

SHINE

Shine: The Next Generation

August 7, 2016

9:30/11:00

PRELUDE – Whom Shall I Fear

Songs – Whom Shall I Fear

Called Me Higher

Video-It's Just a Phase

Announcements-LIVE (Rick)

Invite PC Blessing participants to come to front of stage

Upcoming ministry season/Cong. Mtg watch

Parent Child Blessing (Shannon)

This morning we are going to take some time to pray a blessing over these children and

their parents. So first we are going to find out who they are, please say your name and who we are blessing today.

Family Introductions

As parents, God wants us to assist Him in producing human beings who fully reflect the fact that they are created in *His* image – and not just in *ours*. God wants us as parents to become co-creators with Him. We're invited to co-create *godly young men and godly young women*. That's the goal.

Now God doesn't expect us to be perfect as a parent. That's not possible since we are not God. We just need to be aiming for godliness in our own life and then when we mess up, we just say so. When we mess up with our

kids or our spouse we need to be willing to say to them, “I was wrong. I messed up” – because part of growing in godliness is confessing our sin against other people. So we don’t have to be perfect we just have to remember if we want our kids to pursue godliness, *it starts with us as a person (not a parent) modeling that for them.*

And as parents participating in a Parent Child Blessing, you are taking a step towards that goal. You are making a commitment to devote yourselves to pursuing godliness in your own life and then to raise your children in a way that honors God.

So now, I’m going to ask you to listen and respond to these questions with the words, “We do”.

The children you hold are a gift from your Heavenly Father. Before the thought of a little boy or girl entered your minds, the Lord had already determined that these little children would come in to your lives, and you would become their parents. They are an occasion to celebrate and reflect on God's goodness. Parents, do you agree that you are truly blessed? (We do.)

Scripture instructs you as parents to teach your children about the Lord Jesus Christ. Only then will they be spiritually equipped for the challenges of life. Your children's spiritual welfare will not be accomplished simply by telling them about Jesus. Let the responsibility of raising children inspire within you a dependence on God in your personal

life that is reflected in your words and deeds.
Do you make this commitment? (We do.)

Now, church family, I want to invite you to respond to these questions in the same way, with the words, We do.

As a church, we are all part of the family of God. We commit to come along beside these parents and children not as spectators but as true family members. Church family, do you agree to this responsibility? (We do.)

You have heard these parents state their commitment to a greater level of Christlikeness for the sake of their children. Sometimes families encourage, sometimes they teach, sometimes they confront difficult issues. Church family, will you acknowledge

their commitment and indicate your willingness to help them keep their promise? (We do.)

Let's pray.

Father, right now we lift up these parents to you and we ask you would give them wisdom, patience, endurance, hope and peace that can only come from a life-giving relationship with you.

Lord, we affirm you have placed them as spiritual leaders in their children's lives, and the weight of that responsibility can be overwhelming. We pray that you sustain them and that you remind them often of the importance of the commitments they've made

today and that they don't have to be perfect and they don't have to do it alone.

Lord, we pray for each of these children. Preserve in them the dignity and confidence that comes from the security of an unconditionally loving relationship with you. Create in them a thirst to know you more. Bless them with wisdom and discernment.

Lord we pray for these families and all the families at NHCC to SHINE. Help them to love one another, others and you so well that people are drawn to you as a result.

Thank you, Lord, for placing these families in the community of faith called North Heartland Community Church.

Thank you for our church family. Seal these commitments in our hearts.

In Jesus Name we pray, Amen

Let's give them some encouragement. Parents please stop in the vestibule for just a moment to make sure Julie Smoldt our Director of Children's Ministry has all your info for a special gift you will receive in the coming weeks. Then you can make your way to AL or your seats.

During this next song, our ushers will receive the offering and remember this is a way for us to be reminded that everything we have comes from God and to practice SHINING through generosity. So whether you give here in the service, through our app, website or

even the new giving kiosks in the lobby, you are supporting kingdom work and that is helping you become more like God. Of course, if you are a guest or not ready to do that, please allow the baskets to go on by.

Cat's in the Cradle (Offering)

Ugh that song. Right? Anyone else need a Kleenex. I grew up with that song and I've always loved it and thought of it as a cautionary tale about the importance of spending time and investing in the most precious of life's relationships.

But for the purpose of today's service, I was struck by the end of the song.

“And as he hung up the phone, it occurred to

me he'd grown up just like me, my boy was just like me.”

In the Old Testament book of Deuteronomy, we read,

Hear, O Israel: The LORD our God, the LORD is one.

SLIDE

Love the LORD your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your strength. These commandments that I give you today are to be on your hearts. 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.

