

Pillar Series Slide

Introduce Pillars Leadership emphasis

Summit Collab Summary

Pic of 15 Church Planters & wives

FROM JD GREER- Word from the LORD- Spirit spoke to me- and I believe he wants this church to hear it. So a lot of what I share is attributed to what God had JD deliver to us.

“Don’t Settle”- Luke 18:1-8; Matt 13:58; 15:21-28;

Luke 18:1-8

Now he told them a parable on the need for them to pray always and not give up.

2 “There was a judge in a certain town who didn’t fear God or respect people. 3 And a widow in that town kept coming to him, saying, ‘Give me justice against my adversary.’

4 “For a while he was unwilling, but later he said to himself, ‘Even though I don’t fear God or respect people, 5 yet because this widow keeps pestering me, I will give her justice, so that she doesn’t wear me out by her persistent coming.’ ”

6 Then the Lord said, “Listen to what the unjust judge says. 7 Will not God grant justice to his elect who cry out to him day and night? Will he delay helping them? 8 I tell you that he will swiftly grant them justice. Nevertheless, when the Son of Man comes, will he find faith on earth? ”

Negative example

Matt 13:58

And he did not do many miracles there because of their unbelief.

The miracle worker was here; he visited here; he loved the people... we experienced his teaching and presence, but there were a lot of miracles he *didn’t* do because we just gave up and settled instead of pressing in for the miracles.

Positive example

Matthew 15:21-28

21 When Jesus left there, he withdrew to the area of Tyre and Sidon. 22 Just then a Canaanite woman from that region came and kept crying out, “Have mercy on me, Lord, Son of David! My daughter is severely tormented by a demon.”

23 Jesus did not say a word to her. His disciples approached him and urged him, “Send her away because she’s crying out after us.”

24 He replied, “I was sent only to the lost sheep of the house of Israel.”

25 But she came, knelt before him, and said, “Lord, help me! ”

26 He answered, “It isn’t right to take the children’s bread and throw it to the dogs.”

27 “Yes, Lord,” she said, “yet even the dogs eat the crumbs that fall from their masters’ table.”

28 Then Jesus replied to her, “Woman, your faith is great. Let it be done for you as you want.” And from that moment her daughter was healed.

IOW, I know I’m unworthy, even like a dog, but there’s so much grace in your heart that there’s even enough for dogs like me! In Mark’s Gospel, Mark records Jesus responding by saying

We see a divinely approved unwillingness to settle for God’s first answer; an unwillingness to let certain dreams go.

Or, I think of Jacob **wrestling with God**: “I won’t let you go until you bless me.”

Pillars Pray to Cultivate. Full of Grit.

They don’t settle. I know it sounds crazy= but I’ve just showed you a few examples of the persistence of prayer.

1) Don’t settle in your prayers for family & friends.

- If there’s one thing Jesus teaches over and over about prayer, it’s “don’t give up.” That’s the theme of BOTH of Jesus’ parables about prayer in Luke 11/18... identical parables.

Prayers for my kids- my wife- my friends- in Echo that I've been able to (after years) and sometimes feeling that there is no movement- have been answered.

Luke 18 parable starts with "so that they would pray and not give up"

- Some things we fail to receive because in the 11th hour because we give up praying in the 10th hour
- In his book ***Release the Power of Prayer***, George Mueller tells the story of how he committed to pray for five young men—friends of his sons—to be saved. He committed to pray daily until they became believers. It was 18 months before the first one came to faith in Christ. (Which is a long time—18 months is over 500 days. Have you ever prayed for the same thing 500 days in a row without seeing an answer?) When that first friend was saved, Mueller wrote in his journal how he praised God for the answer, but that there were four more left. So he kept praying. After another five years, the second came to Christ. He kept praying. Another six years, the third one came to Christ. He kept praying. 52 years later—63 years after he had started praying, and a few years after his death, for these 5 young men by name—the final two were brought to faith in Christ.
- Mueller kept meticulous prayer journals, and over his lifetime he cataloged 50,000 answers to prayer. But here's the thing: Of those 50,000 answers to prayer, only 5,000 came on the day he asked for them. For 45,000 of them (90% of them!), he had to persist for a while. George Mueller wrote: 'Don't let yesterday's seemingly unanswered prayers stop you from praying in faith today.'

Don't Give Up!

2) Don't settle in your yearning for Spiritual Revival.

