

# SUSTAIN + + +

| PASTOR GREG GRIFFITH

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You know, I gotta say, I've been lead pastor here for almost seven years, and I know every campus experienced the same thing. Just at all campuses, like, worship and just where our teams bring us every single week to the very throne room of God, I just want to say our worship teams are always bringing us all up in powerful and wonderful ways, and I still have tears in every service here as well.

I want you to think for a moment, what does it mean to live fully in the moment that you're in right now? What does it mean to be fully present where you are right now, in this space, in this time? Not thinking about what was before, whether it was a few minutes ago, a day ago, a week ago, a year ago, or a decade ago. Not about what's next, but like, right here, right now. What it means to be fully in the moment is to be recognizing of what's happening here and now, and to be there.

And so everywhere, across all our campuses, everyone, I want to invite you, take the pamphlet that you move to the side of you, or put in your purse there, or put under your seat, and I want you to hold it. And I want you to hold it, the entire message today, as you think about what it means to live fully in the moment. Because a dream becomes a vision when a movement is caught. A dream becomes a vision when a movement is caught. And God is doing a movement here.

Now today, everyone everywhere is going to be engaged, to be interactive with our message. And so I want to get a practice at all campuses. I want everyone to say right now, let's go. I want you to say it again a little bit louder. One more time, just a smidge louder. Perfect. Good job. Now, later on, we're going to continue to engage, not with the words let's go, but with another word, but I'll teach you that word later.

I want you to think about what the world was like when God planted a church. For a few of you, you'll be able to remember some of these things. For many of you, you're going to have to Google some of these things. It was 1962, and there was a Cuban missile crisis. It was a time when this nation and the world was worried about a nuclear war. Kids were every day, or at least every week, being taught what to do with missile drills and how getting under their desk would protect them from a nuclear bomb. That was the time.

And so as a nation was gripped in fear and anxiety and uncertainty of tomorrow, it also was a nation that sent John Glenn to orbit the earth. And so not only did it look down, but it looked up with a hope of a future and saying, there's got to be more than what we are right now. 1962 was also a time when the Beatles stepped onto the stage in London for the very first time and changed the music world forever. It was also a time when Marilyn Monroe died.

1962 was also a time when births of great corporations, Walmart and Target and Kmart, were launched. And now each one still is beyond its own imagination. Walmart thriving as a mega superstore, Target's continuing to go national and global in its brand. Well, Kmart no longer exists, but they didn't think that would happen.

And it was a time when God said right here in Omaha that this city was ready for a church that wouldn't be nostalgic, wouldn't be fearful of what will be, wouldn't say we're fine how we are. But that this city needed a church called King of Kings, who would be courageous, reliant, authentic and generous in its transformation of lives for decades to come.

And so let's go is where we see what's built beneath us is a foundation that God had laid before us and around us and beyond us. And so we shout, let's go. And today we launch our series where we're going together to see how God leads us from sustaining the ministries which we love to strengthening the ministries which are necessary to expanding the kingdom of God and the community of God beyond our own reach.

Today we will discover what it looks like to be a church, to have a walk, a plan, a pursuit forever. So let's go.

When you think about a church, there's so many ways to think about what a church is. And there's so many different churches in the world. But really, a church that is after the very heart of God isn't about what we have. It's not about what was. It's not even about what will be. It's about reaching the people who are yet to be saved.

It's willing to be a church that is saying we will sacrifice anything and everything in order to reach those who are yet to be saved. That my personal preferences won't guide my principles for what church must be like. Because a church is not a country club that seeks to make its members happy. A church is a hospital that seeks to heal those who are hurting and those who are in need. A church is a church that is filled with sacrifice.

A church that was the axe church that is a church in Omaha that is living fully in the moment today, right here, right now. My predecessor, Mark Zender, said this, I won't forget so many of the charter members of King of Kings and the sacrifice that they had made.

We were being led by the Lord to try all kinds of new and edgy ways to reach those who don't know Christ. And that must have challenged a whole bunch of traditions and mindsets.

You see, what King of Kings has always been known as is a church that's willing to step out and to reach those who don't yet know Jesus. Not to be a church that is stuck in its ways that says it has to be the way it's always been, which has always been the only time that I've been here.

