

Images, Insights and Inspiration for Pastoral Leadership

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DEDICATION

To the called men of God connected to the Angelos Biblical Institute.

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I want to acknowledge the God of Heaven and Earth for the awesome things He has done.

Chapter One

JOSHUA A GOOD LEADER TO FOLLOW

One of the greatest Old Testament leaders is found in the person of Joshua. Joshua the son of nun was not only a leader of change but he also was a great warrior on behalf of the people of God. I resonate with Joshua as he had a difficult task in leading a generation that he was called to lead by God.

Joshua's name means "The Salvation of God". He was the successor to Moses and the man who led the nation of Israel to conquer the land of Canaan and settle in the Promised Land. Joshua was born in Egypt. He went through the great events of the Passover and the Exodus with Moses and all the Hebrew people who escaped from slavery in Egypt, by the power of God.

In the Wilderness of Sinai, Moses took his assistant Joshua with him when he went into the mountains to talk with God (Ex 24:13). Moses also gave Joshua a prominent place at the Tabernacle, to help him to minister to the people. As Moses' servant, Joshua would remain at the tabernacle as his representative while Moses left the camp to fellowship with the Lord (Ex 33:11). His authority as a leader was first delegated to him. This is where he began to gain the idea of leadership over the people.

Joshua was born in Egypt, during the time of slavery, and he shared in all the events of the Exodus, and held the place of commander of the host of the Israelites at their great battle against the Amalekites in Rephidim (Ex 17:8-16).

He was groomed to be Moses replacement, and called by God to be great leader of God's people.

Joshua is recorded as the faithful servant of Moses, and accompanied him in all that he did. Joshua was also one of the twelve who were sent on by Moses to explore the land of Canaan (Nu 13:16,17), and only he and Caleb gave an encouraging report.

Under the direction of God, Moses, before his death, gave the mantle of leadership to Joshua in a public ceremony before the people. Giving him the authority over the nation as his successor (Dt 31:23).

The people were encamped at Shittim when he assumed the command (Jos 1:1); and crossing the Jordan, they encamped at Gilgal, where, having circumcised the people, he kept the Passover, as Israel's new leader. Joshua was then visited by the Captain of the Lord's host, who spoke to him encouraging words (1:1-9).

After this meeting, as the new leader of God's people he began the wars of conquest. Under his leadership six nations and thirty-one kings were conquered.(Jos 11:18-23; 12:24). At the conclusion of his tenure, having won victories in the new land, Joshua divided the land among the tribes, just as God had commanded. He not only was a man of influence and administration, but he became of a man of

great organization as well. It took a command presence and strong leadership to lead men into battle and to organize a strategy to fight the enemy.

Upon the completion of his assignment, he died, at the age of one hundred and ten years old. It was exactly twenty-five years later after crossing the Jordan that he was buried in his own city of Timnath-serah (Jos 24); His final charge to the people is a well regarded sermon today, “As for me and my house we will serve the Lord”. This farewell sermon denotes the charisma of Joshua, and the fortitude to lead strong right up to the very end. He was a thoughtful commander and leader, one whose life was lived as an example before the people.

As a great leader, Joshua has been regarded as a type of Christ (Heb 4:8). He is thought to be so in the following ways: (1) In the name; God is my salvation , just as Jesus names means He is salvation.(2) Joshua brings the people into the possession of the Promised Land, as Jesus brings his people to the heavenly Canaan; and (3) as Joshua succeeded Moses, so the Gospel succeeds the Law.

Upon his death, the people went astray from God. When they lost their leader, it affected every area of life. They began serving idol gods; they forsook what he had taught them. They left what they once knew to be true and righteous.

Joshua played a major role in the life of the people. In his departure, they began to look like, act like and imitate the pagans surrounding them. I believe that because of Joshua’s influence upon the nation, the people followed his example and lifestyle. When he departed, so did his image, words, voice and entire leadership style. The people needed someone to look up to, and in his absence, they turned to the god’s of their neighbors.

Joshua was a man that God could use. As a strength he learned how to follow first, before he was asked to lead. He was the servant of Moses. His task was to minister to the Man that God had placed over him. Joshua learned to watch as he served and therefore was available for the task when the call came from God.

Another observation of his strength was that he trusted God. He was willing to walk by faith, lead by example and do difficult things in the name of the Lord.

When he was assigned to spy out the land, he had confidence that God could deliver the enemy into their hands. His faith allowed him to trust God in difficult situations.

He was a man that had experienced the power of God, in battle. He fought and led the army of the Nation in battle for the Lord. He saw God do amazing things, and he never wandered away from the things he saw. Joshua became the man that God could use, because he had experienced God and knew that he could trust him.

If there was a weakness to be observed, I would say that it was the inability to believe in himself. In Joshua chapter one, we find the amazing charge of God (repeatedly) to not be afraid. God says to Joshua, “As I was with Moses I will also be with you.”(Jos1:1-9) As a leader he had all the confidence in the world in Moses, but it appears that he was fearful of his own inability, or either timid in being in

total control.

Joshua had seen this responsibility before, when he ran the tabernacle, led the army, led in battle and as he watched and served in any capacity asked of him by Moses.

So the ability to do so was always there, however in this passage he was afraid. This in my own opinion constitutes a weakness in that he was such a great leader with such great faith, but he had none in himself when he needed it most.

There are several additional aspects of Joshua's leadership I want to examine they are as follows;

1. The leader and his calling
2. The leader that leads in change
3. The leader as a shepherd

The leader and his calling

Joshua was a man called by God and appointed to serve Moses during a tremendous time in Israelite History. Prior to the death of Moses God reveals that his replacement was a man he had called unto himself. When God calls a man he selects one that he can trust with an assignment. The man that God chooses is a man that God has confidence in and has equipped and called him from birth to do so.

Joshua was brought up during difficult times. He was a man that had a heart for God's people and was available for God to use at his command. God refused to let Moses take the people of God into the promise land. Because of Moses mistakes as a leader, he did not get the reward of leading them to the place that God wanted them to have.

God's plan was for Joshua to lead the people of God as a new Leader. (Num 27:18-23) "18 So the LORD said to Moses, "Take Joshua son of Nun, a man in whom is the spirit, and lay your hand on him. 19 Have him stand before Eleazar the priest and the entire assembly and commission him in their presence. 20 Give him some of your authority so the whole Israelite community will obey him. 21 He is to stand before Eleazar the priest, who will obtain decisions for him by inquiring of the Urim before the LORD.

At his command he and the entire community of the Israelites will go out, and at his command they will come in. 22 Moses did as the LORD commanded him. He took Joshua and had him stand before Eleazar the priest and the whole assembly. 23 Then he laid his hands on him and commissioned him, as the LORD instructed through Moses."

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When God calls a man he is brought before the people in a ceremony revealing that the hand of the Lord is upon him. Joshua was prepared through training and service, and divine mentoring to be able to lead in the capacity, in which God would have him to lead. All of Israel knew of this leader, and all were

witnesses to the work that God was doing in his life.

The Leader that leads in change

The subtext in the book of Joshua could be titled, how to lead in change.

In this book, we see how this new leader was given a task that was bigger than him and ordained by God to accomplish what God needed him to do. In this book, Joshua comes back to the land that God showed him forty years later, and now he is to lead the invasion that should have happened a long time ago.

Joshua's task was big, his congregation large and yet he would take them places that they had never been, and cause them to walk by faith and not by sight. His opportunity lead through change has been a great encouragement to me. I have looked into this book many times to find ways in which to handle crisis, discouragement and surprises along the way. Because Joshua led by example, and his example still speaks today.

The book of Joshua can help any pastor in transition with making decisions and leading strong through seasons of change. He keeps the people together; he leads in worship staying behind the ark, and he is a warrior for the people, and a shepherd also.

He is decisive in his deliberations. Once he has heard from God he moves on what he has heard. Joshua also deals with sin in the camp, and he keeps holiness as the standard for the people of God and the will and work of God.

Joshua as a leader does not straddle the fence of complacency. He also models what it looks like to walk alone, and to say to the world.

The leader as a shepherd

As a shepherd, he leads, guards, and fights on behalf of the flock. He keeps them in the will of God and following God. He also reminds them of how they are to live and to obey the laws of God. In the end he reminds them of how he has lived before them and that, they too have choice in what they are going to do. However, his mind was steadfast in following the Lord.

A good pastor will lead like Joshua. He will protect his people, he will lead by example, he will not be afraid to preach truth, nor will he be afraid of enemies that surround them. He will love the people enough and fear God in such a way that he will do only what pleases Him.

Chapter Two

IS YOUR MINISTRY GROWING?

My reflections on ministry leadership and growth development for the past 25 years, has been both transformational and inspirational. It has consisted of an ongoing cycle of training and formation that has taken place on a daily and weekly basis. Over the course of this journey I have found myself consulting God for wisdom, direction, instruction and help for the task that is ahead of ministry. In the past 15 years I have conducted national and international mission trips, conferences and seminars. I have planted and served four congregations, completed doctoral level training, organized a school for bi-vocational ministers and served three major Christian Universities as a University Pastor, Director of ministry, Minister at large for global evangelism, and community outreach director. I have reviewed my journey of ministry growth and development and placed my thoughts in four categories, they are as follows;

1. Corporate Ministry Development
2. Personal Ministry Development
3. Spiritual Growth Development
4. Professional Ministry Development

In the area of corporate ministry development, I have consistently made it a priority to have a plan that helps me to be available for instruction in community by sitting at the feet of great pastors who preach and teach internationally, as well as locally.

