

# Message Transcript

NEXTGEN WEEKEND | EQUIP FOR BATTLE

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We are going to celebrate today that our God has been faithful through generations. This is Next Gen Weekend. And we'll look at that to see that God was faithful then, He's going to be faithful now.

Can we just celebrate the baptisms of the next generation we got to see today? Continue celebrating when you hear this. Guys, before today started... We had 347 Next Gen baptisms here today. God is moving.

Church, go ahead and grab a seat. We're going to jump right in. You know, Next Gen has a special spot in my heart. It's where I got my start. Some of you know I've been on staff for about 12 years now but served before that and it was in Next Gen where I got my start.

I actually pulled up this picture from one of the first events I got to do. Maybe you can't see me. It's because I was the panda. Some people started from the bottom. I started as a panda.

But this is where I got my start and where I delivered some of my first sermons. I think we have a picture of that as well. Yeah. Yeah. Look at God's grace on me right now. I think that day I was teaching them how to be a T-rex. I must have been. I don't know why my arms are like this. But God showed and did so much in my time in Next Gen.

Last summer I actually got to go with the high school students to camp and it was unbelievable. I was a small group leader for some boys and it was a time. We were in the dorms one night having... And high school boys are high school boys. You know? They are doing stuff. Doing pushups in the hallway getting ready for the beach day as they do.

And one of them walked by me as I'm standing there and he was like, "Bro, anybody ever tell you that you look like that dude who preaches at church? I said, "Yeah, I get that a lot." And he walked away. I hope today is the day that he realizes we are the same person.

But it was an incredible trip. We had this beach day. I also got to experience things that I've never experienced before. They picked me up and threw me into the lake. Now, I heard that this was going to happen and I let them know it's not going to happen. But I changed my mind.



One of two things. One was the way that they presented it to me. They were very kind. Two, there is a piece of wisdom I learned a long time ago that I thought helpful. I didn't know how many it would have taken for them to throw me into the lake, but I knew how many they were going to use. You know what I mean? It was a big crowd of them.

I think we even have drone footage of my commitment to the next generation. I'm the one being held right there, which I'm cool with. It was going to be fine. It was going to be fine, until at the last moment they decided to lift me over their heads and then drop me into the water. Like I said, there is a special spot there in the lake and in my heart for them.

But it's not just me, it's our church. Next Gen has a special spot in our church. For those of you who don't know, our church got started in 1834. That means that there has been a dedication to the next generation. We want to pass on the faith.

And as we started our Awaken initiative, that was a crucial part of it—release the church. We want to reach the next generation, creating content for biblical literacy, parent equipping, so that we can all come together because of how important it is that we raise up the next generation.

And a small snapshot of that is what that partnership is looking like, to get so many families coming together to send kids to camp. I have the numbers here and I want to celebrate them before you, because each number represents someone in Next Gen ministry.

From Camp

501 at HSC

231 at MSC

355 at Kids Camp

Look at this. We had 501 at high school camp, 231 at middle school camp, 355 at Kids Camp—over 1,000 kids. This represents big decisions that are made for families to cut out and create space so that they could go, unplug, and be completely poured into by leaders, and put themselves into situations where they could learn more and more about Jesus. And every year we hear the proof; we get to see the fruit with the baptisms when they come back—of what God did.

And it's not just that. It's not just that Next Gen has a special spot in my heart or in the heart of our church, Next Gen has a special spot in the heart of God. If you notice, there is this pattern all throughout Scripture where God rescues His people, God teaches His people, and He makes it very clear, "Don't let this end with you. Pass it on to the next generation."



We looked at this verse a few weeks ago but I want to circle back to it. It's Deuteronomy, chapter 6. It says:

"Listen, O Israel! The Lord is our God, the Lord alone. And you must love the Lord your God with all your heart, all your soul, and all your strength. And you must commit yourselves wholeheartedly to these commands that I am giving you today."

But it doesn't end there or with that day. Look at what he says:  
"Repeat them again and again to your children." (NLT)

What God knew and we've been able to see from history is how quickly we can forget. God would do these incredible things. He would save His people, and they would go along for a short time holding onto every word He said. But then it felt like they almost had spiritual amnesia. They would forget who God is and they would take things back into their own hands.

