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I just want to say hello to our church family at all of our physical locations and those of you joining us online. We're glad to have you today.

If you have a Bible or a Bible app handy would you go ahead and find Psalm 127. Psalm 127 is where we are going to be.

Today we're beginning a new series of messages called *Rally Cry*. And the big idea behind this, it's sort of a continuation of the series we just came out of. Really what we want to do in the next four weeks leading up to Easter is we want to rally together around some of the areas of all of our lives that have taken significant hits over this past pandemic year. So areas like family, relationships, marriage, and our church mission.

And a rally cry—the definition of that is:

a word, phrase, or idea that brings people together in support of something important or worthwhile.

Now rally cry is usually what happens when your back is against the wall. So when the team is down late in the game, athletes come together at center court or mid-field and they rally. When soldiers are on a battle field and they are surrounded they come together, and they rally.

And what we want to do together, as a church family, is we want to rally together around some of these areas of our lives that have taken hits, because all of us are hurting in some way.

Here's why the next four weeks, I believe, are going to be so critical for all of our lives. What I'm going to say next, it's not easy to say, it's not going to be easy to hear, it's not something that we hear very often and it's going to sound a little bit as welcome as a slap in the face, alright?

I just want to ask you to brace yourself for what I'm going to say next. Are you braced? That wasn't very convincing, alright? Here's what I want to say. This is why the next four weeks are so important. Satan hates you. Aren't you glad you came to church today? That's just such a heartwarming message.

We're used to hearing the opposite of that when we come to church. We hear all of the time, "God loves you." But we don't hear, very often, if at all, Satan hates you.

There are a number of reasons for that. It's not very nice to say. It doesn't sound very good to hear. Some of you may not even fully believe that he exists. Statistically speaking, more people believe in God than they believe in Satan, which I find kind of interesting.

You may be like, "I don't know if I really believe in that guy." And I would say that from his perspective, he would go, "Good. I'd rather you not." An enemy that you don't believe in can cause a whole lot more damage.

So, I just want to lovingly say to you, he's real. And he's sinister. And he hates you. And he hates your family, so he wants to get you to turn on each other. And he hates your marriage for sure. He wants to bring that down if you're married. And he hates your relationships, so he wants to divide us.

And he for sure hates the message of the gospel, the restoration and redemption and the hope that comes through a risen Savior, Jesus Christ. He for sure hates that. So he wants to get you to distort it, deny it, and to doubt it.

So, church, it's time for us to rally and that's what we're going to do over the next four weeks. (That would have been a good place to clap. One person down here had it, right?) We're going to rally. We're going to rally.

Today, I want to kick things off by rallying around our families and in particular I want to talk about our kids and maybe grandkids or just the future generation of difference makers and world changers that are among us.

Now, a lot of this message—the application of it—is going to be for parents and maybe grandparents. I know we've got a lot of people who have kids or grandkids in our church. And I know that as soon as I say that this subject, there is a lot of emotion around it, because all of our stories are different and we're all in different seasons of life.

So it might be tempting for you when you hear that this is a message about parenting or grandparenting to maybe want to tune out for just a host of reasons that are very understandable.

You might be like, "Well, I don't have any kids. And I don't see kids anywhere in my immediate future. So I don't see how this applies." Or maybe you are a kid and you're like, "How does a message on parenting apply to me?" That's a good question.

Maybe some of you are here today and you really want kids but for whatever reason you just haven't been able to have them. And this is a painful subject. And I want you to know that as I studied and wrote this message, I've been praying specifically for that group of people. I know the pain of that. Lindsay and I went through a season in our lives when we experienced multiple miscarriages. I know the pain of that.

Others of you, maybe you're empty nesters and your kids are grown and gone and you're like, "Hey, this is fantastic, Aaron. This is message is about 18 years too late."

I get all of that. What I want to ask you to do is regardless of your specific circumstances, I want to ask you to hang with me. This is not a message about my opinions about parenting or anything like that.

