

**SLIDE: Ps 145:1-9**

Rosemary Scheffel:

Hi my name is Rosemary and I sing on the worship team (as you saw this morning) as well as lead a womans bible study on Tuesday mornings here at the church, (more are more welcome to join us?). I will be reading Ps145:1-9 for us this morning. If you can, please follow along in your bibles.

**SLIDE: vesres 1-4**

- <sup>1</sup>I will extol you, my God and King,  
and bless your name forever and ever.
- <sup>2</sup>Every day I will bless you  
and praise your name forever and ever.
- <sup>3</sup>Great is the LORD, and greatly to be praised,  
and his greatness is unsearchable.
- <sup>4</sup>One generation shall commend your works to another,  
and shall declare your mighty acts.

**SLIDE: verses 5-7**

- <sup>5</sup>On the glorious splendor of your majesty,  
and on your wondrous works, I will meditate.
- <sup>6</sup>They shall speak of the might of your awesome deeds,  
and I will declare your greatness.
- <sup>7</sup>They shall pour forth the fame of your abundant goodness  
and shall sing aloud of your righteousness.

**SLIDE: verses 8-9**

- <sup>8</sup>The LORD is gracious and merciful,  
slow to anger and abounding in steadfast love.
- <sup>9</sup>The LORD is good to all,  
and his mercy is over all that he has made.

This is the word of our Lord; thanks be to God.

## **SLIDE: Family Discipleship**

Thank you Rosemary!

Before I begin, there are always reasons to pray – vehicles breaking down (Josh and Becca Linder) but there are other moments that are a bit more.....any news on Mark Andren, motorcycle, broken ankle....lets pray

Isn't God good! I hope we all grow in praising Him, teaching the next generation about His great deeds, His great love for us and **may we not** forget how patient He is, how merciful He is, and how close He is as we pursue Him.

Good morning everyone, its me – Kent Tollakson your youth and small group directing, discovery land teaching, mens minsitry & bible study helping, lame worship leading, biblical counselor, who will despretly attempt to give you some benifical biblical insights to spur you onto love and good deeds.

I love you people, I love maturing in Jesus with this church family and I really hope I help all of you with what God has led me to share today.

How about we pray about that! Please join me. 5

## **SLIDE: FAMILY DISCIPLESHIP**

My topic this morning is Family Discipleship AND The Next Generaiton. Psalm 145 tells us to tell the next generation all about the greatness of God and therefore My goal is to help all of us do that because our students and young adults are not the church of the future, but an important part of the church right now.

With that in mind, I want to address:

1. Family Discipleship – the importance of parents.
2. Discipling the next generation – the importance of the church family.
3. Data to convict and encourage our effort

## SLIDE: Importance of Parents

### 1. Family Discipleship – the importance of parents.

This will not be not new information to East Lincoln regulars, I'm going to review what we believe and stand on as a church. And even though the bible doesn't provide a lot of information about **how** to teach your children, the command to do so is clear. Right after God provides the 10 commandments we read -. Duet 6:4-7 **4** *"Hear, O Israel: The LORD our God, the LORD is one. 5 You shall love the LORD your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your might. 6 And these words that I command you today shall be on your heart. 7 You shall teach them diligently to your children and shall talk of them when you sit in your house, and when you walk by the way, and when you lie down, and when you rise."* Later in Duet 11(18-21) repeats this, *"18 You shall therefore lay up these words of mine in your heart and in your soul, and you shall bind them as a sign on your hand, and they shall be as frontlets between your eyes. 19 You shall teach them to your children, talking of them when you are sitting in your house, and when you are walking by the way, and when you lie down, and when you rise. 20 You shall write them on the doorposts of your house and on your gates, 21 that your days and the days of your children may be multiplied ....."* Its clear, parents were to be the primary teachers of Gods truth. Unfortunate they had a sin nature leading them astray and we are no different. As Gods people strayed, God sent prophets (preachers) to redirect them. Like Malachi prophesying about parents and children with these words.... *"I will send the prophet Elijah to you before that great **and** dreadful day of the LORD **comes**. 6 He will turn the hearts of the parents to their children, and the hearts of the children to*

