for now, let's talk about baptism.

Baptism is something that we do in the church because, bottom line, Jesus told us to do it.

*"Go and make disciples of all nations baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit."      Matthew 28:19 (NIV)*

In fact, Jesus himself was baptized not because he needed to be but because it was just the right thing to do.

**The Gospel of Matthew also tells us that Jesus went to see John at the Jordan River because John was there baptizing and ...**

*John tried to talk him out of it. "I am the one who needs to be baptized by you," he said, "so why are you coming to me?"*

*But Jesus said, "It should be done, for we must carry out all that God requires." So John agreed to baptize him. Matthew 3:13-15 (NLT)*

As the saying goes, "speed of the

leader, speed of the team." In being baptized, *Jesus was setting the example* for every person in the future ...

1. Who would decide to believe in Him as their Savior who died for their sins on the cross and rose from the grave three days later ...
2. And who would then devote their lives to following in his footsteps.

In being baptized himself, Jesus was saying, in essence, "This is the outward physical sign which communicates to the world that you and I are part of the same family; that we are citizens of the Kingdom of God; that you belong to me and I belong to you."

It's kind of like the way a wedding ring symbolizes that a husband and wife belong to each other. The ring isn't what *makes* them married. They wear the ring because they *are* married.

So, when a person gets baptized, they don't do it because they hope to get their sins washed away; they do it because they have come to Jesus and He has *already* washed their sins away. They get baptized as a sign of something that has already taken place in their lives.

In fact, as you'll see, the act of baptism itself visualizes what has happened to them.

- When a person stands in the water

and goes under the water, it's a picture of dying to the old way of life without Jesus. That way of living where we alone are the "boss of our lives" is dead.

- And when a person comes out of the water they're saying, "there's a new life now and Jesus is my Lord; Jesus is my Savior."

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Now, this morning we have several folks (in our 9:30 and 11:00 services) who have come to this point in their lives where they have made the decision to believe and to follow and we are going to baptize them. And I'm very happy for them.

But every time we set up this baptism pool, I'm also conscious of the fact that there are *others* in this crowd who have also come to the same decision about Jesus (that he's their savior and "he's the boss of me") but who have not been baptized – at least, not of their own choosing. So, we always throw open the door at this point and say "we've got the water; we've got extra towels and even some extra shirts ... so this is your opportunity. You can be baptized this morning, too."

So, if you feel God leading you to come and be baptized (along with these others), you come right away when we start singing. Don't delay – we don't have a lot of time this morning. If God is

saying to you right now “you need to be baptized,” you come right way. Don’t worry about what you’re going to change into – we’ll help you figure that out. Some of you may need to say “yes” to that invitation this morning.

(9:30/11) Now, we do have one qualifier – if you’re younger than middle school and you haven’t signed up ahead of time, we want to ask you to wait until next time we have a baptism class later this spring. We’ve found it necessary to make sure one-on-one that our kids really understand what baptism is,

So, here we go ... let’s stand together and sing (while these folks are baptized).

# **Baptism / “All Because of Jesus / I am Free”**

## **Feature – “Banner of Love”**

One of the great things about baptism for those who are *not* being baptized is that it reminds us of the fundamental reason we exist as a church.

See, a church can legitimately be many things – it can be a place of learning (we heard a little bit about that when Ladell was talking about the CFI courses and that will happen at the end of this month); it can be a place of worship, and we did a little bit of that earlier; it can be a place of friendship and support, and many of us here have found friends and support. But the one thing a church must *always be* is a

lighthouse to its community – a place where people who are not followers of Jesus are drawn to become followers of Jesus. We've already read it this morning – the Great Commission that Jesus gave to his followers: "Spread the good news far and wide about who I am and what I've done for you. Invite others to know me like you know me."

It's very easy as a church to forget that and lose sight of that. In fact, a couple of years ago, I realized that we had lost sight of that. We were doing a lot of good things as a church but we had drifted. It wasn't intentional, but we were not seeing people outside of NHCC come to NHCC and become followers of Jesus. So, we made some changes that brought that purpose

back to the center of our focus ... changes that ultimately led to this remodel and expansion we just completed.

Now, truth is that over the past five or six months while we've been remodeling we have *not* been focused on connecting with people in our community who aren't already part of a church. That's been intentional. We needed to "get our house in order" (literally) and to prepare ourselves for the single greatest outreach opportunity a church can ever have – a Grand Opening to its community. So that's what we've been doing over the last several months ...

