

**I Said This You Heard That**  
***“Fill in the Blanks”***  
**March 8, 2020**

**Welcome-Cary Sinnett**

**Worship**

**“Made New”**

**“Build My Life”**

**Turn and greet and be seated-Richard**

**Feature Song “I Can See Clearly Now”**

That is the song that popped in my head when Rick asked if I could teach today so he could enjoy some well deserved time off.

Back in January when we discussed me covering this Sunday’s message, I told him I wouldn’t mind a little reflection time as this month marks my 21<sup>st</sup> anniversary on staff

here at North Heartland. And honestly, I think that song best describes the transformation that has and is continuing to take place in my life as a result of attending and eventually coming on staff here at North Heartland.

When I came on staff “back then”, I was a young wife and mom. I was struggling with a lot. My husband and I had been married close to five years, we had a two-and-a-half year old son and we were both working full time.

The honeymoon phase of our marriage had passed, our little toddler was very active, we had no in town family, we had moved to the area just a year before and I was struggling to find friends and connect, and we had taken a pay cut for me to come work here so money was tight.

The stress levels were up for both of us and,

needless to say, were not bringing out the best in either of us.

Add to that the fact that I was not very self-aware and seemed to have no idea that ...shocker...my husband didn't see things the way I did. There were a lot of miscommunications and a lot of filling in the blanks. I would hear things he was not saying, I would assume things when he said nothing at all, and he would do the same.

In these spaces, we were struggling to connect, to communicate and it seemed far too often we were at odds. There was a lot of rain, dark clouds and obstacles happening in our lives at that time.

That is one of the many reasons why I'm so incredibly grateful that at just the right time, the Lord led me to leave my career in college life to take a position here at North Heartland.

Through work with my fellow staff members and my mentor, I began to understand more about how I was wired, how my past was affecting my present, how we each had pain points and preferences that were affecting our ability to hear the other person clearly.

I would learn that not only in relationship with my husband but also with my children, with those I worked with, those I led, my friends and my extended family. The clouds were parting in my relational skies and the sun was starting to shine again!

I can laugh now at how blissfully unaware I was. Like it doesn't take spending a lot of time with my husband Price and I to figure out we are opposites in many ways. Though we share a lot of interests and opinions, our way of seeing and interacting with the world is very different.

A few years ago, we came across an animated show that apparently someone has been writing based on our marriage. I asked our daughter which clip from this show would work best to illustrate Price and I and she said, ANY they are just like you and dad.

So I decided to go with the one from an episode that had me laughing so hard Price had to keep pausing it.

Take a peek into the home of Shannon and Price.

**VIDEO**-Bob's Burgers-Linda wants to go on a double date

I can't even begin to tell you how frighteningly similar that is to our house and how much I am like Linda from the animated show Bob's Burgers.

Linda is a wife and mom who is highly extroverted, loves to meet new people, says everything she thinks, longs to be close to her people and sometimes struggles when those she loves don't exude the same touchy-feely, huggy, positive, social, chatty vibe.

See it wasn't until I came to work at North Heartland and got lovingly confronted that I began to realize that not everyone recharges around people.

Apparently for some people, being in social settings drains their battery instead of charging it.

Apparently there are people out there who process their thoughts and feelings on the INSIDE! They actually want to be left alone with their thoughts.

Who are these people? Introverts.

And I have many of them in my life and thanks to North Heartland and the Holy Spirit I'm so much better at loving them and not taking their departure into the fortress of solitude personally.

One of my cousins posted this on her Instagram the other day and I thought it was a timely illustration.

**FULL SLIDE- "THIS"**

CDC: To prevent coronavirus stay home, avoid physical contact and don't go into large crowds.

Introverts: I've been preparing for this moment my entire life.

In all seriousness, introverts are people who

recharge and refuel by being alone, they process internally, when they do speak it is with intentionality, they enjoy smaller, more intimate gatherings where the conversation isn't based on small talk.

I'm very grateful I learned this before the birth of my introverted daughter. Thanks to her daddy and my many introverted female friends, I hope and pray our relationship is better and I'm more sensitive to her needs than I would have been 21 years ago!

