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Taking Hold Taking Hold Of Our Destiny

Intro: Every year at this time I ask the Lord for what His focus is for Foothills. What do You want to say to the people of Foothills at Kickoff Sunday? His pre-game talk to us.

The Lord gave me a specific verse that He wants to be our focus this year.

*Phil. 3:12 "I press on to **take hold** of that for which Christ Jesus **took hold** of me."*

- What does Jesus want us to TAKE HOLD of? Jesus took hold of our lives for a reason. (He changed our lives!) It wasn't so we could just experience heaven someday. There is a destiny He wants us to experience in this life. BUT, for this destiny to be a reality, there are some specific things He wants us to take hold of now. For us to go where He is calling us this year, we need to TAKE HOLD of 4 key reasons why He took hold of us.
- What do we need to take hold of this year?

I. We Must Take Hold Of His Presence

Jesus took hold of us so we could experience Him...take hold of Him!

Phil. 3:10 "As a result, I can really know Christ..."(NLT) Not intellectualize Christ, but actually experience Him.

I John 2:28 "And now, dear children, continue to live in fellowship with Christ..."(NLT) Fellowship implies intimacy...relationship

- How do you take hold of His presence?
 - A. Get spiritually dissatisfied where you're at
 1. Are you satisfied with your level of intimacy with God? Are you satisfied with your level of experience with God? Are you believing the lie that this is all there is to experience?
 - ** Have you seen the Wendy's commercial? "I deserve a hot juicy burger!"
Too many believers satisfied with spiritual fast-food! – this is the norm!
"We were created for intimacy with God!"
 2. I want you to know that I am praying for your dissatisfaction! I am praying that we all have a holy dissatisfaction with our relationship with God. We want more!

3. Why do you want us dissatisfied? 2 reasons: First, there is more for us to experience in our relationship with God. If there is more available, why don't you want it? You won't want it until you are dissatisfied!
4. Secondly, where God is taking us as a church will require more intimacy in our relationship with God. We will not survive without increased intimacy. With greater responsibility comes a greater need for spiritual intimacy.
5. But once you begin to get spiritually dissatisfied, now you can...

B. Get spiritually motivated to seek His presence

Jer. 29:13 "If you look for Me in earnest, you will find Me when you seek Me."

(NLT) The presence of God is something we can discover and experience!

1. In order to do this, we have to stop seeking after a spiritual formula / routine / plan. Seek after the presence of God! Seek after Him. I want to experience more of Him in my every day life!
2. How do we do this? How do we take hold of God? We have to become people of prayer. NOT just people who pray, but people that have prayer as part of their very character...part of who they are.
3. This means that the focus of our praying is not just praying for things, but for the purpose of experiencing God's presence. This means that we are asking God to reveal more of Himself to us. Asking to hear His voice / to experience His presence /
4. This means we become God seekers NOT just God requesters. We begin to understand that the greatest thing God has is not what He can do for us, but who He is. That His greatest gift to us is Himself. The greatest thing He wants to give us is Himself. I believe it is the greatest prayer He wants to answer.
5. Can we be people who will take hold of God's presence this year more than ever before?

II. We Must Take Hold Of His Purpose

Jesus took hold of us so we could join Him

Matt. 6:33 "He will give you all you need from day to day if you live for Him and make the Kingdom of God your primary concern." (NLT) Join Me in what I am doing!

A. We must become Kingdom minded people

1. Our primary concern in life should be about advancing God's Kingdom. Unfortunately, most Christians' primary concern is about advancing their own kingdom. (I'll fit God's stuff in when I can...while I pursue my own thing.)
2. God is calling this church to a higher understanding and commitment to His Kingdom purposes this year! We are a Kingdom minded church! We make decisions based upon Kingdom values and priorities.

3. If we don't corporately understand and embrace this, much of what we do won't even make sense to you. You'll constantly be asking, "Why are they doing that?"
4. When people come to Christ; that's God's Kingdom / when people are fed / when we minister to the poor / when God heals a marriage / when we send 6000 flyers into a community / when we develop a parking lot / when we refuse to let our building limit what God wants to do so that we purchase it / work with children - youth / When we work with the schools / the businesses / city – that's God's Kingdom.
5. We believe God has put us here to advance God's Kingdom in this geographic area. This is why we're here! This is why we take risks / why we don't stop / why we don't get satisfied. It is about seeing God bring His transformation to this are! That will not happen without Kingdom minded people...Kingdom minded churches.

B. We must discover our unique contribution to His Kingdom work

Eph. 2:10 "For we are God's masterpiece. He has created us anew in Christ Jesus, so that we can do the good things He planned for us long ago." (NLT) To say that you have nothing to contribute is to deny the truth of this verse!

1. It's one thing to say you're Kingdom minded; it's another thing to be actively involved in Kingdom work. God did not create you to be a spectator of advancing His Kingdom. This stadium does NOT reflect your role...sitting in bleachers! The track / the field / is your role!!!
2. How are you actively being a part of what God is doing in this geographic area?
3. Will you take hold of His purpose for your life this year by getting involved somewhere? We introduced our ministry leaders to you. We print their names / phone #'s and responsibilities at our info center. BUT, you have to make a move.
4. For those already involved, I praise God for you. For those not involved, will you trust God this year? The only way for God's Kingdom to continue to advance is more people to get involved in Kingdom work.
5. You have a unique contribution that God has created you for. Don't you think it is time for you to begin to discover just what that is? Take hold!