And that same thing can be true of us. If we don't keep God at the forefront, if we're not committed to passing down the faith, then the next generation runs the risk of growing up without Him. That's the consequence.

And there is actually a haunting verse in Judges, chapter 2, verse 10. Look at this. It says:

"After that generation died, another generation grew up who did not acknowledge the Lord or remember the mighty things he had done for Israel." (NLT)

Think about that. We're not talking about hundreds and hundreds of years. It was one generation. They didn't pass the baton and the next one grew up without knowing God or the mighty acts that He had done.

That's what I want to call us to today. That's why this celebration is so important. We know God is going to be faithful to this next generation. What does it look like for us to partner with Him so that verse in Judges isn't true about us? It's a legacy that started here in 1834 that continues and on and on until Jesus returns. That's the kind of church we want to be. Anybody else here committed to serving and pouring into the next generation? That's what we are going to be looking at today.

As I was studying that verse in Judges it stood out to me that they didn't know the mighty acts of God. And I started looking through that and then Psalm 145 popped up. It feels like it speaks almost directly to what happened in Judges.



In Psalm 145 (it's actually David's last Psalm) King David, who lived this incredible life—ups and downs with God for sure—is at the end of his life penning his last psalm. These are some of the most important things that he wants to pass on to the next generation. Look at what he says, Psalm 145, verse 4. He says:

"Let each generation tell its children of your mighty acts; let them proclaim your power. I will meditate on your majestic, glorious splendor and your wonderful miracles. Your awe-inspiring deeds will be on every tongue; I will proclaim your greatness. Everyone will share the story of your wonderful goodness; they will sing with joy about your righteousness." (NLT)

What a vision for the people, that coming out of the mouth of everyone, old and young, about the greatness and the goodness and the mighty acts of God. That's what we need to do.

So, how do we ensure that the next generation doesn't grow up without knowing God? We tell them over and over and over and over again about who God is and what he's done.

Let's be clear about what we are teaching and telling the next generation. Because a lot of times when it comes to kids in church we kind of by-pass that first part of knowing God and focusing on Him and His mighty works and we get straight to how we want to raise them up right, we want them to have good morals and be good children.

And I get it. I have a bunch of these at home—I'm talking about kids. Okay? And maybe what you've noticed is that they come with some assembly required. They need some software updates as they get loading. And you are like, "Oh, I didn't even know you knew how to do that. Who taught you to Lie? Why are you so violent? We need to go to church and we need some help."

We get to this spot where we are like, "I need some help raising these kids up to be productive members of society." And that's usually, a lot of times, our primary focus. We're going to bring them to church so that they can learn the ways of God, and they can have the morality that comes from God. I hear you. And that's important, but it's not most important.

Here's the truth, and I've seen it over and over again. Kids can learn morality from God but miss God Himself.

## **The Next Generation Needs to Know God**



They need to know who He is, what He's like as a heavenly Father. They need to know about His mighty acts. Because morality, behavior, all that has a place. But if God isn't the primary focus, that means I become the center of my faith. And we will never be able to live up to that. That weight will crush not only us, but the next generation. It was never meant to be that way.

And that's why David makes it so clear what we should be focusing on, what we should be talking about over and over and over again. So, let's look at it one more time. He says:

"Let each generation tell its children of your mighty acts; let them proclaim your power."

When you think about the next generation and your interactions with them is that what your focus is? Is more on the mighty acts of God or is it more, "Hey, you need to get your act right."? Because what we need to do, primarily, is to remind our kids or to tell them for the first time for their hearts to be captured by how good our God is. Our God is powerful. Our God is faithful through the generations.

They need to know that no matter what they face, no matter what obstacle, no matter the enemy our God will be victorious. Because there is only One, there is only One who rescued His people. There is only One who carved out a path in the sea and they walked through walls of water. There is only One who knocked down walls and dethroned kings, who went against the most powerful empires and never lost a battle. This is the God who we serve.

And they are not just stories. What happens when we tell our kids over and over and over and we pour this into the next generation, what happens is when they face those battles, when they feel like they are pushed into the corner, when they feel like, "There is no way I can win, there is no way I can keep moving forward," they are reminded of what God did then and He's the same God of that generation. He was faithful. He is going to be faithful right now. That's what they cling to.

