

Sermon - Rollin' With the Spirit

August 5, 2012

Scripture Reading: Matthew 9:16-17 (John 3:8)

Intro to the Core Values

Good afternoon Seaside. My name is John-Michael Becker and it has been a few months since I last came here to speak. My wife Sky and I are the healing and deliverance pastors at New Philadelphia Church and I am also one of the preaching pastors. Sky and I are not on staff though, instead we are full time orphanage ministry workers. I have been teaching English at an orphanage in Seoul for nearly seven years now and I direct an orphanage ministry called Jerusalem Ministry. While the ministry is based in Seoul, I will be visiting Busan again in three weeks to share about a new scholarship our ministry has made for orphans who desire to attend university. A friend of mine has organized a group of bikers to bike from Seoul to Busan in order to raise charity on behalf anti sex-trafficking ministry and on behalf of our scholarship, which not only supports the education for orphans but also helps protect them from the lure of "easy money" in selling their bodies. The group of bikers will be arriving on Saturday, August 25th, and showing the documentary Nefarious at Hosanna Church here in Busan. Hopefully you all will hear more about this in the coming weeks.

Today I am going to be preaching about the sixth core value of New Philadelphia Church: Roll With the Punches. But before we start the message, let's review the previous five core values. Starting with number one...

1. Be Extravagant in Worship
2. Freedom is for Everyone
3. Father the Fatherless
4. Be Faithful in the Small Things
5. The Anointing Flows From the Top Down

I understand the pastors have been giving sermon titles that are slightly different from the core values, so I am going to do the same. The title of today's sermon is: **Rollin' With the Spirit**. Please take note that the word "Rollin'" does not have a "g," but instead has an apostrophe in its place. This was my wife Sky's idea. Brilliant. :) What does the title "Rollin' With the Spirit" have to do with the core value, "Roll With the Punches?" Listen up and you will soon understand.

Roll with the Punches Meaning

Roll with the punches is an English idiom that is based on boxing. When a boxer is being attacked by his opponent he has to learn to step back or to the side as he is being hit so he doesn't absorb the full blow. The better a boxer gets at rolling with the punches the less pain he absorbs and **the easier it becomes for him to counterattack**. So the term "roll with the punches" means to adjust to difficult events as they happen. It means to cope with and withstand adversity and to be flexible. If you Google search "roll with the punches" the Urban Dictionary will be one of your top results. The Urban Dictionary's definition of roll with the punches is: "When things don't go your way and you adapt to the changes and keep moving ahead instead of flipin out."

New Philadelphia Church has a community that does not tolerate leaders complaining or getting really upset when things don't go their way. We are a community that is open to thinking outside the box and not being rigid in our ways. We are a community that values flexibility and honors those who learn to adapt when unexpected changes occur. And as I'll share in illustrations later, we are a church that has even learned to enjoy and make light of sudden, unexpected changes that would really frustrate most people. We've learned God has a sense of humor and likes to keep us on our toes. God truly values adaptability and joyful obedience.

Let's see this in Scripture, please open up to Matthew 9:16-17.

Matthew 9:16-17 - No one puts a piece of unshrunk cloth on an old garment, for the patch tears away from the garment, and a worse tear is made. Neither is new wine put into old wineskins. If it is, the skins burst and the wine is spilled and the skins are destroyed. But new wine is put into fresh wineskins, and so both are preserved.

God is calling the church to be flexible. Old wineskins and old cloth become hard and tear easily if new wine or new cloth are put onto them. And it's the same likelihood for believers who get stuck into old traditions and the old ways of God. The New Testament was originally written in Greek. And in the Greek translation, God's Word is both Logos, referring to the written word (the Bible), and Reyma, the spoken word of God. When Jesus says, "Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that comes from the mouth of God," the Greek in the verse is "Reyma," not "Logos." So Jesus wasn't saying that we live solely by the Bible, but rather we live by the spoken word of God.