III. We Must Take Hold Of His Power

Jesus took hold us so we could be victorious with Him

Phil. 3:10 "...and experience the mighty power that raised Him from the dead..." (NLT) That's some power that is available!

I Cor. 4:20 "For the Kingdom of God is not just fancy talk; it is living by God's power." (NLT) With God's Kingdom comes Kingdom power!

Rom. 8:37 “No, despite all these things, overwhelming victory is ours through Christ who loved us.” (NLT) This is experiential power! Experiential victory!

- How do we take hold of God’s power? How do we experience His victory?
 - A. We take hold of God’s power by pursuing His purposes
 1. God empowers people who give themselves to Kingdom work. Why would He empower your thing? It amazes me how often believers pursue their own agendas and then ask God to empower them. Then, when He doesn’t they get mad at God, as if God existed for their own purposes.
 2. We need to understand how God’s economy works. He doesn’t empower people’s personal agendas, BUT, he does empower Kingdom work. He empowers people who understand they exist for His purposes.
 3. Therefore, if you want to experience the type of supernatural power the Bible repeatedly talks about, you have to change agendas. You have to embrace His purposes for your life. You have to be Kingdom minded.
 4. The Christian life is only a supernatural experience as long as we pursue God’s purposes for our lives. Do you want to experience the power / take hold of God in your life this year?
 5. Then will you evaluate whose agenda you are pursuing? Will you be willing to make a change? Will you take hold of His purposes.
 - B. We take hold of God’s power by being in places to need it
 1. Unfortunately, we tend to pursue things where we know we have a pretty good chance of success with our own resources. The unchurched world is not very impressed with what we can do...neither is God!
 2. The unchurched world is waiting to see what God can do...and God is waiting for His people to trust Him for what He can do as well.
 3. The only way to see God’s power is to live by faith pursuing His Kingdom. This means that we all do things that are beyond our natural resources. We do things despite the fear / even despite the apparent impossibility.
** WHY? This is what brings Him glory! When giants fall people see God!
 4. There is an invisible wall of fear each one of us must cross in order to live by faith and see God’s power. Until you move ahead despite your fear, you will never experience God’s resources. God waits on the other side. Quit asking God to take away the fear...He won’t!...until you move.
 5. Where is your fear keeping you from the resources God promises? Why not take hold of God’s power and walk through that wall this year!
 6. Corporately, the purchase of our building puts us in a place to need God’s power. It is a church wide faith test. We can’t purchase it without Him. We don’t have the resources for a million dollar down payment. (Giant!)

7. But, as we all trust Him individually, not allowing our fear or circumstances dictate our obedience, we will see the supernatural power of God. I can't think of a greater fear producer than money. God wants to release us!
 - Will we take hold of God's power and be victorious with Him this year?

IV. We Must Take Hold Of His People

Jesus took hold of us so we could love people with Him

- Everything we do is done in the context of loving relationships.
- How do we take hold of people and love them?

A. Our love must be an observable action (hands and feet of Jesus)

I John 3:18 "...let us not love with word or with tongue, but in deed and truth."
(NASB)

1. We take hold of people when we love them with our actions. We've all heard the phrase, "talk is cheap". I think the world would agree when they look at the church. Why should they listen to us until we prove to them we care.
2. Too often, churches have neglected the needs of the community God has called them to impact. God is calling us to love the people of this area in tangible ways more than we already do.
3. I love the fact that we have a resource center. (Food and clothes) / we have committed to 400 food boxes this holiday season. / BUT, can we do more? I love the fact we have a scholarship program – known for giving money away! / That we've done work-days with the city /
4. BUT, what else can we do to prove to the people of our area that we care about them and their needs even if they don't attend Foothills? God is calling us to take hold of the people of this area by loving them with actions

B. Our love must create a responsibility to one another

Gal. 6:2 "Share each other's troubles and problems, and in this way obey the law of Christ. (NLT) (What law is that? The law of love! Love each other!)

1. We are not on this journey alone. We do not get to the destination alone. We do not succeed alone. We don't pursue God's purposes alone. We do all this in the context of loving, supporting relationships. WHY?
2. Because by yourself, you cannot succeed. You cannot become all that God desires you to be. You cannot win the battles you face. Alone, you are an easy target for the enemy. (Gladiator: "Whatever comes through those gates, we have a better chance of staying alive if we stick together.")
3. The more of our destiny that we embrace, it will require deeper relationships with each other. It will require an understanding that we are responsible for each other's success. Individualism must go!

4. We all have to recognize our need for others, and our responsibility towards others. Therefore, as God is calling us to take hold of people, I am acknowledging I need you and I have a responsibility to support and encourage you.
 5. This is why Home Groups are so essential. This is where you can take hold of one another in this way. This is where you can link your shields. (Gladiator: scene where the Roman army does what was called a tortoise. (explain). This is how the church takes ground and lives!
 6. Many of you have never experienced relationships like this, but can you put yourself in an environment where you can take hold of relationships like this? Will you.
- I wanted to leave you with some type of visual; something you could take hold of as you leave today as a reminder...So here it is (explain and pass out)