Well back to Price and I, not only is he a strong introvert and I'm a strong extrovert, we also have opposite temperaments. Some of you may be familiar with the four temperaments or the DISC personality profile. Let's take a look at this overview.

**VIDEO- "I Said This. You Heard That."**

So here are the four basic temperaments.

**FULL SLIDE: Shows four colors and key words**

Yellow or The I-“Life of the Party” temperament. They are affectionate, joyful, loud, and tend to interrupt.

Red or the D-“Let’s Do it My Way” temperament. They are self-directed, quick tempered, impatient, and decisive.

Green or The S-“Steady and Supportive” temperament. They are kind, diplomatic, indecisive, and stubborn.

Blue or The C-“Cautious and Compliant” temperament. They are empathetic, creative, moody, and critical.

Temperaments are hard-wired into us. And as you can tell by the descriptors each has its

strength and weaknesses. We all have a way of seeing the world. We have strong preferences based on our temperament.

I’m a yellow life of the party temperament, I lean towards people, tend to be random and easily distracted, usually have a dozen plates spinning, talk a lot and finish other people’s sentences (especially Price’s).

Price is a blue, cautious and compliant temperament who tends toward task, likes things in order and tidy, is very methodical, has laser-focus and discipline and processes internally and when he speaks, you should definitely listen.

So why does any of this matter? Why are we even discussing introverts and extroverts and temperaments in church?

Well if you are a human and you don’t live in

a cabin in a secluded part of the woods and have no interaction with other humans, then you are probably in a variety of relationships with a wide variety of people. Whether those relationships are romantic or platonic, you interact with people on a daily basis and some of them are just like you...and some are not.

And for those who are followers of Jesus, we have been given clear instructions that we are to live in harmony with others.

In his letter to the Christians living in Rome, Paul wrote:

**SLIDE** Live in harmony with each other. Don't be too proud to enjoy the company of ordinary people. And don't think you know it all!

**SLIDE** *Never pay back evil with more evil. Do things in such a way that everyone can see you are honorable. Do all that you can to live in peace with everyone. Romans 12: 16-21 (NLT)*

Don't think you know it all. Do all that you can to live in peace with everyone. Even the people who don't see the world the way you do.

**SLIDE** And in 1 Peter we read  
*Search for peace, and work to maintain it.*  
*1 Peter 3:11 (NLT)*

Search for peace and work to maintain it.

WORK to maintain it. When we first start in a

new relationship or friendship or job, it can be easy to see all the positives but as time goes on if we don't work to maintain it, peace erodes.

You fell in love with the girl who was so spontaneous and fun-loving but now you get frustrated with her for constantly filling up the schedule with activity.

You were so enjoying that new friend who who was so honest and direct, but now you find yourself irritated by the fact that they keep pointing out your flaws and challenging you.

Over time the things that you appreciated at first can become an irritant. You see the other person's flaws and they begin to rub you the wrong way and you either work hard to seek and fight for peace and harmony and accept their strengths AND their weaknesses or you

move away from that person, whether that's physical distance or an emotional distance.

And let me be clear, sometimes that is necessary. Some relationships are unhealthy and distance may need to be introduced and boundaries established. Often though, we just don't want to face the hard truth that we will never be in a relationship that doesn't require WORK on both sides.

We buy in to the fairy tale that if we'll just find the right romantic partner, the right friend, the right job, the right employee then all will be well and we'll live happily ever after.

NOT SO. There is no such thing. Even the people who are just like us will drive us crazy because they are FLAWED. Everyone of us is flawed in some way. We have our own junk, our own shortcomings, our own selfishness. ALL have fallen short. We are

flawed human beings trying to live in harmony with other flawed human beings.

So how can we seek to live in harmony? How can we find peace in our relationships with others?

Well through my time here at North Heartland, I have learned and have to keep learning four valuable lessons.