We're looking at Psalm 127. We're looking at God's word together. And I guarantee you, regardless of who you are, what your specific situation is, when you open yourself up to what God wants to say to you through his word, there will be a word for you.

I want to talk... The bullseye of this message, a lot of the application, is going to be toward parents. But listen, if you've got nieces or nephews or you've got kids who live down the street from you, or you are serving in our Kids' or Students' Ministries, or you're leading a life group

for teenaged boys or girls, if you're mentoring anybody in the next generation, there are going to be principles that apply.

I want to kick this off by saying this. I kind of want all of us to take a deep breath of air because the very first thing that I want you to know is that there is no such thing as a perfect parent, alright? Nobody gets this right. We all mess up in a variety of ways.

Now, those of you who don't know me, I've got four kids at home. I've got an 18, 16, almost 14, and a nine-year-old. Help. You be praying for me. I am in the thick of it and I've got lots and lots of experience. But I am not up here to tell you what I do right so you should do as I do. I'm up here to say, I'm right in the thick of it with you and I make more mistakes than I get right.

In fact, I was just reminded of this. About a week ago my son and I, he's 18, were at the airport getting ready to fly out. And we were at the gate. And I had this memory that I had almost forgotten about a time when he was 10 or 11 and we were flying out of that same gate.

It was on a Sunday afternoon. I'd just got done preaching a whole bunch of services and I was tired. And we were at the gate and he asked if he could go to the candy store and get some candy for the plane. So I reluctantly gave him some money to do that.

And then he came back, and he told me that he forgot to pay for it. So he had the bag of candy and the money. And I was like, "You just shoplifted a bag of candy!" Right? Unintentionally.

So I lose it. I'm tired. I'm cranky. I didn't want him to go get candy anyway and so I just start chewing him out right there at the gate. And there are all of these people around us. And I remember there was this lady sitting right next to us and she told me to calm down—pastor, right? I don't know if she went to our church or not, but I've always wondered.

So Conner and I, he's 18 now, and we're way past that. So we're at the gate and I looked over at him and I go, "Hey, do you remember that time when you went into the candy store and I chewed you out?" Hoping that he would say that he'd forgotten. Oh, no. No. He remembered in vivid detail. And I'm thinking like, "Great, that's going to show up in therapy one day. Dad of the year award."

So I just want you to know that nobody gets this right. In fact, I want to do a little pop quiz right now. At all of our campuses and those of you online. Just so you know if you're a parent and you're just like, "Man, I'm struggling. I don't feel like I'm doing this very well." There is no such thing as perfect.

So pop quiz. Just raise up your hand if you are guilty of any of this, alright? How many of you are guilty, just like me (There are already hands going up. I haven't even said anything.)

How many of you are guilty of just losing your temper and yelling at your kids in public? Anybody? Yeah, just look around. That just means you're human.

How many of you need a good night's sleep and you're so tempted to put a little Benadryl in the sippy cup? Anybody? You didn't actually do it. You just thought about it, alright?

How many of you recognize this picture? I don't know, technically, what that's called but it sucks the boogies out because babies' nostrils are really tiny. How many of you have not had one of these handy so you put your mouth over the nose and sucked in? I may have. Oh come on. I didn't do it to your kids. I did to my kids. Totally natural. I felt very bonded to them after.

How many of you have ever told your kids that the ice cream truck plays music when it's out of ice cream? Anybody? I might have done that.

I really resonate with actress Michelle Pfeiffer when she talks about parenting. She says, "Like all parents, my husband and I just do the best we can, hold our breath and hope we've set aside enough money for our kid's therapy."

On a more serious note, George Barna reported this a few years ago. He said, "Sixty-two percent of parents they interviewed defined successful parenting as having done the best they could, regardless of the outcomes."

Which tells us that we just kind of feel like we're in over our heads and we're exhausted and there are so many things pulling at us and how do you even know if you've done a very good job?

So what I want to do today is I want to offer some encouragement in this area of influencing the next generation. I want to look at Psalm 127 together. So hopefully I've given you enough time to get there. It's a really, really short Psalm but I want to paint the context around why this was written.