PSALM 126 is all about spiritual restoration, and the Psalmist identifies 2 ways that God brings it

Psalm 126:4-6

**4 Restore our fortunes, Lord,
like watercourses in the Negev.**

**5 Those who sow in tears
will reap with shouts of joy.**

**6 Though one goes along weeping,
carrying the bag of seed,
he will surely come back with shouts of joy,
carrying his sheaves.**

The first is in vs 5. The Psalmist talks about "sowing with tears."

- The desert region of Israel is called the Negev, and it's very difficult to get any seed to grow there.
- The Psalmist is imagining soil so arid that seeds planted needed to be watered individually, with tears.
- Imagine how many hours of excruciating labor and what exhausting patience that would take--in a dry land with no water, digging individual holes, planting one seed at a time, and watering them with your tears.
- This is the normal way that God often works through us in the world.
- We patiently plant the seeds of God's Word in the hearts of those around us, water them with our tears, and fertilize them with our faith.
- But, God works another way, too. The psalmist prays, "Restore our fortunes like streams in the Negev."
- But, Derek Kidner says, God works another way, too. The psalmist prays, "Restore our fortunes like streams in the Negev."
- (PIC OF DESERT BLOOM) This is not the Negev, this is in Chile, but the terrain is very similar
 - But once every 30–40 years, they have a torrential monsoon, where they get 7 years of rain in 12 hours. It forms streams in the desert, and a couple of days later, when the waters recede, this is what it leaves...
- This also happened in the Negev. The psalmist imagines God doing this among the hearts of wandering Israelites.

Yearning for an outpouring like this didn't negate the psalmist's responsibility to plant the seeds and patiently water them with tears. But it does give him a hope that he refuses to relinquish, a hope that God will again send his Spirit into his land, like a flood.

3) Don't settle for less than God called our church to be ...multiplying, diverse, & reaching the next generation.

NEXT GEN

Our next gen ministries are just getting started- Meghan & Cade.

- this has to be more than just giving kids a safe/fun experience- raising them up to be pillars in the church and community.

High school graduates today. One of them my son.

Huge part of our calling here was to reach college students.

There are two commonalities to almost all the great revivals in history...

College students & Prayer

With done that with some beautiful stories-
...but we are about to go into with a brand new fervor, intention and leadership.
PATE HIRE.

Very strategic- unlike we've ever been before- Summit Collab help.

See an increasing number of students coming to know Jesus.

MULTIPLYING- CHURCH PLANTING

We've supported church plants with money, even sent some people to be a part of teams...but have never raised up a planter and team. I've prayed for this from day 1- and we're not stopping.

WHAT NEW CHURCHES DO

Will God call you to plant?

College students are so important to our strategy for Church Planting- multiplying our church.

Huge part of our leadership initiative and cohort

DIVERSITY

- Its hard to be a church that reaches diverse kinds of people... is it profitable for the mission? There's a trend right now to give up on any kind of diversity
- Two truths to hold in tension
 - Truth 1: Like reaches like: Just a fact. Race, age, culture, education, income. Arguing against that is like arguing against nature itself.
 - And sometimes it's helpful to lean into that: Peter and Paul blessed each other went separate ways: Peter was Apostle to the Jews
 - Truth 2: We should strive to be inclusive communities as a sign of the gospel (with a unity around the gospel)
 - **Paul couldn't make it clearer: Eph 3: mystery of the church. His strategy:** in Philippi, don't go over here and do a 1st Jewish church and over there First Gentile Church
 - Whole council is formed in Acts 15 to figure out how Jews and Gentiles live together

- Simon the Zealot and Tax Collector- Maybe Jesus made them room together in the same tent.
- we should be discipling people toward this kind of inclusivity: age, class, income, ethnicity, culture....all of it) that's why Eph 3 and Romans 14 are in the Bible!
- How I resolve it:
 - **Both truths must be acknowledged and remain front of mind** (Heresy comes from embracing one truth at the expense of the others)
 - I know you'd prefer to be a fundamentalist with one: but that's not what we do.
 - **The NT leans toward inclusive, not homogenous communities** (Peter leaned toward homogeneity; Paul, based on his writings, leaned toward inclusion) NT after Acts 13, follows Paul, not Peter!
 - **I want to hear more testimonies like I did yesterday:** At Summit Collab, we heard stories of Muslims coming to faith in Jesus, people in the LGBTQ community coming to faith in Jesus, college students from different countries around the world coming to faith in Christ- then taking it back home and leading their families to follow Jesus.
 - **"Left Lucy":** A few years ago, I got a letter from a young lady in her twenties that included a picture of her being baptized at one of our church services. I hadn't been there that day, and she wanted to tell me her story.