Instead, it's a church that has said, we will make sacrifice. We will proceed and we will go. We won't stay in the church in the round where we began, where we started. We will make a historic walk to a church in a warehouse that will reach people beyond. And at Northwest and here at Millard, there's going to be way more hands, maybe a couple at Fremont.

But how many of you were on that walk on 9-11-1994, made that walk in a historic day? A 9-11 that was not about destruction seven years later, but instead was about transformation for decades and generations to come.

That's a church willing to be a sacrifice. And this is what it looks like to be the people of God. Not to give up, not to settle in.

Luke 5-18-19, some friends were carrying him on a mat, and this guy's paralyzed. He's a paralytic. And so they're carrying him on a mat because they want to bring him to Jesus to get healed. And they tried to bring him and put him down for Jesus. But there were so many people that they couldn't find a way.

Now, people of that day would have given up, would have said, bud, we just can't get in. Like, let's go home. People maybe would have said, you know what? Not now. Let's just kind of sit off to the side for a little bit of time. We're going to wait. And maybe he'll come out. And maybe we'll get in. No, they said, we're going to live fully in the moment right now. Our time is now. We built for a time like this. We've carried you all this way.

And so they went up on the roof, and they lowered the crippled man through a hole in the ceiling. You see, they were saying, now is the time. They were living fully in the moment. They were willing to sacrifice everything to get their friend to be before Jesus.

Now, everyone everywhere, right now, I want to teach you a new word. But as I teach you this word, I want to teach you first how to say it. And we're going to say it a little bit backwards. So the first thing I want you to say is I want you to go, Ayo. Ayo.

So remember that. Ayo. Everyone everywhere just said Ayo.

Now this is a word we are somewhat familiar with occasionally. And it's a Greek word called Eucharist. So say Eucharist.

Okay, so now put those two together. It's Eucharist Ayo. Say it. Eucharist Ayo.

Okay, so this word means in Greek, thanks. You give thanks. But it actually means in a way that has a, like, what does this word mean? How do we feel? It means to live fully in the moment.

This was a word that was introduced to King of Kings in the early 2000s by Pastor Roger. And in our celebration of our Jubilee 50th anniversary in 2012, this is the word that was the foundation for the daily devotions, Eucharist Ayo.

And so I want us everyone everywhere to say together, Eucharist Ayo. Say it. Eucharist Ayo.

Alright, we're going to say that a lot of times. I want you to say it with energy every time you have it. This is we're living fully in the moment. And that's what a church is that is on fire for Jesus that was planted here right now to be the church that transforms lives.

And the members of 1994 sacrificed comfort and tradition. They sacrificed familiarity to carry this church forward. And it's in that spirit of sacrifice that it's still alive right here, right now.

And we have the opportunity to be the people who carry King of Kings into its next moment. Not just with our presence today, but with our generosity. We get to live as Eucharist Ayo people in the moment, recognizing that we too make sacrifices to transform lives and to transform our own.

And this is where we get to take a walk together. Not just down a street, but actually a walk together at all campuses. A walk through corridors and hallways and parking lots. A walk to come in to the very presence of God in the throne room of Christ in a space where we worship and praise Him and are transformed and conformed to be like Him.

Psalm 100 verses 4 and 5, and I want you to start this verse with me. Together we say, enter, enter His gates with thanksgiving and His courts with praise. Give thanks to Him and praise His name, for the Lord is good and His love endures forever. His faithfulness continues through all generations.

We come on the walk into the worship that God has called us to, to give Him thanks and praise multi-generational, from young to old, from new to seasoned Christians. And we worship and we praise Him.

Doug Behrens said it this way, we walked into King of Kings and we were drawn into the presence of God with the worship team as they raised their hearts and their hands, their voices and their instruments in praise of God.

Notice what Doug didn't say. He didn't say we walked in and the lights were right. He didn't say we walked in and it was the perfect set list and I knew every single song. What he said is we walked in and we encountered the presence of God.

We were seated at the mountaintop in the throne room of God and we were a people who were praising God, leaving behind what was in the week behind, leaving behind whatever strife or turmoil may have been in the car, leaving behind the hurts and the heartaches and instead bringing them in comfort and praise for we know who we are and who God is.