Many Christians say that we should live by the Bible and by the Bible alone, and while that sounds admirable the truth is that God isn't limited to speaking to us only in Bible verses.

John 16:13 - When the Spirit of truth comes, he will guide you into all the truth, for he will not speak on his own authority, but whatever he hears he will speak, and he will declare to you the things that are to come.

God has never left us to live just by the Bible and nothing else. Without the help of the Holy Spirit, the Bible is just a book with words in it. But with the revelation of the Holy Spirit, we are able to bring forth deep truths out of Scripture. And again, God isn't limited by just the Bible to speak, but can speak to us through dreams, visions, and gentle whispers and leadings.

Let's think of Biblical examples of people being led by God and having to be flexible...

Think about how much Joseph and Mary had to roll with the punches. An angel first appears to Mary and tells her she is going to supernaturally have a child, despite her being a virgin and engaged to Joseph. If Joseph chose to live solely by the Word of God, he would have had Mary stoned for adultery. But instead he plans to divorce her quietly. Joseph then has a dream and is told by the angel to marry Mary but not to sleep with her until the Savior of the World is born by her. Joseph obeys. Then, when they go to Joseph's hometown, they discover they don't have a place to stay, despite Mary about to give birth to... the Savior of the World! And then after Mary has the child, they are told by an angel to go to Egypt and stay there for a couple years. Egypt isn't just far away, it's a whole different culture with a different language and a different religion. As far as we know Joseph and Mary never complained, they just "rolled with the punches." And later when they were finally allowed to

return to Israel Joseph has another dream with a warning in it, so they have to move to the town of Nazareth, where Jesus grew up.

Often Christians think that the bigger the ministry, the clearer everything should be. The greater the responsibility, the more there should be order and clarity. And while we should pursue those things and live responsibly, **if you read Scripture it's clear that those with the highest of callings had to roll with the punches far more than those who were your basic believers.** New Philadelphia Church consists of a community that dreams big. **If you're going to dream big, you better be ready to adapt.**

Let's think of Abraham, one of the greatest men to ever live. He was commanded by God to leave his relatives and his home country to a land that he had never been to. And so he obeyed. And he became a Hebrew, which means a "wanderer" or "pilgrim," for the rest of his life. He kept moving and moving, waiting on the Lord. When God finally gave him the son that Abraham had been waiting well over 40 years to have, God tells Abraham to circumcise his son and himself and his entire household. If there is no greater example of rolling with the punches, it would be this one: a 100 year old man having to circumcise himself. Wow.

And just when Abraham thought he had done enough, God tells him to go sacrifice his beloved son Isaac on a mountain. Abraham doesn't throw a hissy fit at God. He doesn't take a few days to mull it over. Scripture says Abraham obeyed right away, trusting in God.

Hebrews 11:19 - Abraham considered that God was able even to raise Isaac from the dead, from which, figuratively speaking, he did receive him back.

But right as Abraham was about to kill his son Isaac, God spoke a second time and told him to not go ahead with killing Isaac but instead to sacrifice the ram that God provided. If Abraham was slow to listen to God, Isaac would have been dead. Instead, Abraham was alert, and he obeyed God right away.

Abraham's story teaches us that **we must value Gods voice more than yesterdays word.** While God may lead us to work or serve in a way for a time, God is always moving and is never constricted by man. **The truth is, if we put our trust more in methods or traditions, then our faith is no longer in God but rather in the methods and traditions.** And how can God bless that?! God loves to move and open different doors to keep us on our toes, with our faith solely set in Him rather than on the ways of this world.

One of my favorite verses in all of Scripture applies to this message. Please turn to John 3:8...

John 3:8 - The wind blows where it wishes, and you hear its sound, but you do not know where it comes from or where it goes. So it is with everyone who is born of the Spirit.

If you are truly born of God's Spirit and living in full obedience to Him, then that means your life isn't going to be easily traceable. God LOVES to take His children for adventures. God LOVES to parade them before everyone as people not of this world. The truth is that true Christians know how to roll with the punches. Even more than that, they know how to "roll with the Spirit."