Studying by radio, internet and other technological advances has helped me to take advantage of instructional resources that address the church at large and help to develop the leadership skills that I

need to be successful in the work of the ministry. International schools of ministry, conferences, seminars workshops and Seminary level classes have all shaped my thinking over the Past 25 years. I have looked forward to searching various resources that encourage me through dialogue, study sessions, and other resources aimed at helping the man of God to navigate the deep waters of leadership.

Over the past 15 years I have served in Evangelism committees, Baptist associational boards, expository preaching conferences, key note speaking events, community evangelism events, developed networks, connections and resources to spread the good news of Jesus Christ. I have learned about corporate ministry Leadership and development, within large Para-church organizations, University systems and various denominational entities. As a result of what I have learned, I have grown immensely in my own ideas and professional experience.

One such conference that has shaped me over the past 7 years has been the Baptist Pastors Ministerial Conference of Fresno California. This is a ministry that meets regularly in the Fresno metro area. At the conference, preachers share local concerns and ministry issues that affect the community at large. Leaders from ministries across metro Fresno are in attendance and together there is prayer, spiritual formation, preaching and teaching that is designed to encourage and equip the man of God. Many of these Pastors are leaders and or experts in matters of Social Justice and religion. The time I had spent at their feet was insightful and historical for me. I have the privilege of hearing these pioneers discuss national issues and then proclaim in scripture what the bible says about these issues.

In addition to this I have developed and led conferences across the country, through my partnerships with three Universities. These meetings were developed through the Angelos Biblical Institute which inspires, pastors to grow in the preaching and teaching of God's Holy Word. It is in these conferences that I have been able to meet others who are walking in the same brand of leadership that I am walking in.

Personal Ministry Development

In the area of personal ministry development, I have always had a desire to learn how to cultivate a heart to study God's word in a systematic format. Preaching through books of the bible has helped me greatly in the past, and because of this desire I have been able to develop this skill as a teacher of God's word. At my church planting sites, I have had the responsibility of teaching through books of the bible. Each lesson has required multiple hours of preparation and writing. This has helped me in leadership to be studious in the word. Personally, I have been made a better man by this journey, and have grown closer to God in this endeavor, because of expository preaching, teaching, reading, writing, and knowing that I am responsible for others has enhanced my desire for ministry growth and development.

Prior to my seminary masters degrees, my prayer life and personal spiritual formation was inadequate as a leader in ministry. However, I have grown in the disciplines of spiritual formation, and I continue to have a formational time each morning before daybreak. This is where I get alone with God. In this time period, I am able to bring my cares before God and lay them on the altar. It is my special time with the Lord, A time for introspection, reflection, recollection and confession. I long for this time because I know he is meeting me there and will bring to our meeting the necessary correction and information that I need to be a better servant for him. This time of formation (for 15 years) has helped me to begin my day, and to look forward to the work that is before me. Another source of encouragement and development has been the connection with Mentors, professors, teachers and peer servant leaders that have poured into me practical ministry wisdom. They have also shared horror stories to protect me from making the same mistakes. Many of these sessions have come in relaxing settings, small groups, Pastoral retreats, revivals and informal counseling sessions. These moments and times together have been by far the most transformational for me, because they are living episitles that know me, shape me, instruct me and communicate with me regularly.

One such group is my mentoring group that I have walked with for 7 years. It is called the BPC leadership group. Each month 12 of us gather together to study spiritual formation and to practice, recollection, introspection, and dive into some new transformational writing from an evangelical reader. We do this to sharpen one another, debate, discuss and define our thoughts so that we will stay on the cutting edge of Christian leadership.

As I go back briefly to reflect on my prayer life, I want to mention that God has shaped me immensely through my time with him. In the above stated paragraph, I spoke about early morning intercession and said that formation is where I find my devotional life in this season of my journey. Before the day begins, my house is quiet, my heart is quiet and my head is less noisy. This is the perfect opportunity for me to connect with Jesus. I have also included into my spiritual disciplines, the practice of isolation and spiritual retreats. Often times I get the privilege to spend time at a cabin, hotel and other remote areas near the ocean, mountains, and beach that I may observe the hand of God through creation.

This has been a powerful form of devotion for me. In many of these times I will take a hymnal, a journal and my bible and begin to seek his face in worship. I have discovered that spiritual formation is a saving grace in the time of crisis. A great portion of my personal ministry development has been to go back and read the writings of the saints of old. Martin Luther, John Calvin, Jonathon Edwards, Charles Spurgeon, Brother Lawrence are some of these were men that walked and struggled with God and man. I have learned a great deal from their journey as well as my own. My personal prayer life, devotional time and spiritual formation with God has served me well, as a leader in the Lords Church. Reading through the word of God has also been experiential. Preaching, teaching and walking through passages of biblical text, comma by comma and line by line has been mind and life changing. My consistent plan

has been to read through several chapters of the Old Testament and several chapters in the New Testament simultaneously.¹

In order to stay afresh with the corresponding biblical text that interprets one another, one needs to read the new and the old together, for the one opens the window to the other. Over the course of this journey I have both read this way for recreation, and preparation for preaching.

My heart's desire has been to meditate in the word of God daily and to read through the word of God several times a year for instruction and inspiration. Because reading is fundamental to the work of the ministry, I have practiced walking through timeless preaching classics, like those that deal with personal revival. I have read People like Leaoanard Ravenhill and "Why revival tarries", "Sodom had no bibles", A. W Tozer and the "Knowledge of the holy", Watchmen Nee, John Bunyan, Richard Foster and "Shaped By the Word", Lyle Dorsett and "Campus revival", Lon Allison, "Proclamation Evangelism", Franklyn Graham and the "Name", and a Host of evangelical warriors from the Past and the present that help me be inspired by the word of God.

These books stir the soul and heart of the reader. I also enjoy spiritual biographies on the lives of those who were great commission minded. People like D.L Moody, Billy Graham, Billy Sunday, and Charles Finney, Hudson Taylor, C.S Lewis and others are leaders that had an eye on the Kingdom of God. These personal readings inspire and instruct me as I try to lead others.

In the circles of theological doctrines, Men like John piper, and John Mc Arthur, Charles Swindol and David Jeremiah are great writers and deep theological thinkers that I find to be quite interesting. On this journey I have tried to heat my heart with these brothers' writings and theological teachings that are delivered to the saints. These writers help to sharpen me and to remind me of what is entrusted to me and how I am to keep it and guard it for another generation.

¹ W.A Criswell, Why I preach that the bible is literally true, Broadman Press, Nashville TN, 1969

When I think of the work of ministry in the home, and how God has grown me into a Husband, father and brother. It has been like Dennis Rainey and others who encourage this area of ministry in my life. They remind me of my first assignment before God “The Family”. In his latest work, Dr. Rainey did a great work in his Book titled “Ministering to Twenty First Century Families”. He challenges the Preacher to understand the culture in which we live. The author gives the minister tools for understanding, and reaching the new family in the church pew.

As a leader, I have really blown it at times, by putting the church before my own house. I have learned to do better this area of my life. As Husband, and father I have practiced making ball games, and have regular date nights with Sharon. I attend school plays, and I am home for dinner several nights a week. I have learned to share movie times and take mission vacations and holidays together. It has taken me several years to realize that the spiritual formation of my own family is crucial and very important. If the Pastor cannot take care of his own home how can he take care of the house of God? My goal has been to make regular appointments with my kids, date them, hang out with them and be available for them whenever they need me to be available for them. I want to Minister to them and my beautiful Queen, so that they will love the Lord, and look forward to seeing HIM. It is my ministry desire that they fall in love with Jesus and allow Him to lead and guide them in their own spiritual formation and development.

When it comes to leadership in the church, I have found myself to be a servant leader. My style is to lead by example and to lead in a team. I like projects, and consider myself to be project driven. I am also a team player, and between both of these passions I like to lead on a team and run ahead of others serving them as they serve. I love to cast vision, teach leaders, serve leaders, empower leaders and enable them to grow and take over where ever God has led them to lead.²

² Hybels, Bill, Courageous Leadership, Zondervan, Grand Rapids MI, 2002

In my own personal style of leadership I expect others to give like I give, and do as I do. I love hard, serve hard and give all that others have the opportunity to achieve success. I work hard as a leader to do a good job and to help others to do the best that they can in leading others. I have had to learn this type of leadership model. The nine years of ministry development has taught me this.

As a leader I have tried to reproduce myself in the hearts and minds of others so that there can be opportunities for men to grow and to lead others. As a part of my personal leadership development I regularly submit myself to mentors and coaches that can help me navigate the waters of ministry and life. In my learning style I need my board of leaders that have the right and privilege to speak into my life and to encourage me in the work of the ministry. They also rebuke and straiten me out in areas that are needed as well. I have come to learn that as a leader part of my development was being able to have mentors who could deliver constructive criticism. This is good for me, and it helps me to stay on the straight and narrow as it relates to leading others. My Motto is that “Every Pastor ought to have a Pastor”. So in leading others in personal leadership development, I practice the submission to leaders who train and teach me.