From every generation, King of Kings has taken this walk. From Center Street to wherever we stand today, the walk is the same.

We come and we together across all campuses everywhere bring God our best thanksgiving, our best praise and the presence we have living fully in the moment with Him, for Him and His presence with us.

And so together as one church everywhere, everyone can truly say Eucharist, Oh, amen. And it's when we walk together as the church.

We remember the plan that God has for us, a plan, and that's the beauty of our God. There is such a plan for him from him for you. And it's a plan that is laid out. It's not a it's not a speculation. It's not a wonderment. It's a true plan that is revealed to you.

And Paul writes about this in Hebrews 10. Let us consider how we may one another on toward love and good deeds, not giving up meeting together as some are in the habit of doing, but encouraging one another. All the more as you see the day approaching, the day is the day when Christ will return.

When there will be no more sunsets and no more dawning, where there'll be no more hurts and heartaches and no more pain, that the only scars you'll see are the scars of Jesus given for you and for me.

And so what is the plan? The plan is that we continue to spur one another, not suggest to one another, not just kind of say, oh, what is it? But instead spur one another, say, come on, let's go. Let's worship. Let's encounter the very presence of God. Let's sit at the very throne room of God and and to encourage one another.

Right. Not to come to church and be like, hey, how was your day this week? How was your week? And oh, what did you do? Oh, why aren't you so happy that the spring is out and the sun is finally shining and we can see? Oh, yes. I had to mow my lawn. The allergies are rough.

But none of that, none of that is what we're encouraging, none of that is encouraging.

Instead, it's, hey, aren't you glad to be where God is today? What did God do in your life this week? Where did you see God show up? What can I pray for you about? What can I ask you to be praying for me about? Let's get together because Jesus is coming soon.

And let's be ready for this. Let's be triumphant in this. And let's be on point for this, for those who do not yet know him.

And so our lives are fully committed to live for God, for his love and for serving other people.

Melody Thompson said it best when she said God had a plan for the time when we were on Center Street and he has a plan for this church still today.

We must remember God in all things and praise him for all that he has done for each of us. Put him first in your life. Honor him with your very best each day.

May we be bold and courageous to be the church inside and outside the walls of this building. May we lead others to know him more, to love him more and to serve him more.

The plan of God for this church has always been inside and outside of these walls has never been to fill a room. It's been to fill a city one life at a time with the presence, the thanksgiving, the praise and the worship of the King of Kings.

And that's where we get to triumphantly continue to say together as one church, everyone, everywhere, Eucharist day.

You see, God is sustaining the plan and Melody said it when she said the plan for this church, whether on Center Street, is that this church would still be a church today that moves forward.

And plans require people and people require resources. And when you give the King of Kings, as you just saw at your giving moment videos, you see you're not paying bills. You're funding a plan that reaches lives, that builds a community, that says to public schools wherever we have a campus that we're for you, we love you, that we're not separated from you, that we are part of the community and

we want to carry to the next generation the love of Jesus, which means when you give good things do happen for the community and the kingdom of God through you as King of Kings.

And that's because we know what it is to be pursued by God. God has pursued you. He has left everything from his throne room to come and to live and to walk, to die and to rise because he's in pursuit of you as a friend.

Psalm 17, 17 or Proverbs, sorry, 17, 17 says a friend loves at all times.

Please hear this today. You are a friend of God. God loves you at all times, which is why no matter where you're walking and what you're going through, no matter what situation you may be in, no matter what struggle, hurt or heartache, no matter what mountaintop of celebration you may be on, God is good all the time. And all the time, God is good because you are always a friend of God.

And that's his pursuit. And that's our pursuit to pursue God as a friend, to know him more and more as a friend would know one another, to be a best friend with Jesus because he's your best friend now.

Julie easily said it this way. My great desire is for my words and my actions to reflect a heart that is being more and more conformed to the character of Christ, not because of anything I can do on my own, but simply because I have taken the time to really know Jesus.

I don't have to change myself. He will do that part. I just have to pursue a friendship with him. And that's what he does. He pursues a friendship with you and you pursue a friendship with him.

Notice what Julie didn't say. She didn't say, I need to do this, this or this. I need to be in Bible study and I need to do this, this and no. What she said is, I pursue a friendship with God.