*their parents;*” (Mal4:5-6a). What was Elijah’s main teaching? What was Elijah going to prophesy to Gods people that would motivate parents to minister to their kids and kids to respond in appreciation for their parents’ efforts? Well, Elijah brought strong warnings from God, calling His people to turn from their wicked ways and follow God! Elijah called Gods people to repent and believe! And because Gods word is true and what He says will happen – HAPPENS, I’m sure parents responded to Elijah, became more godly, loving each other better, loving their children better, which in turn caused their children to love their parents more...and that can certainly happen now! ....it’s really wonderful truth for today also!

In the New Testament there isn’t much for parenting scripture. Colossians chapter 3 and Ephesians chapter 6 echo each other as God commands children to obey their parents and fathers to NOT provoke their children to anger. To summarize, Parents, you are commanded to teach your children to love the Lord with all their heart, mind, & soul (the first 4 of the ten commandments) and, Jesus clarified with adding, to love their neighbors as themselves (the next 6 of the 10 commandments) without making them angry (wow- hard). If they follow Him – God will help them, (Go read Proverbs Chapter 3 to see many ways God responds to those who follow Him) – But, if they turn away and worship idols, He will withhold blessings to bring worship back to Himself.

This God desire for parents to be the lead teachers of faith to their kids has created a very good movement for around 10-15 years. This effort is often called “family worship” or “family ministry”. One of several reasons “family worship” is being pursued is because lots of parents saw a flaw in the church. That flaw was that parents were letting the church do the work of

teaching (through Sunday school and youth group) instead of doing it themselves. Therefore, some parents, have respond by pulling their children out of those things. I can understand that reaction. But I don't think that's quite right, and I certainly don't think it's that simple.

The mens small group I enjoy have been reading a book called "Family Shepherds" by Voddie bachman. Voddie is very outspoken about his opinion that Sunday school and youth group are bad – and should be abandoned. Voddie sees Gods command for parents to teach their children as the ONLY way to raise up the next generation. Verses like Duet31:12 which says, "*Assemble the people – men, women and children so they can listen and learn to fear the Lord your God and follow carefully all the words of this law*" have been used to say....see, God tells men, women and children to all gather together to hear the sermon – so we should never split up and send kids to another room to learn! In doing more research on the topic of Sunday school and youth group I found an article by *Answers in Genesis*, a ministry I respect, stating Sunday school and yough group are not biblical and not working due to survey results.<sup>1</sup> The suvey asked 1,000 people questions about what Sunday school and youth group taught them. The data is not postive.

The survey found some very un-biblical things had been taught in Sunday school and youth groups. But I disagree that Sunday school and youth group efforts should be abandoned. Even Answers in Genesis strongly advises church to NOT abandon these efforts but rather correct the flaws. Think of it this way. If all of us adults were told, you need to sit in the sanctuary every Sunday and hear a sermon by a preacher who never tries

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<sup>1</sup> <https://answersingenesis.org/church/sunday-school-syndrome/>

to make things easier to understand and the information is always difficult to apply to life, but keep coming anyway. How well would we do with that? Would we keep coming? I can remember how frustrating it was to have a super knowledgeable teacher who didn't try to make things easy to understand. When I first came to Amery and started teaching art I also became the assistant wrestling coach with Mr. Yetter. Now Mr. Yetter forgot more about wrestling than I have ever known, but Mr. Yetter used language I had never heard before...one day he was going over a low single leg and said "your shot must be a parabola", I leaned over to Sean Parnell, a junior wrestler who Mr. Yetter had coached for years, and asked "Sean, what the heck is a parabola?" Sean laughed and said, "it's a curve Mr. T, when you shoot make sure you're curving down low and then coming back up with the leg." And I thought, well....yeah, I know that (change your level), but why say it that way! Only a few kids knew what he was talking about. Oh, well. Mr. Yetter taught me a lot....but he was often difficult to understand and lots of my "job" was to figure it out myself so I could then make it understandable for the kids! And in contrast, when Scott Marko took over, he was very good with 2 valuable characteristics. 1. He worked hard at explaining things well – and Amery wrestling (which had been historically good) got even better. Scott was also excellent at #2. cultivating real relationships with his wrestlers – something God wants to have with us, and wants us to have with each other. Let's keep these things in mind as I continue.

