



Royal Oak  
VICTORY CHURCH

**August 13, 2017 ~ Pastor Dave Meyers**  
**Love Does Part 6 – Palms Up**

Well it's wonderful seeing all of you this morning. As many of you know Clarisse and I have been on vacation the past month or so.

I have to say that it's really been a blessing to have been able to pull away and spend some quality time resting and refueling.

While we were away we didn't do anything too monumental. We went camping several times, took the grand kids on a few day trips, puttered around in the garage and backyard and did a lot of reading. But mainly it was a time just to rest and we certainly were able to do that.

I want to thank many of you for remembering us in your prayers and even though we were away, we still felt as if a part of us was here.

And I also want to thank Pastor Sheldon and all the staff for doing such a great job while we were away.

It's such a blessing to be able to take time off and to not worry about all the things back here at home because we know it's being well taken care of. Let's give all the staff a great big hand of thanks.

I understand that while I was away you began a series of messages entitled:

“Love Does - Discovering a Secretly Incredible Life in a Very Ordinary World”

It's taken from a book with the same name written by a man by the name of Bob Goff.

For those of you who have been with us through this series you'll know that what we've been doing each Sunday is reading a chapter from the book and then spring boarding from it.

We just heard the chapter that we'll be looking at this morning, it's called "Palms Up". I just love the subtitle that goes along with it. Jeff has already read it and it goes like this:

"I used to think that clenched fists would help me fight better, but now I know they only make me weaker."

How many of you think that's quite a statement? That clinched fists, (in other words) living a life filled with grasping and striving, scrapping and fighting are never ways for us to get strong and become more successful in life; but rather the exact opposite is true. That true strength and contentment come when our hands are wide open and our palms are facing up.

And I know, because I've experienced that in my own life over and over again. In fact, it happened yet again a few weeks ago when we were on holidays.

Our granddaughters were spending the night at our house because the plan was to get up the next morning and go to the zoo.

And I was pretty excited about it. Firstly, because I hadn't been to the zoo for ages and secondly, the thought of going with the grand kids was really special.

And so, Clarisse and I had pretty much planned out what the day was going to look like: when we would get up, when we would eat breakfast, when we would leave the house, where we would park the car, and all the different stuff we would do at the zoo when we got there. We had a plan.

But how many know, that sometime the plans that you make and the plans that kids have in their minds can be miles, even universes apart? Well, that's exactly what happened to us.

Clarisse and I got up in morning and started preparing for the day. She woke the girls up and told them it was time for them to get ready.

And while they were eating their breakfast, I went to the store to pick up a few items. When I got back and walked into the house I couldn't believe what I saw.

Instead of them being all dressed and ready to go they had both taken off their pajamas and put on their princess dresses.

Now you have to understand that for my granddaughters, who are 4 and 5 years old, being a princess is the highest and most noble call of all.

And so, a few years ago Clarisse went out and bought both of them princess dresses that included princess shoes and even a princess tiara.

Almost every time when they come over to our house, one of the very first things they do is slip into their princess dress.

It's cute and it's adorable and it always fun to watch. But how many know there's a right time for everything, and according to the plan we had hammered out, this was not one of them.

So, very gently but firmly I told them that they had to take off their princess dress and get into their clothes, because we were going to the zoo.

And so, going down stairs I began to wait. Fifteen minutes turned into a half an hour and a half an hour turned into 45 minutes and 45 minutes was now beginning to creep into one whole hour. It was then I realized that we were way off schedule.

And so, rounding up the girls, Clarisse put their coats on, we jumped in the car, buckled up their seat belts and I was just about to back out of the driveway when Ari, the youngest said, "Papa we can't go to the zoo." "Why not?", I asked. "I forgot my dolly", she said, "I can't go without her".

Well my response was, "Ari, you don't want to take your doll to the zoo. She might get lost and you might never see her again."

But she was not to be dissuaded and so putting the car back into park, I unbuckled my seat belt, went into the house, found her doll, came back out, gave it to her, jumped back into the car and did up my seat belt up again.

And I was just about to put the car into reverse when Lolo, the oldest, said "Papa we can't go to the zoo." And I said "why?" And she said, "Because I don't have my teddy bear."

And doing my very best to be as patience and composed as I possibly could, I said, "Lolo, you don't want to bring your teddy bear to the zoo. What if he gets lost or even worse, what if they think he's a real bear and lock him in the cage

with all the rest of the bears?”

But just like Ari, she was not to be dissuaded and she insisted on having her bear.

So once again I put the car back into park, unbuckled my seat belt, went inside the house, found her bear, got back in the car, did up my seat belt up again, put the car in reverse and we began making our way towards to zoo.

And that's when I happened to glance at the clock to see what time it was, and all I have to say is that I wasn't impressed. Because now we were a whole hour and a half behind schedule and the plan that we had so meticulously put together the night before was quickly falling part.

