

## Sermon Notes August 28 2016

Sunday, August 28, 2016

<http://www.rivercc.org/2016/08/28/sermon-notes-august-28-2016/>

### Intro:

\*In 1970 Hal Lindsey, a dispensational theologian published the best-selling end-times book "The Late Great Planet Earth."

\*54 languages, 35 million copies...still in print.

\*This book put the end-times movement into a rapid, global acceleration that has shaped a good bit of church life in America for 3 generations.

\*1988 a book was published called "88 reasons why Christ will return in 88" (**by the way...he didn't**).

-It didn't have the broad impact of Lindsey's book...but it demonstrated the influence of this mentality on people's lives.

-People went into debt, stopped planning for the future, didn't order supplies for their business...it helped divide one church that I know of.

\*The "end-times" focused approach to faith & life had its roots in a man named John Nelson Darby (Born in London, died in 1882).

\*He is called the father of the modern dispensational movement.

\*Dispensationalism focuses on, among other things...the immediate return of Christ, the pre-trib rapture of the church...think "left behind franchise" and all its books and movies.

\*His ideas were put into the notes of the Scofield reference Bible (1909).

\*People soon forgot what they read in the text of the Scriptures and what they read in the notes...it all became the "Bible" to them. (important to keep in mind if you use a study Bible)

\*"Hey, that's in the Bible...I read it!"

\*Yeah you read Scofield's comments in the margins...that is not what is in the actual text of the Bible.

**\*I don't want you to get lost in the theological woods...there is a point to all this...its not a theological system.**

\*The point is...this "the end is now" thinking has contributed to, among other things, to a single

generational approach to life and faith.

\*I mean if I'm going to be snatched up and everything else burned up...and its going to happen this year, or at very least in my lifetime...what is the point of thinking multi-generationally, what's the pointing of living multi-generationally?

\*So when generations of Christians live as if they are the last generation it hampers long-term, multi-generational thinking and living.

\*To be fair...many lived with a passion to be found faithful...so even if they believed the end was near they still made choices that had positive long-term impact.

\*But Christian dispensationalism combined with...**American cultural "me/nowism"** ...has led (I think) to lots of short term thinking and living.

\*"Me-ism"...Life is all about me and "now-ism"...since life is all about me, all time is "now"...there is no "past" since I wasn't there(so it doesn't matter), and no "future" beyond my lifespan.

\*Not that they don't think the past and future exist...they just don't matter...if they don't concern me, now...they are of no consequence.

\*So dispensational theology...the end is really near. (without a focus on being found faithful)

\*American theology...me/nowism

\*Has lead to lots of short-term, non-multi-generational living.

\*Time Horizon: how far out a person looks into the future in order to make decisions regarding today...now.

**\*There is an overall short-time horizon in our culture...even though there is a lot of talk today regarding future generations...**

\*Especially talk in terms of national debt, national security, climate change, animal life, and human race generically.

\*But what about the actual choices made by individuals...especially in terms of investing their lives in the next generation?

\*What about personal investment in the future by investing in the young person right in front of them?

\*The talk of "human race generically" reminds me of a cartoon where Lucy told her brother Linus (Charlie Brown's buddy)... "You can't become a doctor you don't love mankind."

-Linus replied "I love mankind, its people I can't stand."

\*So the talk of the future is sometimes just talk...because it doesn't show up in personal choices and investments right now...with that student, that child.

\*Love for mankind...doesn't translate into personal action with a real live person.

\*For instance...The number of fatherless children in America is staggering...this is the ultimate lack of future perspective...to not even invest in your own children.

\*Then the number of people "not mentoring" or investing at any level in the children of others...is also staggering.

**\*You are doing better than this...Joy, Eric, Aaron, Mar'kese**

\*Many of you serve in nursery, super church, next...making weekly deposits in the next generation.

\*Youth leaders...making weekly, and more...investments in students.

\*YH mentors, volunteers...making costly investments in the next generation...students who have been seen by some as throwaways.

\*It may not feel like a cosmic, multi-generational transaction is going on when you sit on the floor with a 4 year old in superchurch...but in fact it is.

\*Huge, long-term impactful events almost always feel like normal life when they are happening.

\*Even if the child doesn't remember you...they will remember the cumulative effect of many kind followers of Christ they came in contact with during their developmental years.

\*In addition if their parents are able to focus on the proclamation of God's word in community and it impacts their faith, life and parenting...then you have made a round about investment in that child through their parents.

\*Even if you don't volunteer in the children's ministry...if you get to know a child in the foyer...notice them...learn a name...smile.

\*"Terry, I've tried...I just make kids cry."

\*Okay...but keep trying...one day a kid won't cry when you engage them...maybe you could get some feedback on your approach...get better at it.

\*Or take the "huge risk" of speaking to a teenager you don't know yet.

\*Its possible you will get that "I don't know you, don't want to know you" stare

\*But it will be okay...be secure...they often are not...you can help them.

\*When you come alongside a parent on behalf of their child in your community of faith...your church...you are investing in the generation to come.

