

First Sunday at CoHatch!

Testimonies and Exhortation

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Full Text (for reading on your own)

Testimonies (from Peter and Megan)

Megan and Peter shared a number of testimonies from their family trip out west. Please listen to the audio recording from about 0:00 - 21:30.

When listening to the testimonies, note that there are some small, practical instructional pieces about ministering, sharing the gospel, etc. The theme of the testimonies was the “normal life of sharing Jesus” everywhere we go - especially outside the church.

Everything about God is actual, not theoretical. We share testimonies because knowing God produces fruit - naturally! We overcome the evil one by the blood of the Lamb and the word of our testimony. Testimonies in fact are even as the spirit of prophecy - they propagate more testimonies!

When Paul entered towns in Acts, we see that he often prioritized testimonies. *“Now when they had come and gathered the church together, **they reported all that God had done with them, and that He had opened the door of faith to the Gentiles.**”* (Acts 14:27)

Testimonies are also instructive. When I was with a friend who gave food to a homeless person, I learned something new about how to minister to homeless persons.

You don't always have time to share the whole gospel, so get yourself some gospel tracts (we have them). I can't wait to meet the people in heaven that are going to be there because I gave them a gospel tract. Sometimes you just don't have time and that's all that you can do and that's powerful! It's that simple and it only takes a minute!

Remember, the disciples at times saw testimonies but their hearts remained hardened and not changed by the testimony. It's really key that whenever we see a testimony in our lives that we soften our hearts to such an extent that we allow the testimony to speak of Who God is. The biggest problem you'll have in the Word of God is if you read the Word of God intellectually instead of to encounter Him. The biggest problem you'll have with testimonies is if you receive them transactionally instead of as encounter with Him. Every testimony emanates from the heart of God.

This is why faith works by love and we only speak the truth in love. So every time you see the grace of God exhibited it is actually an invitation to deeper relationship with God.

Exhortation (from Megan)

The Lord is moving and He wants us to prepare for that new move. The Lord's been speaking to me (Megan) about making space for Him.

It's the picture of pruning. If you've seen an apple orchard, you know that at the beginning of the season (right before they prune) there is tons of growth on the plant. Then vinedresser prunes it all back and it will look almost like he killed the trees. But the thing is you cannot have new growth in an orchard (and you won't produce any fruit that year either) if you don't prune.

Sometimes the pruning of the Lord in our lives is painful - especially if we are putting our trust and hope in those things the Lord has done. But if our trust is in Him, when He prunes us, then we're not thinking "boy, He's not going to fill us up again." That's really why the pruning of the Lord is often painful ... because we don't trust Him that in His goodness that He will bring more fruit.

I believe that August and also to some extent September are about being ready for what He's about to do. A lot of times we expect the "thing that God's about to do" to be a big experience. However, think of a football game. We think "that's the thing; the game is the big thing." But the kickoff of the football game is actually not the beginning of the game. The beginning of the game has come months and months prior to that with all the practice for all the players. The ticket sales and preparation of the grounds all led up to that moment as well. What we think of as the beginning is not the beginning. There is a lot of preparation beforehand.

When Jesus came it was one of the most huge events of all time yet only a few people observed it. The place where He came was where there was ROOM.

In this season it is going to look different for everybody. We are not talking about making space specifically at Agathos. We are talking about you, each of you, individually, as a tree planted by streams of water ... you are to allow the Lord to prune you so that He can bear much fruit in you in this season. He have to trust that He wants to bear much fruit in us.

Thinking about the parable of the young virgins, realize that all of the virgins fell asleep. The problem was that some of them were prepared and some of them were not. This is a season of preparation. We're going to go about our daily lives and we going to do what we do, but if we're prepared we will be ready when His move comes! We will be ready to go in with Him.

Part of this is the Lord saying He wants us to not despise small beginnings. The small beginnings are the very first day of practice. The small beginnings are the person getting all the ticket sales ready.

The small beginnings are preparing the grounds. None of that, to your eyes, looks like the football game - looks like the BIG event. But without that, there is not the BIG event.

