Taking Hold Of Our Destiny
(Part 1)

Intro: If I asked any one of you to come up here and take my Bible, you would all know what to do. Taking hold of something tangible (physical) is one thing, but how do we take hold of a destiny from God? It all seems so abstract? How do we grab something we can’t see?

Phil. 3:12 “I take hold of that for which Christ Jesus took hold of me…”

• How do we “Take Hold” of our destiny as a church? I want to give you 6 tangible ways in the next 2 weeks. I want to take this abstract concept and make it tangible.

I. I Must Personalize What God Is Doing

• Mark 8 – story of Jesus telling His disciples to beware of the yeast of the Pharisees. 
  Mark 8:17-18 “...Won’t you ever learn or understand? Are your hearts too hard to take it in? You have eyes – can’t you see? You have ears – can’t you hear?” (NLT) Jesus was frustrated with His disciples because they were not understanding and embracing what was going on. They were stuck in the natural / stuck in the physical and not seeing the spiritual realities around them. We’re guilty of the same thing. If we are ever going to personalize what God is up to, we must make three choices.

  A. We must choose to see it

    1. God gave us a set of eyes in which to literally SEE what God is up to. “You have eyes…can’t you see?” LOOK! We can choose to see the spiritual realities where God is working or we can choose to ignore them.

    2. Haven’t you ever not wanted to look at reality? Illustrate: I-205 off ramps and the sign board people – (explain) If I don’t look I won’t feel!

    3. God is at work around us. God is at work in this church on so many levels I don’t have time to talk about them all! We must choose to see it!

       • 400 food boxes for the community
       • Nursery and children’s ministry. God is bringing them.
       • Lives that are being transformed.

    4. God is at work in this church. Choose to see it. God wants us to see Him because when we see Him we are impacted by it.

  B. We must choose to hear it
1. Not only do we need to see what God is doing, we need to hear it. “You have ears, can’t you hear?” I believe God wants us to listen on two levels.

2. First, we need to listen to others as they share about the reality of God in their lives. Three weeks ago, we had a Sunday especially set aside for this. We had 6 people talk about their spiritual journey and how God is transforming their lives.

3. Did you hear it? How did that impact you? Did it make you long for more in your own life? Did it create gratitude for what God is doing? Did it make you hungry for even more of God’s transforming power? Did it make you believe in God even more?

4. OR, did you tune it out? We can choose not to hear. We all can have selective hearing (not just with our spouses) but even with God. Sometimes, we just don’t want to hear.

5. Because the second level in which God wants us to listen is to His voice. Jesus said that “My sheep hear my voice…” Do we? When you hear other people talking about God do you hear God speaking to you?
   - What about every Sunday morning? (explain)

6. When you choose to see needs around you / see God at work in the circumstances / see opportunities, do you hear God’s quiet voice trying to talk to you?
   - We can’t take hold of something we do not see and do not hear! I have a hard time understanding people when they say they can’t hear or see God. He’s everywhere! We choose not to see it / we choose not to hear it. God wants both because….

C. We must choose to join it

Mark 1:17-18 “Jesus called out to them, ‘Come, be My disciples, and I will show you how to fish for people!’ And they left their nets at once and went with Him.” (NLT)

Come join Me in what I’m doing!

1. We have it all backwards. We are not doing things FOR God, we are supposed to be doing things WITH God! It’s a partnership. It’s ministering in relationship with Him.

2. If you’re out there doing things FOR God you’re not having any fun. WHY? Because it’s all about your effort and energy. The focus is on you. BUT, if you’re in partnership with God, the focus is on Him and His resources. That’s fun!

3. Jesus has called us to join Him on the greatest adventure there ever was. The transformation of people! God has called this church to join Him in His work of transforming this specific geographic area. God cares about the people of this area.
4. In the past 10 years, He has allowed us to see and hear what He is up to. How much more evidence do we need? Look at what God is doing! Listen to His voice speaking to your heat. He is calling us to join Him even more…
  - How?

II. I Must Prioritize What God Is Doing

Mark 8:34 “…If any of you wants to be My follower, …you must put aside your selfish ambition, shoulder your cross and follow Me.” (NLT) Radical priority changes!
  - What does it mean to prioritize what God is doing?
    A. It requires embracing sacrifice (put aside selfish ambition)
      1. Stop thinking that life is all about you and your needs and your desires. We all have selfish ambition in our hearts. Can I set aside what I think I want in order to experience what God wants?
      2. We are all willing to embrace some form of sacrifice if we think the sacrifice is worth the final result. Example: (Day after Thanksgiving shopping – midnight madness - explain) The sacrifice is not worth it to me.
      3. Some of you sacrificed for an education / parents make sacrifices for their kids / some have sacrificed for their careers / some sacrificed in war
      4. The problem with modern day Christianity, is that most believers today have concluded that following Jesus is not worth the sacrifice He asks for. Our selfish ambitions overrule our Saviors ambitions for us.
      5. It will require personal sacrifice for us to take hold of our destiny as a church. I’m not saying that no one is making sacrifices. But what I see is that so many people are making sacrifices for the wrong things! For things that won’t matter in eternity.
      6. Wouldn’t it be better making sacrifices for things that really count? Things that really pay off? Things that actually change people’s lives and transforms a community?
      7. I see people making huge sacrifices for money and possessions and they sacrifice relationships / ministry / God / eternity / sacrifice investing their lives in what really matters.
    - I believe God wants to us to take hold of a miracle He wants to unfold in our community. This will not happen without sacrifice.