As we conclude this section on Personal ministry development, I am reminded that throughout the gospels it is written 15 times that Jesus prayed. In these times He prayed in the early morning hours in various places of solitude, such as on the mountains or in the wilderness prior to doing ministry. It is the opinion of this writer that it is of extreme importance, that the servant of the lord resemble the life of Christ if they want to be successful in the ministry of leading others. There are six observations I have discovered in the life of Christ and his personal ministry development.

1. *Jesus before doing any ministry desired communion with his Father.*
2. *Jesus delighted himself in maintaining conversation with His Father who had all power of heaven and earth in his hands.*

3. *Jesus did nothing before consulting with His father prior to ministry responsibilities.*
4. *HE sought out fellowship with the triune council of Heaven.*
5. *Jesus through prayer would trust in the Spirit of God to illuminate His way while serving on earth.*
6. *Jesus dove into the great depths of prayer as a model of spiritual living that we may have an example to follow.*

This type of spiritual formation is what I desire for the duration of my leadership walk. As the triune God kept intimate fellowship with one another, so I desire the same thing as I journey on earth. God in this passage is looking for the opportunity to meet with Jesus so he can give him instruction concerning the cases he will have for the day. The Father wants to use Jesus in the earthly realm just as He wants to use me. I can't help but notice that there is something very precious about an early morning meeting with the Father. I believe that Jesus knew the importance of prayer and wanted to give His undivided attention to the Father. Jesus knew that interrupted prayer, was not true devotion to God. He knew that prayer that was not in solitude could never be as rich of an encounter as that which was done in total seclusion.

It is the observation of this writer that prayer in a solitary place is sweeter than a hurried encounter surrounded in noise. In the solitary place my devotion is sacred and intentional. It is there that I can fully devote myself to the Masters voice and wait patiently for him to speak. As a form of my spiritual formation I continue to practice this discipline with diligence.

I have discovered that praying while in solitude will enhance my thought processes. Praying while in solitude will reveal greater depths of intimacy with God. Why, because, my mind, body, and soul is not in competition with anyone or anything else. Praying in solitude will change me, before it changes anything else. This is why I must practice this discipline with great vigor in the New Year.

I have learned that praying while in solitude exposes my real motives, and secret desires. When I pray in solitude it brings me bare before the throne, and makes me rely upon the work of the Holy Spirit

to get my prayers right. Having the right place of solitude, makes the prayer experience sweet and refreshing. As I grow as a student in the ministry of leadership I am convicted with knowing I must have a consistent place of solicitude, if I am to draw near unto God.

Chapter Three

THE SPIRITUAL GROWTH OF A LEADER

Over the past years one of the greatest areas of ministry growth and development has taken place in Church planting. There is nothing more rewarding and challenging than going into an area to begin a new work for God. I have been challenged theologically, professionally, socially, culturally and most of all personally in what I believe and practice as a Christian.

Church planting has taught me that Spiritual leadership is more than organizational development. It is the call to be incarnational, transparent, flexible, and humble and most of all to be like Jesus. In the last 15 years we have been instrumental in starting two churches, one in Alabama, and the other in California. These two states are different in every way. They have different cultures, traditions, people groups, social stratus and ideas about God and faith. Everything I have learned from Fresno Pacific University, Wheaton College and Birmingham Theological Seminary has helped me to process what I have experienced on this journey.

Reflections on Church planting

The name of the two churches that were planted are both called “New beginnings Baptist Church”. Together we have a wonderful history of spiritual growth and development. In the evolution of our story, it started with about 20 adults who met with the organizing Pastor, the Reverend Dr. C. L. Stallworth during an evening fellowship on May 21, 2003.

New beginnings Family Church was born out of a church dispute from their mother church Trinity Baptist Church of Birmingham Alabama. Rev. Stallworth, who was the former pastor of Trinity Baptist

Church, and was asked to leave by the voting members of the church. Upon his departure, several members decided to follow Him and to see what the man of God was going to do.

During the above special called meeting the group of 20 prayed and talked about the vision of starting a church that would have a mainline thrust with a 21st century model of ministry. Dorothy Stallworth, (wife of Pastor Stallworth) suggested the name, “New Beginnings Family Church.” The following Sunday, May 25th, the group met at the Radisson Hotel located on University avenue in Birmingham Alabama, and welcomed sixty plus members into the fellowship. After meeting at the Sheraton Inn and Convention Center for the first year, God provided an opportunity for the church to gain a more stable location. Therefore, in April of 2004, New Beginnings began renting space at a location commonly known as L-R Hall. The church continued to move forward as God was defining her identity. In May of 2005, the organizing Pastor and family would decide to relocate to another area of the country and leave the small congregation of believers behind. Pastor Stallworth met with myself and several others and asked me if I would consider taking the reins of the ministry and leading this group of believers in the will of the Lord. In June of 2005, the church welcomed me as her Pastor and bid farewell to organizing Pastor, Reverend Stallworth and family.

Under new leadership, the congregation would move onto the campus of Ridgecrest Baptist Church and begin to transition into a church of action. With a partnership established with a Southern Baptist Anglo-American congregation, we became a multicultural ministry serving in the same location. The two sister churches would embark on a grand endeavors to reach the lost and bring the good news of Jesus Christ to a dying and hurting world. We held evangelism meetings, children’s activities, joint communion services and missional activities.

Over a period of 8 months, blacks and whites shared the same campus for worship, fellowship and ministry. It was here that I grew as a church planter and discovered a rich theology of kingdom work,

which began to shape ministry growth and development in my life.

In February of 2006, talks began between me and church leadership at Carson Road Baptist Church. (Another Baptist Anglo congregation) God opened another door for the church to collaborate up with saints who love the Lord and wanted to see Him his name lifted up in the earth. In April of the same year, New Beginnings Family Church relocated to Carson Road Baptist Church to carry out the great commission and win more souls to Jesus Christ. We said good bye to Ridgecrest Baptist and transitioned to another facility where the church was in greater need of our help and resources to reach a transitioning community.

Carson Road Baptist was a church that was dying and in need of financial stability to survive. With the new partnership came more space for New Beginnings, opportunity for more growth, and the ability to have their own property in 6 months when Carson Road would shut their doors.

After six months of partnership, Carson Road decided not to close their doors and to continue as a church in the community. New Beginnings went to God in prayer and for 60 days, we fasted and asked God for a place of our own and resources to do the work of ministry in the earth. On the 58th day of our corporate fast and prayer time, a meeting was held with Pastor John King of Trinity Baptist Church, and leader of new church growth and stewardship of the Birmingham Baptist Association. Pastor King shared with me that a sister church of the Birmingham Baptist Association was looking to sale their property to a young growing African American church. Another meeting was set and negotiations began between the association and First Baptist Church of Midfield Alabama.

In November of 2006, I was contacted by First Baptist midfield for a meeting to come and to see their property and to do a presentation on my ministry philosophy, vision and desires for New Beginnings family church. After the presentation, First Baptist Church decided to not sale the property to New Beginnings but to give it to them with all of the contents. First Baptist wanted to leave a legacy

of leadership in the community and felt as if the Lord wanted them to do this through New Beginnings.

In December of 2006, a transitional service was held with First Baptist Church of Midfield and New Beginnings Family Church. Both congregations worshipped together for two Sundays. Numerous news articles and television cameras were on location to capture the historical event. Never in the history of the South had an all-White Baptist congregation, gave an all-Black Baptist congregation such a wonderful gift. The legacy of leadership and Christian ministry of First Baptist Midfield and New Beginnings was well on the way now.

Since 2004 New beginnings has continued to reproduce leadership in her training and development classes. There have been several men called to preach the gospel within her ranks. Teachers have been trained to equip the saints for the work of the ministry, and leaders are being developed in every area of the ministry.

In 2007 I was called by God to plant to second New beginnings Baptist Church in Northern California. The church and her existing leadership bid me and my family farewell, and helped us to launch the new ministry.

Through this endeavor I have learned a great deal about leadership, change, and how to be sensitive to what God is doing in the earth. The legacy of leadership and the baton of servant hood have been successfully passed. The first church is now officially 12 years old, and has experienced great things on behalf of God's grace. The New Church in California is 7 years old, and the story of our legacy of leadership has enriched, encouraged and brought her to a place where she can see God work and understand when to join Him in what he is doing.

Chapter Four

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT FOR THE PASTOR

As a church planter, the lessons I have learned have been beneficial to me, theologically what I thought I knew about Church leadership, Ecclesiology, and Christology has all changed over time. I believe that I am a little bit wiser now and I have so much to be thanking God for. This formational training, combined with seminary experience has opened my eyes to good stewardship, the art of listening, the true doctrine of suffering, and introduced me to new friends in the counseling ministry (authors) that can assist me on my way as a leader of people.

I have gained confidence in the discipline of Pasturing people and leading them to discover God's truth for their lives. I have also discovered that counseling in the biblical context is a powerful tool and the only one that will help to transform lives that are broken and in need of divine repair.

I had never looked at preaching as a means to repair and to heal broken lives. I only saw it as instructional based proclamation. However, now I take my text with counseling in mind. My sermon application for the congregation has much more meaning to me, because, there are those that are listening for a word from the Lord. They are in need for some answers to the problems of life. In the preaching hour I have discovered that they have shown up to another counseling session to know how to handle the struggles of life. This is what my exploration and theological maturation process has taught me. It has helped my preaching in supernatural ways. I have always cared about my people, and have always wanted to help them in their struggles. Now, I can do that through the preaching and teaching of God's word.

