

## *Following Jesus through a Building Project*

**Intro:** Here in a few weeks we will begin our third building project at Foothills. (Briefly explain) Building projects are very unique times in the life of a church. They will either make the church better or they make the church worse. In my experience, there's not much middle ground. Since this will be a new experience for many of you, I want to spend some time today talking about how we follow Jesus through a building project. Building projects should be fun and the source of tremendous joy for a church. BUT, this doesn't always happen this way. In fact, many pastors resign after building projects are completed. (Don't worry...Not going to happen here.)

- Today I want to share with you some principals that will make this next season a fun and rewarding one for us as a church.
- 3 ways to follow Jesus

### **1. We keep our eyes on Jesus not a building**

*Heb. 12:1-2 "...And let us run with endurance the race God has set before us. <sup>2</sup> We do this by keeping our eyes on Jesus, the champion who initiates and perfects our faith..." (NLT)*

- View our building project as a spiritual leg of the race

It's not simply about getting a project done. It is more important HOW we get the project done. This is more a spiritual process than a physical one. If all we see is the physical we will blow this leg of the race. HOW?

- Trust that Jesus has a bigger agenda than simply a building. There is always more going on than what we can physically see. For example...
  - What example are we showing the community as we build? I promise you they are watching us. We have the largest single building in the downtown. We are the biggest building on Main St. This is public! We have an opportunity to inspire a community.
  - Are we concerned about the reputation of Jesus in this process? Everything we do either enhances or detracts from the reputation of Jesus...even a building project. We do everything to the glory of God. Our mindset!
  - Are we aware how we influence other churches? Not only is the community watching but so are the other churches. God has and will use our faith to inspire growing faith in other churches.
  - Are we aware how this may impact downtown businesses? We believe and promote the revitalization of the downtown. We do not believe empty store fronts is the heart of God.
  - These are simply the obvious ones but I'm sure Jesus has more?

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- We are exercising faith following Jesus with this project. There is spiritual battle going on. The Kingdom of God is advancing in to more enemy territory. We just took over 14,000 sq feet of enemy territory.
- It was empty. It had no purpose. It represented death rather than life. It was falling apart...BUT God is redemptive. Everything about this project is about God's redemptive story of our town. This project is spiritual!

- View our building project as an opportunity to grow your faith

Heb. 12 says that Jesus is the one who perfects of our faith. Therefore, we need to understand going in that He will use this project as a faith development opportunity. I promise! How do I know? Because this is my third building project. How will He use it?

*Rom. 5:3-4 "We can rejoice, too, when we run into problems and trials, for we know that they help us develop endurance. <sup>4</sup> And endurance develops strength of character, and character strengthens our confident hope of salvation." (NLT)*

- Problems and trials are part of every building project. Financial / organizational / personal / emotional / we are going to have opportunities to grow in a variety of ways. This is how we keep our eyes on Jesus.
- You will either grow in spiritual endurance and deeper in godly character, or you will allow your flesh to come to the surface and control you. Why do I say this? Because building projects can give you opportunity for your flesh.
  - Some things will simply push your buttons...I promise!
- You will either learn to follow Jesus better or you will blame the people around you or who you perceive are responsible for your frustration.
  - Maybe you signed up to help and didn't get a notification back when you were needed. (You can get mad or grow – maybe make a phone call
  - Maybe you were asked to do a job that didn't seem very important or glamorous?
  - Maybe the person you were volunteering with really was annoying you.
  - We may encounter unexpected costs. As good as our planning was, it's a remodel folks. Unexpected things happen. Sometimes it can come from the county – talk about the seismic upgrades to the tune of \$200K

We must keep our eyes on Jesus through this project not eyes on a building.

## 2. We value unity not opinions

*I Cor. 1:10 "I appeal to you, dear brothers and sisters, by the authority of our Lord Jesus Christ, to live in harmony with each other. Let there be no divisions in the church. Rather, be of one mind, united in thought and purpose." (NLT)* Even during a building project. Building projects create unique opportunities for division. I'm not worried too much about this since we do not have this spirit at Foothills, but I still need to get this on the table.

- Please value those who have spent countless hours getting us here

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What do I mean by this?

- There has been countless hours of conversations with ministry leaders who will use this space / builders / architects / that it is impossible to bring everyone up to speed on this journey that has taken several years. (2 years of conversations)
- Please choose to value the people who have worked so hard behind the scenes to get us to this point. If you criticize what has been planned you devalue those who have painstakingly worked for 2 years.
- This space is designed with the function driving decisions. It is designed primarily for ministering to children and students. We did the best we could with the space we had.
- Unity begins by choosing to value the people who were part of this process long before you got involved. Unity sees the sovereign hand of God in this process. God had these people involved to get us to this part of the journey.