So, I disagree with abandoning Sunday school and youth group. But I don't disagree because I work in youth ministry. I disagree because of scripture...here are some thoughts and verses.

## **SLIDE: 2. Importance of the Church Family**

Please realize the church family is supposed to be active in teaching the next generation – purely and together – a team effort that builds up and supports parents who are making that effort. And let's be realistic here, what about the church's responsibility to fill in the gaps where parents are not doing their job, or parents who are not able to do so? (James 3:1 says not everyone should teach – because God knows some people aren't capable!). What about youth in unbelieving homes? Are we going to abandon youth without guidance by having all of the able-bodied parents and teachers withdraw into their own homes? Or are we called to gather together and help each other and proclaim the good news to those who are seeking? Let me also point out that parents failing to lead their families in Godliness is nothing new, it's a gap we have always needed to address. Is not the entire OT a story of God creating everything in love only to have, even the most heralded saints, rebel against Him? What about the priest Eli in the book of Samuel? Eli did not hold his children accountable to follow God and his failure led to the death of his wicked sons and a curse upon his family. I think Eli could have used some help! Maybe a discipleship program at church to provide connection, relationship, teaching and accountability! Voddie Backman<sup>2</sup> quoted Johnathan Edwards, a puritan preacher in the 1700's *"How few are there who are thorough in maintaining order and government in their families! How is family government in a great measure vanished! And how many are as likely to bring a curse upon their families, as Eli"* (pg.134)

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<sup>2</sup> <https://www.crossway.org/books/family-shepherds-tpb/>

Even back in the 1700's, when families were far more responsible for their child's education and public school was run by the church – godly results were lacking. There were gaps to fill.

All that being said, I see Godly dads and moms teaching their kids about God as our best model, one we need to fully support, while providing age specific programs to make things easier to understand and fill in gaps. I think this should inspire us to increase our efforts in developing robust Sunday school, good news club and youth group programs.

And, I see this as the biblical desire of God! Here are a few scriptures that I believe lead us in this direction.

Jesus commands *“go therefore and make disciples of all nations teaching them to obey all I have commanded you”* (Matt28:19-20). This verse casts the net over the entire world, men, women and children of all ages and ethnicities.

Psalms 145:4, part of our reading for today says, *“<sup>4</sup> One generation shall commend your works to another and shall declare your mighty acts.”* The context of this verse is that the older generation of the church is to talk to the younger generation about God's great works!

2Tim3:16-17 says *“<sup>16</sup> All Scripture is breathed out by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, and for training in righteousness, <sup>17</sup> that the man of God may be complete, equipped for every good work.”* This verse is for everyone. Even though it says *“the MAN of*



*God may be complete*”, the Greek word for man here, anthrópos, means “one of the human race, inclusive of every man, woman and child”<sup>3</sup>

1Peter 4:10 says *“Each of you should use whatever gift you have received to serve others, as faithful stewards of God’s grace in its various forms.”* All of us have strengths to use, that means some of you are better at teaching kids, some better as connecting with teens, some better at teaching young mothers, or being on the worship team, or helping in the sound booth...etc. etc. We are all supposed to use our strengths to help others in their weaknesses to raise up the future generations of the church –so that we *“grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ.”* (2Pt3:18).

### **SLIDE: Important Points. 3 - Data to convict and encourage**

Im going to throw a bunch of information at you that is a mix of positive and negative to help stir us up into action.