As I thought about this verse from the Bible and that song, I was reminded that the next generation so often picks up not so much what we say but what we do and who we are. We can tell them all the “right” things in Sunday schools, classrooms and kitchen table lectures (and should) but they will learn so much more from our character, from the things we see and do along the road of life.

Those words from Deuteronomy speak to the importance of relationship. So much of what we learn about life and the Lord comes from what we learn along the way in our relationships.

As I mentioned earlier to the parents in the parent child blessing. Who they are is most

important. If they are pursuing God in their own life, if they are trying to become more God-centered, more gracious, more generous, more gospel-driven etc, then their children will see that. How they live that out will mean more and impact their child more than a bunch of lip service to religious values.

That's why in our Next Gen ministries we use a strategy called Orange. Orange is a one-word description of the strategy which takes the light of the church (yellow) and the love of the home (red) and combines them to create Orange.

A key thought behind Orange is that in any given year, our Children and Student ministry volunteers have about 40 hours with children and students to teach them about God but

their parents have about 3000 hours.

So our hope is to help parents, to resource them, to challenge and encourage them and to come along side of them to influence the next generation to love, know and serve God. Our next gen leaders and volunteers desire to create a partnership with parents to help maximize the spiritual influence in a child and student's life.

I have to say I have been tremendously blessed that my children have grown up here at North Heartland and have had (and still have) the benefit of being loved on, challenged and encouraged by so many amazing adults.

As a parent, I have had the benefit of their knowledge of the stage of life my child is in,

their insight in to what I might be missing, and their encouragement to keep the course.

As a pastor, I know that I'm not the only one who feels this. I know so many of you feel the same way, so at this time, I would like to ask all of our Next Gen leaders and volunteers to please stand and be recognized and remain standing so we can pray a blessing over you.

Let's pray: Lord we thank you so much for each of these individuals who give so much of who they are to love on children and students. We thank you for their faithful commitment to influence the next generation for you and to come alongside parents to encourage them and strengthen families. We pray that you would continue to bless them in their ministry, let them never forget the

impact they are making and help them to continue to depend on you as they serve others. We pray this would be an amazing year of life change for them, for parents, and for the children and students they work with. In your name, Amen.

You may be seated.

Now I know it's easy to think, well Shannon I no longer have children in my home, or I'm not a parent, or I don't volunteer in the Next Gen ministries so this service isn't for me. But that simply is not true. I'm certain that the large majority of us have someone under the age of 18 in our life. Perhaps a niece or nephew, a neighbor kid, a close friend's children or grandchildren. I suspect most of us if we think about it, relate in some way to

someone under the age of 18.

So what would happen if we decided to get intentional about SHINING the light of Christ into the next generation? What would happen if we invested in relationships with children and students and helped to point them to the one who saves? What if we impressed upon them while we watch baseball and eat chicken wings, while we sit by the campfire and watch the sunset that we serve a mighty God. What if we impressed on them that they are not alone on this journey and that we too are trying to know, love and serve God. That we are trying to figure out what it means to be to be gracious, to be generous, to be gospel driven, to be good and to be God-centered.

I'd like to suggest three tangible ways we

could invest in and Shine into the next generation.

The first way is to pray for them. Pray for them with intentionality and with focus and not just when they are struggling. We could pray for them to know Jesus, to love him and serve him. We could pray for them to develop the fruits of the spirit: love, peace, patience, gentleness, and so on. We could pray for their future. We could pray for their friends.

Following service this morning we have a resource table located in the commons across from the coffee bar, where we have several sample books and a resource guide for those wanting to learn more. One of the items on that table is a 31-day guide to praying for your children. And though this

particular guide is written for parents, it can be used by any of us to pray specifically for the children and students in our lives.

And this week as the beginning of school gets closer, we have an opportunity to pray for...well let's listen as a few of our recent graduates sat down with me to answer the question, who are some of the adults who have influenced you the most outside of your family.

Video: SHINE Next Gen Clip One (students talk about teachers)-1 min 52 sec

I'm certain that we could go around the room and most of us can still remember the name of at least one teacher and probably more who had a tremendous impact on us in our

younger years. Those who spend their primary vocational energy in education, have a tremendous impact on our children and students. So what if we started with praying for the teachers that our children and students will have this year.

In fact, let's do that together right now.

If you are an educator, would you please stand. Thank you. Thank you for the investment you make in the next generation. Please remain standing as we pray a prayer of blessing over you.

Lord, we lift up all these educators to you and all the educators of the students and children of NHCC. We thank you for the calling you have placed on their life to educate,

encourage and influence the next generation. We pray that you would be near to them as they lead and guide our children and students. We pray you would help them to grasp the influence they have and to use it to build up, to challenge and encourage students to become all you have created them to be. We pray especially for educators who are followers of you that they might shine like bright lights in this hurting world. Let them shine before others to draw them to you. In your name, Amen.

