**40 DAYS OF PURPOSE WRAP UP**

**How we will be different because of what we’ve learned**

**3/19/17**

**I. Introduction:**

As we came to the conclusion of our 40-day campaign, I was preparing to begin preaching on the next series of messages, that I am excited about leading into Easter on, “How to live the life of Jesus in you.” But as I prepared the first message, I just felt in my spirit that we aren’t done. The thought I had was… “What we’ve been learning and experiencing this last 40-days is just so significant we need to pause and let it soak in more”. We are going to have a “40 Days’” celebration night a week from Tuesday, to praise God for what He did and hear testimonies, but I felt we needed this time to pause and reflect on what we’ve learned and how we are going to be different because of it.

A. In James 1:22-25 we read, *“Do not merely listen to the word, and so deceive yourselves. Do what it says. Anyone who listens to the word but does not do what it says is like someone who looks at his face in a mirror and after looking at himself, goes away and immediately forgets what he looks like. But whoever looks intently into the perfect law that gives freedom, and continues in it –not forgetting what they have heard, but doing it-they will be blessed in what they do.”*

In other words, God doesn’t want us just to have taken a tour through some inspiring thoughts and messages, He wants us to claim what we’ve learned as new territory that we begin to walk in. He wants us to be different from what we’ve learned. One of the ways we really become different when we study the Bible is by remembering and reminding ourselves over and over in our mind of what we’ve learned and discovered.

Deut. 11:2 (TEV) *“Remember today what you have learned about the Lord through your experiences with Him.”*

Over and over we see in different places that we’re called to meditate on what God has said and done. It’s not a pretty picture but it is what is meant by the word “meditate.” The Bible word for meditation comes from what a cow does when it “chews its cud.” It is actually regurgitating what it ate and chewing on it some more.

B. I have been reflecting on what “revival” is. Revival is asking God to take a work He’s done in us in the past and do it again in a deeper way. The key part of the word revival is the “re”. We ask God to re-new us, re-dig the wells, re-build the altars, re-establish. God doesn’t just give us past revelations and experiences, He builds on those over and over. We are to re-member our first love… go back and re-taste what God gave us as a basis for receiving more. I will often sing old songs that were points of contact with God in the past, often they lead me to experience God in new ways.

**II. So let’s remember somethings God has done and taught us**

1. One of the things God has done in these last 40 days is to raise up new people among us, ordinary people to do extraordinary things in Jesus’ name.

**Some things I am so thankful for:**

* 95 people commit to 40 days of prayer for this campaign.
* 16 people go to Huatabampo to minister there, 1 to the Philippines. Yesterday between the food packing and McArthur outreach, we had 70 volunteer to serve our community.
* We had 54 Life Group hosts step out to host, “What on earth am I here for”, several for the very first time. There may be more but some that I’m aware for the first time here at HFTW included:

Dustin and Ashley Ward, Kristen Chastain, Gene and Lisa Telles

Steve and Claudia Alexander, David and Cheri Coffelt, Norma Rivas

Albert and Marcy Juarez, Orlando Caro, Virginia Ruedas, Rita Ruedas

Dale Yerion, Doug and Rita Beckman

We said that a leader is someone willing to risk failure for the possibility of making a difference for the Lord. Because of all of our hosts I think there was over 350 people who attended groups. One thing I know for sure… the goal of our church growing warmer through fellowship has definitely occurred. Strangers became friends and friends became family. A lot of people shared with me that they felt that warmth in our service last Sunday, when we celebrated my healing. Among other things I know of, for sure there were 3 people who accepted Jesus through these groups.

* So many have begun serving in lots of other ways, as well, during this time. One thing I was blessed by was, that this is the first campaign in which both our kid’s ministry and youth did the same lessons and projects with us. In one of the middle school/junior high classes, they were talking about how it takes over 70 volunteers just to do our kids ministry every Sunday. The Junior High were very moved by that and 7 of them volunteered for the nursery.

It has been so amazing how just since the first of the year, God has been stirring up people in our church to start missions and outreaches. I shared with you around the first of the year, how I so felt God was moving the ministry from the pulpit into the community. How he so moved me to remind everyone, that as pastors we’re the administrators but you are ministers and the missionaries. You are the vision God gave me so many years ago to turn this city into the easiest place to get to Heaven from in the U.S. and to be a neighborhood church that would literally have a world-wide mission. It wasn’t going to happen through me, but through you being the fearless army of compassion.

