

**Made for More**  
***Not About Me***  
**February 27, 2022**

Good morning everyone. Whether you're in the room or joining us online, I'm glad you're with us today.

You know, we sing that song fairly often around here, and every time we get to the part where it says "take me to the riverside, take me under, baptize" ...

I always think, "we need to do this song on the day when we do baptisms."

And today's the day!

As you can see, we have our baptismal pool set up and that's what we're going to do right here at the beginning of our service.

We're going to baptize some folks – not as many as we typically do because we've decided to do baptism more frequently so that there are more opportunities for people to respond in this way.

And that's what baptism is.

It's a *response* to the grace and mercy of God offered to us through the death and resurrection of Jesus of Nazareth.

But not just *a* response.

It's *the* response that Jesus told us to make when we come to the point of believing in Him as our savior and wanting to follow in His way.

**... which is why, according to the Gospel of Luke ...**

*When people believed Philip as he was proclaiming the good news of the kingdom of God and the name of Jesus Christ, they*

*were baptized, both men and women.*

*Acts 8:12 (NIV)*

It's hard to miss the sequence there. First step, you believe. Second, you are baptized.

Now, as to why Jesus told us to do that, He never really explained it.

But I don't think He has to because it's fairly obvious what is happening.

- When a person goes under the water, it's a way of visualizing they are "dead in sin" and there's nothing they can do to save themselves; nothing they can do to make up for even the least of their sins.
- Then, when they come up out of the water, they're saying, "In the same way that God the Father raised Jesus from the dead, he has raised me from spiritual death."

“By my faith in who Jesus is and in what He did, I have been made clean and holy and perfect in His sight.”

“I have been given a new life that begins now and will continue for all of eternity.”

- And by doing it in front of a collection of other believers, they are publicly declaring “I’m in. I’m part of the Kingdom of God along with the rest of you.”

Now, this morning, we have several people who told us in advance that they wanted to be baptized. And they’re already down front and we’re going to baptize them in just a few minutes.

*But I am certain* that there are some here today who have *also* come to believe in Jesus, yet who have *not* been baptized – at least, not of their own choosing.

Maybe that's you.

Maybe you were baptized as an infant. That's a great thing. I was baptized as an infant.

But the value of you and I making our own decision to be baptized cannot be overstated.

It's something that you can always look back on and say, "Yes, I know that I did come to the point of trusting Jesus as my savior and my King."

"And then I did the very first thing that He instructed new believers to do. I got in the water, and I went under. I was baptized."

That's why, whenever we baptize these days, we always throw open the door at this point and say, "if you need to be baptized this is your opportunity."

- We've got the water

- We've got extra towels
- We even have extra clothes of all sizes for both men and women to change into for getting wet.
- We have all the personal grooming items you will need for afterwards.
- You can even bring your family and friends down to the pool with you and they can stand up here next to you!

There simply is no reason why you cannot be baptized right here and right now.

And some of you ... that's exactly what you are hearing from God right now. So don't harden your heart. Don't make excuses.

Instead, during this next song, while the rest of

us stand and sing, you move to the door right away. Don't delay – we don't have a lot of time.

And when you get to the door, the people there will help you get changed in the dressing room down the hallway.

Then they'll bring you back in and we'll baptize you along with everyone else while the band plays and we all sing together.

Now, we do have one qualifier – if you're younger than high school and you haven't signed up ahead of time, we want to ask you to wait until next time because you need to go to a baptism class.

We want to make sure you understand what you are doing.

Ok, so let me pray and we'll do this thing.

Jesus, you have made room in your

Kingdom for us. Some of us need to make room for you.

And it starts by being obedient to instruction that we be “taken under and baptized.”

So, I pray that if anyone is being pulled in that direction right now, they will have the courage to say “yes” to this invitation.

Amen.

Let’s stand and sing.

And if you need to come for baptism, move right away because we’re only going to sing one song and then we’ll start the baptisms.

Here we go.