It's written by a guy named David and David did not grow up in an ideal family. In fact, he did not have a good example of a parent. One time his dad completely overlooked and forgot about him. That's the kind of family David grew up in. As a result, David takes that legacy and he sort of transfers that forward to his own kids.

And you know, oftentimes, that is what ends up happening... All of us have a family of origin in which we learn some things, there are some things modeled to us, and we just sort of take those things, maybe without ever critically thinking about them and we just kind of transfer that legacy down to our kids.

How many of you have ever been lecturing your kids and all of a sudden you go, "Oh my goodness, I sound just like my mom."? Or, "I sound just like my dad." Where in the world did that come from? It's because you're a product of your family of origin, whether you like it or not. And we have a tendency to transfer that on down to our kids.

This is what happened with David. David, unfortunately, was a bad dad right from the start. He was so passive that he flat out ignored what was going on with his kids at home.

In fact, there were several times when the wheels were just completely coming off, but David was checked out. And he was afraid to provide leadership for his family even though he was leading an entire nation. He was respected by everybody across the kingdom.

But, unfortunately, he wasn't respected by his own family at home. Can I say it this way? David was a good king. He was a crummy dad. David was a rock star at work, but he was failing at home.

A couple of examples of this. One time David had a son named Amnon who sexually assaulted one of David's daughters named Tamar. And David found out about it and he didn't do anything. So his other sons took matters into their own hands and they killed Amnon. That was going on at home.

Later on his son Absalom, who absolutely despised David, their relationship had deteriorated so much, and he tried to dethrone David and get rid of him. So David just had a jacked-up homelife.

But at the very end of his life, he had one last son named Solomon. And David got a few things right with Solomon. David fathered Solomon, not perfectly, but he fathered him way better than the rest of his kids.

As a result, Solomon took that legacy of faithfulness to God and he passed it down to future generations of their family tree, leading all of the way to Jesus, because Jesus comes out of the line of David.

And what Psalm 127 is it's David singing over his son, Solomon. And there are a few things that we can learn here. Look at what he writes:

*“Unless the LORD builds a house, the work of the builders is wasted. Unless the LORD protects a city, guarding it with sentries will do no good. It is useless for you to work so hard from early morning until late at night, anxiously working for food to eat; for God gives rest to his loved ones.”*

*Now, what this is is a picture of a frenzied parent. We are trying so hard, burning the candle at both ends to provide for our family, to protect our family, to make sure that they had what we didn't have growing up. So we've got them in extra-curricular activities, sports. And we're running around like crazy and yet potentially missing the most important thing. We're furiously building a home and God says, “I need to be invited in to that process.”*

*And David goes on and notice all of the descriptives that he uses for Solomon. He says: ‘Children are a gift from the LORD; they are a reward from him. Children born to a young man are like arrows in a warrior's hands. How joyful is the man whose quiver is full of them! He will not be put to shame when he confronts his accusers at the city gates.’*

Now, what this chapter does is it provides a vision for parenting that is oftentimes very different from the vision of parenting that many of us have, especially Christian parenting, or what I might call, Christ centered parenting. David says there's a different goal. There's a different vision for parenting than what we have in our mind.

Here's what I mean. How many of you had a china cabinet in your home growing up? Anybody have or maybe your grandparents had one of these. The purpose of a china cabinet was to keep all of the very valuable, breakable, irreplaceable sometimes, items behind closed doors so that way nothing bad would happen to them.

Oftentimes what ends up happening is that we slip into what we might call China cabinet parenting. In other words, our kids are valuable, they are very fragile, they are certainly irreplaceable, so we fall into this line of thinking, “My job as a parent,” especially Christian parenting—I think that we're really guilty at this, “...let's just protect them.”

We don't want anything bad to happen to them, we don't want them to be contaminated by the darkness of this world. So we sort of parent by holding our children close, it's a defensive posture.

Now, please don't misunderstand me. Yes, that's a big part of our job as parents and for the next generation—to protect, and to be wise about what we expose them to and when.