\*We had countless investments in our children by non-family members...the impact was and is huge.

\*When you set a pace for the next generation in your own life...qualifying yourself through good choices and refusing to disqualify yourself through bad ones...that is an ongoing multi-generational choice.

**\*so don't just get old and grumpy...that is a choice you don't have to make.**

"Too late Terry."

\*Not its not...getting old yes, getting grumpy...no!

\*Fun is gift. Fun is a resiliency factor. Fun is not something you are required to give up to become an adult.

\*Learn to be fun again...kids learn best in the context of fun.

\*They need discipline...but largely they are flooded when it happening to them...long-term impact is minimal.

\*But when fun is happening...their brains are taking it all in.

**\*Set the pace with your life.**

\*When you walk with God...have years of daily QTs, faithful to your spouse, live committed to your church ...do your job with excellence...live with long-term faithfulness across the spectrum of your life....all this uniquely qualifies you to impact the next generation.

\*Your choices may not seem to matter to the youth around you now...but when the youth grow up and life happens to them...they go searching for examples, looking for navigation points...**then** it matters how you have and are living...it matters to them.

\*They are not looking for perfection...but for a settled direction.

\*I keep a picture of Paul Comegys on my computer desktop...small one...but I see it.

\*Partly to remind me of his dear friendship...but also because of the way he invested in the lives of my kids...amazing investment.

\*But in your kids as well...so many kids.

\*Paul was uniquely gifted and called to invest in the next generation...not all can, or should invest at his level...but he got it right.

\*He saw the opportunity and the value of investing in the generation to come.

\*His investment has and will continue to outlive his time on the planet.

\*William Wilberforce (died 1833) one of my own personal favorite examples of living with a long-view.

\*He spent his entire adult life working for the abolition of slavery (three nights before he died, Parliament passed the Slavery Abolition Act...emancipating the slaves throughout the British Empire)

\*In addition to working for transformation in the slave trade...he worked for transformation in the rampant alcoholism, drug abuse, sexual abuse, and what we call sweatshops (slave labor, child abuse).

\*He saw the difference his life made as he lay on a deathbed in one of his major emphasis...but in other ways he died looking for change that was yet to come...and in many ways is still yet to come.

**\*"How can I live this way (long term vision) when I can't see the impact, or know the impact will be there at all?"**

**\*"When my life is so pressing...the "now" is so demanding...how do I even think of the "then?"**

\*Understandable questions...lets look at them.

\*Solomon complained about life in a faithless sort of way...

**Ecc.2:11 When I surveyed all that my hands had done and what I had toiled to achieve, everything was meaningless, a chasing after the wind; nothing was gained under the sun... 15 Then I thought in my heart, "The fate of the fool will overtake me also. What then do I gain by being wise?" I said in my heart, "This too is meaningless." 16 For the wise man, like the fool, will not be long remembered; in days to come both will be forgotten. Like the fool, the wise man too must die! 17 So I hated life, because the work that is done under the sun was grievous to me. All of it is meaningless, a chasing after the wind. 18 I hated all the things I had toiled for under the sun, because I must leave them to the one who comes after me. (the anti-generational vision) 19 And who knows whether he will be a wise man or a fool? Yet he will have control over all the work into which I have poured my effort and skill under the sun. This too is meaningless**

\*Solomon...dude...maybe you should have given more of your considerable talents and intellect to investing in the next generation in hopes they won't prove to be fools.

\*Solomon was a smart guy who lived for much of his life...like a self-centered fool...and he did in fact raise a fool for a son.

\*But we don't have to live faithless lives...we can live faithful lives.

\*We can seek to be found faithful...and we can trust God with the outcome of our lives.

\*This answers both questions...

**\*"How can I live this way (long term vision) when I can't see the impact, or know the impact will be there at all?"**

**\*"When my life is so pressing...the "now" is so demanding...how do I think of the "then?"**

**1Cor. 4:2 Now it is required that those who have been given a trust must prove faithful.**

\*We are not required to determine the choices of future generations...that is way above our pay grade.

\*We are to be found faithful with what and who God puts in front of us...which means we live **in** the here and now...but not merely **for** the here and now.

\*Look at Hebrews 11..starts like this...

**Heb. 11:1 Now faith is being sure of what we hope for and certain of what we do not see. 2 This is what the ancients were commended for.**

\*Then the chapter describes some of the choices these ancients made...choices they made by faith, on behalf of future generations...including you and me.

**Heb. 11:13 All these people were still living by faith when they died. They did not receive the things promised; they only saw them and welcomed them from a distance.**

\*So how do you know living with the long-view, investing in the next generation will be worth it?

\*Well...you believe God...you understand your primary role is to be found faithful.

\*How do you live with a long-view...when the "now" is all consuming?

**\*Lots of faithful "nows" lead to a long-term (then) impact.**

\*If you are retired from the job that paid for your life...and you are not dead...your calling to invest is intact.

\*Eric said...mentoring is a life calling...and not just for him.