And in that pursuit of that friendship, he will make me more and more like him. When we want to be like Christ, it just simply means I want to be more of a friend to Jesus and to others. And when we're friends with Jesus, we become friends with others.

I heard of a story from a member here, Bev, who came here and as she had come here, she had lost her only son. And in the midst of that hurt and that heartache and that pain, she had friends that she had developed in her life group, which we now call connect groups.

And those friends do what friends do. They didn't ask her, what can we do? They didn't say, I'm so sorry, I'll pray for you. They stepped in and they walked with her and they brought her things that they thought she would need.

They just did it. They just took care of her and they continued to check in, not only in the days ahead, but in the months ahead, the years ahead and the decades ahead.

And they reminded her that she is not alone in this grief and this hurt and this heartache that will never go away until the day of Jesus comes again.

But not only does she have a friend of God who walks with her, but she has a friend from God who is a community that walks around her and beside her.

And this is what it means for each and every one of us to live in a moment fully with one another and why we can say together in our celebratory moments and in our painful moments as people who are friends of God, we can shout Eucharisteo.

So you're living in a moment now. This church is living in a moment today. The very God who planted King of Kings in 1962 is the very God who is still planting. He's still growing. He's still building.

And so don't just be present here today. I want to invite you to actually live in the moment wholeheartedly, to fully worship and love God with your whole heart, soul and mind, which means we give sacrificially to our God because we know He is doing greater in the moment and in the people and in the lives and in the community around us.

And so if 18 months ago you embarked on this journey with us in the Let's Go initiative, I want to invite you today to ask yourself, am I still living in the moment? Or has God blessed me even more that I can do even more?

That my sacrifice was a sacrifice, but it wasn't a sacrifice. Maybe God's inviting you to step in even greater over these next six months. Maybe you've joined the family here at King of Kings and now call it home since this moment began.

And this is God's invitation to you to say, how are you standing on the shoulders who've gone before you? How are you standing tall with those around you in the moment here and now? And He's inviting you to step up and step in to the very kingdom of God and to the community that is seeing His plan.

Because what God began in 1962 is thriving beyond any of those initial charter members' wildest dreams. And is a place in the moment that you and I have right now where we can truly say, this is a church that is on a walk with God and with each other, that knows the plan that God has for us together, that is pursuing more and more friends of Jesus to be friends with us because we know it will become a forever reality.

Exodus 3.14, God says to Moses, I am who I am. And actually, the best way to translate this, but it's not good English, would be, I is who I is, meaning this is what you're to say to the Israelites, I is has sent me to you.

It's not saying, God didn't say to them, go, tell them what I did or what I was. Or tell them what will be. Or tell them the future.

No. He's saying, live fully in the moment. Tell them, I am. I'm always. I'm forever. I am. Because with me, there's no past. There's no future. There's just with me.

He said that in a burning bush. He's saying that right here, right now. And this God who planted churches in 1962 Omaha is that same God who walked with you through the doors at your campus today.

And so, so the encouragement and the invitation here is not to always think about nostalgically what God did and what we miss. And not to think about with anxiety or uncertainty or even a joy of what God will do. Because we don't know.

But instead to think about just who he is.

And this is exactly the way Neil Fortkamp put it. When he said, take, take time today to think about and praise God, not for what he's done or what he will do, but just for who he is. Right here, right now.

So in 1962, we had a world that was filled with fear and wonder. And God said, I'm going to plant something here.

On 9-11, 1994, a church walked boldly and triumphantly, shoulder to shoulder, in a sacrifice to do what was courageous and at that time, unheard of. So that you and I could be here.

And today, we don't look back longing and pining for what had been. We don't look forward anxious about what will be. We live right here and right now in him.

And so together we say let's go and Eucharisteo.

I invite everyone everywhere to stand up.

Hey God, thank you for the opportunity to live fully in the moment with you today, tomorrow and forever. To be your people right here, right now. Thankful for those who stand beside us. Thankful for those whose shoulders we stand on.

Thankful for the moment we have right here, right now. To be a church. To walk with you and with each other. To know the plan. To be, have been pursued and made a friend and to pursue and make friends with you.

And to know that we have a forever. For you are the God who is right here, right now.

Everyone everywhere said amen and amen.