But if you notice, David didn't say anything about that in this chapter. Instead he encourages us to a higher calling when it comes to our kids. Check out verse 4 again. He says, “Children are like arrows in the hands of a warrior.”

They are like arrows. Now, there are a lot of things that you can do with an arrow, but keeping it behind closed doors in a china cabinet isn't one of them. Can I say it this way? Arrows don't need to be protected. They are something that others need protection from.



And God's word is saying is that the goal of shaping the next generation, kids, grandkids, nieces and nephews—whatever young person you might be influencing in your life is to invest in them, not just to keep bad things from happening to them. It is not like a defensive kind of posture around it. It's actually an offensive posture where we are saying, "No, no, no. Our job here is to prepare them to be aimed and sent out. To be directed in a certain way. To pierce through the darkness of this world."

Could I be as bold to say it this way? We're not trying to raise kids who need protected from the darkness of the world but kids the darkness needs protection from!

Now some of you are like, "What does that mean? Are we trying to raise a bunch vigilantes? Like a new hybrid of a super hero?" No, no, no, no. There's a better word for it. It's called disciples. That's what we're trying to do. Young men and women who are surefooted and--- they're not perfect—but are following after Jesus in every area of their life, and we set them up well.

We're not closing them in like, "I've got to keep all of the bad things from happening to you." No, I'm actually aiming them in the right direction and eventually they are going to be sent out and we want them to be sent out to pierce the darkness to make a difference in this world and in the Kingdom of God.

What Psalm 127 does is it provides a framework for us in how to do that—imperfectly, but we want to do that. So let me just start off by sharing a couple of things from this chapter that can help us do this. And I want to lead with this question right here:

What kind of legacy do you want to leave?

What kind of legacy do you want to leave on your kids, your grandkids, your nieces, your nephews the next generation that you may be influencing?

Some of you may be building a business and that's going to be a part of your legacy that you want to pass down to your family. Maybe some of you are building a legacy of accomplishment. Maybe some of you are trying to build a legacy of wealth.

Listen, none of those things are bad. In fact, all of those things are good. But what Psalm 127 really challenges us to do is to see our kids and the next generation as our greatest legacy. Like, 100 years from now somebody else is going to be living in the home that you are making mortgage payments on right now. Somebody else is going to have all of your assets. Nobody is likely going to remember your name.

Nobody is going to remember that I was a pastor at Traders Point Church, but hopefully there will be some Brockets running around 100 years from now on down from my family line who will be influenced by how I directed my immediate family.

Today some of you need this challenge and some of you need this encouragement. Here's the paradigm shift that maybe we need to have today:

Your greatest accomplishment for the Kingdom of God might not be something you do but someone you raise or influence.

And as soon as I say that that might hit you emotionally in a variety of different ways. Some of you might agree. Some of you are like, "Yep. That's right. That's what I'm trying to do." Some of you, maybe there's a little bit of guilt, maybe just a tinge of shame when you read that because you're not quite sure that you are doing that. Or, you're not quite sure that you've done that.

This is where it can prematurely hi-jack the message that God wants you to hear today, because we realize all of our own inadequacies. And there is a myth that many of us have

bought into as parents. And I would say specifically as Christian parents that we really need to blow up.

And the myth, interestingly enough, came from a guy named B. F. Skinner who was a Harvard psychologist in the 1960s and he developed a theory called radical behaviorism, which teaches that children are blank slates, and they are 100 percent shaped by their environment. So, as a result, here was his parenting equation.

Good environment = good children

So you do everything you can to create a good environment at home. You make sure your kids are safe, that they've got enough food. You make sure they've got clothes—emotionally healthy, all of that. It's going to equal good children. And I'm not even saying that that's wrong, I'm just saying that he's missing something.