I have also learned the power of peer reflection, and ministry counseling. Over the course of my journey I have learned to enjoy sitting with other ministry professionals. It has revived my heart and spoken to me about how much I need an ongoing session with peers and mentors that can counsel with me. I need to talk through case studies and I need to share intimate details of the work with someone who is in the work as I am. I yet continue to meet with our associational leadership by-monthly for ministerial meetings. I am also subscribed to weekly e-letters and e-mails for pastoral readings and training tips for pastors through evangelical publishers.

An additional strategy for formation has been instruction from a series of Senior Pastors that have helped me through crisis intervention, and professors who have walked me through difficult academic discoveries. Finally, the greatest teacher I have had, has been the person of the Holy Spirit. He is my first and foremost counselor that continues to lead me into all truth. I have taken advantage of my relationship God, and he has taught me many things about myself and ministry in the past 25 years.

Another area of growth in professional ministry has been in the area of shepherding congregational members. When a member of the congregation needs assistance, depending on what the situation is, I now practice recommending the counselee to get help in several areas of the church. Why? Because, I have learned that the entire body needs to be involved in the healing process. I use two distinct initiatives, corporate counseling and Personal counseling.

I have come to believe that the church is designed to have a strong discipleship model where each one can disciple one. As Pastor I encourage and teach the body to look out for the needs of the body.

It is my desire that the church be a counseling body that can mentor, teach, train, and equip others for spiritual formation. The body can also assist in the development of the work of the ministry, utilizing the word of God in every area of the church with multiple teachers who can assist the struggling believer.

When needs emerge in the body that need more direct hands on and perhaps even one on one counseling, as the Sr. pastor I want to meet the needs through the word of God, assisting people to hear what God is saying in the church.

One of the greatest ongoing tools for counseling is the regular preaching and teaching times of the church. Through expository preaching and teaching through different portions of the word of God, many of life's issues will be addressed. It is the word of God used in the life of the church that is caught and taught by the counselee and that will help them to grow in God's grace.

In every ministry that we have and develop it is required that ministry leaders disciple members in order to help them to grow in the grace of our Lord and savior Jesus Christ. I have discovered that mentoring occurs here as well as biblical counseling in times of trouble. In this area of the church counseling works as another dynamic of the ministry for all members.

As previously mentioned, I have discovered that I do not know it all. I am a novice counselor at best. However, I do know where to go for help. As a professional it is okay to ask someone for assistance, or to make a referral to someone who can professionally handle a situation better than me.

There was a time when I would absolutely try to do it all. But, now I have gained a great deal of respect for this discipline and I can offer help to someone through the agency of another. While I am evolving in the area of biblical counseling, I have most certainly not arrived. I need lot's more experience in listening, crisis intervention, assessment, spiritual wisdom, knowledge and understanding of the will of God in every situation.

In reflecting on my journey, it has really been a rich one. There are those things that I wish I could do over, and not have made the mistakes that I did. However, I have learned from them and have come to discover the richness of God's amazing grace in the process. These 25 years have brought me tears of

joy and sorrow, but I count myself grateful to have called by God to walk this walk, and to have seen all the wonders of his love that he has allowed me to see.

Chapter Five

PERSONAL MINISTRY IN THE MAKING

My leadership consist of an ongoing cycle of training and formation that takes place on a daily and weekly basis. As for today I find myself consulting God for wisdom, direction, instruction and help for the task that is ahead of me. Weekly I am in training where I sit at the feet of other teachers to be taught and encouraged in the pastoral work of ministry. For my leadership plan in the New Year, I have broken down this development in three phases, they are as follows:

- Corporate leadership development
- Personal leadership development
- Spiritual leadership development

In the area of corporate leadership development, I plan to make myself available for instruction in community by sitting at the feet of great pastors who preach and teach internationally, as well as locally. Studying by radio, internet and other technological advances will also help me to take advantage of instructional resources that address the church at large and help to develop the leadership skills that I need to be successful in the work of the ministry.

I look forward to searching various resources to encourage me through dialogue, study sessions, and other resources aimed at helping the man of God to navigate the deep waters of leadership. Another form of corporate leadership development, I look forward to using is the weekly attendance at a local ministerial conference for Pastors.

As previously mentioned, my local conference is a ministry that meets regularly here in the Fresno metro area. At the conference, preachers share local concerns and ministry issues that affect the community at large. Leaders from ministries across the City are in attendance and together there is

prayer, spiritual formation, and preaching and teaching that is designed to encourage and equip the man of God.

In addition to this strategy I also plan to attend conferences across the country that inspire, and help the pastor leader to grow in the preaching and teaching of God's Holy Word. It is in these conferences that I will be able to meet others who are walking in the same brand of leadership that I am walking in.

As a pastor I should be able to help someone, encourage someone, and build alliances that support the ministry efforts of one another in the harvest. This form of corporate cooperation and leadership development is good for the body of Christ and for me as an individual leader. In learning in a corporate body I am not alone as I learn, but I will always be in the presence of the others who are also learning leaders.

In the area of personal leadership development in the next year, I have a desire to learn more about how to cultivate a heart to study God's word in a systematic format. Preaching through books of the bible has helped me greatly in the past, and I look forward to developing this skill as a teacher of God's word.

Personal Devotional Plan

As previously mentioned, early morning intercession and formation is where I find my devotional life in this season of my journey. Before the day begins, my house is quiet, my heart is quiet and my head is less noisy. This is the perfect opportunity for me to connect with Jesus.

Often times I get the privilege to go down by the local lake and sit at the foot of the mountains, and study the hand of God through creation. This too acts as a form of devotion for me. In many of these times I will take a hymnal, a journal and my bible and begin to seek his face in worship. I plan to continue this in the near future, for it has been my saving grace in the time of crisis.

I need this sacred space after being bombarded with the cares of this world. A great portion of my devotional plan in the New Year is to go back and read the writings of the saints of old. Martin

Luther, John Calvin, Brother Lawrence are some of these were men that walked and struggled with God and man.

Bible Reading Plan

Reading through the word of God is awesome and experiential, but preaching and walking through passages of biblical text, comma by comma and line by line is my preference. I hope in the future to be able to do both with great diligence. My plan is to read through several chapters of the Old Testament and several chapters in the New Testament simultaneously.

In order to stay afresh with the corresponding biblical text that interprets one another, one needs to read the new and the old together, for the one opens the window to the other. While I plan to read this way for recreation, I will also use it as a expository technique for preparation and preaching. It is my desire to read through the word of God several times a year for instruction and inspiration.

Personal Reading Plan

To read for personal development in the future I want to walk through some timeless preaching classics, like those that deal with personal revival. I have read in the past some that I would love to walk through and re-read again. People like Leonaard Ravenhill and “Why revival tarries”, “Sodom had no bibles”, A. W Tozer and the “Knowledge of the holy”, Watchmen Nee and the power of the word.

John Bunyan, Richard Foster and “Shaped By the Word”, Lyle Dorsett and “Campus revival”, Lon Allison, “John R Mott, and a host of the classics in evangelism and revival. These books stir the soul and heart of the reader. I also want to make it a personal journey to look at biographies again.

To be able to read books on the lives of those who were great commission minded is always a great joy. People like D.L Moody, Billy Graham, Billy Sunday, and Charles Finney, Hudson Taylor, C.S Lewis and others are leaders that had an eye on the Kingdom of God. These personal readings inspire

and instruct me as I try to lead others. I also want to continue to search the devotional classics, and writings from the saints of old.

In the circles of theological doctrines, Men like John piper, and John Mc Arthur, Charles Swindol, Tony Evans, George Waddles Sr. and David Jeremiah are great writers and deep theological thinkers that I find to be quite resourceful, spiritual and profoundly interesting.

On this journey in the New Year I want to heat my heart with these brothers' writings and theological teachings that are delivered to the saints. These writers will help to sharpen and remind me of what is entrusted to me and how I am to keep and guard it for another generation.

This is a powerful trust I have, reading will keep me in touch with old friends of the faith that have walked miles in my shoes. These men will inspire and instruct through their writings. I believe that the man that God uses today is a man with many friends from the past.

Family Relationship Building

Dennis Rainey wrote a book titled "Ministering to Twenty First Century Families". In this work He challenges the Preacher to understand the culture in which we live. The author gives the minister tools for understanding, and reaching the new family in the church pew.

As a leader, I too have really blown it at times, by putting the church family before my own family. I want to do better this year. I want to make ball games, and have regular date nights with Sharon. Attend school plays, and be home for dinner several nights a week. I want to share movie times and take mission vacations and holidays together.

I realize that the spiritual formation of my own family is crucial and very, very important. If the Pastor cannot take care of his own home how can he take care of the house of God? My goal is to make regular appointments with my Kids, date them, hang out with them and be available for them whenever they need me to be available for them.

I want to minister to them and my beautiful Queen, so that they will love the Lord, and look forward to seeing HIM. It is my heart's desire that they fall in love with Jesus and allow Him to lead and guide them in their own spiritual formation and development.

My Personal Leadership Development

When it comes to leadership in the church, I have found myself to be a servant leader. My style is to lead by example and to lead in a team. I like projects, and consider myself to be project driven. I am also a team player, and between both of these passions I like to lead on a team and run ahead of others serving them as they serve those we have been called to serve. I love to cast vision, teach leaders, serve leaders, empower leaders and enable them to grow and take over where ever God has led them to lead.