### **Lesson One: Know Thyself**

**SLIDE** In the Gospel of Matthew, we read

*Why do you look at the speck of sawdust in your brother's eye and pay no attention to the plank in your own eye? How can you say to your brother, 'Let me take the speck out of your eye,' when all the time there is a plank in your own eye? You hypocrite, first take the*

*plank out of your own eye, and then you will see clearly to remove the speck from your brother's eye. Matthew 7:3-5 NIV*

Before we go pointing out where others are falling short, we are challenged to examine ourselves. The truth is, even for some of us who struggle with low self-esteem and self-loathing, we still tend to make excuses for our own shortcomings.

When confronted with our weakness, we tend to say, It's just the way we are, it's the way we were raised, it's because someone hurt us. We struggle to look honestly at ourselves. We are quick to give excuses for our poor behavior or to shore up our weaknesses but we are unwilling to offer the same to someone else. When we see their shortcomings, we think, well...they should just know better, their temperament is no



excuse, it doesn't matter if they are stressed.

So let me ask you, how well do you know yourself?

Think back to those temperaments. Which are you? What are your weaknesses and flaws? Do you have a tendency to dominate others? To interrupt conversations? To judge people harshly by your standards? To avoid conflict and say things are fine when they are not fine?

You have pain points and hot buttons. Hurtful things that were said to you in the past intentionally or unintentionally that have landed in a place that when touched elicit an escalated response even though the other person may have no idea that it was a pain point or hot button.

You have a core motivation that you are

trying to meet, maybe you need to be needed or to preserve peace or to be safe and secure. You have ways you communicate whether that's direct or indirect. Ways that you show appreciation and love whether through words, gifts or quality time, etc. You have a way you see and interact with the world.

So let me ask you to take a moment to ponder, how well do you know yourself? How self-aware would those around you say you are? Are you aware of how sometimes your flaws/weaknesses, derail you and your relationships?

PAUSE

For those of us who follow Jesus, I want to challenge you to ask the Holy Spirit to reveal to you what you need to be aware of and be open to where He wants to offer healing and

redemption.

I want to be mindful of how my flaws and unawareness have been affecting others. I want to be aware of the log in my eye and intentional about allowing the Lord to continue to transform me. So there you go, lesson one: Know Thyself.

**The second lesson: Bear with one another.**

**SLIDE** In Paul's letter to the Christians in Ephesus, we read:

*Be completely humble and gentle; be patient, bearing with one another in love. Ephesians 4:2 (NIV)*

Honestly these principles will work for anyone but for those of us who follow Jesus, we must

seek to understand those around us and to be gentle and patient with them.

As we saw earlier, that doesn't mean we don't address the specks in their eye, we just do that after we have examined ourselves AND we do it with humility and gentleness.

We try to take into consideration their temperaments, hot buttons, and pain points. We try to make allowances for one another, believing the best about one another instead of automatically assuming the worst, and bearing with another's weakness.

Let's look at the needs of the four temperaments.

**FULL SLIDE- Needs of the four colors**

So yellows need: approval, acceptance, attention and affection

Reds need: loyalty, sense of control, appreciation and credit for work.

Greens need: harmony, feeling of worth, lack of stress and respect.

Blues need: safety, sensitivity, support, space and silence.

So as I mentioned earlier I'm a yellow and my husband is a blue. You can see how I need attention and affection but my husband needs space and silence. Going back 21 years, this was one of the first things that was causing a rift in our relationship.

I would call him...and I'm not kidding here...at least 6-7 times a day asking him what he was doing (working), what he was up to (working) and to tell him I loved him.

I wanted and needed his attention and

affection but to a fault. When he would come home after a long day at work and he'd cook while I worked and then we'd put our busy toddler to bed, he'd be ready to lay down and read and enjoy some much needed silence and space and I'd be hovering around asking him what he was doing and trying to talk with him about his day.

It wasn't long after another fight over why I needed his attention and why was he so withdrawn, that I started working with my mentor and realizing that I was looking to Price to fill all my needs. He was not a substitute for Jesus or for girlfriends. My mentor challenged me to stop looking to my husband to meet the needs that only God could fill and to consider it might be time to make some friends outside of him.