What we've done is we've taken that equation and we've sort of Christianized it and it's actually hurting some of us. Here's the Christianized version of that equation:

Godly parenting = godly children

So we're like, "If I do everything I can to create a godly environment at home, it's going to create godly children and if not, then I must have done it wrong or must have not gotten it right. We've even co-opted a verse for this. Do you know what it is? Proverbs 22, verse 6:

*"Direct your children onto the right path, and when they are older, they will not leave it."*

We've heard that verse and actually that causes some pain and some guilt in our lives, especially if you're an empty nester and you did everything you could to raise your children to follow after Jesus and maybe they are not. And you're like, "What did I do wrong?"

See, here's what I want you to know. That verse is found in the book of Proverbs not the book of promises. These are wisdom principles for how life generally works out, not promises for how life will always work out.

Can I just show you an example of this from the book of Genesis? Genesis, chapter 3, when Adam and Eve fell into sin. Let's look at that equation. You had:

Perfect environment (Garden of Eden) + perfect children (Adam and Eve had no sin nature. They hadn't done anything wrong yet.) + perfect parent (God the Father) = rebellion

So, for many of us, maybe you did everything you thought you knew how to do. And what the Bible is showing us is that your children are born with something that just messes everything up—free will.

Which means that you could do everything possible to be the best, godly parent available. You give them all of the right opportunities. You take them to church every week. You read Bible stories to them. You try to teach them lessons. You try to be as authentic as you can.

Listen. At some point... Even those of you who've got multiple kids who grew up in the same home, the same environment and their lives are on dramatically different paths. So now you're left with, "Did I do something wrong?"

I've got four kids at home. It is amazing how similar they all are and yet how different they all are. And one of the things that I'm having to learn is that there's not a one size fits all. I've got to parent them in unique ways because they are individuals.

So this whole idea here means two things:

You shouldn't take too much credit when things go well with your kids, and

You can't take on too much blame if things don't.

See, if you don't grasp this then you might parent through a tremendous amount of pressure, fear, or guilt. And then when your kids grow up and leave, you'll either have too much guilt or too much pride.

Now, with that said, here's the good news and this is what I'm trying to say. What the Bible is showing us is that:

As a parent you have zero control over what your kids do with their lives, but you have tremendous influence.

And influence is far better than control. And what we want to do as early as possible in the game is that we want to trade the control that we think that we might have for the influence that only we have.

And that's the question I want to camp out on in the remainder of our time. I want to bring your attention back to those incredible, descriptive words that David wrote of Solomon in Psalm 127. He said, "Solomon, you are a gift. You're a reward. You're a blessing. You're like an arrow." This is David singing over his son.

And this is so key, because I think that for many of us, we sort of thought that our job as a parent was to protect them, and to sort of discipline them—if they get out of line we've got to keep in line. And what this Psalm is showing us is that delight always comes before discipline and within the context of discipline.

It's kind of like, have you ever watched one of those shows where there's a swordsmith where he's trying to shape something out of steel? What does he do with the steel first before he shapes it? He heats it so that way it's malleable enough to be shaped.

And I would say that this is how delight and discipline work. If you don't delight in your kids before you provide a context of discipline, you won't shape them, you'll break them. And that delight in our children heats their hearts so that way they are shapeable.

God models this with one audible sentence that he spoke to Jesus in Matthew, chapter 3, verse 17. He said:

*"This is my dearly loved Son, who brings me great joy."*

This was a statement of delight. So what I want to encourage you to do is I want to focus on how we delight in our kids so that way we heat their hearts so we can shape them toward the people that Jesus desires for them to be.

And our culture just does not encourage us to view children in this way—as a delight. Our culture disciplines us or trains us in many ways, it may just even be indirectly, that they are sort of inconveniences—expensive inconveniences at that. As a result less and less people are choosing to have kids, now more so than any other group of people in history.

I've got four kids at home. So we're a relatively large family. And every now and then I'll get this sense...

I remember one time several years ago when my kids were a little bit younger, and we were out. And Lindsay needed to run into the store to get something so instead of all of us going in, I



just stayed outside—there was a little lawn area outside of the store. I was like, “I’ll just stay here and watch the kids while you run in really quick.”