The Hebrew phrase in verse 7 gives the idea of not just him sharing or talking about the stories, the mighty acts of God, it's like they're bubbling up. It means that they will overflow, they will gush with the memories and the goodness of God. That's what we want for our kids. That's the vision.

When you begin to talk to them and you're talking to them about their struggles and what they are going through and they begin to tell you how they are going to prevail or what's going to push them forward, that's what we want them to default to. That's where their minds and their hearts always race back to, "My God is good and powerful."



And David is going to continue here in this Psalm because it's not just about how good God is, it's not just about how powerful He is. There is a whole other side of God that the next generation needs to know about. And maybe it's going to sound surprising to you, but it's needed. God is a protector. He can keep you safe from anything, but God also wants to keep close, there is a tenderness to who God is and the relationship He wants.

Our kids, the next generation, have to know this:

"The Lord is compassionate and merciful, slow to get angry and filled with unfailing love."

David is quoting Moses here from Exodus, chapter 34, who is actually quoting God, Himself. This is how God chose to describe Himself to me and you. Look at this in Exodus 34. It says:

"Yahweh! The Lord! The God of compassion and mercy! I," this is God speaking, "I am slow to anger and filled with unfailing love and faithfulness." (NLT)  
Our kids need to know that they serve an all-powerful God that should be feared but at the same time He is a heavenly Father who is filled with compassion and mercy and is slow to get angry, filled with unfailing love and faithfulness.

There is nothing they can do to get away from Him. There is nothing that they could do that would ever jeopardize the fact that He loves them. That His faithfulness is for them. That no matter what they do, the moment they turn, He will be there waiting to embrace them.

How many kids walked away from the church, how many kids have walked away from faith because they messed up and they believed that they weren't good enough, that they couldn't come back? If that's you, you're just making your way back, I want you to know that there is nothing you can do... Our heavenly Father is compassionate and merciful, and this whole church wants to welcome you back to the family of God.

When we come and we begin to follow after God, we are a part of the church, and we are pouring into the next generation, that's what they need to hear about—the mighty acts of God. And not just the stories that we read about, but how God is continuing the story in our lives. This is the call:

Tell the next generation what God has done—both in His Word and in your life



So, I'm not just always pointing back to the stories of what God did then, I'm letting them in, I'm being vulnerable of who I was when God met me. I'm expressing to them how I fell short. And I got to experience the forgiveness of God. I get to tell them that's who I am. You may think I'm a superman or superwoman. You may think that I'm this great person. Can I tell you that I am the person who I am only by the grace of God? And that grace is available to you.

We need to be open and honest and vulnerable with our kids and tell them the stories of how He saved us, what it feels like to taste the forgiveness of God and how He can right size everything. When you think about what you're teaching the next generation, is that what it is?

There is one other thing, too, that I want to point to and it's less about what we share and it's more in the how we share it—if that makes sense. There is a word that David uses that I think we need to make sure that it's true of us as well. When he talked about the next generation. Look at what he says. He says: "...they will sing with joy about your righteousness."

It's not just that they will sing about His righteousness. It's not just that they will go to church. It's not just that we will take them to Kids Ministry, it is that they will have a joyful spirit about them.

When you talk about God and His righteousness is it joyful? Or is it fear based, or guilt based, "You better," or "You have to or else."? Because I sit with a lot of people who either walked away from the faith or felt like they couldn't go to church and I hear their stories about what it was like to go to church.

They left because they never got to experience the joy of the Lord. What they experienced was just cold, religious activities that were done out of duty and no one was ever happy to be there. There was no love. There was no joy. God has been kind of working me over with this thought:

What if joy is what God uses to capture the attention of the next generation? What would need to change about me and you and how we are presenting the gospel, how we get ready for church, the way we talk about all of the things?

Where do you need to infuse joy?

Where do you need to infuse joy? Because there is this way that we can go about our lives and no one wants to be a part. Even if we do the right things and just try to make it through, maybe it's missing joy. And the thing that I want to point to is that this is going to be a joy that is bigger than you. It's a joy that is bigger than circumstances. It is a joy that comes from the very Spirit of God.



