

BHOP Forerunner Gathering – RICHEL PARKS

Cultivating Lifestyle and Message of the Kingdom

I. BHOP VISION #2: TO CULTIVATE WORSHIPING INTERCESSORS IN A PROPHETIC ENVIRONMENT WHO LIVE A FASTED LIFESTYLE, GROW IN THE KNOWLEDGE OF THE LORD AND ARE STIRRED WITH THE MESSAGE OF HIS HEART.

A. Prophetic Words

II. CULTIVATING PEOPLE OF LAVISH DEVOTION

A. Lavish: costly, expensive, rich, spend generously on, shower with

1. Our heart is to establish an environment that exposes the love, truth and life of Jesus, so that it provokes people to not just devote some time to God, but their lifestyle.

B. Placing The First Commandment First

And He said to him, "You shall love the LORD your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind." This is the great and first commandment. (Matt. 22:37-38, ESV)

1. The first commandment is the primary thing with which God is concerned about.

One thing have I asked of the LORD, that will I seek after: that I may dwell in the house of the LORD all the days of my life, to gaze upon the beauty of the LORD and to inquire in his temple. (Ps. 27:4 ESV)

You will seek me and find me, when you seek me with all your heart. (Jer. 29:13)

C. Responsive Heart

1. Our relationship with Jesus is one of active intimacy. It is a present tense reality. Cultivating a responsive heart of lavish devotion to Jesus takes time and effort. It is something that we do deliberately and not something we cultivate on the run.

You keep him in perfect peace whose mind is stayed on you, because he trusts in you. (Is. 26:3 ESV)

2. We must consciously carry our hearts or cultivate a spiritual atmosphere on our hearts in a way in which we are responsive to God (in the present tense) with wholehearted love.

But I am afraid that as the serpent deceived Eve by his cunning, your thoughts will be led astray from a sincere and pure devotion to Christ. (2 Cor. 11:3, ESV)

D. Not Losing Sight Of His Feet, So We Might Fall At Them

1. We are seeking to passionately sit at the feet of Christ, and call others to it as well.
 - a) That doesn't mean that people lose sight of ministry, or the "doing" that can come with hearing His voice. But the doing must be exactly that, directed by His voice, and it takes time and living a fasted lifestyle to cultivate ears to hear what the Spirit is saying.

- (1) We want to call people to go beyond a cultured, western Christianity that seeks comfort and preference, focused all around the desires of the hear and now, leaving their hearts exposed to deception. And call them to sit before the beauty of Jesus all their days, so they gain His preferences and abide by them!

O Lord, I love the habitation of Your house and the place where your glory dwells. (Ps. 26:8 ESV)

E. Asking The Right Question

1. People of lavish devotion ask the Lord the right question. We must ask, "What is the most that God will enable me to give Him?"

For the eyes of the LORD run to and fro throughout the whole earth, to show Himself strong on behalf of those whose heart is loyal to Him. (2 Chron. 16:9)

F. The Lavish Devotion of Mary of Bethany: Filled With His Word

And a woman named Martha welcomed Him (Jesus) into her house. And she had a sister called Mary, who sat at the Lord's feet and listened to His teaching. But Martha was distracted with much serving. And she went up to Him and said, "Lord, do You not care that my sister has left me to serve alone? Tell her then to help me." But the Lord answered her, "Martha, Martha, you are anxious and troubled (bothered: NAS) about many things, but one thing is necessary. Mary has chosen the good portion, which will not be taken away from her." (Luke 10:38-42 ESV)

1. Mary sat at Jesus' feet and heard His words (Lk. 10:39).

Blessed is the man...(whose) delight is in the law of the LORD, and on His law he meditates day and night. He is like a tree planted by streams of water, that yields its fruit in its season, and its leaf does not wither. In all he does, he prospers. (Ps. 1:1-2 ESV)

2. Martha was distracted with much serving. Martha appealed to legitimate humanitarian needs that the Scripture commands us to serve. She was not corrected for serving but for doing it in a wrong spirit.
 - a) Jesus said to Martha that one thing is needed. If the issue of lavish devotion (active intimacy) is established in us, then all the other issues of our life in God will be in their proper place.
3. Mary has chosen that good part, which will not be taken away from her (Luke 10:42). No one can choose this for us.
4. Mary is described three times in Scripture. Each time the Holy Spirit highlights her as sitting at the feet of Jesus (Luke 10:39; John 11:32; 12:3).

Mary came to where Jesus was and saw Him, she fell at His feet... (John 11:32 ESV)

Mary therefore took a pound of expensive ointment...and anointed the feet of Jesus and wiped His feet with her hair. The house was filled with the fragrance of the perfume. (John 12:3 ESV)

G. The Lavish Devotion of Mary of Bethany: Wasting Her Life

And while He was at Bethany in the house of Simon...as He was reclining at the table, a woman (Mary of Bethany; Jn. 12:3) came with an alabaster flask of ointment of pure nard (perfume), very costly, and she broke the flask and poured it over His head. 4 There were some who said to themselves indignantly, "Why was this ointment wasted like that? For this ointment could have been sold for...300 denarii (a years wages) and given to the poor." And they scolded her. But Jesus said, "Leave her alone...She has done a beautiful thing to Me...Wherever the gospel is proclaimed...what she has done will be told in memory of her." (Mark 14:3-9 ESV)

1. This exhortation is to validate the wisdom of a lifestyle of sustained focus on devotion to God. God esteems, remembers and rewards this but those operating their lives primarily off the natural realm will call it weak and foolish.