I'm so grateful for her wisdom in that and her challenge. I've been blessed with so many

great female friends through the years both here at church and through my time serving in the school in PTA, band parents, and other groups.

I have also learned to limit my social expectations to honor my husband's needs for downtime and quiet and he's learned to get out there and be more social. We have worked together to find a balance though it is something we have to constantly work on.

I've also learned to bear with my daughter's preferences. As I mentioned earlier, I have an introverted daughter. This was really hard for me to adjust to as she entered her middle and high school years. Her older brother is a strong extrovert and a lot like me. He's easy for me to read. He processes verbally.

My daughter on the other hand processes internally. My daughter has a close friend

who is very much like me, she processes everything out loud and with her mom. As I watched that dynamic, I found myself struggling and feeling like a bad mom. Why wouldn't my daughter talk with me like that? Why was she holding back? Why couldn't we have that close mother/daughter relationship?

And then I was reminded...oh right. She's an introvert and a blue temperament. She processes internally and the more I push her for information, the more she pulls back.

Sometimes there really is nothing wrong except that she is depleted and needs silence and space to recharge but sometimes there really is stuff going on that she is processing and if I'll be patient and wait on her, she will come out and talk with me.

I'm always blown away by the depth and

maturity she shows when she finally shares. I have to bear with her that she is not as verbal as me and needs space to process. And she has to bear with me that I want to know she is ok and that I care deeply and will ask, more times than she prefers, if she is really ok.

Together we are learning how to have a relationship where we take in to account both of our preferences.

Understanding your temperament and the temperament of those around you is critical to better living in harmony with one another.

I so wish we had more time to go into this but alas we do not so I want to strongly suggest that if you want to know yourself better and understand those around you that you take some time to watch the amazing study which that temperament video came from.

## **FULL SLIDE-Pic of I Said This**

It's called, "I Said This. You Heard That" and it can be found for free on Right Now Media which you can access through our website. It's a six week study full of good information. I'll be posting a link to it later today on our social media. It also makes a great group study!

Investing time in watching those videos and working on the exercises in them will really help you with the first two lessons to know thyself and to bear with others. And as you learn more about yourself and others, you'll be more prepared for lesson three.

## **Fill in the Blanks with the TRUTH**

One of the most critical things I've learned in the past several years is that in the absence of clear communication we are left to fill in the

blanks and rarely do we fill it in with the right stuff or good stuff. Far too often our own negative voices and the voice of the enemy fill in the blanks with junk.

See I've had to learn again and again that just because my introverts are hanging out in their fortress of solitude does NOT necessarily mean they are not ok or that they are mad at me. See I read their pulling away as a sign something is wrong because for me as an extrovert, when I stop talking and go internal it is a sure sign to those around me that something is definitely up! But that is not necessarily the case with them.

So we have to communicate and fill in the blanks with truth for one another. For me, I need to hear from my introverts-hey I'm depleted and need some recharging, or hey I'm processing some stuff and I need some think time. And then I have to respect that

and back away but at least it keeps me from filling in the blanks with the wrong info.

But it's not just in the silence that we fill in the blanks. Often because of our temperaments and the way we process information as well as our own past hurts and hot buttons, we can fill in the blanks when someone is speaking to us.

Recently Price and I were having a conversation where he had to fill in some blanks for me. Price was having a hard day and so I was rubbing his back, giving him a hug, and telling him it would be ok. He was pulling back and away and I was confused about why.

He then informed me that when he is struggling with stuff and I give him touches and encouraging words, he feels like I'm patronizing him and petting him like a dog! Umm...I've been doing that for 25+ years and

you are just now mentioning that?

He said, well how are you supposed to tell your wife who you know is only trying to help that what she is doing is not helpful?

So thankfully he was able to tell me and I will certainly adjust AND I have made it clear to him that when I am struggling I definitely want him to pat me like a dog and praise me. Seriously I need the touch and words to encourage me.

Which reminds me of the verse found in Ephesians 4:29:

## **SLIDE**

*Do not let any unwholesome talk come out of your mouths, but only what is helpful for building others up according to their needs,*

*that it may benefit those who listen.*

*Ephesians 4:29 (NIV)*

We are to speak words (and I'll add act in ways) that what? Build others up according to whose needs? THEIR needs.