It's not based upon how well things are going or if this is a good season when I have a reason to be happy. No, no, no. This is a joy of the fruit of the Spirit: love, joy, peace. Do you have a joy that marks all of your ways? When you get ready for church is that what your kids experience? When you serve in Kids Ministry is that what they are seeing? Is that what they are experiencing?

Infusing joy is so important to us as a church that it's actually one of our staff behaviors, and it's a Difference Maker behavior. Difference Makers, for those of you who don't know, that's what we call those who serve here. You are not volunteers; you are making a difference. And it's so important. It's the type of church that we want to be. It's an expectation that we all show up ready to infuse joy.

Here's what that means:

We make joy visible in our actions, attitude, and interactions with others. In what area of your life do you need to do that? And we want to show up ready to infuse joy in our circles of influence. It's not just that we have to do the task, we get to do it with joy.

I heard it said once, maybe somebody needs to hear this today, that your face needs to be reminded that your soul was saved. That's a big deal. So often we get caught up in the right now but it takes a moment as you are preparing for the day, as you are going to work, as you are going to serve that, "I want to infuse joy. God, remind me of everything that I have, remind me of everything that You have done, remind me of who You are and I will always have a reason to be joyful."

That's the kind of church we want to be. That's why today is carved out the way it is. Today is a joyful occasion where we are gathering together to look back on the faithfulness of God and to not have spiritual amnesia, to not pretend what God is doing in this season is normal. He is acting out. He is moving the next generation. He is calling all people to Himself. And we have so much to celebrate. The next generation is worth celebrating.

Some of you don't really know what is happening here completely. Because unless you're serving in a classroom, unless you are one of those Difference Makers, a lot of that is missed. Maybe it's even a mystery to you. What are they doing back there because you never go that way? And don't. We have security. You can't just go wandering around back there.

But what you need to know, what is happening is nothing short of an act and a move of God. What God is doing on Wednesday nights with middle school and high school students, what God is doing through Youth Night, how God is moving in every single classroom at all of our campuses—we are bursting at the seams. More and more kids are coming to know about Jesus. That's what is happening.





Next Gen is not a daycare for kids or a social gathering for youth. It is a ministry that is solely dedicated to the raising up of the next generation in the ways of Jesus. They are clearing the way. They are being equipped for battle and deployed for impact in their own way. This is real ministry that is happening. That's what is happening back there.

And what I want to do today is, once again, just pause and to look back and to celebrate how God is using His people to pass on their faith to the next generation.

I just want to start by celebrating, and some of you guys. If you could see this team, our staff team, that is dedicated to the next generation. We have campus teams. We have central teams. There are people giving up so many hours every single week to set up the environment, to organize the leaders, so that the next generation can come to know Jesus. Can we celebrate all of the staff members here at Traders Point?

And it's not just staff. The number I am going to share with you right now, this is a real number and it blows my mind that this is really what is happening right here. It's staff and it's Difference Makers:

#### 1570 Next Gen Difference Makers

There are 1570 Difference Makers who are serving the next generation in this season. That is an army of people coming together to say, "I want to make sure that what happened in Judges doesn't happen on my watch. I want to pass the baton. I'm not just worried about my kids, I'm worried about the kids of this generation and I want to make sure they know the mighty acts of God." And they are making a difference.

I just want to highlight a few of our Difference Makers right now in this moment. And each story (I'm just going to prime the pump for you) is worthy to be celebrated. You don't have to wait to the end when all names are named. This isn't a graduation, Okay?

I think about people like Michael Kiefer who started coming about two years ago. He came under the leadership of Eric Fairbrother, another incredible leader at our church, and Mike has probably brought 15 to 20 different guys over the past two years to Sunday night and Wednesday—half of which have ended up getting baptized by Brandon Newman. Can we celebrate Michael Kiefer? There is a Difference Maker at Carmel who served in Next Gen and I'm not going to say names or give you too many details, but it's a lawyer who was carving out PTO time to go serve at camp. It was submitted and the now previous employer said, "No, you can't go. You can't use volunteer hours for a religious cause."