In my own personal style of leadership I expect others to give like I give, and do as I do. I love hard, serve hard and give all that those I serve may have the opportunity to achieve success. I work hard as a leader to do a good job and to help others to do the best that they can in leading also.

As a leader I want to reproduce myself in the hearts and minds of others so that there can be opportunities for men to grow and to lead others. As a part of my personal leadership development I am going to continue to submit myself to mentors and coaches that can help me navigate the waters of ministry and life.

In my learning style I need to surround myself with servant leaders that have the right and privilege to speak into my life and to encourage me in the work of the ministry.

I have come to learn that as a leader a major part of my development is being able to have mentors who can also deliver constructive criticism. This is good for me, and it helps me to stay on the straight and narrow as it relates to leading others. My Motto is that "Every Pastor ought to have a Pastor".

I try to lead others in personal leadership development, I am modeling and practicing submission to peer leaders, and role modeling leaders who train and teach me. I have a peer mentor group that I am a part of here in the United States.

I also have a national pastoral leadership conference that I participate in yearly. Each year for a 3 to 5 days we meet to encourage and instruct each other in the ministry. It is a powerful time and very much needed in life and formation as a leader. I have benefited greatly from both of this form of informal training and spiritual formation. In the future I will continue in these groups, as they have brought me great joy and satisfaction in this area of my life and my training.

Personal prayer as a spiritual formation

One of the greatest mysteries in the gospels is the mystery of having to prepare before doing ministry. It is said that Jesus spent numerous hours in Prayer with his Father before going out to heal and to minister to others. In my goals of spiritual formation in the New Year I plan to intensify my prayer life with the Father.

Throughout the gospels it is written 15 times that Jesus prayed. In these times He prayed in the early morning hours in various places of solitude, such as on the mountains or in the wilderness prior to doing ministry. It is the opinion of this writer that it is of extreme importance, that the servant of the lord resemble the life of Christ if they want to be successful in the ministry of leading others.

If Jesus Christ practiced the spiritual discipline of prayer in solitude, to be prepared for the work of leadership in the ministry, then surely I need to double the time that he had, if I am to be successful in my efforts. If Jesus labored in this world to gain victory over spiritual battles, I too must use prayer to form and to shape my life to do the Fathers will. I believe that there are many dynamics to leadership and many tools that are needed to serve others well. However, there is none more important than the dynamic of spiritual formation.

In order to be a good leader, I have to first be taught and led. It is in the closet of prayer and preparation that I know I can get my heart in line before I get my script in line. In Marks gospel I see what prayer and preparation did for Jesus before ministering to others who were in need. There are six observations I have discovered in this text.

- Jesus before doing any ministry desired communion with his Father.
- Jesus delighted himself in maintaining conversation with His Father who had all power of heaven and earth in his hands.
- Jesus did nothing before consulting with His father prior to ministry responsibilities.
- HE sought out fellowship with the triune council of Heaven.
- Jesus through prayer would trust in the Spirit of God to illuminate His way while serving on earth.
- Jesus dove into the great depths of prayer as a model of spiritual living that we may have an example to follow.

In the early chapters of Marks gospel, it is recorded that Jesus got up early to pray. This gives us the ability to see a picture of the Father in Heaven waking the Son to spend time with Him. It is a consistent picture of the fellowship Jesus has always' had with his father throughout eternity.

This type of spiritual formation and relationship is what I desire for the New Year in my leadership walk. As the triune God kept intimate fellowship with one another, so I desire the same thing as I journey on earth.

God in this passage is looking for the opportunity to meet with Jesus so he can give him instruction concerning the cases he will have for the day. The Father wants to use Jesus in the earthly realm just as He wants to use me. I can't help but notice that there is something very precious about an early morning meeting with the Father.

I believe that Jesus knew the importance of prayer and wanted to give His undivided attention to the Father. Jesus knew that interrupted prayer, was not true devotion to God. He knew that prayer that was not in solitude could never be as rich of an encounter as that which was done in total seclusion.

As I close this chapter, I thank God today for giving me a model of prayer and spiritual formation, in the life of Jesus. It is in this model that I see the importance of being alone with God in

order to meet the needs of those who are awaiting interaction with God. Every good student of the gospels takes serious the life of Christ as he is the model minister of the new covenant. In Jesus is the example of a leader. He took care of his own soul before attending to others.

Chapter Six

HOW TO EVALUATE YOUR LEADERSHIP

When it comes to leadership in the church, I have found myself to be a servant leader. My style is to lead by example and to lead in a team. I like projects, and consider myself to be project driven.

I am also a team player who likes to lead on a team and run ahead of others serving them as they serve those around us. I love to cast vision, teach leaders, serve leaders, empower leaders and enable them to grow and take over where ever God has led them to lead.

In my own personal leadership practices, I expect others to give like I give, and do as I do. I love hard, serve hard and give all that those I serve may have the opportunity to achieve success. I work hard as a leader to do a good job and to help others to do the best that they can in leading also.

Weakness and Strengths

One of the weaknesses of my leadership is the struggle to slow down in the midst of projects. Some time I can get so focused that I am not willing to think things all the way through. Having a goal in mind and accomplishing it can drive me to the point of being negligent in certain areas. I also have the problem of over extending myself in areas at times. Doing really dumb things like forgetting to take care of my family and myself. This for me is a serious problem and a great weakness in my leadership.

Compassion and commitment is a strength that I have in leadership. Being totally involved and working with others is a gift and a thrill for me. I love the idea of being on a team and leading us into victory. I want to work together with others and serve with others.

Influences on leadership

As a leader I want to reproduce myself in the hearts and minds of others so that there can be opportunities for men to grow and to lead others. As a part of my personal leadership development I continue to submit myself to mentors and coaches that can help me navigate the waters of ministry and life.

In my learning style I have surround myself with servant leaders that have the right and privilege to speak into my life and to encourage me in the work of the ministry. I have come to learn that as a leader a major part of my development is being able to have mentors who can also deliver constructive criticism. This is good for me, and it helps me to stay on the straight and narrow as it relates to leading others. My Motto is that “Every Pastor ought to have a Pastor”.

Dr. Henry Black by, Dr. Billy Graham, Dr. John Mac Arthur, Dr. Robert Smith and Dr. David Jeremiah are teachers that are influences on my life. I read their sermons and books to discover what the leader is thinking about in particular areas. They have been very influential in my life.

Leaders that I look to for guidance

Dr. George Waddles, Dr. Lon Allison, Dr. Lyle Dorsett, and a host of authors and radio bible teachers are guys that I am influenced by and sit under to hear instruction from. Their life’s wisdom and pastoral experience help to carry me in difficult moments,

and assist me in leading new beginnings family Baptist Church. As I learn from them, I try to lead others. I am modeling and practicing submission to older leaders, they can teach what others cannot.

In addition to these, I have a peer mentor group that I am a part of here in the United States. We meet together every year for one week out of a month. There are ten of us, and we have agreed to walk through life together and to spend ten years of formation with one another. Every year when we gather we read a book, discuss its meaning for our lives and share it's most precious encounters that have helped us over the past year. I am accountable to them and they help me to lead as I journey in life.

I also have a pastoral leadership group that I meet with yearly. Each year for a 3 to 5 days we meet to encourage and instruct each other in the ministry. It is a powerful time and very much needed in life and formation as a leader. I have benefited greatly from both of these forms of informal training times in these groups, they have brought me great joy and satisfaction in this area of my life and my training.

Chapter Seven

DR. RALPH BELL A LEADER YOU SHOULD KNOW

It has been said that America is a nation that is plagued with alarming statistics that reflect a sub culture of people that are in extreme danger of moral and spiritual oppression. Examples such as vicious acts of violence, murder, rape, gang terrorism, robberies, drug dealing, mass prison institutionalization, family breakdown, racism, substance abuse, hopelessness and a host of other social ills describe this cultures demise. Dr. Ralph Bell is a preacher evangelist who believes the answer to this problem is in God's word. As an itinerant evangelist of the Billy Graham Evangelistic association, Dr. Bell traveled North America proclaiming the good news of Jesus Christ, trying to save this multitude from the entering the gates of Hell.

Personal Information

Born May 13, 1934, in St. Catherine's, Ontario, Canada; son of Archibald and Cecilia Bell; married Jean Overstreet, 1957; children: Ralph S., Christian Eugene.

Education: Attended Moody Bible Institute, Chicago, IL, 1954-57; Taylor University, B.A., 1959; Fuller Theological Seminary, Pasadena, CA, M.Div., 1963; attended pastoral clinical training, Metropolitan State Mental Hospital, Los Angeles, CA, 1963-64.

Religion: Christian.

Career

Pastor of West Washington Community Church, Los Angeles, CA, 1960-65; began intermittent association with Billy Graham Crusade in 1963, became associate evangelist Of the Billy Graham Crusade, 1965. Has also worked as a professor at Los Angeles Bible Training School and as chaplain at the Los Angeles County Jail. Leader or associate leader of evangelical crusades in the United States, Canada, Europe, Australia, New Guinea, and Korea. Author of *Soul Free*, Baptist-Publishing House.