## Message

What a great song and what a great way to pick up where we left off last week ...

... and where we left off was talking about *impacting the world*.

Impacting the world but not just for *good* – although it is good to make an impact for good.

Instead, we were talking about impacting the world for *God* ...

... which, of course, means we're pretty much talking to Christians at this point because if you're not a Christian, God doesn't *expect* you to impact the world for Him.

Instead, God's number one priority for you – God's primary agenda in your life – is for you to seek Him and reach out for Him and find Him,

though He is not far from any of us.<sup>i</sup>

God wants you to begin a relationship with him by receiving Jesus as your savior.

On the other hand, however, if you *are* a Christian, “impacting the world” is very much an expectation. It’s part of the deal.

God wants to use your life to impact the world not just for *good* but for *Him*.

That’s because, as good as it is to impact the world for good ...

**What the world really needs is *the God who is good* and from whom all goodness flows.**

And if Christians focus only on impacting the world for good (as good as that is), who will impact the world with what the world really needs, which is God?

**So, as the song put it:**

*God put a million, million doors in the world  
For His love to walk through.  
One of those doors is you.<sup>ii</sup>*

## **In Context**

Now, if this is your first time with us or your first time in a long time, I should probably put this into context.

The *reason* why we're talking about "impacting the world" is because *that* is one of the four things we try to help people do at this church ...

... so that we can all become more of the "more" that we're made for ...

... which is what *this series* is all about ...

... and what *our church* is all about.

**The way we say it around here is “You were made for more. We can help.”**

See, as part of the human race, you and I were created by God to reflect every good thing about his nature and his character into this world.

That’s what it means to be “created in His image” – not that we *look* like Him physically but that we are simply *like* Him in ...

- Our character
- And our creativity
- And our ability to increase the flourishing of everyone and everything around us.

That’s the “more” that we were made for.

Unfortunately, however, the reality is that while we were “made for more”, we’re actually a lot *less* than the “more” we were made for.

- Our character is lacking in big ways and small.
- So often we waste our giftedness or misuse our creativity.
- And sometimes – maybe a lot of times - we actually inhibit instead of increasing the flourishing of the people and world around us.

In other words, we miss the target. We fall short of the high calling that is ours as God's image-bearers.

So, we need some help, which God offers to us through ...

- Jesus
- And the company of His followers,

otherwise known as the church.

In Jesus, God offers us ...

- Forgiveness of sin; for all of the ways in which we miss the target (which is what the word “sin” literally means in the original language).
- And a new identity that is filled with the presence and power of the Holy Spirit, who enables us to grow.

**As the Apostle Paul once put it ...**

*If anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; what is old has passed away—look, what is new has come! 2 Corinthians 5:17 (NET)*

In the church, God offers us a group of people who will ...

- Challenge and encourage us
- Teach us and train us

... so that we can become more like Jesus, who is the epitome of the “more” that we were all made for.

**Again, as Paul put it ...**

*Christ himself gave the apostles, the prophets, the evangelists, the pastors and teachers, to equip his people for works of service, so that the body of Christ (which is another way of referring to the church) ...*

Jesus gave leaders and coaches and trainers so that the church and its people ...

*... may be built up ...*

**And here’s “what built up” looks like:**

*... until we all reach unity in the faith and in the knowledge of the Son of God and become mature, attaining to the whole measure of the fullness of Christ.*

*Ephesians 4:11-13*

*(NIV)*

See, the “church” as an institution is Jesus’ idea.

And the mission of every church is to figure out how to help people come to Him and then become mature, attaining to the whole measure of the fullness of who He is.

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So ... in this series we’ve been talking about how we do that here, at NHCC ...

... how we try to help everyone who engages with us and joins up with us to seek God and reach out for God and find God and then, ultimately, to become more of the “more” that



God made them for.

Specifically, our strategy is to provide four environments or activities or opportunities (however you want to label them) that you pretty much can't get anywhere else – at least, not as a package deal.