- Unity is always more important than being right

WHY?

- God blesses unity not our ability to do a building project “right”. I guarantee you that we will make mistakes / We talked to as many experts in the field as possible but at the end of the day, mistakes will be made. So what? You are not at “First Perfect Church”
- We are trying to do the best we can utilizing a 40 yr. old retail strip mall. Doing something perfect is not our goal. We are building useable ministry space designed for very specific purposes. I guarantee you that will happen.
- Choose unity instead of polarizing – explain – when we polarize, we create winners and losers. My way is right and your way is wrong. This mentality destroys unity.
- Please take your concerns / your ideas / even your criticisms to the right people in private. Why this way? Because this is the biblical model. Talking to others and posting negative things on social media is a fleshly response.

- Unity is what invites the blessing of God

*Ps. 133:1, 3 “Behold, how good and pleasant it is when brothers dwell in unity! For there the LORD has commanded the blessing...” (ESV)*

- God commands His blessing on places that manifest unity. If we desire the blessing of God upon our building project and church then pursuing unity is more important than pursuing perfection.
- It is God’s desire that we have a greater sense of unity at the end of the project. We have more phases coming. Unity will empower the other phases we still have to trust Jesus for. Unity will evoke God’s blessing as we move ahead.

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- God has not blessed our 19 year journey because we have done everything right. We haven't! But we have maintained an amazing sense of unity throughout our journey. This quality will always be blessed.

If we truly want to follow Jesus well during this project, we have to value unity above our own opinions.

### **3. We keep the purpose central not a project**

*Phil. 2:2 "Then make me truly happy by agreeing wholeheartedly with each other, loving one another, and working together with one mind and purpose."(NLT)*

What a great description of the environment of the church. There is this beautiful balance of right relationships and right purpose working together. We've already talked about the relational aspect with unity. But what about purpose? We must never allow the building to become a purpose. The building is NOT the purpose.

Let me remind everyone the purpose of our church.

*"Foothills Community Church exists to reach the 1000s of unchurched people in our geographic area with the love and forgiveness of Jesus Christ and to equip them to follow Jesus fully experiencing His presence and demonstrating His power."*

Simply stated: *"Following Jesus Fully; Transforming the City Completely"*

- Purpose is the reason for the project

The purpose is not the building. The purpose of reaching 1000s of unchurched people is the reason for the building. The reason we are spending millions of dollars over the next few years is so we can have a facility that will help us reach people for Jesus and see our city transformed. Our purpose is what drives our decisions not a building project.

- Please never lose sight of this truth, otherwise none of our decisions make sense. Jesus called us to follow Him 19 years ago and this purpose is the driving force behind this church. It is the driving force behind the next phase. This is simply phase 1. Purpose is the reason behind phase 2 as well.
- Our purpose motivates us to overcome any obstacle that hinders this goal.

- Purpose is what makes sacrifice possible for the project

I won't necessarily sacrifice simply to have a nicer building, but I will sacrifice much to see 1000s of people come to know Jesus and a city transformed. I will sacrifice time / money and even my opinions in order to see this type of supernatural result. Purpose is what makes sacrifice possible.

- The greater the purpose, the greater the sacrifice. If we want to see God's great purposes realized in our church and area, then it will require great sacrifice from all of us.

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- All great stories have great sacrifice woven into the narrative. This is why we love to read them. People who sacrificed to see a great cause become reality.
  - Jesus is writing an amazing narrative right here. It is an unlikely story of how God chose to use a church in a small little town no one really cared about to have an impossible impact for the Kingdom of God. It is an impact that goes far beyond our little community.
  - It is worth sacrificing for!
- Purpose is what outlives the project  
 If you make a building the purpose then the purpose is done once the project is completed. But if the purpose is about reaching 1000s of people...if the purpose is about advancing the Kingdom of God...if the purpose is about following Jesus and seeing a city transformed then the purpose outlives any project we accomplish.
    - The purpose of this church is going to outlive me and every one of us here. Someday, we will get every phase of this building project completed. (explain each phase). As glorious as that will be, the purpose lives on.
    - We do not want to hand the next generation a building. We want to hand them an irresistible purpose that has been already transforming 1000s people for decades. This is what I want to give to my grandchildren.
    - Our legacy can never be this building but rather showing the next generation how to recklessly follow Jesus into great purposes for His Kingdom.

Therefore, as we begin this project may we never make this building or any other future project central in our thinking or in our passions. What drives us is the godly purpose Jesus entrusted to us.

As we begin yet another construction project, let's keep our eyes on Jesus; walk in unity with one another; and chase after the purpose Jesus gave us with all we have. If we live in this manners, we can expect the blessing of God upon our journey together AND we will be part of a supernatural narrative that Jesus is writing. OH...and we will have a blast doing it together as well!