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Hey Traders Point family, I hope you had a very Merry Christmas and I want to wish you a Happy New Year. Thank you so much for taking just a minute to join us for this special online worship experience, wherever you may be tuning in from around the world.

I also want to invite you to be at one of our campuses next weekend. I'm going to be sitting down with good friends of ours, Brian Welch and his daughter Jennea, to have a conversation with them. If you don't know who Brian Welch is, he is probably the best known for being a guitarist in the band Korn.

If you don't know who Korn is, that's okay. You don't have to know who they are, you don't have to be a fan of their music in order to get a lot of what Brian is going to be sharing with us next weekend. Brian and Jennea are going to be talking to us about their relationship with God, their relationship with one another as father and daughter, and some things they are learning along the way.

And, I think you're going to be encouraged by it, challenged by it. You're going to laugh at some of the things they have to say, because they are really funny people. You're going to find they are just human beings like us. We are going to have a great conversation that I think would be really good for every one of us to hear. It's going to be a good weekend for you to invite friends to come with you.

Well, right after Christmas and before New Year's Day, I like to just sit down and reflect back before I look ahead. I want to take a quick minute to look back at the year we just came out of. 2019 was an incredible year for our church. God has done so many things in this past year. There have been hundreds of people who have been connected to Jesus in groups and in serving. We've had over 600 baptisms in our church—that's amazing—people age eight all the way up to age 88, and everywhere in between.

And some amazing stories have been coming across my desk, stories of lives that have been changed and impacted in incredible ways. In fact, one of the things I've been hearing more and more here lately is—people will send me an email or come up to me at a restaurant or stop me in a hallway and they will say these powerful words: "Traders Point saved my life."

At first, I thought, “That’s a little melodramatic,” but as they began to tell me what they meant by that, it made a lot of sense. They will go on to talk about how the ministry of this church impacted their lives in such a way that it saved their marriage, it saved them from an addiction, it saved their waning faith.

I want you to know that we don’t take any of the credit for that. We give God all the glory for it. But I also want to acknowledge that God uses people to impact other people. He always has, and he always will. And I want to share those thoughts with you, because that’s what you’ve done.

If you’ve been a part of our church, if you’ve been generous, if you’ve been in a group, if you’ve been serving, if you’ve been demonstrating the love of Jesus to other people, you’re just as much a part of that vision and mission as anyone else on our team. And I want to thank you for that.

Because of 2019, I think 2020 is going to be even better. We’re going to start the year off in a big way. In fact, in January we launch campus number five, and in February we launch campus number six. I want you to write these dates down on your calendar.

Sunday, January 19 we are launching our Midtown campus in the Broad Ripple area. We’re going to start portable at first at the Seventh Day Adventist church in Broad Ripple. Then, on Sunday, February 23, we’re going to be launching our Northeast campus in the Fishers area at Fall Creek Intermediate School.

I’m going to ask you to be praying for both of these campus launches. If you’d like to be a part of either one of these campuses, if you live within a 20-minute drive of either of those areas, I want to invite you to check out those grand openings when they come.

I believe God is going to do more in and through our church in 2020. I want to invite you to be a part of it. There are a few days left in the year to financially contribute to the mission of our church via the website or the church app.

Finally, I want to take a few minutes to share with you a few thoughts that are on my heart for our church as we head into a new year.

A few weeks ago, I was talking to a friend of mine. She was sharing with me about a friend of hers who she has been praying to invite to church. Now, so far this friend has been unreceptive to an invitation. She is not a believer.

She was just sharing with me some of the conversations and the emails they have been having back and forth. At one point, and I really love this thought she shared with me, she said, “You know, Aaron? The gospel is incredibly simple, and yet we make it so complicated. And it’s actually the complications, that’s what the people are rejecting when I extend an invitation.” And I couldn’t agree with her more. I think as we head into a new year, it is going to be so important for us as a church family to get back to the simplicity and the beauty of the gospel message. It really is not as complicated as we often make it.

I’m not quite sure who said it first, but I really like this acronym for the word grace. It’s simply this. Grace is God’s riches at Christ’s expense. Grace is free to us, but it doesn’t mean it didn’t cost him everything. It’s God’s riches at Christ’s expense.

When Jesus invited the disciples to follow him, I love how he put it in Matthew 4:19. He simply says this, “Come follow me, and I will show you how to fish for people.” Some translations say, “Make you fishers of men.”