The term "Roll With the Punches" has somewhat of a negative vibe, because it implies having to adjust to difficulties or even attacks. But while things might seem negative in the world's sight, in God's sight everything is always under control. If we are in obedience to God, we might endure hardship and such, but we are commanded to count all sufferings as joy for God.

Think about the life of Paul. He was originally an oppressor of the church and was set in the traditions and guidelines he had been raised under. But when Jesus appeared to him on the road to Damascus, Paul's life was radically changed. He had to completely change his whole viewpoint on life and on God. He ended up being a true example of John 3:8, being led by the Spirit all over the Middle East and Southern Europe. He endured being whipped numerous times, shipwrecked numerous times, imprisoned, being stoned, and enduring all sorts of other things. But he pressed on in joy. In Acts 16 we read about Paul doing great work and casting out a demon from a young girl. Instead of being honored for the act, Paul was beaten severely and then thrown into jail. At that point Paul could have easily complained or questioned God, but instead he and his companion chose to just worship God. And what did God do? God created a crazy earthquake that set Paul and his companion free and they ended up converting their jailer and his whole family.

When we roll with God's Spirit, awesome things happen. And when difficult situations arise before us, we trust in God's goodness and keep our eyes and our worship on Him, just like Paul did. And we will see God's deliverance in the end. God truly works all things for our good!

Before I end this message I want to briefly share three areas that you must be ready to roll with the punches. They are three M's, and the first is marriage...

Marriage

Marriage is one of the greatest examples of how blessed we can be if we learn to roll with God's Spirit, and how cursed we can be if choose to stick with our own ways.

When Sky and I give pre-marital counseling sessions one of the first things we share with couples is that marriage means death to your former self. When you marry someone, you are no longer a single person. You are now one with your spouse. "The two shall become one." The single you has to die, or else you're going to have a very conflicted marriage.

That means you're no longer to live how you did as a single: making your own decisions, choosing when to clean, when to eat, when to sleep, where to live, where to work, how to spend your free time and such. Now you have a spouse you are one with that is now a part of your life in every way. As a single you had much spare time and freedom, but now as a married person you have to consider your spouse. And you have to learn to roll with the punches when difficulties come up.

I thought I knew love before I got married. I had served the orphans for over five and a half years and I thought I had love down pretty good. And then I got married. And I realized just how selfish I was. As a single I could do whatever I wanted and spend time with whoever I wanted. But once I was married I realized that true love means true commitment, and looking towards the other's needs rather than your own. I did learn that from serving at the orphanage, but at the same time I could step outside of the orphanage whenever I wanted and I also always had authority over the kids. But my wife isn't a child, and I dare not treat her

that way, right honey? :)

Any easy example of this would be when I was preparing for this sermon. I take sermon prep very seriously and try and give myself a lot of time. But wouldn't you know, on the evening I was going to prepare a sermon on "roll with the punches" I had to... "roll with the punches." Sky and I ended up having a long talk during the time I was supposed to be preparing my sermon. It was a loooong talk, and I remember glancing at the clock and thinking about the sermon that needed to be written. But let me tell you, if I had cut Sky short and just worked on the sermon like I had planned, I can guarantee Sky wouldn't have been too happy and I don't think God would have blessed what I'm writing. I chose my wife and my marriage over my own desires to do things, and that is what true love is.

And if you really want to know true, true love, have kids. Then you will really learn what rolling with the punches means. The reason why the birthrate keeps dropping is because more and more people are choosing to be selfish and not marry, or marry but not have kids. They would rather do their own thing and spend all their money on themselves. Kids consume time and money, and those are the two things most important to selfish people who don't know love.

It's as we roll with the punches we begin to realize that the difficulties and hardships we are enduring are for our own good, and we are being perfected in love. And the truth is revealed, that rather than rolling with the punches the whole time we were rolling with the Spirit. God was behind it all.