In Zechariah 4:10 (NLT) Zechariah says “*Do not despise these small beginnings, for the Lord rejoices to see the work begin, to see the plumb line in Zerubbabel’s hand.*” We have to think like God thinks. First of all, when you build a building, the plumb line comes out after you’ve cleared space. You clear space and before you build you drop the plumb line. Do you know why God is excited to see the plumb line? Because He knows that the things that He begins He will finish! Anything that He starts, He will bring it through to completion. That’s why He’s excited to see the beginning. He’s excited to see the small beginning because He knows that when He begins a thing He will bring it through to completion!

In the preparation, I’m also remembering the widow who was going to have to sell her two sons because she didn’t have enough money to pay her debts. She says “I only have this little jar of oil.” Elisha, the prophet, said “go gather as many jars as you can from all the people you know. Go get them and once you have them, start pouring.” This is what the Lord is saying to us “go gather your jars! Gather them up.”

I don’t know what it looks like for each of you individually. I think there is a place of regret. The Lord says there are things in our hearts and our minds that are taking up space that He wants to come and fill. But if we do not let go of them then He cannot come and fill it. I think regret is a major thing where the Lord is saying “I want you to make space for Me and I want you to let go of regret.”

There are many different kinds of regret. Historically it has been really difficult for me to clean and make room for stuff in our household. I was asking God “what is it that is causing it to be hard for me to let go of some things?” He said “it’s regret.”

There are multiple types of regret. One regret is because you have something and you regret not taking care of it properly or doing what you ought to have done with it so you want to keep it because you feel like “oh, I should really take care of it.” God is saying “I am not feeling bad about what you did not do correctly. So you do not need to hold onto those things that you did not do correctly.” We need to give those things to the Lord because that is taking up space where the Lord is going to do something in your life.

The other type of regret is “I don’t want to let go of this thing because I don’t trust that if I let go of it that if I need it you will bring me back something ... but right now it is taking up space.” We don’t trust Him that He’s good enough that even if we lose something He will restore it or replace it ... or give us exactly what we need when the time comes. Regret is a major thing the Lord wants us to give up to make space for Him.

There are lots of other things in our individual lives and really you have to ask the Lord what those things are that need to be pruned and taken away to make space. He has SO MUCH He wants to give YOU. But He has been showing me “but I can’t give it to you if there’s no room there.”

He’s going to fill the room that we make for Him!

I want to encourage us to make room for Him in this season - to prepare! The preparation is the beginning of His work. This is the NOW.

His Presence is Where He is Calling you to Go! (Peter)

About 3 months ago I had been searching for the Lord’s presence for about a week. It was a very weird thing for me. I said “Lord, where are you at?” He said “when’s the last time you felt My presence?” I said “a week ago.” He said “what were you doing then?” I said “contemplating writing the Facebook post that was a real stretch for me that You told me to write.” He said “what are you doing now?” I said “still thinking about writing it.”

Here’s what He said ... “My presence is so with you where I am asking you to go that because you’ve not stepped in to where I’m asking you to go, you’re trying to find Me.”

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Jesus said “behold, I’m with you even unto the end of the age.” That means you have to step out in a way the requires His presence to test Him on His Word. “Just trust Me ... if you step out, you’ll find out that I’m with you! You will behold it with your own eyes!”

God didn’t move our church to CoHatch just to give us a new space. God arranged for us to be here. There is a purpose for us to be here and His purpose isn’t just for us to have a space. The purpose here has to do with each of us individually. Therefore it also has to do with us corporately as a church family. But the leading or primary purpose has to do with each of us individually. When Megan is saying “make room.” It is not because Megan and I are drafting up 19 different ministries that we want the church as an organization to start now that we’re here. But we are a family and what God’s doing here in bringing us here and the season that this represents for our church is going to impact you personally in the best of ways. So the responsibility is not to make room so that you can come to an extra mid-week gathering. The responsibility is to make room so that when you are on vacation the Lord works through you ... or whatever it looks like for you. It’s my connection with God in context. But your context is different than my context.

If we’ll make room, He will fill it. There’s the clearing, then there’s the plumb line for building. “Lord whatever You’re doing in this season, don’t do it without me!” This is going to be a 2020, clarity of

vision of season. God is already positioning us in this season. We've moved into this space and it was a divine set-up. Let's make room for Him to move.