There are really three words that jump out at me from that one little verse, and these are the three words I want to leave us with as a church family to think about as we head into 2020. It’s just simply the words **come**, **follow**, and **make**. And I want us to focus on these three, simple, yet incredibly powerful words for us as a church family.

The first word is come. The invitation that I think so many people miss is the one for them to come just as they are. I’m amazed at how many people think they can’t come to church because of something in their past or because of some questions they don’t have answers to, or some beliefs that are unresolved.

Jesus always met people right where they were. He looked them in the eye, and he loved them. There is a really big difference between loving someone and approving of everything they do. You do not have to approve of everything in someone’s life in order to love them.

1 Corinthians 13 says, “Without love, all of our words are like a clanging symbol.” They’re just annoying. As a church, we’re going to make sure this message is loud and clear. People are in process. No one is fully formed. Even if you’ve been following Jesus for 50 years, there is still work to do. We are in different places in our spiritual journey, and that’s okay.

As so, as a church we’re going to fling the doors wide open to anyone and everyone. We won’t be seeker-sensitive in the sense that we’ll water anything down, but we will be sensitive to where people are coming from because Jesus was. He was kind and understanding to all sorts

of broken, messy, and irreligious people. I just want to extend the invitation to you, whoever you are. Just come.

The second word is follow, which means that even though the invitation is that we come as we are, we don't stay as we are. Jesus invited the people to follow him before they ever cleaned themselves up, figured things out, or had their questions answered.

Listen, if you wait until you have all those things buttoned up, you'll never follow him. You see, we get those things sorted out, we get our beliefs sorted out, we get our questions answered, we get our lives cleaned up as we follow him. Which means that discipleship, which is just a fancy word for following Jesus, is always going to be messy. It's always going to be a bit unpredictable. It's also going to be something incredibly difficult to measure.

I want to encourage you to do three things in the new year to help you follow Jesus. The first thing is to engage with God's Word, which is different than get-on-a-Bible-reading-plan. Now, I don't have anything against Bible reading plans. I'm in one right now, but one of the things I've observed is oftentimes you get somebody who is really excited to read God's Word. They start in Genesis. By the time they get to Leviticus, they're out. And I want you to be in it longer than that.

Instead, maybe read a Proverb a day. Maybe start in the Gospel of John. Spend about 10 minutes reading, then sit back and ask yourself, "What is God saying to me from these verses?" And ask yourself, "What am I going to do with it?" and, "When am I going to do it?" When you engage with God's Word in that way, which is all about life application, it will change your interaction with it.

The second thing is that I want to encourage you to get connected to life-giving relationships, which is what we mean when we say, "Get into a group." All that means is that you're going to surround yourself with a half-dozen to a dozen other people just like you. You're going to pray with one another, encourage each other, help each other apply God's word to your life, so you know you're not in this alone.

The third thing is I want to ask you to start serving somewhere. Whether that's once a month, every other week, or every week. Instead of just coming and consuming a service, when you begin to serve other people it will revolutionize the way you experience church.

The third and the final word is make. You know, Jesus' mission is people. So, he said to his disciples, "I will make you fishers of men." People matter, all kinds of people. And the whole

purpose of spiritual growth is to provide you and me a good enough foundation from which we can lovingly engage all kinds of people.

The purpose of reading the Bible isn't just to fill your head with Bible knowledge. The purpose of growing spiritually isn't so you can become a better Christian. All of it is for the purpose of you and me to being able to extend a loving hand to people who are far from God. May we never forget that.

That's the whole purpose of our church. Our mission is to remove unnecessary barriers to get people to Jesus so that he can do in their lives what no one else can. I'm super-excited to be able to do this with you in 2020 and beyond. I want to lead us in a word of prayer today, as we close out 2019 and begin 2020. Let's just focus our eyes on Jesus.

Father, we come to you right now. I'm so grateful for 2019 and all the incredible things you did in and through our church. The hundreds and even thousands of lives that were impacted by the ministry of our church family.

So now, God, we thank you for that and we look ahead to a brand-new year. We ask that you would do even more. We ask that you would reach more people, change more lives, do more ministry because this world is a dark place. It needs the light of the gospel of grace.

Help us to not get in the way of that, but to make it as clear as we can so as many people as possible can come to know and experience the grace that is available through your Son, Jesus Christ.

We ask this in Jesus' name. Amen.