When she first came to our church, she wasn't a Christian. She was anti-Christian, if anything. She was a Berkeley grad doing post-doc work at one of the universities. She'd visited our church a few times with friends, but she told me that the first personal interaction we'd had was over Twitter. She had said something snarky in response to a pro-life post I had put up. Normally I don't respond to snipes on Twitter, but I did on this one, and I'm not even sure why. I had no idea she went to our church--I think her Twitter handle was something like "LeftLucy." We went back and forth a couple of times, then we dropped it and I never thought about it again until this letter showed up at my office.

"I was 'LeftLucy,'" she told me, "and I didn't like your pro-life stance. But I kept coming to the church, and eventually I was convinced by the truth of the gospel." She'd been there several months now, and she'd been growing by leaps and bounds.

She told me, "I knew you were pro-life; I knew you thought gay marriage was wrong. I knew that . . . but even though those things were clear, you didn't make the Summit the 'Republican church.' If you had, I would never have been able to bring myself to go. But because you didn't, I heard the gospel, and I got saved." Now she's in the process of relearning everything. Her politics are changing because her heart has changed.

- Church- we are not going to give up on LeftLucy and settle for reaching only white, upper class, middle aged Republicans.

We're not gonna make the meat of our conversations about exalting or tearing down a political party or president. Online or elsewhere.

And that means that we need to let the Bible and the Holy Spirit guide us into ministry that can be perceived as political- but really its just obeying the Scripture.

IMMIGRANTS, POOR, Crisis pregnancy centers like PORTICO- We are- will continue to and still do even more in these areas- COMPLETELY Guided by God's PRO_LIFE ethic from womb to tomb- NOT by the political climate of America.

When we have political or racial or tension in our church- it can be a good thing- because our diversity is increasing and we'll lean into the HS and unite around our common savior and common mission.

And by the way- that means you have to look at your community group differently-

THIS IS THE KIND OF CHURCH WE WANT TO BE AND MULTIPLY

4) Don't settle in your walk with God.

- **Be zealous about holiness:**
- the greatest gift you can give to other people is your personal holiness. JC Ryle
- **Grace & Grit Slide**
- Power of indwelling sin: You have to die to yourself as much today as ever. Gal 5: The flesh wars against the Spirit and the Spirit against the flesh, so that the flesh is always pulling against you, and it will do that until the day you die...
- The whole of the Christian life is a series of deaths: you never get over that and it never gets easy
- Like John Owen said: "Be killing sin or it will be killing you"
- **Be zealous about your prayer life**
- **Acts 6:** You can't see this in English, but there's a definite article in Greek before prayer, so that what it says is "We will devote ourselves to the prayer and the ministry of the word." (**Acts 6:4**) Which means they are equal. Both are the ministries they are dedicating themselves to.
- We see prayer as preparation for the ministry, but they saw prayer as the ministry. We think prayer "before the work"; they saw prayer as the work.
- You start to take your spiritual life for granted when life gets busy...you get discouraged...distracted.

Back to 4)

Some of you are here today- and you have a deep sense of frustration- because you've tried a million things...a million ways to try and find God...

Here's the good news. He's not hiding. He's inviting.

God doesn't ask you to get it all right first- GOSPEL

Conclusion

If there's one conclusion for all this, it's to spend more time in prayer.

A fear about our church is that we become people of great technique and training and preaching and multiplication but not prayer.

Jesus said in **Mark 11:17**, "**My house shall be called a house of prayer for all nations.**" It's importance to note the passive tense in that. This is not what the church calls itself, it's how others describe the church. It's not so much about our aspirations, but our reputation. Is this our church's reputation in the city?

I want us to be a movement characterized by prayer, both privately and publicly...

- Privately: Is this what people know about you?
- Disciples asked Jesus, "Teach us to pray." Jesus prayed all night before making decisions often.
- And in your churches: ***Focus more on prayer.*** When I say "become people of prayer," some of us think exclusively about "the prayer closet"
- But what characterizes Acts is the church at prayer:
 - In 26 of 28 chapters mentions prayer, and it's almost always the church at prayer!
 - WE haven't done this well. And its my fault. I get discouraged...and I've settled.
 - Most of the great movements happened from prayer: Acts 13: greatest mission movement came out of a prayer meeting, not a missions sermon
- **"We will never see much change for the better in our churches until the prayer meeting occupies a higher place in the esteem of Christians."- Charles Spurgeon**

Don't settle! Let's ask God to do great things...