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Taking Hold Of Our Destiny

(Part 2)

Intro: Last week we began a 2 part series on how we take hold of the destiny God has given us as a church. WHY? Because I believe God wants to increase the ownership of this vision. He doesn't want a few of us taking hold of this thing, God wants a movement!

- How do we Take Hold of our destiny as a church? We recognize what God is doing, then, we partner with Him in tangible ways. Last week we discussed the first three. We must personalize / prioritize / propagate what God is doing. This week, we get the final three.

IV. I Must Provide For What God Is Doing

- Why? Why does God want me to financially provide for what He's doing?
- Doesn't He know that we're struggling financially? Doesn't He know what's going on in the economy? Hasn't He seen the gas prices? Come on!!!
- Let me share with you some biblical truths regarding our responsibility to financially support our destiny even while the economy has affected Lisa and I. (Share about Lisa losing her jobs – We understand!)

A. Giving provides the multiplication of ministry

Malachi 3:10 "Bring all the tithes into the storehouse so there will be enough food in My temple..." (NLT)

1. God actually allows His work to be hindered if His people do not make provision for it. In the OT, they brought the tithes into the storehouse of the temple so there was enough food to meet the needs of people.
2. In the NT, the storehouse that God uses is no longer a temple, but it is the local church. This is why in your bulletin we print a figure that is needed monthly with the description: "The Ministry Storehouse".
3. At Foothills, the Ministry Storehouse is what is called the general fund. This is the account used to pay for all the monthly ministry expenses. The larger the ministry grows, the more expensive it is to operate. (600+ people)
4. Does it really take over \$45,000 a month to operate what goes on here? YES! If this amount does not come in, the ministry is hindered. This is why we all have a responsibility to shoulder the financial responsibility of the vision. (share facts)

- We lease over 31,000 feet of buildings @ over \$14,000 a month. This doesn't even turn the lights on or heat the buildings.
 - There are 6 people on a paid staff positions at the church, yet only 2 of these positions are full-time.
 - Every ministry of the church requires operating expenses...we have many.
 - Printing costs / Insurance costs / Maintenance costs / Cleaning cost
5. The destiny that God has called us to is expensive. Salvation is free, but taking hold of the destiny He has for us as a church costs! And when we refuse to participate at a financial level we hinder what God wants to do.
 6. I know these are hard times. But hard times do not negate my responsibility to support what God is doing. Just because things are hard, God does not put His work on hold. He wants us to trust Him in the hard times.

B. Giving provides the manifestation of motives

Matt. 6:21 "Where your treasure is, there your heart and thoughts will be also." (NLT)

1. Jesus is the one who said that the way we spend our money reveals the motives of our heart. Over half of Jesus' parables had to do with money and possessions. In fact, Jesus spoke more often about this issue than any other.
2. Jesus is the one who said generosity is a heart issue NOT a financial issue. It is a spiritual issue not a material issue. Giving reveals how large your heart is not how large your income is.
3. To not financially provide for what God is doing reveals that my heart is not committed to what God is doing. It reveals that I have not really taken hold of God's work of transformation.
4. Jesus is the one who says that until there is a financial commitment, there is not a heart commitment. Unless I'm willing to give up some of my treasure to what He's up to, my heart has not fully embraced His Kingdom work.
5. A few weeks ago I talked about how we are a Kingdom minded church. We are about advancing the Kingdom of God. Now, can we be a church that has a Kingdom heart? A heart that longs more for the God's Kingdom than for material possessions / material security /
6. So much so, that I am willing to part with my treasure. Where's your heart?

C. Giving provides the multiplication of money

II Cor. 9:8 "And God will generously provide all you need. Then you will always have everything you need and plenty left over to share with others." (NLT)

II Cor. 8:7 "...now I want you to excel also in this gracious ministry of giving." (NLT) Not so that you're bankrupt, but so that you can experience even more of

Me! If we do not learn to excel in the ministry of giving, we will never experience God's provision in an abundant way towards us.

1. I believe God wants us to learn to be rivers of His resources not reservoirs. Explain.
 2. God wants to multiply His resources to us in order to channel those resources to His Kingdom work. BUT, unless we prove faithful / unless we demonstrate that He can trust us with wealth, He waits until we grow up.
 3. When we choose to be generous, we unlock something in the spiritual realm; we unlock the multiplication of God's resources to us and His work.
 4. Unless we trust God in this, we miss out on experiencing God at this level. We miss His provision / His power / His care / The miraculous!
- I know things are tough right now. But can we together trust God in this? Can we be committed to provide for what God is doing? Can we be Kingdom hearted people? Will you decide to take that envelope in your bulletin and each week / bi-weekly / monthly shoulder the financial responsibility for what God is doing?

V. I Must Pray For What God Is Doing

WHY? Why should I be praying for what God is doing?

A. Prayer increases the partnership

I Cor. 1:9 " God will do this, for he is faithful to do what he says, and he has invited you into partnership with his Son, Jesus Christ our Lord." (NLT)

1. How can we maintain a growing partnership with Jesus if we don't Communicate with Him? It's just a fact of relationships, the better we communicate, the better the relationship...the better the partnership.
2. It works this way in my marriage. If I'm not adequately communicating to Lisa, it hinders that feeling of partnership. In fact, she tells me so when it's not working. ("I just don't feel connected.")
3. If we could here God's audible voice today, I wonder if He'd be saying the same thing to many of us? "Because we're not talking, I don't feel that I'm included...I don't feel the partnership."
4. When it comes to taking hold of our destiny, we're not just doing things for God, we're doing things with Him. Unless we are committed to prayer, there's no way for us to grow in that partnership with Him.
5. Unless I'm praying, there's no way for me to know what I'm supposed to partner with God in. There's no way to take hold of our destiny without taking hold of prayer.
6. What would happen if every person at Foothills simply began asking God every day, "How do you want me to partner with you today?" "God, how do I join you in what you're doing?" We would become a God led church even more!