B. It requires embracing inconvenience (shoulder your cross) Ouch!
  1. We want a convenient faith. One that fits into our life not one where it alters our lives. We want the less filling, low carb, yet still tastes great version. Shoulder my cross?
  2. Jesus didn’t say this to imply that following Him is all about embracing a life of pain. He does want us to know that following Him is not always convenient…it’s not always easy...
3. Following Jesus has been the hardest thing I have ever attempted to do in my life! Does that surprise some of you? Following Jesus has also produced the most meaningful and glorious experiences in my life as well.

4. For us to take hold of our destiny, it will be inconvenient. Do you think it is always convenient to serve? (worship team / resource center volunteers / change diapers in the nursery / work in the children’s ministry / to Pray / read my Bible / share my faith / tithe)

5. If we want to embrace convenience, we will sacrifice our destiny. BUT, if we will be willing to be inconvenienced for the sake of the Kingdom of God, we will see His transforming power in our midst.

C. It requires embracing loss of control (follow Me)
   • Jesus didn’t say, “I’ll follow you!”
   1. Here’s the issues that keeps most people from experiencing destiny. To really take hold of the destiny God has for us, we have to let go of our own. We must relinquish control of our lives and follow Him.
   2. This is why following Jesus comes down to control. We want control because we want to predict the outcomes. If Jesus is in control, we can’t control the outcomes and therefore, have to live by faith.
   3. Therefore, we settle for small, pitiful results for the Kingdom of God because of our unwillingness to give up control and follow Jesus into the unknown. We are satisfied with far less than what could have been. We settle for what we can control; what we can accomplish and what makes sense in our rational thinking. AND, we sacrifice the supernatural!
   4. We will never take hold of our destiny until we give up control! Following Jesus is a daily exercise in giving up control. It is not a one time decision but a conscious and continual choice to follow Him NOT yourself.
   5. This is what we are trying to do corporately as a church. We want to follow Jesus into the future…follow Him into our destiny. Follow Him in order to minister to people in our community / follow Him in the purchase of this building / follow Him to expand ministries and influence.

In order to experience what He can do not what we can do. We can’t just give intellectual agreement in what God is doing. We must prioritize our lives around what God is doing!

III. I Must Propagate What God Is Doing
Propagate: To cause to multiply. God uses us in the multiplication of what He’s doing.
   • Summarize Acts 4 - Peter and John before religious leaders.
   Acts 4:19-20 “But Peter and John replied, ‘Do you think God wants us to obey you rather than Him? We cannot stop telling about the wonderful things we have seen and heard.’” (NLT) Notice what they said…things we have seen and heard! Seeing and hearing God gives you confidence to multiply what God is doing unashamed!
A. We multiply what God is doing publicly
   1. Peter and John joined what God was doing in the public arena. It wasn’t
taking place behind closed doors. It was out in the open so everyone could
see and hear!
   2. If we are to take hold of our destiny as a church we must continue to move
out into the public arenas. We must look for ways to meet the needs of our
community giving them the opportunity to see and hear.
   3. God doesn’t want to bring transformation in private. Transformation is a
public activity to be witnesses by all. (the miracle of God healing this man)
   4. This community needs to see what God is doing in and through this church.
      God wants His people and His work on display for the world to see.
      Matt. 5:16 “...let your good deeds shine out for all to see, so that everyone will
      praise your heavenly Father.” (NLT)
   5. God’s at work in our community already. We need to join Him. How? Our
      Resource Center / Preschool / community work days / Halloween project /
      scholarships
      BUT, we should be looking for even more ways to be visible.

B. We multiply what God is doing verbally
   “We cannot stop talking about…”
   1. This community needs to not only see what God is doing, they need to hear
about it. Where do they hear about it? From you! They don’t need to hear
about the programs that are offered, they need to hear about the reality of
God in the lives of people.
   2. If you have seen and heard what God is doing then you have a responsibility
to share it. I pray that once you start seeing and hearing you get so excited
about what God is up to that you just can’t shut up!
   3. I believe God wants an entire community to feel like they’re missing out on
something…because they are! God is doing something here and you need to be
a part of this.
   4. That message comes from all of us, not just the pastor. In fact, it has much
more power when it comes from all of you!

C. We multiply what God is doing by challenging the status quo
   1. The religious leaders in the story represent the status quo. They wanted to
maintain the status quo. They warned the disciples to not rock the religious
boat. What was their response…”We cannot stop…”
   2. Taking hold of God’s destiny will always threaten the status quo. God did
not put Foothills Church in Molalla to reinforce the religious and cultural
status quos. He put us here to rock the boat!...To shake things up!
   3. We are here to challenge the religious status quo of spiritual lethargy,
deadness / lack of cooperation / divisiveness / the acceptance of no spiritual impact / the overall lack of faith in the church.

4. We are here to challenge the cultural status quos / the drug and alcohol issues / the fatalistic idea that our kids will do drugs - drink - have sex and there’s nothing we can do / the rate of divorce / the needs of the poor / the belief that we cannot make a difference in our schools. /

5. God did not raise up foothills to play church. He raised us up to BE the church in this community and to be used by Him to change the status quo. This is what it means to propagate what God is doing. These conditions bother Him and they should bother us as well!

God does not want us to be casual observers of this life of faith. He wants us to Take Hold of the reason He saved us…to join Him in His work of transformation. This is our destiny! To do that, we must Take hold of what God is doing. We have to personalize it / prioritize it / and be willing to propagate it. Will you be willing?