And we try very hard not to get distracted from these four things because there are so many good things a church can do.

But when you try to do *too many* things you usually end up not doing *anything* very well.

**So, the four things we invite people to do here and try to make it possible to do here are to ...**

- Connect with God
- Join a group

- Develop your potential
- Impact the world

And since we've already talked at length about the first three of these in previous messages, I'm not going to repeat any of that today.

If you missed any of those messages you can watch, listen to, or read the transcript in the media section of our website and our app.

## **Input vs. Output**

But I do want to point something out about those four environments or activities or opportunities (however you want to label them).

**Notice that the first three – connect with God, join a group and develop your potential – are primarily “input” activities.**

When you're in those environments you're primarily *receiving* something.

Specifically ...

- You come to this service where you receive what is presented from the stage and you (hopefully) connect with God.
- Or you go to a small group where you're around people who build you up and encourage you.

I know I've said this before but so many times I've told myself "I'm too tired or <whatever> to go to my small group."

But I go anyway.

And the same thing happens every time. I come away feeling refreshed and filled up just by being with those folks. I *receive* from that environment.

- Finally, if you go to one of our core classes or additional competency classes or you link up with a spiritual development coach as a way to develop your potential, you're also on the receiving end.

So, the first three environments or activities or opportunities we offer are primarily *inputs*.

**But the final one – “impact the world” – is primarily about *output*.**

And we started talking about that last week and we're going to finish it off this week ...

... but, before we do, let me ask you a question: *if all you do is receive input what happens to you?*

Well, if all you do is *eat* (input) but never *do anything* physical like exercise (output), you pretty much ruin your body – and in so many ways, right?

And if a river flows into a body of water (input) but nothing ever flows out (output), that body of water becomes stagnant and full of slime and goo.

**In extreme cases nothing can live in it.**



It's dead. And we literally call it the Dead Sea.

And the same thing can happen to us spiritually.

If all we do is receive input but never produce output, we'll become spiritually sick and die ...

**... which is why James wrote:**

*Do not merely listen to the word,  
and so deceive yourselves.*

Do not say “oh, I’m receiving so much from God worship and community and Bible knowledge so I must be healthy.”

“That’s deception,” James says, “because the reality is to be healthy ...”

**You have to ...**

*Do what it says. James 1:2 (NIV)*

There has to be an output.

**Jesus himself put it like this:**

*“You did not choose me, but I chose you and appointed you so that you might [what?] ...”*

... keep on receiving and receiving and being blessed by God.

No, that’s not what He said.

He said, “I chose you and appointed you so that you might ...

*... go and bear fruit.”          John  
15:16 (NIV)*

And Jesus wording there is very important.

“I chose you to do more than just sit around and get spiritually fat and stagnant. I chose you to *go*. I chose you to move and be active and do something that produces something.”

“I chose you to *go* out into the world and make an impact – and not just for *good* but for *God*. I chose you to bear fruit ...”

**And to “bear fruit” means making it possible for what has happened in *your* life because of Jesus to happen in the lives of *others*.<sup>iii</sup>**

If you’re a Christian, that’s part of the “more” that you were made for; to go *beyond* yourself

and your own interest and concerns for the benefit of others ...

... in the same way that God went beyond Himself and His own interests and concerns for your benefit ...

... so that they might be able to have what you have.

So, here's a question to ask if you're a Christian.

**Are you producing fruit? Are you having an impact in your world not just for good but for God?**

And I don't ask that to make anyone feel guilty.

I'm asking it to help diagnose the problem if there is one.

If you're not bearing fruit – if you're not having an impact for God – it might be that you're not committed enough to the input side of the



equation. It might be that you're not receiving enough.

And what you need to do is to spend more time

...

- Connecting with God
- Or being part of a small group
- Or developing your potential

... all of which we can help you with here at NHCC.

Of course, it could *also* be that you're not having an impact for God because you're not putting yourself in situations where that can happen.

You're not engaging in environments and activities where that is the purpose and goal.