I shared how early in my ministry it was marked by a lot of people watching and cheering me on to go preach and do powerful works, but that at this stage I would be the one watching you and cheering you. This is being so confirmed with these ministries bursting forth… Anapra, Carmen’s closet, Jacob and Isaiah going to Juarez, Tommie and the detention center, a ministry team in Carizozo, East Juarez, McArthur School, the hotels on Picacho Street, what our care team is doing to launch this Tuesday night a healing and recovery ministry. We keep getting that this is a “Kairos moment”- meaning a moment in which divine favor and divine opportunity unite, for divine breakthroughs to be multiplied.” … Prophetic word…

B. Another thing that we learned in these last 6 weeks is that God still does miracles.

Ps. 77:14 (LB) says, *“You are the God of miracles and wonders! You still demonstrate Your awesome power.”*

I mentioned how one of our prayer groups prayed over a quilt, that a lady in our church makes for people who are in long term recovery. We took it to a cousin of mine in ICU, who had been in a coma and was on a ventilator after a stroke. Within a day her situation had turned around; she was back conscious and able to breathe on her own.

My daughter Anna at the beginning of the campaign had suffered for a month, with such intense stomach pain that she couldn’t eat or sleep. She went to the doctor and had many tests. But in spite of her intense pain, during the week, she came to the Habitation Service we had. Near the end, Sue Yeager had a word, based on the friends who brought their friend on a stretcher to Jesus. She had a word of knowledge about a stomach condition. It was almost like a bingo night. Anna and her husband, Joe both yelled out, “It’s me.” As people gathered around her to pray, God touched her. That night the pain disappeared. She slept like a baby that night and has slept and eaten normally ever since.

**III. Another thing we learned is that we are born for a unique purpose that God has individually designed each one of us for.** We are not an accident, and that purpose is not based on our achievement or our ability but God’s grace and design.

*Gal. 1:15-16 MSG, “Even then God had designs on me. Why, when I was still in my mother’s womb he chose and called me out of sheer generosity! Now He has intervened and revealed His Son to me so that I might joyfully tell non-Jews about Him.”*

*John 15:16 MSG, “You didn’t choose me, remember; I chose you, and put you in the world to bear fruit, fruit that won’t spoil. As fruit bearers, whatever you ask the Father in relation to me, he gives you.”*

I think what is so significant about this is that our purpose isn’t something we have to find or strive to make happen; it is going to happen not because we’re good but because He’s good. It’s going to happen not because we are summoning God to come and do something, or make something happen, but God has summoned us to abide in Him and trust Him to do what he has already planned and promised to do from before the foundation of the world. As we just seek His purposes.

It’s not because we have it all together; it is because in spite of us, He is at work for us, in us, and through us and has chosen us, even to use our weaknesses. We are flawed, fragile people, with lots of failures… but He has promised to use us in our weaknesses if we just yield.

I heard about some brand of jeans that has on the label “intentionally flawed” God has intentionally allowed us with all of our flaws and weaknesses to be used by Him, so that He gets all of the glory, and we don’t have anything we can brag about. \*Dr. Antony

**IV. He is going to empower us to fulfill our purpose and destiny as we seek to fulfill the 5 purposes that He has laid out in His word for us as individuals and for us as a church.**

A. Can we review what those 5 purposes are?

**1. We were planned for God’s pleasure that is called worship.**

At the heart of this is what we said, “It’s all about God, it’s not about me.”

*“God is the one who made all things, and all things are for His glory. He wanted to have many children to share His glory…” (Heb. 2:10a NCV)*

*“Everything got started in Him and finds its purpose in Him.” (Col. 1:16 MSG)*

**2. We were formed for God’s family that is called fellowship.**

God didn’t just make us to be a believer at church but a “belonger”.

The reason we are so passionate about these life groups is, that for tens of thousands of people in our city, the only chance that they will ever have to experience what a true spiritual family is in the church as part of a small group.

**3. We were created to become like Christ that is called discipleship.**

One of the primary reasons for the church is to teach us the truth and habits that it takes to really grow in maturity as a Christian because there is no higher purpose in life than to be transformed and learn to choose to live, serve, love, and have integrity like Jesus had.

So much of life won’t make sense until we get this. The hassles, the trials, and temptations are all about teaching us how to respond to life in ways that we get better not bitter. Tests are how we change and grow, we could never become like Christ without them.

**4. We were shaped to serve God that is called ministry.**

God doesn’t just exist to serve us; we were made to serve Him. Actually, the joy and pleasure of being a Christian comes when we are making a difference in other people’s lives.