The more I thought about it, the tighter my fists grabbed the steering wheel until by the time we got into the zoo parking lot I was pretty wound up.

And so, finding a parking stall we got the girls out of the car. We started walking towards the entrance with me being a little bit stressed and agitated and that's when I believe God began talking to me.

And it's like He asked me why I was so wound up. I told him that it was because we had a plan and we were now a whole hour and a half late executing it.

And then I felt Him say, “Well does it really matter all that much if you're an hour and a half, or two hours, or ever three hours late? It's not like your catching a plane and leaving the country. You're going to zoo.

All those animals that you're so wound up about seeing, they're not going anywhere. They were here yesterday, they are here today and they'll be here tomorrow.

And so, what you need to do is take a deep breath, unclench your fists and do what you're supposed to being doing in the first place.

And that is spending some quality, memory making time with your granddaughters. That is what it's all about.”

And all I have to say is that in that short walk we made from the parking lot to the entrance, it was like I had a major paradigm shift.

I was reminded yet again of the incredible value of living our lives with our hands wide open and our palms facing up.

And before I move on and talk more about what that really looks like, the one question I want you to ask yourself this morning is just how am I doing when it comes to this area and what is the default posture I tend to assume when it comes to living my life.

Am I clutching and grasping? Am I striving and fighting? Am I going through the day with my hands closed and my fists clenched, or have I learned the importance of taking a deep breath and turning my palms up in trust and surrender to God?

It's important that we pause every once in a while, and think about that because it can mean the difference between fear and faith, misery and joy, weakness and strength, failure and success. That's how important open palm living is in our lives.

This morning, what I would like to do is share a little bit of exactly what that looks like. How many of you are ready? Turn to the person next to you and say, "It's time to turn them up".

The very first truth when it comes to palm up living is that:

It's not natural.

In other words, palms up living is something that we aren't normally born with. And if you don't believe me, just look at how a baby looks when it first comes into the world.

Usually it's crying with its face all scrunched, up and if you look at its hands, almost every time, you'll notice that both of them are closed in a tight little fist.

That's usually the way we arrive here. We come into this world clenching and grasping and striving. In fact, I just happen to have a picture of me at that very moment of time in my life.

And if you look closely at that picture you'll notice that both my hands are closed in a fist.

Now, before you start laughing and pointing your finger at me, I challenge you to go find a picture of when you were born. I'll bet that you look the very same way, with your hands closed and your fists tight.

And the reason is because open palm living is never normal or natural for any of us.

That we come into this world clutching and grasping, striving and fighting, our hands closed and our fists clenched. And unless we can learn to do it differently, that's exactly how we leave it.

And that really shouldn't surprise us because the fact is, that's exactly how God said it would be. That after men fell, God turned to Adam and said this:

"Since you listened to your wife and ate from the tree whose fruit I commanded you not to eat, the ground is cursed because of you. All your life you will struggle to scratch a living from it." - Genesis 3:17

In other words, after the fall, grasping and clenching, struggling and scratching became the default way we all began to live.

And so firstly palms up living is not natural. Secondly, palms up living:

It's not rational.

In other words, living our lives in with our palms facing up in progressive surrender and release to God, oftentimes doesn't make that much sense to our rational and natural mind, and you see this all through scripture.

That it wasn't rational for God to take Gideon's army and shrink it from 32,000 down to a mere 300 men. But that's what palms up living is all about.

That it wasn't rational for God to tell King Jehoshaphat to march into battle putting the warriors in the back and the singers in the front. But that's what palms up living is all about.

It was rational for David to go toe to toe on the battlefield with Goliath or for the widow to give her last mite or for Jesus to leave the glory and spender of

heaven and come here on earth to pour out his life as a ransom for many.

It's not rational. And yet that's exactly what palms up living is all about. And that oftentimes, it simply doesn't make that much sense to our natural mind. And yet we are to do it anyway.

It was way back in 2003 when a letter came from Pastor Terry Murphy from the Moose Jaw Victory Church. I felt God tell me, that we as a church were to give \$5,000 towards it. The board agreed and so we sent them the money.

From a natural perspective, giving that money away made absolutely no sense at all. That we couldn't afford it and in fact we needed it as badly or even more as they did. I could have come up with a million reasons why we needed to hold on to it and yet we let it go and released it all the same.

It was shortly after that things began opening up for us. We found a lead on this very piece of land, put a down payment on it and a year later it was ours.

And that's what palms up is all about. That it releases and gives even when everything around it is screaming, "This is crazy and makes no sense at all".

And Jesus touched on this very principle himself in Matthew 10:39 when He said:

"If you cling to your life, you will lose it; but if you give up your life for Me, you will find it."

How many know that makes no sense? Because our natural mind tells us that in order for a person to be able to find and keep their life, then they are going to have to strive and grasp and cling onto it with all that's in them.