But we can help with that because, as I said last week, there are three simple things we invite people to do around here all the time which actually *do* produce an impact for God in this world.

They “bear fruit” (to use Jesus’ terminology) in that they make it possible, if you’re a Christian, for what has happened in your life because of Jesus to happen in the lives of others.

## **3D Impact**

So, let’s talk about these three things. And let’s call them the “three dimensions of impact.”

**We can help you impact the world for God ...**

- Through generosity (specifically *financial* generosity).
- Through volunteering.

- Through inviting.

Generosity ... volunteering ... inviting.

Now, obviously, none of those are earth-shattering activities.

None require you to quit your job and go to seminary or to head off to the mission field somewhere.

They're simple ... but impactful.

## GENEROSITY REDUX

Now, we talked about generosity last week, so we won't cover any of that again today.

**But I do want to circle back on the idea that it's possible to be generous in more ways than being generous *financially* ...**

... because almost every time I talk about this, that idea comes up.

And it's legit because you *can* be generous with things other than money.

- You can be generous with your time.
- You can be generous with your talent.
- You can be generous with compliments and encouragement.
- You can be generous with your influence.
- You can be generous by donating some of your “stuff” to charity or by donating your blood.

And those are all good things.

And many of them can have an impact not just for good but for God.

However, the reason we don't define generosity like that here is because ...

**As our scope of generosity grows larger and larger, Jesus' heightened focus on *financial* generosity grows smaller and smaller.**

Let me say that again.

As our scope of generosity – how we think of it and define it – grows larger and larger, Jesus' heightened focus on *financial* generosity grows smaller and smaller. It gets minimized.

And that's not good because, as I said last week, Jesus had more to say about money and our need to emancipate it – to set it free, to give it away – in a premeditated, calculated, designated way ...

... than any other subject other than the Kingdom of God.

And that wasn't an accident on His part. It was intentional.

But why? Why did He do that?

Jesus hammered this issue again and again for one simple reason.

**We love our money and stuff too much ...  
sometimes even more than we love God and  
people.**

... which, by definition, keeps us from becoming more of the “more” we were made for!

And the antidote to that, according to Jesus, is to get rid of some of our money and stuff; to emancipate it and give it away to the people and causes God loves (which is how generosity can have an impact for God).

So, as good as it is for you and me to be generous with our time and talent and anything else, it just doesn't get to the heart of the matter as

Jesus talked about it.

And until you do that – and I’m exclusively speaking to Christians on this ...

- Until you get to the heart of the matter ...
- Until you deal with your love for money and possessions and your trust in them
- Until you get strategic and intentional about your approach to financial generosity

... you will limit your spiritual growth and development. You will not become more of the “more” you were made for.

Now, having said that it should also be said that it doesn’t take a lot of money to be strategic and intentional ... because that’s usually one of the barriers.

People say, “I’d *like* to be financially generous, but I just don’t have that much money to give away.”

But here’s the deal. It’s not about the amount.

If all you can give – again, I’m speaking to Christians ... if all you can give is \$5 a week, then create a plan to make that happen. That’s being strategic and intentional.

Not only will that have an effect on your own spiritual growth and development, God will also bless you for it.

And if we had time, I could tell you story after story of how that has happened in my life. But we don’t so I won’t.

PLUS, if you give to NHCC – and, by the way, you don’t have to give it here; this is not a plea for money because we don’t do that here ...



But if you *do* give it here – and this is the important thing at least for today ...

If you do give it here, you'll be impacting the world for God because what we do with the money that is donated is ...

- Introduce people to “our Jesus” (as the song put it)
- And some of them say yes to Him.
- And their lives are changed.
- And their eternities are changed.

When you give to NHCC, we use what you contribute to provide a staff and a facility and equipment and programs that help people experience four things that they can't experience anywhere else – at least, not as a package deal.

- To connect with God
- To join a group
- To develop their potential
- To impact the world for God

Anyway, that's how and why generosity is one dimension of how we help people impact the world for God.