B. Prayer increases the power

James 5:16 “...The earnest prayer of a righteous person has great power and wonderful results.” (NLT)

1. Prayer increases the spiritual voltage of a church. The more we pray the more of God’s power we see. The more we pray regarding our specific destiny, the more of that destiny we will experience.
2. Can you imagine what would happen if every person of Foothills began to pray daily about the vision God has called us to? If every person began to pray about our core values (POWER)? If every person began to pray for this community?
3. If every believer of this church saw that praying for the vision was part of their responsibility to take hold of our destiny? Can you imagine what would happen? We’d go from being a 100 spiritual watt church to a 100,000 spiritual watt...and we’d see the power of God!

I Cor. 4:20 “For the Kingdom of God does not consist in words but in power.” (NASB) If we want to see the real power of God’s Kingdom, then we must pray!

C. Prayer increases the protection

Eph. 6:10, 18 “Use every piece of God’s armor to resist the enemy in the time of evil, so that after the battle, you will still be standing firm...Pray at all times and on every occasion in the power of the Holy Spirit. Stay alert and persistent in your prayers for all Christians everywhere.” (NLT)

1. We are in a spiritual war-zone. We live and operate in hostile territory. We have a spiritual enemy as a church. God has given us practical spiritual tactics in which to be victorious. Prayer is one of these tactics.
2. How do we use prayer as a protective tactic against our spiritual enemy? We all embrace the responsibility to pray specifically for what God is doing here at Foothills. Not just the pastor or key leaders, but all. How?
3. Pray for God’s protection over your own personal life. Why? Because you never want to be used by the enemy to negatively influence anything that God is doing. (gossip / slander / divisiveness / uncooperative spirit /
 - Pray for God’s protective covering over Foothills staff and ministry leaders. (Info center has a list) These people are on the front lines of ministry and influence.
 - Pray for God’s protective covering over the entire church / the people / the ministries / the testimony / pray that no weapon formed against us will ever prosper.

Will you make a commitment to pray for what God is doing at this church? Will you embrace it as your responsibility? Will you take hold of this?

VI. I Must Persevere In What God Is Doing

WHY? Why do I need to persevere?

A. Perseverance grows me personally

James 1:2-4 "...whenever trouble comes your way, let it be an opportunity for joy. For when your faith is tested, your endurance has a chance to grow. So let it grow, for when your endurance is fully developed, you will be strong in character ready for anything." (NLT)

1. God is more concerned with the growth of our character than He is with the growth of our comfort. If we are comfort minded, we will always see adversity as a threat / a problem, rather than an opportunity to grow our character.
2. Why does God want to grow our character? Because He has more of our destiny to impart to us and He cannot give us more until we grow up! It is only as our character grows that we are ready for anything.
3. We must grow up spiritually so we can handle the greater responsibility He wants to impart to us. It's a lot like parenting: I didn't let my daughters drive a car when they were 10. Why? Not mature enough to handle the responsibility that goes with it. It works this way with God and the vision He has for us.
4. Unless we persevere and grow up, we will forfeit the fulfillment of the vision. WHY? Because it requires maturity. God waits until we choose to persevere and grow.
5. Therefore, when we quit, we are forfeiting the growth of our character, and this results in the delay or even the forfeiting of our destiny.

B. Perseverance guarantees God's promise

Heb. 10:35-36 "Do not throw away this confident trust in the Lord no matter what happens. Remember the great reward it brings you! Patient endurance is what you need now, so you will continue to do God's will. Then you will receive all that He has promised." (NLT)

1. We are so groomed by our culture to always want instant gratification that we think it works this way spiritually. We have developed a culture of Christians who quit when things get tough because we think that God should make us comfortable and operate on our timetable.
2. We forget that there are two kinds of promises from God; Conditional and Unconditional. Unconditional promises require nothing from us. They are true because God says so (His love / His grace / His mercy / His forgiveness)
3. BUT, conditional promises are true only as we meet certain conditions. Experiencing our destiny from God is a conditional promise. It will be true only as we as a church embrace certain conditions. Perseverance is one of these conditions.

4. We do this as parents all the time. “You can watch TV when you homework is done / have dessert when you finish dinner / all are conditions. When it comes to experiencing destiny, perseverance is a key condition.
5. How do we maintain our perseverance? You stay focused on the reward...on God’s promise. We desire the fulfillment of what God has promised more than the current discomfort we feel.
6. What God has called us to as a church is not easy. He has called us to partner with Him to reach the 1000’s of unchurched people in our geographic area. This is a glorious destiny, but it will require some perseverance!

Can we take hold of our destiny? Will you believe that God brought you to this church for a divine purpose...to partner with Him in bringing transformation to this area? If that is true, then will you take hold of this? Will you Provide for it / Will you Pray for it / Will you Persevere in it? (Pass out Take Hold Cards)