Thank you. You may be seated.

Praying for those children and student in our lives is huge but we can take it a step further by understanding what specific needs they have from the adults in their life.

At the beginning of the service, we watched the video “It’s Just a Phase.” This was created from our friends at The reThink Group, the same folks who introduced the concept of Orange.

They have done a tremendous amount of research and development to help adults understand the uniqueness of each phase in child and student’s life.

A phase is a timeframe in a kids life when you can leverage distinctive opportunities to influence a kid’s future.

In each phase, children and students are asking a different question that impacts their development and growth. In each phase, the

adults have a one-word job description. Understanding where children and students are in the phase timeline can better equip the adults in their life to maximize influence.

I want to just give a quick overview. Though the timeline is divided up into very specific time frames for the purpose of our time today I want to just hit the highlights.

Our ushers will be handing out a copy of the phase timeline as you leave today so you can study up more closely on what phase the children and students in your life are in.

If you are investing in someone in the infant to preschool age range, these children want to know if they are safe, able and ok? This age range is motivated by safety and what

they need from the adults in their life is to

Embrace their physical needs.

If you are investing in someone in the elementary age range, these children want to know if they have your attention, if they have what it takes and if they have friends. They are motivated by fun at this age range and what they need from the adults in their life is to

Engage their interests.

If you are investing in someone in the middle school age range, these students are motivated by acceptance and they are trying to determine who they like and who they are. What they need from the adults in their life is

for them to

Affirm their personal journey.

And finally if you are investing in someone in the high school age range, these students are motivated by freedom and are trying to answer the questions where do I belong, why should I believe, how can I matter and what will I do. From the adults in their life, they need their help to

Mobilize their potential.

Let's take another listen to our recent graduates when I asked them as they were growing up, what did they need to hear from the adults in their life.

VIDEO: Shine Next Gen Clip 2 (students talk about what they needed from adults) 2 min 17

Did you notice where the conversation between Victoria and the pastor took place? While they were doing dishes. While they were doing life, this pastor had the opportunity to influence Victoria, to share with her truth about God and to affirm her and to help mobilize her potential. And Claire, right when she needed it, she was reminded that nothing she could do could change God's love for her.

The adults in their life were aware of what they were struggling with in their phase of life and were able to speak to that and share with them God's grace and truth.

Knowing where a child or student is in their phase allows us to better leverage our influence in their life speaking to the heart of what is most concerning and motivating to them.

So to invest in the next generation we can pray for the children and students in our life, we can educate ourselves on the phase of life they are in and finally we can submit ourselves to what God might be saying about our role with the next generation.

We can come before the Lord and ask who are you wanting me to invest in? Certainly if you are a parent, your children would fall in to that category but what if God wanted you to also invest your relational influence in your

child's friends or your niece or nephew?

If you don't have children in the home for whatever reason, who might God want you to invest in? Is it a relative? A neighbor? A family friend's children?

And perhaps what we need to consider with God isn't just the who question but perhaps the how question. How would you like me to invest in the next generation Lord?

For some of you here today, I wonder if God might be calling you to invest in children and students here at NHCC. Maybe the who is the next gen of this church and the how is by stepping in to a role in children's or student ministry. Maybe God is calling you to use your time and talent to make a difference

here and to help build into the families of NHCC.

Let's here once again from the graduates about how they have been influence by some of the adults who serve in our student ministry area.

VIDEO: Shine Next Gen Clip 3 (students talking about SM staff) 1 min 30 sec

I just want to challenge you, if you have a nudge that you are to consider investing in a more formal way through our children or student ministry to pray about it this week and then make plans to stop by and visit with a member of those teams next Sunday when we host our Volunteer Fair.

Now I'm not saying everyone is called to serve in children or student ministry but I know that God intended for those of us who are older to invest in the next generation. To connect with them in ways that allow us to influence them for the Lord. So whether you do that in a formal or informal way, please do it.

In this final clip from our graduates, I asked them what they would want to tell adults about investing in the next gen.

VIDEO: SHINE Next Gen Clip 4 (students talk about investing in next gen) 2 min 56 sec.

As a mom, I know I have been so tremendously blessed to see so many adults

pour into my kids in formal ways as teachers, and next gen volunteers to informal ways as family friends who come to support their productions, who listen to their stories at dinner, who say the same thing I've been saying for months but coming from another adult they suddenly get it. Friends, let your light SHINE in to the next generation. Invest in them, influence them to know, love and serve the Lord.

Let's pray for them. Let's meet them where they are at and let's ask God to give us clarity on our role in their life.

Because friends it's just a phase and we don't want to miss it. Let's pray.

Pray that we all would have clarity on our

what God is calling us to do and be in the days and months to come.

Feature Song-Don't Blink

Graduate Blessing and Closing Comments-
Rick