## **Other Dimensions**

So, let's talk about the other two dimensions: volunteering and inviting.

**Now, when it comes to volunteering, we define it as “giving away some of your time and/or your talent.”**

When you give away some of your treasure,

that's what we call *generosity*.

And when you give away some of your time and/or your talent, that's what we mean by *volunteering*.

Now, there are many, many places where you can do that these days and have an impact on this world for good.

For instance, our daughter, Katie (who some of you know), is on the board of a great organization called *Uncover KC* whose sole purpose is to help people find places to volunteer in the community.

And what they do is really, really good – so good, in fact, that Jetta and I make a fairly sizable donation to them every year.

They impact the world for *good*, but they don't necessarily impact the world for *God*.

In other words, what they do isn't intended – at least not directly– to help other people experience what has happened in *your* life because of Jesus to happen in *their* lives.

And if you're a Christian, if you're going to become more of the more you were made for, that has to be part of the deal. As Jesus said, we need to be bearing fruit ...

... which is why we regularly invite people to volunteer in ways that help us carry out our mission as a church.

When you do that – when you volunteer at NHCC – you're doing more than just filling a role or covering a job that needs to be done – although it IS that, too.

**When you volunteer here, you're making it possible for others to experience in their lives what has happened (and is happening) in yours.**

You're bearing fruit.

**And not only that, when you get involved in making it possible for someone else to grow, you grow.**

I've told you this story before but it's just such a great illustration from my own life.

Many, many years ago when we lived in New Jersey and I was a software engineer for Bell Labs, one day I got a phone call from a guy at the church we were part of.

He said, "we need a young couple to be the Sunday School directors for our youth group, and we thought you and your wife might be good at that. Are you interested?"

I said, "well, I don't know. What all is involved?"

I'll never forget what he said.

He said, "As little or as much as you want to

make of it. We've never really had anybody do it before, but we're getting a lot of teenagers in the church, and we need to do something."

I remember going outside to cut the grass right after that and praying, "Lord, I've never done anything like this before but I'm open. What do you want me to do?"

And He said, "just do for them what was done for you as a teenager in the church where you became a Christian."

And I thought, "Oh, I can do that."

And we did.

And we saw God use us in ways we never would have imagined to impact middle school and high school students.

And not only did those kids and the other volunteer leaders on our team grow ... we grew.

We became more of the “more” we were made for because that’s how it works. When you get involved in someone else’s growth, you grow.

And that’s the testimony of so many people over the years who have volunteered in our ministry here at NHCC.

And if *you* were to volunteer – if *you* were to become part of a team that has a regular assignment in making things happen around here – that will happen to you as well.

You’ll become more of the “more” you were made for.

And if you’re *not* volunteering right now – if you’re not part of a team – in just a few minutes, I’m going to tell about a special opportunity where you can try it out; where you can give it a test run.

But let's go ahead and talk about the final dimension of how we help people to impact the world for God.

**And that is through inviting ... specifically, inviting people who are not attending church and may not even be Christians to come to a service with you (or to watch online).**

This is probably the most direct way to impact the world for God because it literally opens the door for a real, live flesh and blood human being *who you know* to possibly experience what you have experienced with God.

And it's a little scary and a little risky to invite someone because ...

- a) You might get turned down
- b) You might get labeled as a religious nutcase
- c) They might come and not have a good



experience ...

... which, to me, would just be terrible because we work very hard to make what happens here

...

- Interesting
- Relevant
- Easy to understand
- And excellent

But those are all risks worth taking because, if you're a Christian, those are the risks that someone took for you.

And God used that person to put you on the road to becoming more of the more you're made for.

Now, we try to make every Sunday appropriate

for inviting people who aren't "church people" but one of the things we're doing these days is to have three specific "outreach seasons" where we try to go over the top ...

... so that if you invite someone who isn't a church person, what we do will be even better than what we normally do from week-to-week.