Life's Work

Dr. Ralph S. Bell is an associate evangelist with the Billy Graham Evangelistic Association. One of three Christian ministers handpicked by Dr. Graham to help lead the Billy Graham crusades, Bell assisted in every aspect of the popular mass Christian meetings. He also held citywide and single-church crusades of his own and addressed Christian topics on radio and television shows. Since 1965, Bell has been directly involved in every major Billy Graham crusade, and since 1980, he has led more than 30 smaller crusades himself.

The Office of the Evangelist

As an itinerant, Evangelist Dr. Bell's authority comes out of the New Testament in the epistle to the church of Ephesus. The apostle Paul one of the greatest leaders of the church lays out the list of offices given to the church in order to assist her in growth and spiritual maturity. The order of offices according to the scripture consists of the following, apostles, prophets, evangelists, pastors and teachers.

The Biblical Role of the Evangelist

The evangelist has a specific role they play for the kingdom of God. In the New Testament, this office goes various places and spreads the good news of the kingdom of God on earth. The office of the evangelist can be found in the books of II Timothy, Titus, Acts and I Timothy. Apostle Paul the author of these previously mentioned epistles, writes in the Ephesians letter chapter 4: 11-15 that the office of the preaching itinerant evangelist is responsible for equipping and building up the body.

The ministry of the evangelist consist of ordaining elders (I timothy 5:22, Titus 1:5). Committing the word to faithful men. (II timothy 3:2. Titus 3:8). Training, teaching, rebuking, exhorting with patience and instruction (I timothy 1:3). This preacher is to warn others about false teachers and most of all evangelize the lost for the kingdom of God (I Tim 4:1-16).

This evangelist/leader is called by God to the highest calling on the planet, he is responsible for speaking the divine word of the creator and given instruction for salvation to all humankind (ROM 10:14-15). This evangelist is accountable to God for all that he does and says' on earth. In addition to this, he is held accountable to others like himself that he may have a support system and someone to share the difficulty of this assignment (I Tim. II Tim).

I have discovered that the Dr. Bell as an Evangelist is one that is on the move searching and pursuing the lost for the kingdom of God. He has no set institutional location or assignment where he serves daily. The world's cities are his pulpit and the lost are his congregation. His heart for the kingdom as a servant of the BGEA was

solely committed to winning sinners to Jesus. Dr. Ralph Bell is a leader in Evangelical history that many do not know about. However, his resume and ministry portfolio speaks for itself. I am happy to have met him and served with him on several occasions. He is quite a preacher and is truly a man after God's own heart.

CHAPTER EIGHT

EVANGELISM IN THE MODERN CULTURE

Author Wilbert Shenk in his book write the vision explores evangelization and the modern culture. He writes that one of the major influences on evangelization in western culture has been Charles G. Finney. In the first half of the nineteenth century, Finney a practicing lawyer was converted to Christianity. This lawyer called into the ministry by God entered into his new labor without the training of formal theological education. Charles Finney is quoted as saying " I was bred a lawyer and came forth from a law office to the pulpit." I talked to the people as I would a jury." Mr. Shenk in commenting on Finney say's that he approached his task as one that wanted a decision from the audience here and now! He was not a bully but an advocate of the bar. Charles Finney's methods were the subject of controversy, because of his unique style of preaching. He was known for being one who wrought a sea of change in evangelization.

The Apostle Paul was another soldier that the New Testament reader will never forget. He came from an extensive educational background, studying in the best schools of his day, and with the wisest teachers of his generation. However, he was known for persecuting Christian believers.

When Paul was called by God into the gospel ministry, his approach to the task was very intense. It appears that wherever he preached, the people either were converted or started a riot as a result of his preaching.

In addition to the controversy he initiated, large numbers of preachers joined him in changing a modern culture for the gospel of Jesus Christ. In researching all of these evangelists, it was discovered that they were convinced that culture could not change without true conversion. It appears that they wanted the hard to handle cases to evangelize and therefore they pursued the heathen. This is the vision of the evangelist. He attempts to reach a culture that is hard to reach and understand.

In conclusion, to this chapter on evangelism and leadership, Dr. Ralph Bell has greatly contributed to the biblical work of the great commission and to the office of the evangelist. Preachers like him have helped evangelicals stay focused on the call given to the church, for the work of the kingdom. I have concluded that the evangelist/leader is called by God to the highest calling on the planet, he is responsible for speaking the divine word of the creator and given instruction for salvation to all mankind (ROM 10:14-15). The evangelist is accountable to God for all that he does and say's on earth. In addition to this he is held accountable to others like himself that he may have a support system and someone to share the difficulty of this assignment (I Tim. II Tim)

Without these gifts to the body, who possess the clear cut call to win lost souls, I think the greater church body would be in trouble. These men remind us of what God's heart is in the earth. God is good to us and kind enough to remind us through these types of preachers how important it is to win lost people to Christ.

Chapter Nine

SERMON OUTLINES ON LEADERSHIP

A Leader worth Serving

Col 1:15-18

Over the Last few weeks we have discovered that our brother Paul has laid out for us a prerequisite for Love and leadership in the church.

We have observed how he was passionate for them because of their faith in Jesus Christ and their love for the gospel.

Paul said that Epaphras had given them the report of the faith that was in the church.

Once again let me say how much I like this letter, because in it we discover some amazing facts about Church Leadership.

1. As a leader in the Church you got to love the church
2. As a leader in the Church you have to want to guard the Church
3. As a leader in the Church you ought to want to see her grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord.
4. As a leader in the church you have to pray for the church

And as a leader you must look out for one another and continue to encourage each other in the faith.

Tonight, we see a shift in the teaching of Paul and we begin to see why he is thankful for the church.

1. He is thankful because of the Leader of the Church.
2. He gives us the powerful picture of who our leader is and why he has the authority to do what he does in the church.

I. The Portrait of our Leader

15 He is the image of the invisible God, the *firstborn* over all creation.

1. Paul in his thesis of what good leadership is gives us the example of our Lord and savior to look up too. He calls Jesus visible image (*eikoon*)
2. This word means that *Jesus is the very stamp* of God the Father as he was before the Incarnation and is right now in glory (Phil 2:5-11; Heb 1:3).

Jesus as our Leader of the Church looks like God, acts like God, serves like God and He is God!

- When He was seen on earth he was the stamp of God!
- When he did the miracles on earth, they were done by God,
- When he rescued us from Hell it was the stamp of God!
- Whatever you see Jesus doing in the gospels, you see God doing in the earth.

Example:

At several of my Jobs as an administrator, I had a rubber stamp that I kept for the secretary. On the stamp was my signature. In my absence (When I was invisible to the staff) my stamp was used to authorize my, my power, and my authority in the office to get things done.

- Because of my stamp, I didn't have to be present.
- Because of my stamp, the staff could operate on my behalf.
- Wherever the signature was it was my approval for the office.

Application:

1. When Jesus came to earth, He was already God.
 2. He was his own authority, His own Power
 3. However man had never seen this power in the flesh! So he wrote his own signature in the incarnation, and wrapped in flesh.
 4. So when He signed off on a miracle, We would know it was God
-
- As servants of Jesus Christ we have got to know who our Leader is.
 - As servants of Jesus Christ we have got to know who our savior is.
 - As servants of Jesus Christ we have got to know who our helper is
 - As servants of Jesus Christ we have got to know who our redeemer is.

He is the visible Portrait of our Father in heaven. When you have seen Jesus you have seen the Father

He is the first-born "The son of Man & the Son of God"

He is the Alpha and the Omega, and there shall never be another like Him! He is the only stamp of God!

II. The Power of our Leader

16 For by Him all things were created that are in heaven and that are on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or principalities or powers. All things were created through Him and for Him.

- Paul in this verse wants us to know the endless boundaries of his Power.
- Paul begins with the power to create other things to start with.
- He describes Jesus as Creator, maker, designer, developer, life giver and the one who has given all life to everything Created.
- He points us to two worlds, Heaven and Earth!

Let's start with Heaven;

He is the creator of the Spiral galaxy which houses our milky way

1. He is the creator of our Irregular galaxy which houses its own trillion stars
2. He is the creator of the Elliptical Galaxy, that house a family of independent stars
3. He is the creator of the lenticular Galaxy, that spiral galaxy without a spiral structure, framing its own stars and sending them to and fro.

I have not even mention the planets in our own galaxy, the Milky Way, Pluto, Mars, Venus, the stars that give us light and Heat.

It was from the Power of our Leader that created those things!

Look at the Earth:

- It was our leader that created the Atlantic Ocean, the Artic Ocean, The Pacific Ocean, and the Indian Ocean!
- It was his power that scooped out the continents and separated them from the waters;
- It was his power that gave us North , South, East and West.
- It was his power that, that brought us mountains and valleys, Deserts and Beaches, Snow and Rain, Sunshine and Clouds.
- It was His power that gave us gravity, and Grace, snowflakes and zephyr breezes.

Our God has all power in Heaven and Earth.

Note:

- He also made the unseen Spirits in the earth and the heavens. The good ones and the Bad ones.
- The Angels are his design; they fly because he designed them to do so.
- They sing because he put the vocal cords in the right place.
- The devil is His devil. He was created to bring God honor and Glory in the earth.

Observation:

This verse alone reminds us that our leader cannot be compared to any other, there is none like Jesus! As our Leader, he knows no limitations. He has all power and authority in the earth!

Application:

- As servants of Jesus Christ we have got to know the power of our Leader.
- As servants of Jesus Christ we have got to know the power of our Savior.
- As servants of Jesus Christ we have got to know the power of our helper.
- As servants of Jesus Christ we have got to know the power of our redeemer.