Because of how important it was the lawyer felt convicted, was called to the next generation, quit the job, and went to camp. That is an act of faith, believing that God is going to be present.

These are real stories. Like Grant Gervin who had never served a day in Next Gen ministries. And then one day Pastor Aaron was up here preaching, talking about camp and how we needed people to go. He immediately goes, takes the time off, gets the PTO, and then sends a message to the youth team and saying, "Hey, I don't know if you'll need me, but I just want you to know that I took the time." They did need him. And he did make a difference serving at camp. I think about people like Pete Moore. Pete, who was here at our church and was going through some stuff as the Awaken initiative started just felt God stirring him, calling him to more.

He didn't really know what that was going to be but, as God started awakening him, where God led him was leading a group of middle school boys. And now he shows up every Wednesday. He attends their sports games. He's building relationships with their parents. He is making a difference. Can we give it up for Pete?

It's what we take, the little moments in time just showing up, being consistent, being there for them. The Next Gen needs to know that we love them and that we are for them and that we are present. And that's what he is doing. And I can tell you this?, I just want to share from this spot too. As someone who has been here for a while now, attending, going on 15 years maybe, I started in Youth Ministry like I said. Now I'm at this spot in ministry where the kids I remember in middle school and high school are productive members of society. They are attending our church. They are engaged here. And to see what God is doing...

The reason I want to share this is because I know that there are so many Difference Makers and you serve week in and week out and you start to doubt and you start to wonder, "Does it really make a difference?"

And I just want to share these stories to let you know that it does. And I've been able to wait on this side and see the proof that comes years later because of your faithfulness and your serving.

People like Mike and Mackenzie Lewis. They really did it. They are a couple that I met as they were going into high school and they came, they were committed, they were in a relationship together, they stayed together through college, they got married, they just welcomed their first kid, and they are committed and fully engaged at Traders Point and I see them. Can we celebrate the faithfulness that God has carried them through and now they are on the other side pouring into their church?



I think about people like Holly Zike who went through our ministry and now I just got the privilege of marrying her and her husband. She started serving here at our church. Can we celebrate what God is doing here in these acts of being faithful through the generations?

I was just thinking about this stage up here as we were worshiping. We had Maddie Hoffman over here who is leading worship who was just the sweetest, quietest, middle and high school student. And now I see that she is serving the church. Her husband is on staff. It is just an incredible thing to see.

And then Jack Hogan, who is back there on the drums. We tried to kill that man in Youth Ministry. There was once when we were up here on this stage (some of you remember this) we crowd surfed him from the front of this room to the back on a raft with high school students leading him from the front to the back.

Can we just celebrate that, not only did he survive, he is serving on staff at the church? I just think back on of these things. As I was pushing him off the stage I wasn't thinking, "You are going to be so helpful to the church one day." But he is. I think about the Fraiser girls, Madelyn and Jordan and Ellie, who grew up... There are some of those girls you meet in middle school and high school but they are already more mature and put together than you. Yeah. So I remember meeting them and was like, "You guys are going to change the world." And they are. I think about Ellie, one of the Fraiser girls who is on staff here. She's married. She's welcoming her first kid and now she is pouring back through the Outreach Team. This is incredible.

I think about their parents a lot. Mike and Louise. Can we celebrate their parents? Mike and Lousie, I don't know how they did it. They were so faithful and you can see what God did in the lives of their kids and is still doing—beautiful.

And it's also like Cody Wagoner who (I'm going to be careful here) I'm just saying how the Fraiser girls were one way, maybe Cody was on this side over here. He was more like me, probably. Right? And he goes through the ministry and I hadn't heard from him.

It was a couple of months ago I was at our Fisher campus and I'm talking to people and I stepped over to get a cup of coffee and there is this strapping young man who is moving the coffee like this [large coffee urn held between his arms]. It was Cody Waggoner now giving back to the church. He is married. He has a dog. He is a productive member of society.



So, I want you to hold onto that. Remember the impact that you are making. Even if you can't feel it in the moment, I believe that through the grace of God... I'm praying that God's favor will allow you to see the impact that you're making. If it's not in this season, in the seasons to come. That's building into the next generation and being faithful no matter what.