**5. We were made for a mission, the Bible word for that is evangelism.**

One of the other things that we’ve learned in this campaign is that our community is hungry for God.

*“Look around you! Vast fields of human souls are ripening all around us, and are ready now for reaping.” (John 4:35 LB)*

In our outreaches, in invitations to come to some of our groups. As we’ve gone out and asked people if they would like prayer. It has been confirmed over and over, people all around us are interested and hungry for God.

B. One of the really important reasons we actually wanted to go through these is that they define not only what God has called us to be as individuals but they define what we are to be about as a church family. They define the reason the church exists, and the basis of the vision we have together.

One of the reasons, as pastors and elders, we wanted to do this campaign was not only to help each of us personally grow, but to lay the groundwork for us as a church to operate in one mind and one purpose together to accomplish the greatest good.

One of the questions I’ve asked God in many different ways is: “What are you trying to do to these dear people?” I believe this series describes it. What He is trying to do to us is unite us around these 5 purposes, to do them together every way we can, everywhere we can, not only here but around the world, so that He gets the glory and people everywhere learn how to live as whole, healthy, complete and transformed people in the power of Jesus’ name.

Everything we are going to try and do in the next few years is to further one of these 5 purposes. In fact, let me give you examples of specific goals we have that you can be praying with us about, in terms of expanding these 5 purposes in our church.

1. We have the goal in the next 24 months to significantly expand the opportunities for more people to experience God’s presence through worship.
   * We have a vision to start a Saturday night service, that will especially allow us to give vital support for our youth ministry. Having an adult service, we will both be able to serve those in our city who have to work on Sunday mornings and have a place for families who want to bring their youth.
   * We also are making it a big deal that our youth can go to the Desperation Conference in Colorado Springs this June, a conference filled with worship and the presence of God.
   * We hope to start this summer to launch the remodeling of our kid’s worship area. We are believing for another couple of hundred thousand of our Daring Faith funds to come in so we can… Have great improvement in the kid’s chapel and the nursery and pre-k wing.
2. In terms of fellowship we are going to be intentional about multiplying spiritual families, we call life groups so that hundreds more people will have the chance to have a spiritual family. We’re still aiming for 70.

We are going to be intentional this summer in creating lots of multigenerational fun events where people can hang out. Where our kids can make friends with each other. Where lots of strangers become friends and friends become family.

1. In terms of discipleship. These Equip 101-501 classes are going to be the key to helping all of us take the next step in their journey to becoming like Christ.

101 is going to help people move from fan to follower… a huge step is water baptism.

201 is our membership which will help you move from an attender to a “belonger”.

301 is our discipleship class learn how to study the Bible on your own, how to move from a watcher to a worshiper.

401 is our ministry class where you will learn how to unwrap your spiritual gift and put it to work in ministry. If you want to help disciple someone, one of the greatest things is to simply bring someone with you to one of these seminars that maybe is newer than you in the Lord and then be a spiritual partner with you.

\*One of the tools that we gave you that can help you define who you are and where specifically you might want to focus your next step of discipleship on is the Spiritual Health Assessment. I have some copies of these at the kiosk and they will be on the app as well.

We have also started HFTW Leadership Institute, a mentoring program especially for those who think God may be calling them to be a missionary or church planter.

1. In terms of service, we are identifying some 50 ministry responsibilities that we all could help with for Easter, so that you can get your feet wet, and try out some areas of service, even if you only have a couple of hours to give.
2. In terms of missions, we have several mission projects that we will be focusing on together. Both local missions like the McArthur School project and many other community outreaches as well as international. The biggest of which will be to help us build the compassion center in Anapra and be part of our monthly outreaches there. We will also be leading ministry teams to Acuna Mexico, the Philippines, and Zambia.

**IV. So what do we now?** So how do we start living what we’ve learned.

John 13:17 NIV, *Jesus said… “Now that you know these things, you will be blessed if you do them.”*

**A couple of key things:**

A. **Pass it on!** The more you share what you’ve learned with others and involve them in your journey in God, the more you will keep growing. Pass it on, means being in a group where you are sharing your journey with others. It also means reaching out. We are about to make over 3000 invitations to our Easter services. We are inviting you now to write down the names of people you’d like to invite on a prayer card and we will pray for them. We will be making invitation bags with candy on April 8.