Missions

The second M I'm going to share about is, "Missions." New Philly is a church that is big on missions. This summer we sent out 70 members on five different teams to Australia, Indonesia, Japan, Thailand, and Myanmar. That's a lot of people! We are a church that loves to go out. And the first thing you learn when you go to another country for missions is: "roll with the punches."

My wife and I led a team to Nepal earlier this year. The native pastor put us at a hostel that had no insulation, no hot water, and most of the time no electricity, and it was the middle of winter in Nepal! We had to sleep in layers of clothes with our winter jackets on, and we were still shivering. We had to heat water on the stove to use it to wash ourselves. They would tell us we had ministry at 7am and we would be ready outside in the cold to be picked up, and they wouldn't arrive until 9am. The schedule constantly changed on us. But instead of complaining, we chose to laugh it off and during the hardships and waiting we bonded much more closer as a team. That trip was unforgettable, in a very positive way. We had a lot of fun enduring everything, and everyone was positive.

And missions isn't limited to other countries, just a few weeks ago Sky and I went with four other leaders to minister at a Korean youth retreat. We left at 7am and were supposed to arrive at the retreat center in the countryside around 9:30am, but because of all sorts of unexpected things coming up, we didn't arrive until 1pm. We hit crazy traffic, took another route only for the toll booth to be broken down and all the cars to be stopped on the road like the world was ending. When we finally got to the retreat center no one was there, and then we called and discovered we had been given the wrong retreat center name. So we had to enter the correct retreat center into the navigation and start driving again. It was quite a journey, but during it we all laughed it off and bonded closely. We did pray, but we never

panicked or complained or allowed ourselves to get frustrated. And what ended up happening was instead of getting a small portion of time in the morning like was planned, we were able to minister to the kids for a much longer time in the afternoon and it was a blessed visit. Our trip home only took an hour and a half.

We could have complained, but instead we rolled with the Spirit and enjoyed God's presence and good fellowship during the long drive. And God was able to do a greater work that day because we arrived late.

Complain and get frustrated, and missions will be some of the most frustrated experiences of your life. Roll with the punches, roll with the Spirit, and missions will be some of the greatest experiences of your life. New Philly chooses to roll with the punches, and missions only gets better and better as each year goes by.

Ministry

The last M I'm going to cover today is: "Ministry." Many Christians like to choose their churches like they choose their pizzas. "I like pepperoni, ham, and sausage... and NO mushrooms." "I like contemporary music, short sermons, a family atmosphere... and NO evangelism outreaches." And they will choose the church that does ministry according to their liking, but the moment the church tries new things they leave because they get uncomfortable. These Christians could be labeled as "old wineskins," because they are inflexible to anything new and only want things their way.

The truth is that while God is the same yesterday, today, and forever (Hebrews 13:8), the first revelation God gave of Himself to the world is that He is a Creator. And if God is always the same, then that means He is always creating. God is always doing a new thing, and we can't allow ourselves to get so wrapped up in His old works to miss what He is doing today.

The Spirit of God is described as a river in different parts of the Bible. Physical rivers are known to always be shifting. If there is ever a flood, rivers can move dramatically. So dramatically to the point that there are places in the world where there are bridges over dry ground. There had been rushing rivers under the bridges before, but the rivers had moved while the bridges remained in the same place. It's the same with many ministries, the Spirit of God is always moving but we like to make a bridge over one spot and stay there, even after the Spirit is long gone.

If you attend New Philadelphia long enough you will learn that we are a church that loves to roll with the Spirit. The leaders choose to keep close to God rather than hold on past ways of doing ministry. And because of that the sermons in this church are fresh and the ministry is alive and moving. God is doing great things here!

End :)

So in conclusion, if you attend New Philadelphia Church, you will learn to be blessed by core value number six: Roll With the Punches. And the more you roll with the punches, the more you will see God in the details and Him actually orchestrating every step for your glory.

Pray