I think about families like the Bennetts and the Bakers who served in Kids Ministry for over 40 years. Can we celebrate the Bennetts and the Bakers? Forty years! Showing up week in and week out. Do you know how many kids and students they influenced, how many missionaries and pastors? Some of the love and the teaching of God that they first got to hear was from them.

And still to this day, Priscilla Baker, any time I preach, she will send me an encouraging note letting me know how proud she is, still fanning into flames the next generation as it goes forward. It's bigger because of her. That's what it means to be a part of a church family. It is all of us coming together. I've heard that it takes a village to raise a kid. I'm going to take it one step further. It takes a church to raise a kid.

Adults (not just parents) are responsible for helping raise up the next generation and welcoming them into the family of God

This is on all of us. God has entrusted us to share the stories of God and the gospel of Jesus Christ with the next generation. It's an honor of a lifetime—I don't know what could bring you more joy than anything else, being there on the front lines, when you get to welcome the next generation into the family of God. That is what we are called to do. That's what the church is.

The church is a multi-generational family. That changes the way we relate to one another. That family dynamic shapes how we interact with one another. Look at the way Paul describes the church and how we should interact with one another in 1 Timothy, chapter 5. He says:

"Never speak harshly to an older man, but appeal to him respectfully as you would to your own father. Talk to younger men as you would to your own brothers. Treat older women as you would your mother, and treat younger women with all purity as you would your own sisters." (NLT)

How different is that? When you look out into the world and within culture, the older generation doesn't listen to the younger generation and the younger generation doesn't listen to the older generation. And the older generation doesn't honor the younger generation, the only see the differences.



But Scripture says it's going to be different in the church. There is going to be honor. And we're going to treat one another as family, as fathers and sons, as brothers and sisters, and mothers. Is that how you are relating to one another? We aren't serving someone else's kids; we are taking care of our family. Two people believe that. That's what this church is. That's what it needs to be. That's what God is calling us to be. We are taking care of our family. And it's going to take all of us.

We're not watching someone else's kids. That's like dads talking about babysitting. You can't babysit your own kids. Those are yours. When we talk about serving the next generation it's us coming together to serve our spiritual sons and daughters, knowing that it takes a whole church to raise up the next generation, how every single one of us has a role to play in the church.

That's when it really gets beautiful. The beauty of the church is amplified when the older generation and the younger generation come together. Break it down like this. This is what is going to happen in the next season. We want to make sure that we pass the thing on:

Older generations — share the stories of how faithful God has been  
Younger generations — stir us up with what God is doing now  
Older generations, I need you. We need you to remember how faithful God has been in your life. Your life is evidence. Your life is a treasure. You think for some reason that no one wants to hear, but we need to hear about God's faithfulness. We need to bridge that gap from what we read in Scripture to how He is showing up. And you have the stories. Share them with one another.

And the younger generation, you need to know that God has given you a fire and a passion and you have youthful eyes that see the world differently. You see gaps that we have missed in our generation. We need you to speak up. We need you to bring a fresh wind and new worship, a new spirit into this and remind us that God is at work in this moment. Live in such a way that we can't forget what God is doing now.

When the wisdom of age meets the passion of youth, the next generation will come to know Jesus.

That's what I'm talking about when we come together. And right now we need to come together. We need to close the gap. We have the next generation coming in droves. Classrooms are filled. Classrooms are bursting at the seams. Youth events are having to be changed to different campuses because we're outgrowing the space. Now is the time to serve the next generation. Now is the time. Our family needs us. It is on me and you to care for our younger brothers and sisters.



So, I want to speak to a few different people here in all of our rooms at our campuses. And for the first group it's a call to start. There are a lot of adults here and you're already there because you have a feeling that I'm going to make a push. You have a feeling that I'm going to invite you into something. And you are like, "I can't do it. I just not good enough. I'm not ready. I don't know enough. Whatever it may be, I just can't help the next generation."

And I just want to meet you right where you are and lovingly point you to 1 Timothy, chapter 1, verse 15. It says:

"This is a trustworthy saying, and everyone should accept it: 'Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners'—and I am the worst of them all. But God had mercy on me so that Christ Jesus could use me as a prime example of his great patience with even the worst sinners. Then others will realize that they, too, can believe in him and receive eternal life." (NLT)

If you are in a place and you're saying, "I can't serve because I'm not good enough, I don't know enough," I think you may be missing the point. Remember what we are called to do. We're called to share His mighty acts and His mighty acts alone, not our own.