So it doesn't matter that I like to give comforting words and touches, if those are NOT building up my husband then I need to suppress that urge and instead do and say what does help him.

So I have two challenges for you in this.

First-Fill in the blanks for those around you. Don't leave them to wonder. Fill in the blanks for them when something is bothering you, don't expect them to guess or read your mind. Be gentle and humble having first examined yourself and then bearing with

them, express how you feel or what you need.

The game that will ALWAYS cost you in relationships is the one where you expect the other person to know what you want, need and feel without YOU telling them. Fill in the blanks in a loving and gentle way.

And just a *quick soap box moment*:

Because of my job, I'm around death a lot which means I get to see close and personal what happens when people don't fill in the blanks. So here's what I've learned.

DO NOT wait to tell those around you that you love them, respect them, care for them, are proud of them or think they should just know it. In the absence of your communication they are left to fill in the blanks and they rarely fill it with something good. Too many of us, are walking around

carrying hurt and pain from things that were left unsaid. Fill in the blanks! End soap box.

Okay my second challenge: when in doubt, DO NOT fill in the blanks for someone else. Again just like people can't read your mind, you can't read theirs. Don't fill in the blanks in the silence, don't hear what they are not saying. I mean the silence may mean they are upset with you, their passive-aggressive dig may have been intentional, but it may not have been and you won't know until you ask.

It reminds me of how often we think or hear of people saying, well I don't want to go to the doctor because I'm afraid of what they'll find. Not going to the doctor does not change anything except if it IS something then you are wasting time you could be doing something about it.

Same in relationships, not asking or not telling if something is up will NOT make the



relationship better or stronger it will only prolong the inevitable and honestly make things much worse.

When in doubt about what someone else may be thinking or saying, JUST ASK. Do NOT fill in the blanks for them.

So there you have the first three lessons: Know thyself, Bear with one another, and Fill in the blanks with the truth. But for me those three lessons are something I can only work on and do if I am mindful of the last lesson.

**The final and most important lesson-Root your identity in who GOD says you are.**

As a follower of Jesus, I know and fully believe that there is a place inside each of us that needs filling up. We try to fill it with success, approval of others, wealth, experiences, addictions, etc., but none of it

will do. It's an insatiable hunger inside of us looking and longing for a sense of belonging, an approval, an unconditional love and that my friends I firmly believe can be found only in God.

We ache and long for wholeness because we were created and designed to live in harmony and communion with God and each other but when sin entered the world, when we decided we didn't need Him, we lost that perfect harmony and communion with one another and Him and since then, we have been striving and straining to be made whole.

When we are out of sync with God and our identity is not rooted in who HE says we are, we struggle to see ourselves as we are, we are not very patient or able to bear with others because we need them to fill us, fix us, validate us. We struggle to tell the truth or to face the truth because our identity is not

secure.

And so as we end our service today, I want to invite you to consider what it says in Romans 5:8:

**SLIDE**

*But God demonstrates his own love for us in this: While we were still sinners, Christ died for us. Romans 5:8 (NIV)*

God knows us. All our flaws, all our weaknesses, all the ways we reject Him, all the ugly and He loves us anyway. Jesus sees us exactly as we are, not as we should be and willingly lays down His life on our behalf.

And when we take that in and really accept what He has to say about us, we are better able to see ourselves as we are, to bear with

others and to speak and receive the truth in love and grace.

And even when relationships end or people fail us or walk away, His love remains and in Him we are made complete.

As our band comes to sing this next song, allow the Lord to fill in the blanks for you with HIS truth and who He says you are. Then when the song is over, Hannah will invite you to stand and sing a reprise of the song we sang together earlier, Build My Life, as a commitment to God and others.

Let's pray.

Band in place

Feature- “You Say”

Hannah invites people to stand for a reprise  
of “Build My Life”

Closing prayer and benediction-Shannon

Closing comments: Next week new series;  
drop off the Above and Beyond insert at door