

## How to follow Jesus into the impossible Part 2

**Intro:** I want to explain this pile of rocks on the platform. What do these rocks mean? Why are they here? (Explain) July 2002, we signed a lease for 24,000 sq. ft. of the former Sentry market building. The first week of January 2003, we had our first service in this very spot. That first Sunday I shared a message about the nation of Israel crossing the Jordan river.....

**Lesson:** If you live by faith and trust Me, I will always provide...I will always make a way...I will always part the water...I will always do the impossible.

*Matt. 17:20 "... Jesus told them. "I tell you the truth, if you had faith even as small as a mustard seed, you could say to this mountain, 'Move from here to there,' and it would move. Nothing would be impossible"*

- I want to give you four personal faith commitments that unleash the impossible. Jesus said that it takes the faith of a mustard seed to move a mountain. What does this type of faith look like? Today I want to share with you 4 qualities of mountain moving faith. 4 faith commitments that unleash the impossible in a church that is following Jesus.

### 1. We pray as if our very lives depend on it

- Mountain moving faith prays. Faith that unleashes the impossible knows that our very lives depend on us staying connected to Jesus. Prayer is how this relational connection is maintained.
- All relationships stay connected through communication. This is what prayer is. The more you communicate, the better the relationship is. (Simple, right?) It works this way in every relationship. You communicate in your marriage because the life of your marriage depends on it.
- It works this way with God. We pray because our lives as followers of Jesus depend on it. We pray as a church because the life of the church depends on it. If we desire to see the impossible, we have to be people who are committed to pray like it matters.

*Matt. 7:7-8 "Keep on asking, and you will receive what you ask for. Keep on seeking, and you will find. Keep on knocking, and the door will be opened to you. <sup>8</sup> For everyone who asks, receives. Everyone who seeks, finds. And to everyone who knocks, the door will be opened."*  
(NLT)

- Please notice the phrase "keep on". It is stated 3 times and implied 3 times (explain). This is not some lackadaisical attitude towards prayer. This is not simply praying at meal time. This is a commitment to a lifestyle of continual conversation with God.
- When we pray like this as a church, we stay connected and God does wonders in our midst. Look at what Jesus said...

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*John 15:4-5 “Remain in me, and I will remain in you. For a branch cannot produce fruit if it is severed from the vine, and you cannot be fruitful unless you remain in me.”<sup>5</sup> “Yes, I am the vine; you are the branches. Those who remain in me, and I in them, will produce much fruit. For apart from me you can do nothing.” (NLT)*

- To “remain” is another way of saying “stay connected”. From this connection, we produce fruit for the Kingdom of God. Without this connection, we produce nothing of value for the Kingdom of God. Therefore, growing in this spiritual connection with Jesus is vital for every person and every church.
- So, let’s grow in this as a church. Let’s pray like the very life and future of this church depends on it. Let’s not think it is someone else’s responsibility to pray like this. May we each personalize this.
- Prayer Card – explain. Here’s how to pray for your church. Will you pray for your church every day for the next month?

## **2. We give as if the success of the mission depends on it**

- The mission Jesus has called us to as a church is big. He has called us to follow Him as we together reach thousands of unchurched people in our area. The impossible is not cheap.
- BUT because we believe in the power of the Gospel and that Jesus truly changes lives, we financially give in order to see this mission advance.

*II Cor 9:13 “As a result of your ministry, they will give glory to God. For your generosity to them and to all believers will prove that you are obedient to the Good News of Christ.” (NLT)*

- I want you to notice that our generosity and obedience to the Gospel (Good News) are connected. The apostle Paul says that “your generosity proves”... What does your generosity prove?

Notice how Jesus says the very same thing.

*Matt. 6:21 “Wherever your treasure is, there the desires of your heart will also be.” (NLT)*

- Our money proves the things we love. Our money reveals the desires of our heart?
- Do we love the spread of the Gospel? Do we love seeing Jesus transform lives? Do we have a passion to see Jesus bring transformation to Molalla / Colton / Mulino / Beaver Creek and beyond? Then we give to see the Gospel expand and grow.
- Because of your generosity we were able to buy this building and remodel the former True Value space. Let me tell you one story of what God is doing in FSM because of generosity (**Video – Pastor Sam** - about the 20 street kids / explain)
- The expansion of the mission depends on ongoing generosity from people who love the gospel.
- The Gospel is expanding at Foothills once again.
  - We have a continual building project – Remodeling current space for the purpose of relationships. The Gospel expands through relationships. Foothills must grow in

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connecting people relationally as we become larger. We must never become a large impersonal church. (Relationships is a core value)

- Developing a Beavercreek campus. God has entrusted to us 10 acres for the purpose of the Gospel.
- Both of these will require increased generosity. Therefore let me give you some specific challenges. (This may seem impossible to some of you...that's the point!)
  - Raise \$1 million in the next year – HOW? \$1000 by 1000 people. Explain. Please do not take your normal giving and designate it to the building fund.
    - Some are already thinking: “I can’t give \$1000!” Some of you spend \$5 a day on coffee. Just do the math over a year.
    - Ask God for it. You may be amazed what He gives you to give away.
  - Increase monthly giving by \$10,000 per month. Current monthly giving will not sustain a second campus. Great time for some of you who have not yet made a decision to give on a regular basis to do so. (online giving) \$100 by 100 people
- How is this possible? When everyone does their faith part. All you have to do is your part God asks you to do. This is what mountain moving faith looks like.