They were running around, acting crazy. And there was this older lady by herself walking down the sidewalk and she stopped, and she looked at us and then she looked at me and this is what she said. She goes, “Those aren’t all yours, are they?” That’s kind of an interesting way to say it. And I was just like, they’re not a rash, “Yeah, they’re mine.”

And no joke, this is what she said. She goes, “You do realize what causes that?” And I was like, “Oh, I’m very well aware. My wife can’t keep her hands off of me.”

But as she walked away, I was like—she kind of made me feel like she just caught me littering or something. Like I had just done something to contribute to the environment going down the tubes or something like that. Just think about how our culture oftentimes talks about kids as if they are an inconvenience.

On a much more serious note, tragically there are 40 to 50 million abortions done across the world every single year. And one of the top reasons that is given, tragically, is the word inconvenience.

Now, can I just say this? Do children cause inconveniences? Yes! Sleep deprivation for one. Those of you who’ve got little kids, babies, at home—I say this full of love—you look like you just got released by ISIS. You’re just walking around, sleep deprived, there is weight gain, you’ve got to trade in the sports car for the minivan that forever smells like Cheerios.

Can we talk car seats for a minute? Every now and then somebody will go, “Pastor, I have never cussed.” It’s because you’ve never put in a car seat. Put in a car seat and you’ll drop several four-letter words.

You think that diapers and baby food is expensive? Just wait ‘til they go to college. Somebody told me that paying for your kid’s college is like purchasing a brand-new BMW every single year and pushing it off of a cliff—that’s what that is.

So, do children cause inconveniences? Yes! But what glorious inconveniences they are. David says they are a delight, they are a reward, they are a blessing, they are like arrows that have been entrusted to us so that we can shape their future and they are released out into this world.

So let me get real, real practical in the remainder of our time. We want to delight in the next generation. And:

Delight has to be demonstrated.

You can’t just go internally, “Oh, of course I love my kids” No, it’s got to be demonstrated. Have you ever heard this from your own parents? “Your dad is really proud of you; he just doesn’t show it.” “Your mother really loves you; she just doesn’t say it.”

Can I just tell you? That is bogus. And I’m so sorry. They need to show it and they need to say it and you need to show it and you need to say it. And you need to learn to have fun and laugh with your kids at every age.

I know. I've got three teenagers at home and it's easy to kind of go, "Well, you know. We used to get on the ground and wrestle together and have so much fun, but not anymore."

Well, you don't need to get on the ground and wrestle with them now, but you need to learn to have fun in the way that they'll have fun now. At every age, learn to connect with them in ways, listen, that they feel connected to. Don't just try to get them to do the thing that you want to do.

One author said, "A child spells love T I M E." And I'm just always looking for opportunities. I don't do it perfectly, but I'm always looking for opportunities to create memories or experiences...

Several weeks ago my youngest daughter, Kadence, really wanted to go to Hoosiers Heights and do the rock-climbing wall. So we showed up on Saturday afternoon. But we couldn't get in due to all of the restrictions. She was so bummed and disappointed. And I looked at her and I was like, "Well, we could just go home." Or, I could create a memory.

I was like, "Hey, honey. I've got a key to the auditorium at church." So we came over here and we climbed back through the guts of this building. We climbed on this rafter. I think it's illegal for us to do it, but we did it. And we got way out here trying to create this memory—just me and her. I'm always looking for those moments.

Now, could I go another layer of application? Listen to me, delight means that:

You won't put them last.

And I think this applies to both moms and dads, but I think that the application here probably falls more toward the dads with that statement. Listen. Fathers, your boss can get a new employee, your company can get a new CEO, your buddies can get a new fourth for the golf tournament, but your kids cannot get a new dad.

And what God's word is calling you to do is to make your home your first calling and priority. They need you.

The next application is:

To delight in your kids means you won't put them first.

This obviously applies to both mom and dad, but can I say that oftentimes maybe it's the moms who need to hear this the most. The primary time that this often happens is with our kids... Maybe it's God and then kids and then spouse, if you're married.