\*Don't throw away your days on yourself...invest them in others.

\*If you are waiting for the day when you don't have to "work"...think about why?

\*Its not wrong to want to do something else with your time(life) than you currently are...but if the idea is you want to have more time to make life about you...that is wrong thinking.

\*Investing in others is your life's work....or supposed to be.

\*And we cannot wait for a future day when we have more time, energy, money, opportunity to

invest...when we have more things together personally.

\*We must look to invest...we must look to qualify and not disqualify ourselves...right here and right now.

**\*Two verses from Psalms today:**

**Ps 22:30 Posterity will serve him; future generations will be told about the Lord. 31 They will proclaim his righteousness to a people yet unborn — for he has done it.**

\*Posterity is the Hebrew word for "seed"...that which propagates a species.

\*The praise of God will extend from generation to generation.

\*Future generations will be told about the Lord...his righteousness to a people unborn.

\*Someone said "Anyone can count the seeds in the apple, only God can count the apples in a seed."

\*Cute quote...but it is true...To see the power of "posterity"...the seed of generations in the life of individuals is important and possible.

\*This happens when we take responsibility to tell the generation in front of us of the reality, goodness, and power of the Lord.

\*We are to believe, live, proclaim the gospel.

**2 Tim. 2:2 And the things you have heard me say in the presence of many witnesses entrust to reliable men who will also be qualified to teach others.**

\*How many generations of believers are in that verse? Paul..Tim...reliable witnesses...others.

\*Certainly it is not about us...our about perfection...but we are to be credible witnesses.

**\*Ps 22:31..."We proclaim what he has done."**

\*We are to do what we can do to make the good news easier to see as good news.

**\*"But Terry it is a hopeless case...we are fighting against a cultural wave that is sweeping over the generations...don't you read the news?"**

\*In 1955 G.K. Chesterton wrote..."At least five times, the Faith has to all appearances gone to the dogs. In each of these five cases, it was the dog that died."

\*What do you think was true about the very first generation of Christians, and the ones after that, and after that...all of culture opposed them...tried to exterminate them.

\*What has happened in cycles throughout American history?

\*What has happened in China, the former Soviet Union, Cuba, Africa? What is happening now.

\*Let's let God concern himself with the flow of human history...let's concern ourselves with our role in it.

\*Be faithful to Believe, live, proclaim...especially to the next generation.

### **APPLICATION:**

\*What can I do?

\*Practical options?

1. Invest in a child, student...varying levels of commitment.

-Our children's ministry, youth ministry

2. Invest in a student through YH...many are fatherless, motherless.

3. Obvious...but I will mention it...invest with enduring passion and proactivity in your own biological children and grandchildren.

\*Often the most important time in our children's lives are the vary same time that our lives as parents are most challenging...career and otherwise.

\*But you must give your best to this your most important calling.

4. Not as obvious...informally adopt "grandchildren" "nieces and nephews" from your church body...I have a good friend whose life was saved by what some call "godparents"

\*In some faith traditions a godparent sponsors a child's baptism and stands alongside the parents to take an interest in the child's development in an ongoing fashion.

\*The principle itself is sound...we didn't enter into formal arrangements as such...but my girls had people who played this role in their lives.

\*This was organic, informal...but highly, highly intentional by us and those other adults.

5. Take ongoing actions to "qualify yourself" and refuse actions that will "disqualify you" as a credible mentor, witness, point of reference for the next generation or two.

6. Notice the next generation or generations...in church, your neighborhood, stores...stop being annoyed by the kids...pray for them...engage them.

7. Pray

8. Proclaim...announce the good news of Jesus whenever you get the chance. It doesn't matter if you

think they are paying attention...it only matters that you are.

9. Invest your life in parents. Do what you can to keep them encouraged.

\*The most important impact you might make on the next generation may be in keeping an parent encouraged to stay in their marriage, to walk with God, to keep investing in their child.

## **ORGANIZED ORGANIC**

**\*Our philosophy of ministry is highly organic.**

\*If you have a cow with no bones...dead cow

\*If you see the cow's bones...sick cow.

\*If the cow has bones but you can't see them...healthy cow.

\*For the most part that holds true for healthy organizations.

\*There is organization, structure...but the organic is the point.

\*The organic is relationships.

\*So...we have organizational structure...small groups, children's ministry, youth and college ministry.

\*But organizationally we are intentionally minimal...out of a conviction...that real, lasting, transformational impact is life on life.

\*People are motivated by life on life...not maintaining structures.

\*Personal...portable...ministry...who I am...wherever I go...I represent him.

**\*Invest...invest...invest.**

**\*Invite...invite...invite.**

\*"Terry, I have been mistreated, disregarded...people do not respond, they do not reciprocate, they do not appreciate."

\*"I'm sorry...but it just doesn't matter...you do not therefore have an excuse or permission from God or from life to stay on the sidelines."

\*Everyone who is investing has the same story...same trouble...they have just stayed engaged anyway...

\*God is inviting you to experience life...this is where it happens....think, live, choose multi-generational investment.