Let your life, let where you are and what you are, be a moment to be marked by the grace of God to say, "Hey, even God can use me, I know that He can use me." Be willing to show up and believe that God can do a work through you no matter what. It is not about you. It's us pointing to a perfect God. That's what you need to get started.

And some of you are like, "I just feel like I would, but if I'm being honest I feel like it's going to be a lot. It's going to be hard." And I don't want to lie to you. It's going to be hard. It's going to be difficult. But it's not the right question. The question isn't, "Is this going to be hard?" The question is, "Is it worth it?" Yes. Unbelievably worth it.

I can't think of anything that we could give ourselves to that makes us look more like Jesus, to be more of the church that we envision, than to make sure that every kid that shows up is being disciplined and loved by the older generation. We get to play that part. We get to be a part of that.

And then for others, maybe it's a season to double down. Maybe you started serving a while ago and that sounded like a lot to you so you said, "Hey, I'm just going to start with once a month," or whatever it is. And I know for some of you as well, maybe once a month is all you can do.



But there is a big group that, as you get into it, you know that you can make that move. And you can double down, double your impact by just moving to serving weekly. Kids need a consistent face. They know that you are going to be there every single time that they show up. And maybe that's the move you need to make when you think about serving. You've already started but you need to double down.

We have new service times coming. We have Saturday night. If you are looking for a spot, "Is there really a need?" There is a need in every single space, but Saturday night, specifically, and 8 a.m. services that we are moving to. There is a real need in this time to start serving the next generation.

For others of you, I want to challenge you because maybe you feel like you're missing something. You started coming to church. You love it. You love coming and worshipping. The teaching—you feel like it makes your life better. You look forward to your time here. But you feel like you're missing something. Usually when we start to feel like this we think, "I just think I need more." And by more we usually default to, "I think I just need more information. I need to be a part of another Bible study. Maybe I need a better preacher." Take it easy. Okay?

The depth you are searching for will not come through learning more, but to passing your faith to the next generation

Maybe, maybe. Or what if, what if the depth you are searching for won't come from learning more but from passing your faith to the next generation? Guys, we are not taking in this information because we're getting ready for Bible Bowl or some kind of Bible Jeopardy.

Everything we are given, everything we are blessed with, everything we learn about God is so that we can be a blessing to others. We have been commissioned by Jesus to serve the next generation. It's within the Great Commission where Jesus said, "Go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit." And then, "Teach these new disciples all that I have commanded you."

I could tell you about a few spots all over the city where thousands of new disciples are showing up ready to learn about the ways of God. What they need is you. And I'm not saying this in a guilt you in any way, I'm saying this in an invitational way.



I have so much faith. I believe God will show up for this next generation. But what I want to invite you into is the honor of a lifetime. We can partner with God. And we can be the ones who help welcome the next generation into the family of God.

So, if that's you today and you want to start serving the next generation, all you have to do is go to our Traders Point app. Download the app. It's right here on the home page. Man your station—hey Mary, I see you serving there—fill out the quick form, we will be in contact with you. We will get you set up with what you need to serve the next generation.

If you have questions, if you want to process more, or to hear more, you can stop by Info Central at any of our campuses. We would love to help you in any way that we can. This is our invitation. This is our moment to pass on the baton. And for the Next Gen, the next generation is in all of our rooms today. I want to speak to you for a second. I want you to know the role that you have in our church. I want you to know that you have a role today, not one day when you graduate, not one day when you have a family of your own, right now you have a unique role in the life of our church and the time is now. I want you to know that this whole church is behind you and believes in you. Church, can we put our hands together and show our love and belief in the next generation? And I want to pull from the words of Paul that he wrote to a spiritual son of his. And he was calling some things out; he was calling him to more at a young age. And some of the things he's going to give him are for you as well. And they may surprise you but I want you to take them to heart and I want you to know that we are going to pray these over you. So, 1 Timothy, chapter 4 says:

"Don't let anyone think less of you because you are young. Be an example to all believers in what you say, in the way you live, in your love, your faith, and your purity." (NLT)

Don't let anyone think less of you because you are young. Be an example for all believers. I want you to think about that. This isn't just as an example for your peers. This isn't just an example for those younger than you. Be an example to everyone.