#### **a. Remember the Gospel**

The goal from day one with God was for His creation to follow Him and enjoy the blessings that come with pure worship of Him. God also gave men and women free will, which was almost immediately used to sin...we all have that same inherited sin nature. Our sin brings a big problem. It brings separation from God and spiritual death! *“<sup>4</sup> But God, being rich in mercy, because of the great love with which he loved us, <sup>5</sup> even when we were dead in our trespasses, made us alive together with Christ—by grace you have been saved (through faith!)— <sup>6</sup> and raised up with him and seated with him in the heavenly places in Christ Jesus,”* (Eph2:4-6). God didn’t do what makes more sense.....destroy us all and start over. He didn’t cast us

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<sup>3</sup> <https://biblehub.com/greek/444.htm>

away, but rather comes to us. He offers salvation freely to those who would believe in Him and follow in His ways. When that happens, when we repent and believe, we find greater purpose and real life.

**b. The church just won't die!**

It's interesting to study Christianity and see how generation after generation struggles to get all people to enjoy God's truth, while His church continues to grow. It's true that many recent surveys and polls tell us how many people are walking away from faith but let's also realize that Gen X was supposed to kill the church and they didn't, the millennials were supposed to kill the church and they didn't and now Gen Z is supposed to kill the church and they won't!

**c. The times are scary ripe.**

The reality is all our generations need each other. Barna (a Christian polling firm) has combined research of 13-17 year olds with 18-35 year olds – from 26 countries. To come up with these 4 big findings. 1. They feel connected but alone, they are hyper connected to people virtually (even all over the world) but that connection rings hollow and they feel lonely. 2. They have high anxiety. It makes sense! We are all in an age of uncertainty, waiting for the next big natural disaster, financial crash, disease outbreak or political turmoil “event” to be thrust upon us! 3. The youth of the world want purpose in their life. They are not money driven – they are purpose driven. That is super positive and it gives me great hope for the upcoming years. And 4. They have a vibrant interest in spiritual things! And oddly this is one of the reasons so many are leaving traditional Christianity! They are interested in spiritual stuff so much so that they are getting into

witchcraft and new age stuff. They are not exactly resistant to Christianity...but they do get turned off by Christians because we often don't talk WITH them but rather TALK AT them – tell them WHAT THEY MUST THINK AND DO. **We get** angry too when someone doesn't listen to us, when they don't talk with but rather TELL US WHAT WE MUST THINK. So within that, lets try to remember that youth are for the most part curious about Jesus and want to know more.

Also, our parents need HELP. One reason they need help is because they are themselves. All parents fail in some ways, so if we leave out supportive efforts to help disciple youth, we are asking for more failure.

And, the youth need our help! Barna provides good data, but what about the reality that our younger generation is drowning in a sea of lies and misrepresentation too. I got this tid bit from Matt Chandler, he was scrolling through instagram and came on a gal saying something like "I have a masters in biblical theoplogy and I just want you to know that the word homosexuality didn't appear in the bible until 1946." This is the kind of teaching that claims the bible has been altered by men and is inaccurate about homosexuality. Usually they also teach that homosexuality is fine, its not a sin and Gods ok with you doing whatever you want with your sexual life. Now, the truth about the word homosexuality is that she is right, that word didn't appear in the bible until 1946, but that's because it was a brand new word in 1946 and it fit the meaning of the biblical text concerning men with men and womean with women. It didn't make the bible manipulated by men, it made the bible more understandable with a correct word to use for an issue of sexual immorality. It's that kind of teaching that keeps muddying the waters of truth and understanding leaving a wake of

confusion, depression, anxiety and worse in its wake. Its evil. With the amount of confusing sexual messaging that is flowing freely in every direction the statistics tell us we should be teaching our kids about sex by age 9 (and if you give your kid a phone, earlier still). Not because they are ready for it – because they are already being taught about sex, by everyone else but us. If any of my words have stirred up guilt about how you have led your children or sexual confusion for anyone, Lets remember the gospel truth ....