And yet here Jesus tells us that it's not that way at all. That if you really want to find your life then you need to let go and surrender it to Him.

And that's what palms up living is all about. That firstly it's not natural. Secondly it's not rational. And then thirdly:

It's not comfortable

In Palates, you are forced to stretch in ways you never thought was possible and stretch muscles you never even knew you had. Of course, when you do it there's always a certain amount of pain and discomfort. But as they always say: "the pain is worth the gain".

And yet the truth is that's exactly the way it is with palms up living; that it challenges us to stretch and extend ourselves in ways that might result in far higher levels of discomfort and pain. That's just the way it is.

Because how many know, it wasn't comfortable for Abraham to leave his father and mother, his sisters and brothers, the life that he knew and loved so much; go to a land that God would show him? And yet despite the discomfort he did it anyway.

How many know it wasn't comfortable when God told him to take Isaac, his only son, the son whom he loved with everything within him and go to Mount Moriah and sacrifice him as offering there? How many know it wasn't easy and yet despite the pain he did it anyway?

And how many know it wasn't comfortable for the disciples to leave everything that was safe and secure, predicable and familiar; in order to follow Jesus? And yet despite the discomfort and uncertainty they went anyway.

And how many know, it sure wasn't comfortable for Jesus to hang naked on a cross, suspended between heaven and earth, while the crowd below mocked and jeered at him? But that's what palms up living is all about.

That it calls us to step out of our comfort zone and go places and do things that might require a higher level of commitment and sacrifice.

And one question I want you to ask yourself this morning is, "When was the last time I did something like that?". When was the last time you felt a fresh wave of that kind of uncertainty and discomfort in your life?

Pastor George Hill describes it as the happily terrified feeling. When you have to step out of your comfort zone and are doing something greater and grander for God.

Something that causes you to lose your breath, bow your knee, look up to



heaven and say “Lord I am way out of my element here and if you don’t come through then I’m going down”. That’s what palms up living is all about.

And if you haven been in that place for a while, I would encourage to find out what God is saying to you and then take some far bigger and bolder steps into what He is calling you to do.

I like what the writer of Hebrews had to say about this in Hebrews 6:12

“We do not want you to become lazy, but to imitate those who through faith and patience inherit what has been promised”

And so firstly palms up living is not natural. Secondly it’s not rational. Thirdly it’s not comfortable. And then lastly this morning, palms up living:

It’s not futile

In other words, it’s not without purpose. And because of that there is always, and I mean always, a very deep and rich reward when we choose to live our lives that way.

And you see this all through the Bible. Look at what the writer of Proverbs says here in Proverbs 11:24

“There is one who scatters, yet increases more; And there is one who withholds more than is right, But it leads to poverty.”

And then look at the promise the writer gives to us here.

“The generous soul will be made rich, and he who waters will also be watered himself.” - Proverbs 11:25

And that is the deep and rich reward that come whenever we choose to live our lives surrender with our palms up. Of course, Jesus mentioned this himself in Luke 18:29. Look at it here:

“And I assure you that everyone who has given up house or wife or brothers or parents or children, for the sake of the Kingdom of God, (Luke 18:29)

will be repaid many times over in this life, and will have eternal life in the world

to come." (Luke 18:30)

In other words, palms up living is the only way we can truly receive all that God has for us.

Because how many know, it's pretty hard to fill a hand that is closed and with fists that are clenched? In fact, it reminds me of the story of how they catch monkeys in Africa.

The hunter will take a gourd and cut a small hole just big enough for the monkey's hand to fit in it. Then they will fill it with something the monkey likes to eat, like nuts or sweets.

And sure enough, sooner or later a monkey will come by, smell what's inside, put their hand through the hole and grab a fistful of it.

But because the hole is just big enough to put their empty hand through, they can't pull it out as long as they are holding onto the nuts.

At this point you would think that the monkey would realize it, drop the nuts and run away. But they don't. They want those treats so bad that they keep holding on, and because of it they are caught.

And that's exactly what happens when we live our lives with closed fists. That the very things we are so desperately holding on to end up trapping and ensnaring us. And that's why palms up living is so vital in our lives. Because it really does two things for us.

It allows me to release the things that are toxic and hurting me.

Things like bitterness and anger, things like disappointment and hurt, things like fear and anxiety, jealousy and betrayal, addiction and sin. That palms up helps us get release of all of those negative and toxic things within us. But not only that.

It also allows me to receive the grace and strength God has for me.

Things like faith and hope. Things like healing and forgiveness. Things like peace and joy, satisfaction and contentment, gifts and callings, life and love.

That palms up living makes all of those things for more accessible. But they'll never be ours unless we will open up our hands and ask God to take away all the dark and toxic stuff, and then fill us with all that He has for us.

And in closing this morning that's exactly what I want us to do right now.

This week's Love does challenge:

Choose one area in my life that I will surrender more fully to God.