It reminds me of a story that just came through this week about 10-year-old Ava, who is getting baptized today. As Ava was sitting down and processing and talking about her faith with our staff and with her mom right there, her mom shared, "Ava has led me to the Lord."

Today, I want you to hear this, both are getting baptized. Ava will get baptized and then immediately her first act in celebrating herself as a new creation will be to baptize her very own mother.





Don't let anyone look down on you. And this is sensitive to me because I feel it and I felt it at a young age, that I wasn't worthy, that I wasn't ready, that God couldn't use me. And I just want to tell you that that is a lie from the pit of hell. It's not a lie that goes away with age, either. There are people older who could tell you that.

What you need to do is make a decision right now and say, "I'm never going to feel ready, but I'm going to know my God so well, that wherever He places me, I'm going to thrive. Whatever He calls me to I can succeed. Not because of me but because of the grace of God that is on me. Now is the time.

In 2 Timothy, chapter 2, verse 22 Paul goes on to tell Timothy:

"Run from anything that stimulates youthful lusts."

That is true. I want you to know that it is a dark and messed up and corrupt world out there that is going to try to tempt you to the left and right and in any direction other than the way to Jesus. Run from anything that stimulates that. But I also want to tell you, you cannot make your life all about that. If you make your life about running from something, your life will be about nothing. God has called you to so much more than just running away from something. Look how Paul continues in this verse. He says instead, this is the call that is on your life: "...pursue righteous living, faithfulness, love, and peace. Enjoy the companionship of those who call on the Lord with pure hearts." (NLT)

That's the blessing that your church wants to pray over you today. So, right now at all of our campuses if you are in this next generation, birth through 18, from babies to seniors in high school, would you stand to your feet in this moment? And I know that's a lot. It's going to take some bravery. It's a beautiful thing to see. Can we celebrate them for just standing in this moment of faith?

For the rest of us at all of our campuses if you are close to someone throw a hand on a shoulder—stay standing, stay standing—if not extend a hand and reach out to the next generation. We are going to pray a prayer of blessing over you for this next season. Close your eyes, bow your head, and join us in prayer.

Father, we believe that You have been faithful. We believe that You will always be faithful. God, I pray that we take the call to pass down our faith seriously. God, we pray right now for the next generation. God, I pray that as they stand in this moment, God, they come face to face with who You are, Your mighty acts.



God, that the gospel would penetrate their hearts, that they would know that You are the God above all generations. You have the keys to heaven and earth. God, that You came and took the form of a man. You wrapped Yourself in skin and bones.

God, I pray that they know of Your mighty act, that You went to a cross and You died on our behalf. You paid the penalty. God, You didn't remain dead. I pray that everyone would hear this. You resurrected from the grave defeating the power of sin and death once and for all.

God, I pray that they stand in that confidence right now, knowing Your mighty works, that there is nothing that You can't do, there is nothing that would ever pull them from Your presence.

I pray right now that as they stand they would be filled with the Holy Spirit, the same Spirit that raised Christ from the grave. God, empower them. Equip them. Give them what they don't have. Raise them up in humility but in a confidence that You have set them apart, that You are making them holy, that You are going to use them in this season to change the world.

God, I pray that they know that they have you at their back. You are for them. You are with them. And if that's true what can stand against them? I pray that they also know that they have a whole church that believes in them, a whole church that is dedicated to raising them up in the ways of Jesus. God, be with them as we go from here.

Jesus, we love You. It's in Your perfect and holy name we pray. And the church says: Amen.

Hey, can we celebrate everyone who is standing? Celebrate the next generation believing in faith that God's not done. So, right now at all of our campuses would you stand to your feet? We are standing as a united front, as one family—younger generation with old.

Younger generation, I want you to know that now is your time. This is the moment, as we go back into worship, stir us up, bring us passion, awaken our faith. You are an example to all of us. Let's sing the name of Jesus together. Let's go church.