**We've tried to help everyone who says**

## **“NHCC is my church” answer three questions ...**

- Where will I serve over the next 6 months so that new people who come to NHCC are served well?
- What will I give in support of the ministry of NHCC over the next year because, we've made some financial commitments to be able to do this.
- Who will I invite during Grand Opening Season?

And I hope, if NHCC is your church home, you have answers to those questions and that you're ready to move forward because *today marks the end of that preparation stage ...* and next Sunday is the beginning of "phase

one" of Grand Opening Season.

I call it phase one of a season because, for us, Grand Opening is more than just one day. It's going to last from next Sunday thru the month of April. And during that time, there will be four phases; four major attempts to get the word out and invite people to come and be part of it. Each phase will match up with a specific message series that I think will be of value not only to us but to people who may think that church doesn't really have anything to say about real life.

Phase 1 (next Sunday thru end of January): "Remodel Your Life" (helping people realize their New Year's resolutions).

Phase 2 (February): "At the Movies"  
(discovering God and the message  
of Christ in those movies)

Phase 3: (March) Rational Faith in  
an Irrational World (why does it  
make sense to believe?)

Easter March 31

Phase 4: (April) Relational/Family  
series (how to live well with others)

That's where we're going over the next  
four months. I'm excited about it! I hope  
you're excited as well.

Now, yesterday, thanks to our friends at  
Action Mailing in Liberty ...

**(pic) we dropped 20,000 of these  
lovely cards into the mail to kick off  
Phase One.**

That's the front side which promotes the Grand Opening of our wonderful remodel as well as some of the cool people who are part of NHCC ...

**(pic) Here's the back side, which promotes the "Remodel Your Life" series.**

And sometime tomorrow thru Wednesday, pretty much every home in the 3-5 mile radius around this building is going to get a card. And I'm very happy about that. We are fortunate to be able to do it not only for phase one but with each phase.

But as cool as this slick little invitation is, it's not the most effective tool we have. The most effective tool at getting people who don't go to church to check

out a church is *a personal invitation from you and from me*. So, this morning, when you leave, our ushers are going to give every person one or more of these invitations so that we can give it away to someone else. (We also have a web version that can be sent by email).

*But ... as effective as a personal invitation can be ... and as wonderful as the slick cards are ... it's all wasted effort unless the Holy Spirit is at work.*

### **As Jesus once told his disciples ...**

*"The Spirit gives life ... No one can come to me unless the Father has enabled them."*

*John 6:63,65 (NLT)*

... which is why part of what we need to do this morning is to ask God to empower our efforts.

So, here's how we're going to close out our time this morning.

1. We're going to do a guided prayer walk through this building.
  - a. Grouped by section.
  - b. You won't have to pray out loud
  - c. 10 minutes to complete
  
2. Then, back here for a fun group "video postcard" which we're going to post up on Facebook later this week.

3. Final instructions about next week.
4. Dismiss for a guided prayer experience which you can do on your own.

## **Activities**

8:45/10:00/11:30

**Prayer walk (10 mins)**

**Video postcard (5 minutes) ... Shannon**

**Final instructions**

OK, next Sunday (assuming it doesn't snow ... which it did at our first Grand Opening 9 years ago!) ... next Sunday we're going to have bunch of new

people. So, I want to ask you to do several things to make it a great experience.

- Show up a little earlier than normal.
- Please do not park on the street or front of the upper lot. We want to leave that open for guests!
- Please “move to the middle” so we can leave the aisle seats for first-time guests.
- Pray for me to give a great message. 😊

By the way, that list (along with a few other instructions) is printed on a little card which you will receive (along with the Remodel Your Life card) when you

walk out of here in just a few minutes.

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Now, normally we love it when everyone takes time to hang out and visit after church. But, today, I want to ask you to do something different: *leave quickly and go do a guided prayer experience on your own.*

On the card you will receive, there are very simple instructions about what to do:

1. Drive to one or more streets within 3-5 miles of NHCC. Stop and have someone pray the prayer written on the card.
2. Then, when you get into your own neighborhood, do the same thing

with the second prayer that's written on the card.

This is very very important to what we're doing next week ... which is why this service is ending *right now*.

See you next week!