



CELL GUIDE

TOPIC Letting Go and Taking Hold

SPEAKER Dr John Andrews

THEME Philippians 3

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MESSAGE SUMMARY

INTRODUCTION

In this sermon, Dr John Andrews leads us into exploring the theme of letting go and taking hold through pondering upon chapter three of the book of Philippians. He draws our attention to Apostle Paul's communication of his decision to lay hold of that which Christ has taken hold for him and his consideration of all things as loss except for the knowledge of knowing Christ. He then relates it to our salvation and our daily surrender of living a life that is for Christ and not self.

TWO KEY PRINCIPLES TO LETTING GO AND TAKING HOLD

In the book of John, Jesus' first recorded question is "What do you want?".

This is a significant question as it reveals to us the motives behind our actions and highlights the idea that what we do ultimately reflects what we want.

The apostle Paul is highlighted as an example of radical transformation due to a divine encounter with God on the road to Damascus which radically changes his desires and his final ambition in life.

In Philippians, Paul reveals his change of motivation: from his own desires (what he wants) to God's desires (what Christ has taken hold of for him). This dramatically changed him from being a zealous destroyer of the church to a passionate builder of the Church.

As followers of Jesus, we must also choose between living like Christ or living for ourselves.

The following two key principles will help us understand how to better let go of sin and self to lay hold of Jesus.

1) Principle 1: Your Focus will determine Your Direction – A Question of Vision

Learning to let go and take hold is an issue of vision.

Paul was able to move from being a persecutor of the church to a promoter of the church because he saw the heavenly vision which was given to him (Acts 26:19), focused on God (Phil 3:7,8) and pressed on to take hold of that which Christ had taken hold for him (Phil 3:12).

As such, we are reminded that our salvation and redemption from sin through Christ Jesus is about being called by God to move away from sin, so that we can be called to a greater purpose for Him.

God essentially wants to save us to a purpose greater than ourselves, so that we can let go of our self and take hold of Jesus. As a church, when we begin to know God and focus on him by blessing and exalting him, we can be a called-out community (church) drawn to God and his goodness leaving behind our fleshly desires.

We must be reminded that when we fail to focus on God, we will drift.

2) Principle 2: Your Valuation of things in the Light of Christ – A Question Of Value

A right valuation of our choices is another principle of learning to let go and take hold.

When asked to choose between a suitcase of one million dollars and a suitcase filled with durian skins, we will decide to choose the suitcase which is of greater value (suitcase full of money).

Paul communicates that “whatever were gains to me, I now consider loss for the sake of Christ”, and so we are to, in like manner, make biblical valuations of our possessions, relationships, and desires to determine their value in comparison to Jesus.

Paul considered everything as garbage (and in some translations, excrement) in the light of knowing Christ. Here, there is no denial of the value of education, wealth, and status, but the main emphasis is to see Paul’s change in his valuation of his existing qualifications and possessions in comparison to knowing who Jesus Christ is in his life.

We are encouraged to reflect and try to fully grasp the historical and spiritual reality of Christ’s redemptive death on the cross for us.

As we begin to focus on the reality of who Christ is and what he has done for us, our vision will be filled with Him.

As we start to understand and consider the value of what it is to be in him, letting go of our self and sin becomes easier and taking hold of Jesus becomes our joy.

CONCLUSION

Jim Elliot, a missionary, once said, “He is no fool, who gives what he cannot keep, to gain what he cannot lose.” On this journey of letting go to take hold, it is essentially a journey away from self and towards God.

As we prepare ourselves to surrender to become Christlike, we will come to a place of freedom and life.

QUESTIONS

1. We are encouraged to make Jesus our focus. What is the heavenly vision which God has laid upon your life? Share how this vision has shaped major decisions you have made?

2. Dr John Andrews' statement that "we cannot let go if our hands are full". What are the things in our lives that is making our hands full where they take us away from focusing on Jesus and to know him deeply.

3. In this sermon, we are encouraged to let go of self and take hold of Jesus. Share the challenges which you currently face in living out this exhortation.