III. The Position of our Leader

17 And He is before all things, and in Him *all things* consist.

- Paul in this verse wants us to know the endless boundaries of his Position
- Before there was time there was Jesus
- Before there was a beginning there was Jesus
- Before there was a yesterday there was Jesus
- Before anything thing ever existed there was Jesus

Paul uses the word Consist, because it describes the perfect ability from God to place together and to hold together.

- Whatever God places together it holds together!
- Whatever God hooks up, it can't be torn apart

- Whatever God designs it can't be outdone

IV. The Praise for our Leader

18 And He is the head of the body, the church, who is the beginning, the *firstborn from the dead*, that in all things He may have the preeminence.

Note:

- Paul knew the false teaching that had crept into the church by the Gnostics (enemies of god) they had a Jesus as being just another Spirit.
- So Paul wanted the Colossians to know He was more than Just a Spirit. But, he was the HEAD of the BODY, THE CHURCH!
- He was God. He was the Leader of the Church to whom they owed all things.
- He wanted them to know the (Pre-eminence “the first Place over everything”) greatness of The Christ! Without Jesus, there is no Church, without Jesus there is no Salvation
- Without Jesus there is no Heaven. Without Jesus there is nothing!

Application:

I am glad today that Jesus made Himself the Visible image of the invisible God.

Because He did, we have a picture of what God is like.

I am glad that God sent his only Begotten Son to earth to die on our behalf.

Because He did we know what leadership is like.

I am glad today that Jesus lived sacrificially because the standard for leadership is found in Jesus.

He came. He gave and he rose from the dead, that we might have eternal life.

- He is a Leader worth Serving, I am going to stay with Jesus, until the end of my days, and then I am going to stay with him in eternity
- He is a leader worth serving, my life has been made better because of HIM
- He is a leader worth serving My Home is made better because of Him!

The cost of servant leadership

Col 1:24-29

One of the newest buzzwords in the business market is servant leadership. This term means that those who are leaders are those who are willing to put others before themselves.

In the corporate world, this term denotes service being done for those who serve you.

However in the church it means something totally different.

- A servant leader in the church is a church slave.
- A servant who works for Christ, in order that others may get to know him.
- These servant leaders don't serve for reimbursement on earth.
- They don't serve for status, and they do not wait for others to serve them in return.
- They do what they do because of who they are.
- Servant leaders are servants first and leaders second.
- Servant leaders are born from above not below
- Servant leaders are loyal to the cross and the Christ
- Servant leaders are committed to God and to his word
- Servant leaders are sacrificial in living, and give their all to help others see Jesus.

Our example tonight is the Apostle Paul. In this closing chapter he writes to give us insights to the calling and ministry of servant leadership on earth. His love for the gentile Church enabled him to endure unwanted sufferings and the trials of this world, for the sake of the Christ.

I. A leader who suffers

24 Now I rejoice in what was suffered for you, and I fill up in my flesh what is still lacking in regard to Christ's afflictions, for the sake of his body, which is the church.

Note:

1. Paul in this verse considers his persecutions, as far as the Jews were concerned, a blessing for the Gentiles.
2. It was for the gentiles that he brought them the gospel, and caused trouble with the Jews.
3. Because of his calling to preach to the gentiles there was a contract out on his life!
4. They tried to kill him in Jerusalem, and in order to save his life he had to appeal to Cesar in Rome and stand trial for the gospel.

Application:

- Leadership in the church will also have to face many difficulties on the journey.
- Sometime we lead while having our own lives in danger
- Leadership in the church is a call to suffer for others, in order that they may grow close to Christ.
- Persecution can come for leaders in many forms, and when it comes it always comes to break, make or stop the leader from doing the work of the ministry.

But Like Paul, Christian leaders have to know who they are, and why they are doing what they do in the name of the Lord.

I fill up in my flesh what is still lacking in regard to Christ's afflictions, for the sake of his body, which is the church

Col 1:24

In Paul's words there was still some afflictions he had to pass through before his race was finished; These afflictions would come to him on account of the Gospel; for preaching to the church.

Note:

- Any servant that loves the church and teaches her the gospel will one day encounter afflictions.
- If you just keep living trouble will come your way.
- This trouble doesn't come because you have done wrong, but rather because you have done right
- Paul declares that he fills up his life with this trouble, because of the church.
- The church is the reason for his trouble. Because he serves her, he suffers for her.

Just like Jesus!

II. A Leader who serves

25 I have become its servant by the commission God gave me to present to you the word of God in its fullness—

26 the *mystery* that has been kept hidden for ages and generations, but is now disclosed to the saints.

27 To them God has chosen to make known among the Gentiles the glorious riches of this mystery, which is Christ in you, the hope of glory.

Note:

1. Paul clearly denotes in this verse why he does what he does, because he has been called by God!
2. Paul is a servant (Diakonos) (Slave) commissioned by God to preach the word.
3. He is also to share the unsearchable riches of the kingdom. The mystery that has been hidden from the eyes of men. (But is now clearly seen by the church)
4. God has made Paul a steward of the ministry on earth! He is to serve him with all that he has.

Conclusion:

28 We proclaim him, admonishing and teaching everyone with *all wisdom*, so that we may present everyone perfect in Christ.

29 To this end I labor, struggling with all his energy, which so powerfully works in me.

- Paul in his clarity wants to convince the church that he is all in with Jesus. He has committed his way to the Lord.
- Paul's ministry was sold out to admonishing others, teaching the untaught revealing the wisdom of God to those hungry to hear it.
- Paul's goal was to see everyone perfect in Christ

Application:

- Any servant leader with a passion for the church, has to love to admonish others.
- Any servant leader with a passion for new believers has to be willing to teach the word of the Lord to others.
- Any servant leader who loves the Lord has to be willing to struggle with the church through the transitions of life.
- This work is a hard work, and thankless work, a non-stopping task.

The Ministry of a Leader

Col 2:1-5

By the time the apostles reaches this portion of His letter he is about to burst with energy for this baby church that he loves dearly. You can tell by the emotion of the letter that he is truly committed to ministering to them.

I like this because herein lies the true picture of the ministry for a leader. Every Christian leader (No matter who or where) has to model certain characteristics in order to lead effectively. Paul does that for us in this text.

Note:

He has never seen Colossae, but his heart has been with them from the beginning of the work. He writes as a father beloved, concerned, committed, and filled with compassion for the body of Christ.

I. True Concern

1 I want you to know how much I have agonized for you and for the church at Laodicea, and for many other friends who have never known me personally.

2 My goal is that they will be encouraged and knit together by strong ties of love. I want them to have full confidence because they have complete understanding of God's secret plan, which is Christ himself.

Note:

True leaders are;

- Filled with compassion for those they serve, there is no pretense with them or pseudo behavior to mis-lead others.
- Filling up continually with the concern of those under their watch (they want to know how they are doing) They have a shepherds heart and a servants Mentality
- Filled with agony to know the estate of others that they serve, they long to see them prosper and do what God had ordained them to do

- Driven by goals to help others to know more about God and to draw closer to God, they long to see people tap into the rich resource of the Kingdom of Heaven. They want you to know more about Christ.

II. True Communication

3 In him lie hidden all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge.

4 I am telling you this so that no one will be able to deceive you with persuasive arguments.

Note:

Paul has a strong talent for communicating the truth and the desires of his heart.

He wants them to what God has to say (treasures of wisdom) and what God has revealed unto man (treasures of knowledge)

Observation:

- Wisdom and knowledge are different! They are the cousins of divine insight that the child of God can have if only they would seek God's face.
- If the leader of ministry would ask for these, they will have the travelling companion of peace to help them as they wait on God in difficult situations.

III. True Commitment

5 For though I am far away from you, my heart is with you. And I am very happy because you are living as you should and because of your strong faith in Christ.

Note:

- Paul did not have to write this letter
- He did not have to be concerned
- He did not have to care
- He did not have to pray and intercede for them
- He did not have to want more information from Epharaditus

- He did not have to send a letter back instructing them to watch out for false teachers

However, He was committed to the work of God in the earth, and God's people in the earth.

- True commitment takes up your time
- True commitment takes up your energy
- True commitment takes up your ideas
- True commitment takes investing

Because he was committed His heart was in the ministry and in leadership.

Note:

- You can't lead with excellence if your heart is not in it.
- You can't lead with passion if your heart is not in it.
- You can't lead with promise if your heart is not in it.

Conclusion:

Paul is a good example for the child of God, because he had a heart like Jesus.

Jesus is our leadership example; it was passion, commitment, promise, dedication and Love that led him through Calvary, the grave, and to the right hand of the father!

What Leaders need to Know about Jesus

Col. 1:19-23

The Word had come to the prison that false teachers had crept into the church. They were trying to mislead God's people from believing in the person of Jesus Christ.

- The Lies that were told, was, that Jesus could not be 100% God and 100% Man.
- They said that Jesus could not have died and rose again with all power of heaven and earth in His hands.
- They said that people needed much more to save them. And that they had to practice religious rituals, and have religious practices that verified their goodness.
- They said that Christians needed to partake in a higher consciousness, and by doing so they could achieve the ultimate status with God.

Observation:

Paul had got the wind of this poisonous teaching and sat down at the sacred desk in Rome, to send the church that he loved and prayed for a word from the Lord.