Every now and then I'll be talking to a family and I'll see this. It's a mom and a dad and their kids are running around, and he says something, and she sort of shoots him a look, or she sort of shushes him and then she says, "Oh, it's okay. He knows where he stands. My babies always come first."

Can I just say that one of the best things that you can do for your kids is to prioritize your marriage over your relationship with them? One day they are going to leave and move on and you're going to be there with your spouse, if you're married.

And I'm not talking about abuse or disfunction in marriage. I'm just talking about a reminder that it needs to be God, if you're married, then it's your spouse, then it's your kids, and then it's your work responsibilities.

Listen. One of the things... Your kids need you to be the type of parents that if they saw what was going on in your bedroom it would scar them for life. We need more Pentecostal bedrooms—lots of tongues and laying on of the hands. In Jesus' name. Alright?

And listen. If that offends you, you can email [rbramlett@tpcc.org](mailto:rbramlett@tpcc.org). He would love to hear about it.

Hey, here's the next:

Delight has to be declared.

Delight has to be declared. You've got to tell them. You know that whenever you're criticized—you might be encouraged nine times, criticized once. What do you remember? You remember the criticism.

So this is an opportunity to speak blessing into the lives of your kids and the next generation. You're calling things out in them that maybe they can't yet see for themselves. And you say, "You know what, man? You are really good at that." "You know what? I think God has really big plans for your life." You have no idea how a simple statement like that might completely change the trajectory of a young person's life.

I speak from experience. I grew up a shy, timid kid. Had no aspirations, dreams, or desires. And one of my really good friends, his dad was one of the best leaders that I knew. And I would oftentimes go over to his house in grade school. And I'd walk in and this is where I would often find him—I would see him in the kitchen, and he had one of those orange juice makers and he was constantly squeezing fresh orange juice.

And I would walk in and he would look up and he would go—I was like in the 5<sup>th</sup> grade—and he would go, "Aaron Brockett. There's the next world changer." And I was like, "What are you talking about?" And my friend would be like, "Dad, I told you to stop calling my friends world changers. It's embarrassing."

Fast forward to 14 years and it was that man who gave this church my name. Don't underestimate the power of your voice in the life of your kids and in the life of a young person.

Can I say that this is the function and the power of our Kids' and Students' Ministries? What we want to do is not take your job as the primary discipler in your home, because that's only yours. Listen. You're not outsourcing spirituality to your kids by bringing them here.

You drop your car off to get serviced, "Well, I'm going to drop my kids off, so you get them to Jesus." No, that's your responsibility.

What we want to do is come along side of you and to equip you and encourage you to do what God has called you to do best, which means that we'll come along side of you and say some things to your kids and your students that maybe you've been telling them but they're going to hear it differently from another adult. And we're going to speak blessing into their life.

I want to encourage you to take advantage of the resources and the ministries that are here for students and kids, because that's what we're desiring to do. We want to help you do what God has called you to do best.

Let me give you one last one:

Discipline from love not anger or impatience.

Discipline needs to come from love and not anger or impatience. You need to discipline but wait until you calm down, wait until you have enough patience so that way it doesn't get convoluted. You don't want your children equating discipline with anger or discipline with impatience, you just miss the opportunity to shape their heart.

See, once we heat their hearts with delight, we shape their hearts with discipline. And by discipline, I mean what one author writes about it. He says, "No one has ever soared very high, lasted very long, achieved very much or run very straight without it. Discipline in your life is an indispensable tool.

"It will serve them well if you equip them with disciplines like strong work ethic, good study habits, sound money management, leadership skill, how to treat your body, how to treat other people, good manners, the discipline of putting pain before pleasure, decision making, conflict resolution, how to have a consistent time of personal worship, Bible study, and prayer, the discipline of solitude, gratitude, and servanthood."

And at the end of the day... Listen, your kids have a sin nature just like you. And they are going to make mistakes. And in those times, we need to show them that same gospel shaped love that our Heavenly Father has shown us. Show them that our delight in them is not based upon their performance, their achievements, or even their obedience.