*II Cor. 9:7-8 “You must each decide in your heart how much to give. And don’t give reluctantly or in response to pressure. “For God loves a person who gives cheerfully.”<sup>8</sup> 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)*

### **3. We serve as if the health of the church depends on it**

- A lack of serving makes the church unhealthy. The bible explains the church using the imagery of the human body – if eyes don’t see and legs don’t walk and hands don’t hold, then how can a body be healthy? If the body parts don’t function you have an unhealthy body.
- This is why it is so important for every person to find their place serving in the context of the church. The church can only be healthy as each person serves. The more people who serve the healthier the church becomes.

*I Cor. 12:7 “A spiritual gift is given to each of us so we can help each other.” (NLT)*

*I Peter 4:10 “God has given each of you a gift from his great variety of spiritual gifts. Use them well to serve one another.” (NLT)*

- God placed a spiritual gift in every follower of Jesus for the sole purpose of serving. Your gift helps others. No one person has all the gifts. This way we are interdependent on each other.
- Your gifting compliments other gifts. Therefore, if you withhold your serving you hurt and limit the effectiveness of other people.
- For example: Right now you’re watching my gift, but do you see the other gifts around me? I can’t run the sound / lights / slides / creativity to make the slides and graphics / the

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live stream / the hospitality / the children's workers so you can be here and listen. It is the gifts working together that make the impossible possible.

*Rom. 12:11 "Never be lazy, but work hard and serve the Lord enthusiastically." (NLT)*

- I love this verse because it gives me permission to be excited serving Jesus. All my life I have been told to calm down. Not going to happen! The greatest adventure of my life has been serving Jesus.
- In a growing church and with the addition of another campus we are going to need more people serving. This is your moment to get into the game. This is your time to help this church grow in health, and be a part of God doing the impossible.

HOW?

- There is a variety of things you can do
  - Go to the website
  - Contact a ministry leader
  - Make an appointment with Michelle Stoneking
  - Sign up on your blue card
  - Visit a ministry
  - Help us pioneer our new campus (host of roles needed)
  - Start praying asking God where He wants you to serve.

#### **4. We love as if the hope of the world depends on it**

- This world is filled with so much hatred. The relational climate in our country today is something I have never witnessed in my lifetime. The animosity, the polarization, the demonizing of others is unprecedented.
- Then add to this social media. The irony of social media is there isn't anything about it that's social. Social media creates pseudo relationships...fake relationships. No one has 913 friends.
- All the research out there indicates social media actually makes people more lonely and more unhappy. All this represents the climate our country...angry, isolated, unhappy and lonely people.
- If there was ever a time to show the world something different it is now. The church needs to step up and show the world what it looks like to love each other.

*John 13:34-35 "So now I am giving you a new commandment: Love each other. Just as I have loved you, you should love each other. Your love for one another will prove to the world that you are my disciples." (NLT)*

Two very important truths I want to point out.

- Jesus is the standard of what love looks like (love as I have loved you) How did Jesus love?
  - **Jesus loved unconditionally**

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People did not have to clean themselves up first / change behavior / or do any religious activity. He loved every person with no conditions attached to it. Do we love people like this? This needs to be the environment of this church.

- We will passionately love whoever walks through our doors.

- **Jesus loved sacrificially**

Jesus loved us so much He gave up His life for us. Unconditional love requires sacrifice. Do we just love when it's easy or do we sacrifice for the sake of loving others? Sacrifice our time / money / even our opinions so we can do the loving thing?

- **Jesus loved authentically** – This is why people flocked to Him. His love was real. He genuinely cared about the well-being of others / their hurts / their fears / their lives. His love wasn't a show it was genuine. When we can love others like this, the church becomes something the world desperately needs.

*Matt. 5:44-46 “But I say, love your enemies! Pray for those who persecute you! <sup>45</sup> In that way, you will be acting as true children of your Father in heaven. For he gives his sunlight to both the evil and the good, and he sends rain on the just and the unjust alike. <sup>46</sup> If you love only those who love you, what reward is there for that? Even corrupt tax collectors do that much.” (NLT)*

- We must show the world a different kind of love. We must become the light in the darkness Jesus talked about. Love sets us apart.
- Our love is the external observable proof we belong to Jesus. (the world will know) Love like this is something the world will notice. It is something they cannot manufacture. YET, it is something that will attract them to Jesus. The world will know you are my disciples if you love...”
  - It's not our buildings / programs / our technology that the world is going to be impressed with. WHY? Because they can do the very same things. It is our radical commitment to love they cannot manufacture. What they see is a group of people radically different yet profoundly loving one another. They see a living relational miracle that is unlike anything in their reality.
  - This is why the loving environment of this church is everything. The environment of a church that does the impossible is love. Without love the impossible can never be achieved. Without love, transformation can never happen.

How do we grow in love?

- Pray, asking God to pour His love in you. This world can make our love grow cold.

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- Choose to act in a loving manner before you feel like it. Stop waiting for loving feelings. Choose love first.
- Do something sacrificial to demonstrate love to someone else. Stop thinking about what you need. See what someone else needs and do it.
- Every time you are at Foothills make it your goal to be loving.

I believe the faith that Jesus talked about still moves mountains. Biblical mountain moving faith is not simply an agreement to a set of beliefs. It is a faith that creates mountain moving behaviors that Jesus empowers. Let's continue being a mountain moving kind of church.

**We pray as if our very lives depend on it**

**We give as if the success of the mission depends on it**

**We serve as if the health of the church depends on it**

**We love as if the hope of the world depends on it**

Prayer time

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