B. **Take the next step.** As I’ve mentioned one thing God provides all of us with no matter how long we have been serving the Lord is a next step. There is a next step for me, there is a next step for you. Whether it is water baptism, confessing your faith in Christ, becoming a member of a church, joining a life group, serving in ministry, starting a ministry, going on a mission trip, inviting people to church. As I mentioned the Spiritual Health Assessment is a great tool to help you identify what your next step should be.

*(2 Tim. 2:2b CEV) “Now I want you to tell these same things to (other) followers who can be trusted to tell others also.”*

C. **Turn what you’ve discovered about God into decisions you make for God.** As we have said. We don’t grow by what we hear or by what we wish. We grow by what we commit to.

Living the life, we were put on earth to live doesn’t happen by accident: it happens on purpose. It happens because we define what we believe the life God has called us to live is and then decide forcefully and intentionally that this will be the life we will live.

1. What we see in Jesus’ life is that from beginning to end He decided to live His calling. As a 12-year old boy He went to the temple and told his parents

Luke 12:49 NKJV, “*Did you not know that I must be about my Father’s business.”*

John 17:4, When he got to his last time of prayer in the garden

*“I have glorified You on the earth. I have finished the work which You have given me to do.”* And his last words on the cross were, “It is finished.”

Paul said, this *one thing I do, forgetting what was behind I press toward the mark for the prize.*

There are just so many distractions, difficulties, and detours. It is the most natural thing for our life to become a zig zag instead of an arrow that aims for the target. We like to say if you don’t stand for something you are liable to fall for anything.

*Proverbs says, “An intelligent person aims at what wise action a fool starts off in many directions.”*

“The whales that chased sardines: These great creatures destined for the high seas prostituted their potential and lost their destinies aiming for small desires.”

2. In the book we learned that there are 5 decisions that purpose driven people make that help them hit their mark

* The decision to make God the center of their life not themselves or other people.
* The decision to make God’s community of people the companions of their life, because those who walk with the wise will be wise.
* The decision to make Jesus’ values the character of your life, your standard of right and wrong.
* The decision to make the contribution of your life, serving Jesus with the gifts that he’s given you.
* The decision to make the communication of your life, the sharing of the Good News of the gospel of Jesus.

In Chapter 40 you are challenged to write your own life mission statement. One way to do that he suggests is to write your own eulogy. I love what Andy Stanley said, “You are going to end up somewhere you might as well end up there on purpose.” I thought it was a great idea so I’ve done that. I’ve also worked on the speech for my 50th wedding anniversary. We planned 50 things we want to happen before we reach 50 years married.

Here’s a little of what I wrote. First I worked on my last words.

*Jesus I am yours and you are mine. Into your hands I commit my spirit. I might borrow the words of Rick Warren’s Dad for the last words to my family- “one more soul for Jesus”.*

*We are gathered here today, to celebrate the life of Dale Walker. He fulfilled God’s purpose for his life in his generation. He loved his beloved wife passionately for their 65 years, holding her hand with his final breath. He continually let his children, their spouses, his grandkids, great grandkids, and great, great grandkids (hoping for 80) how proud he was of them. He lived to see them exceed in every way his success and contribution to the world. All of them are serving the Lord. They are taught by the Lord and they are shining lights of His glory.*

*He was the pastor of 2 churches, full of people he loved with all of his heart and who loved him back. They were gold to him, his joy and his crown. He led them with integrity and taught them the whole counsel of God. The faith, obedience, and service of this church became famous throughout the entire world.*

*Well over 10 million came to Christ just last year through the witness of those sent out from this church and those discipled by them. They have been part of making the city of Las Cruces and the state of NM, a completely different state, definitely the easiest place in America to get to Heaven from. They and their descendants are godly, Christ-like people who worship, love, serve, grow, and witness to others with intense passion and loyalty.*

*Though he made so many mistakes, he walked in integrity and obedience to His master Jesus Christ to his final breath. There his last words were, “I am yours Jesus and you are mine, into your hands I commit my spirit”.*

As I’ve said these are not just wishes but they are decisions that have to be lived out on purpose every day. One of the key ways we do this is by trusting the blood of the Lamb but also by using the word of our testimony. I wrote this taking much of it from the words of an African martyr, who I believe expressed the decision I’m talking about beautifully.

I want to make this clarification that as we make these declarations, we are not declaring what we can do but what Christ can do through us. As Christians we live by faith, that means declaring things that are not as though they were, because we believe that God is going to work within us to will and to do of His good pleasure. Let’s stand and if you’d like we will declare it together.