Your number one job as a parent is to spend your entire life proving to your kids, "Listen, you cannot out sin my love. I will always be there for you, just as our Heavenly Father in Christ says, 'You cannot out sin my love for you.'"

As I land the plane today, there might be a little bit of heaviness in the room right now. Maybe a little bit of guilt, maybe a little regret, maybe a little shame, maybe the realization that you're not doing some of this, maybe the regret that your kids are grown and gone, and you didn't do any of this.

Maybe when your kids were young you weren't walking with Christ, so you didn't point them to him either. And now that they are grown and gone, you're left thinking, "I didn't leave with a very good spiritual legacy." Or, "I was too busy building my career," or, "I was too preoccupied with my struggling marriage," or, "I was too critical or too judgmental or too demanding. I guess I'm a failure."

And your self-critic will go into overdrive and will say things like, "you're a horrible mom," or, "You're a bad dad." "You're screwing up your kids. You forced them to eat too many vegetables. You should have sent them to public school, or private school, or home school. You should have let them stay up later. You should have gotten up earlier and made them breakfast. You'll never be enough. They are going to resent you one day."

God's word says that Satan is an accuser. And what that means is that he wants to put you on trial every second of your life in an effort to condemn you. So can I speak some words of hope and can I speak some words of good news into those places of despair.

Listen, moms and dads you don't need to be your child's savior. They already have one. And here's a promise. You cannot mess up your kids so much that Jesus cannot redeem them.

Your child's salvation is not dependent upon how good of a job you do, it's dependent upon how good of a Savior he is and what a glorious Savior he is.

And maybe your kids are grown and gone and out of the house, maybe they're not walking with the Lord and you gave it everything that you had, and you've got so many regrets and you feel like it's your fault.

Can I just encourage you with this? I don't think we think about this often enough. You know that Jesus didn't have any kids, but he had 12 disciples who acted like kids at times. And one of them went complete rogue and totally betrayed him. So does that mean that Jesus, himself, wasn't a very good disciple maker? No.

And if one of your kids, right now is making some poor decisions that doesn't mean that you failed as a parent. That means you're human. And your children right now do not need perfect parents they need authentic, sinner parents who are willing to acknowledge that sin, to be teachable themselves, and to continually turn away from that and run toward your own Savior as a model for what your kids can do as well.

Your job is not to be a perfect parent, but it is to introduce them to the only perfect parent they will ever have, and that is their Heavenly Father. So today we lean on him and we recognize now, more than ever, that we need to invest into the next generation for what God desires to do in and through them. That they would be sent out like arrows piercing through the darkness of this world. And we need to cry out and ask God to help us with that task.

Today, it begins right now. I really do believe that there is going to be a family or a parent—this is going to change your life because right now you're just going to put a stake in the ground and say, "No more. My business isn't going to come first. My accomplishments aren't going to come first. My wealth amassment isn't going to come first. It's going to be my kids. It's going to be my spouse. It's going to be my family."

And today might mean that you need to give your life to Jesus or re-surrender your life to Jesus. And if that's the case, you can text the word Jesus to 87221. Our team will follow up with you right where you are.

So, now in these remaining moments I'm going to pray and we're just going to cry out together, wherever you may be gathered right now we're just going to cry out and we're going to sing to our Heavenly Father.

Father, we come to you right now and, God, just speaking as an inadequate dad, I come to you and I just cry out that we need your grace, we need the hope of salvation that can only come in and through our relationship with you.

So, Father, right now there are moms or dads who are really struggling, they feel in over their head, they feel exhausted, they feel overwhelmed, they feel like they are condemned with shame and regret. God, I just ask that you free them today. That they would feel the warmth of your love and recognize that there is hope and there is redemption that comes through the name of Jesus. So we claim that. We sing that. We run to that.

So, Father, we want to be a church that recognizes that our task is to raise up a new generation of Jesus followers who will push back the darkness of this world and advance your kingdom coming. So we lean on you because we're imperfect. We thank you for your grace.



So hear our voices, here our cries right now as we sing. And we ask this in Jesus' name. And everybody says: Amen.