

Lay Hold of the Kingdom

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My wife and I travel back to her hometown in Lancaster County, PA, once or twice a year. It's a long, 11-hour drive. When we first come into western Pennsylvania on I-70, there is an interesting stretch of road I like to call "the chute."

It's a 35-mile or so stretch of road that has a cement barrier in the middle, with virtually no shoulders on the sides. Hills and mountains rise on both sides of the road, making it feel like you are in a chute. It is one of the scariest and probably most dangerous stretches of four-lane road anywhere (although I have never seen signs of an accident in the 30-plus years I have driven it).

Why so scary?

Since there are no shoulders or center median space, state troopers cannot pull over the speeders. So, it is not patrolled. And the drivers know it. The result? Instead of obeying the 50- or 55-mile-an-hour speed limit, drivers go 70–80 miles per hour! And you had better drive that speed, too, or you are in trouble.

Full Throttle

In Matthew 11:12, there is a powerful truth spoken by Jesus: “The kingdom of God has been forcefully advancing, and forceful men lay hold of it” (niv, 1978). And how do forceful men/women lay hold of it?

Primarily through prayer.

A little later in Matthew, Jesus had an exchange with His disciples. He asked them about people’s opinions on His identity. The answers varied. Then He asked, “Who do you say I am?”

Peter responded, “You are the Christ!” (Matt. 16:16, esv).

Jesus praised Peter for his bold answer: “I will build my church, and the gates of Hades will not overcome it.” Jesus added, “I will give you the keys of the kingdom of heaven; whatever you bind on earth will be bound in heaven, and whatever you loose on earth will be loosed in heaven” (Matt. 16:18–19).

Gates are a defensive weapon, so that verse is speaking of believers (the Church) attacking the gates of Hell through prayer—binding and loosing what God tells them to bind and loose!

Every time we pray for a lost neighbor, we pound those gates. Every time we pray for transformation in our community, we pound those gates. Every time we pray for revival and spiritual awakening, we pound those gates!

Like driving in “the chute,” advancing the Kingdom of God is not for wimps! We need to “full throttle” it to keep up with God’s plans to grow His Kingdom on earth as it is in heaven.

Are you laying hold of the Kingdom of God through prayer? Are you going “full throttle” to see His Kingdom advance?

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