The truth I want our young people (or old people, everyone) to understand is that if they have failed or are struggling with anything ..... welcome to the club!!!! We are all fighting the fight of faith, which is death to self and submission to Jesus. The only way things are really hopeless and dark is to embrace your feelings and desires over Gods word. You will never hear me say – go ahead and follow all the desires of your heart and let feelings rule your life. What you will hear me say is - come join this motley crew of sinners in faith and boldly approach the throne of God as dearly loved children while we help each other repent of sin!

That kind of data about 13-35 year olds fuels my fire! I mean, are you kidding me! The times are scary ripe – the harvest is right in front of us. We live within a span of history when young people are super interested in spiritual things and want their lives to have purpose! They are lonely and want real personal relationships! They are worried about life and need reasons to have hope! Real Christian discipleship addresses all of those problems and more – the more being their eternal salvation!

Lets go! Lets gather our resources and start fishing within that water like crazy! As far as the desire to implement family worship, yes please! – I just

hope that it doesn't get overapplied and cause families to pull back and restrict their ability to engage in the church and our community! God bless the Nelson family and how Kayla and Andrew lead their kids...because Bennett, their oldest provides a great example. As I often led Bennetts small group on a Wednesday night, he indicated a strong desire to be able to evangelize and witness to other kids, but he was stuck at home with his brothers! But then Bennet realized another young man was coming to youth group who needed Jesus, it was an opportunity for Bennet, for me, and for our entire Wednesday ministry to witness and disciple someone. Without our youth group effort – that young man would have had no Christian influence, and I hope we see him again this fall!

Do you want to impact the church for years to come. Well, then. If you're a parent, get serious about teaching your kids about the great love of God, poured out upon you and them. AND to the WHOLE church - make sure your growing through small group participation, as well as helping out with the 1 hour of Sunday school each week, the one hour of Good News club each week or the 2 hours of youth group each week, or womens ministry, or mens ministry, IN THE WAYS YOU CAN AND SHOULD. Parents, get your kids into these programs to gain solid supplemental teaching! The Answers in Genesis article and its survey brought up a few really bad things kids had learned in Sunday school, all I can say is your kids will not be led off track with our Discovery Land curriculum and as God as my witness, I am doing my best to communicate biblical truth and the Gospel on Wednesday nights. This topic is so big that it could easily be a series. There is truth about how Godly marriages fit into this, there is truth about how singles fit into this, there is truth about how small groups fit into this,

there is truth about how retired and empty nesters fit into this...message after message. But I don't have that luxury or the time today.

I'll leave you with this....a little dream of mine. What if we so believed in this that we had a waiting list for discovery land and youth group volunteers. How cool would it be if you came and talked to me and said – yeah, we want to be a part of helping the next generation know Jesus and I had to say....yeah, well ok. Fill out the application and I'll let you know in about 3-4 years when we have a few people rotate out and then we would love to have you jump on in!

I think that would be great. Talk to me if you do want to help with youth group, talk to Jessica Witkop if you want to help out with Discovery Land, and talk to me if you want to start up or get connected to a small group or men's ministry, talk to Kathy Schwanke about women's ministry, get connected and involved if you are not already. Enough for today - thank you for listening, lets pray and go serve our Lord and King. Amen.

Join me.

Prayer – God please wash over these words – amplify what was true – erase anything if it was wrong and increase our Love for you as well as bring more people into your family. We ask You to raise up bold and faithful leaders in the younger generation as well as the older – so that Your will be done and Your name will be honored and praised.

In Jesus Name. Amen

**SLIDE: Benediction:**

The end of 2Peter warns us about alot of this. Here Peter admits some truths of God are hard to understand, and unstable people of the world will twist Gods truth to fit their sin. Allow me to use the truth of the last two verses of 2Peter, as a closing prayer over us:

Dear Lord, I pray and ask You to help us because we know there are many false teachings in our world today. I ask you to help us not to be pulled away from You because of these lies. Help us stay firmly grounded on Your truth so that we may grow in the grace and knowledge of your Son, Jesus Christ. All glory to Him – now and forever - Amen