**One of those seasons is Christmas when we do lots of secular music and a series like Christmas at the Movies.**

**Another season happens around Easter (specifically the series leading up to it and following it).**

**And then the final outreach season happens in late July/early August when school is about to resume.**

Just so you'll know, this year, I'm going to another movie series using recent non-Christmas movies.

And I'll give you a tip. You might want to go see *Encanto* which is a great movie and in theaters right now.

## Opportunities

So, there you have it.

The “three dimensions of impact” ... three ways we can help you, if you're a Christian, impact your world for God and, in the process, become more of the more you were made for.

- Generosity
- Volunteering
- Inviting

Now, next Sunday is a great day because Daylight Savings Time will be returning ...

... which means that Easter is not too far away ...

... which *also* means that our next outreach season is not too far away ...

... which brings me to that special opportunity I mentioned before.

**We call it the “Say Yes” campaign.**

If you’re not currently volunteering, we’re asking you, inviting you, challenging you to say “yes” to volunteering on one of our ministry teams ...

- For a period of 12 weeks (which includes time for training and understanding the task) ...
- Beginning on March 13<sup>th</sup> – two weeks from today ...
- and running through May 29<sup>th</sup> which is Memorial Day ...

... so that we're fully staffed for our Easter outreach season ...

*... so that* when people take the risk of inviting someone, they can be confident that what that person will find is excellence because we have so many volunteers making it all happen.

**The goal of the campaign is just what I said: to give it a try with no strings attached.**

That means if, at the end of the 12 weeks, you decide "this is not for me" you don't have to do it anymore with no questions asked.

Now, if you want to know more about the many and various opportunities we have ...

- Our Queen of Volunteerism, Jill Allen, will be in the commons after the service to answer any questions.
- Or you can go to our website and go to the

sign me up tab ...

- Or you can go to our app and look for “Say Yes” under the events tab.

Most volunteer positions around here are one Sunday a month for both services or two times per month during one service.

The good thing about that is that you can serve at one service and go to the other.

So, if you're not already volunteering somewhere, help us impact the world for God by “saying yes.”

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Alright, one more thing and then we'll be finished for today.

Earlier in the series, I spent a little bit of time talking about the value of formal church

membership – of taking the step of actually joining the church instead of just being an attender.

And what I want to say today is that everything I've talked about in this series is actually part of the process of becoming a member.

And it begins with the Orientation class where you learn about what makes NHCC unique and you decide if this is the place for you.

And if you think it is, then you go to the membership class where you learn what membership is about (hint: it's about becoming more of the more you were made for) ...

... and then, if you want to join, you make a commitment to ...

- Connect with God
- Join a group

- Develop your potential
- Impact the world through generosity, volunteering and inviting.

As well as take several core classes that are designed to help you do those things.

So, if you're not currently a member, I encourage you to at least go check out the Orientation.

Now, if you currently are a member, we're not going to ask you to go back and take the classes (although we'd recommend that you do).

However, we are going to ask you to watch a special video which we'll have available after next Sunday's service describing how membership is going to work going forward.

We'll be sending you more info on that this week so stay tuned.



## Closing

Well, I think that does it for this series.

Next week, we'll begin a new series – Dinner with Jesus ... *lots of things can happen around a dinner table (fun and not-so-fun). What if Jesus came to yours?*

Looking at eyewitness stories of conversations and teachable moments when Jesus sat down to eat with people.

If you want to know more about who Jesus is and what matters most to Him, this series is for you.

Ok, let's stand together and I want to close by specifically praying for the situation in Ukraine.

## Prayer for Ukraine –

- Repentance or Frustration for Putin
- Safety for Ukrainians
- Glory to You.

## Endnotes

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<sup>i</sup> Acts 17:27

<sup>ii</sup> With Every Act of Love, Jason Gray

<sup>iii</sup> From the NET commentary: “going” at this point suggests that the fruit is something more than just character qualities in the disciples’ own lives, but rather involves fruit in the lives of others.