Cultivating Kingdom and Lifestyle Message

But God chose what is foolish in the world to put to shame the wise...what is weak in the world to shame the strong (1 Cor. 1:27 ESV)

- a) Tabernacle with the Outer Courts (natural light), Most Holy Place (candlelight), Holy of Holies (shekinah light)
 - (1) God is looking for those who will step beyond the Outer Courts and the smell of death, to the Most Holy place and beyond with the smell of sweet incense, through devotion, allowing more than the natural to be their light.

III. CULTIVATED IN THE WILDERNESS: SET APART

A. Enlarged Heart = More Space For God To Reveal Himself And Birth Kingdom Message

1. From David on hills shepherding his sheep, to Moses encountering God at the burning bush, to Christ on his 40 day fast, to John the Baptist...gazing on God and His awesome beauty leads to enlarged hearts so that they might be filled with the knowledge of His will and proclaim a message He burns in their hearts.
 - a) John the Baptist spent well over 10 years in the wilderness in order to speak a message of power ushering in the coming Savior for only 18 months.
 - (1) He tarried until the time that God decided to reveal Him. (Luke 1:80)
 - b) Going to the wilderness, causes our hearts to become an altar and His love the flame that falls on that altar.

Let your mercy and lovingkindness, O Lord, be upon us, in proportion to our waiting and hoping for You. (Ps. 33:22 ESV)

- c) Elijah on Mount Carmel!
 - (1) I want BHOP to be a place that cultivate those with an Elijah-type spirit! Those who take pleasure in the endorsement of heaven, rather than the endorsement of a society of concession and worldliness.
 - (2) Where results are measured by meekness, love and those things that please God. (Col. 1:9-11; Eph. 4:1-3; 1 Thess. 4:1)
 - (a) As believers we must cultivate a tender and responsive heart to God and be vigilant in the possession of our souls. The Bible warns of a time coming when the love of many will grow cold and unbelievable pressure on the earth will bring forth the greatest levels of suffering and mistreatment (Mt. 24:9-13; Mk. 13:12-13; Dan. 7:25, 12:1-2; Rev. 13:5-8). We must prepare for this season and the smaller seasons of tribulation that precede it, by casting off every sin that ensnares us and by fixing our eyes on Jesus who for the joy set before Him endured the Cross.

B. Witnesses Who Give Testimony

1. God's people must be witnesses on the "court stand" of life, proclaiming with boldness and clarity, through their lives (demonstrating His power), the testimony of Jesus!
 - a) We must separate ourselves from not only sin, but those things that keep our fires from burning brightly!
2. "Prophets are forged in the deserts of fasting, not the desserts of feasting." Lou Engle

IV. CULTURE OF THE KINGDOM: FASTED LIFESTYLE

A. Definition = Voluntary Weakness

Cultivating Kingdom and Lifestyle Message

1. Walking out spiritual disciplines such as prayer, fasting, studying the Word, giving, service, doing justice, etc, are tools and avenues to set our eyes on Christ, so that denying the flesh becomes easier. Why? Because our eyes are not on “today”, but “tomorrow”. (Gal. 6:8)
 - a) “Spiritual disciplines (prayer, fasting, meditation on the Word, etc) are ordained by God as a necessary way to posture our heart to freely receive more grace. These activities do not earn us God’s favor. The power is in the “bonfire of God’s presence” not in the cold flesh positioned in front of it. Spiritual disciplines do not earn us God’s favor but gives us the opportunity to show our value of the relationship. God gives to our heart on the basis of how much we hunger for relationship with Him. God sees our hunger for Him as our love for Him. God honors how much we value the relationship by giving us more according to our hunger. God gives more to our heart but does not love us more when we live in spiritual disciplines.” Mike Bickle-IHOP KC

B. Sermon on the Mount: Core Values of God’s Kingdom (Matt. 5-7)

1. The Sermon on the Mount is the “constitution of God’s Kingdom.” It is the litmus test to measure spiritual development and ministry impact. These values are to be the themes that we are to emphasize most in our ministries.
 - a) Many ministries today are discouraged because of feeling unsuccessful in ministry (as judged by the size of one’s ministry). We must embrace God’s standards for evaluating our success.
 - b) Jesus’ called us to pursue a lifestyle of obedience that seeks to be perfect (mature in obedience). Walking mature in our obedience is relative in this age and absolute in the age-to-come. In this age, we never attain to perfection in the absolute sense. We are to walk in the fullness of the light that we receive from the Spirit. This includes declaring war on all our lust that the Spirit reveals.

You therefore must be perfect, (walk in all the light you receive) as your heavenly Father is perfect. (Matt. 5:48 ESV)
2. Many in the prayer movement can be characterized as being too spiritually minded that they are no earthly good (praying too much), but living the Sermon on the Mount guarantees that we won’t be so earthly minded that we are no spiritual good.
 - a) The Kingdom culture and Sermon on the Mount are not for the spiritually advanced but rather are to be understood as Christianity 101, and continually lived out in our lives.

V. SACRED CHARGE

- Pray Daily: Spend two hours in prayer and the Word (including reading the entire book of Revelation once a week)
- Fast Weekly: Set our heart to fast two days a week as a lifestyle
- Speak Boldly: Stand as faithful witnesses in allegiance to Jesus’ heart for the Church, Israel, and the nations
- Do Justly: Do works of justice focusing on the fatherless and oppressed
- Give Extravagantly: Give to the prayer movement (beyond our tithe)
- Live Holy: Walk out the Sermon on the Mount and keep the Purity Covenant
- Lead Diligently: Lead weekly prayer meetings and Bible studies (focused on training forerunners)
- Be Radically Corporate: Live fasted lives together as families (with His presence as our home and standard)
- Consecrated Serving: Seek God on the time and type of practical service we are to give