The false teachers had a bad Christology. Their understanding of Jesus would lead people to a burning hell. So He had to correct this teaching.

I. The truth about Jesus

19 For it pleased the Father that in Him all the fullness should dwell,

Note: (Vs.19)

- When it came to God redeeming Mankind, the Father had one plan. His name was Jesus.
- Everything that God wanted to take place on earth to save his creation was wrapped up in the Person of the Christ.
- Jesus was God's answer for man's rebellion and reconciliation with God.

- So He Put in “Jesus” All of HIMSELF that He might be all to Himself to redeem you and I. (The virgin Birth)

Story:

When Sis. Wilson and I had our sons, they Got all of me and all of her. When you see them, you see us. (all of our genes, all of our blood cells, all of our ancestry, they got it all)

1. In Jesus is all of God’s Mercy, Grace, Peace, Love, Power and eternal wisdom and knowledge and deity. (Nothing is missing)

Vs. 20

20 and by Him to reconcile all things to Himself, by Him, whether things on *earth or things in heaven*, having made peace through the blood of His cross.

Note:

Because the Ability and the Authority that was in Christ when He came to earth, he is the only one that could do what the Father wanted Him to do!

- He reconciled Man back to God!
- Jesus became the divine bridge for man to come back to God!

Because of the sins of Adam and Eve, We had no way to enter back into a right relationship with the Father!

- Jesus as God’s Savior and Sacrificial Lamb, became the Sacrifice and Atonement for our transgressions.
- He became the offering that God needed to redeem us from our offense against God.
- He is the reconciling one for those who are in Heaven (right now with God, and those who have relationship with God on earth)

Observation:

He became our reconciler at the Cross of Calvary where he shed “The Blood required for the price of Sin”

It was the Blood-shed at Calvary that reconciled, and continues to reconcile. It washed us once and continues to wash us now. It is always cleansing,

(Because of Jesus I am a Bloody man)

II. The Truth about the Believers

21 And you, who once were alienated and enemies in your mind by wicked works, yet now He has reconciled

22 in the *body of His flesh* through death, to present you holy, and blameless, and above reproach in *His sight* —

Note:

One of the marvelous things about this verse is that God was at work in the earth, fixing our situation. “Hooking us Up”

1. If the truth was told, I did not deserve to be saved and forgiven, pardoned and set free.
2. I was outside of the favor of God! I was God’s enemy because of my sins!
3. My head was messed up with all kind of stuff! My behavior had my life in a fowl condition!
4. I was born a sinner and separated from a Holy God! I could not do right, I could not act right, I could not stay right!
5. There was nothing good in me, I needed a Savior!

Observation:

- That’s when God’s Plan in Christ took over and was introduced to me as the only answer for my situation.
- Through the reconciliation of Jesus Christ, and the washing of the Blood, I have been set free from the prison of Sin, and debt that I owe.
- I am no longer God’s enemy! I am his child!

Note:

- At the cross there was an exchange that took Place
- At the cross Jesus put his body in the place where my mine should have gone!
- At the cross His death hooked me up with some stuff!

When Jesus Died, I went from being Un-Holy to Holy
Unrighteous to righteous, unforgiving to forgiven, from guilty to blameless!

- When Jesus died The Father was pleased to place all of my Sins on Him!
- Everything I ever did, said thought and will do, was placed on Jesus!
- An exchange took place that changed my Life!

Application:

That's why as a leader in the church. I owe God everything!

- As a leader in the church, I am in debt to God
- As a leader in the church, My life is not my own
- As a leader in the church, I work for no man but God
- As a leader in the church, I want to do, and be and go where he wants me too!
- He has done so much for me, I cannot tell it all!

Calvary was more than we think it was!

III. The Truth about Salvation

23 if indeed you continue in the faith, grounded and steadfast, and are not moved away from the hope of the gospel which *you heard*, which *was preached* to every creature under heaven, of which I, Paul, became a minister.

Observation:

- The teaching of salvation is to be continued in!
- The doctrine of the Cross is to be proclaimed
- We are to be grounded in it and solid in understanding the power of the cross!

Note:

1. We are never to be swayed or deceived into disregarding the cross!
2. We are not to be moved by strange doctrines about salvation!
3. Nothing ought to mislead us away from Calvary and the fundamentals of what it took to save us!
4. Paul is warning Colossae to stay in the faith, by sticking with the Gospel. Don't wonder from the gospel.
 - In the gospel there is Hope
 - In the gospel there is Joy
 - In the gospel there is salvation
 - In the gospel there is Grace
 - In the gospel there is the good news
 - In the gospel there is Love

In the gospel there is God's plan for mankind

1. Stick with gospel Don't let the self help people get you
2. Don't let another form of salvation deceive you

3. Nothing can change you but the gospel!
4. Not steps, not chants, not good works, not magic spells, not horoscopes, not psychology, biology, human-ology, or philosophy. Only the Gospel. Stay with the Gospel

Compassion for the Church

Col 1:1-8

We give thanks to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, praying always for you, 4 since we heard of your faith in Christ Jesus and of your love for all the saints

5 because of the hope which is laid up for you in heaven, of which you heard before in the word of the truth of the gospel, 6 which has come to you, as it has also in all the world, and is bringing forth fruit, as it is also among you since the day you heard and knew the grace of God in truth; 7 as you also learned from Epaphras, our dear fellow servant, who is a faithful minister of Christ on your behalf, 8 who also declared to us your love in the Spirit

Introduction:

This letter was written by Paul during his first captivity at Rome (Acts 28:16), it was written to counteract the Jewish false teaching there, of which Paul had heard from Epaphras (Col 4:12).

The false teaching opposed in this epistle was trying to sway Christians, to mix eastern mysticism “Angel worship, and greek mythology to develop a deeper life that was much more complicated than the simplicity of the gospel.

The church had come under attack with these pseudo teachers, and Epaphras came back to Paul and gave him the report of How they were doing.

Paul being an Apostle sent by God wrote down these words to encourage and to instruct the church in what she ought to do concerning these things.

I like this letter for in it we find these amazing facts about Church Leadership.

- As a leader in the Church you got to love the church
- As a leader in the Church you have to want to guard the Church, from those who would do harm to her
- As a leader in the Church, you ought to want to see her grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord.

Note:

I got a concern today about leaders who say they Love the Church, but never are teaching the body about the Lord.

I got a concern today about leaders who say they love the church, but don't guard her against ravenous wolves

I got a concern today about leaders who say the Love the church, but are not interested in seeing her grow in the grace and the knowledge of the Lord.

Note:

Our introduction is a good picture of true concerns about leadership.

I. Paul's Passion for Colossae

We give thanks to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, praying always for you, 4 since we heard of your faith in Christ Jesus and of your love for all the saints

Note:

Paul is passionate about Colossae because Colossae belongs to the Lord.

His Passion is spilled out for her through Prayer

He uses the word "Always" when he describes how much he thinks of them.

He thinks of them always because he has heard of their faith! Their Faith in Christ was being talked about among the brothers

- Their faith was on display in the world
- Their faith was to be admired by other saints, they had embraced the death burial and resurrection of the Lord

Application:

- Every church Leader ought to have the Love of God in their Hearts for a sister Church who's faith is on display
- Every church Leader ought to be praying for other churches open in the Name of Jesus Christ
- Every church leader ought to be listening for the report from fellow travelers with a testimony about Jesus

II. Paul's praise for Colossae

5 because of the hope which is laid up for you in heaven, of which you heard before in the word of the truth of the gospel, 6 which has come to you, as it has also in all the world, and is bringing forth fruit, as it is also among you since the day you heard and knew the grace of God in truth;

Note:

1. Paul's Passion for them leads him to praise them for their faith in God and for receiving the Gospel of Jesus Christ.
2. They trusted in the Hope of Heaven, because they heard the preaching of the word that pointed them to Jesus!
3. Paul said after they heard the word it began to produce some fruit in their Lives. The fruit that comes from the truth is good stuff and will bring great results for the Kingdom

Observation:

They were living in a Roman Colony that was saturated with pagan lies and mystic religion, yet they held on to the word of God and became a thriving Church that would bring God honor and Glory in life.

Application:

- The “true church” in America today is kind of like Colossae. She is existing among pseudo believers that are trying to tear down the faith.
- They have mystic beliefs, and fleshly desires to be praised, but those of us that are gospelizers. Are holding on to the true word of God.
- We are born again from above, and have heard the good news of Jesus Christ and are not turning back.
- We are surrounded by liars and are yet producing great fruit for the Lord.

III. Paul’s Partners in Christ

7 as you also learned from Epaphras, our dear fellow servant, who is a faithful minister of Christ on your behalf, 8 who also declared to us your love in the Spirit

Note:

Every now and then God sends His church a leader who is like this man named Epaphras (His name means devoted)

- As a preacher and teacher of God’s word he was a devoted servant of the Lord and helper to the church

Example:

- This is what the Pastor ought to look like.
- This is what a church leader ought to look like.
- This is what a Christian who is committed ought to look like.

A. Paul said he was faithful

- He could be depended on
- He could be trusted,
- He could be relied on to show up, to be in place and to carry out any assignment given to Him.

- B. Epaphras would travel from Colossae to Rome and from Rome to Colossae to encourage and to equip the church.
- His commitment to the Lord was shown by his travels
 - He was a messenger on mission for God in the earth
- C. Paul uses the word Minister to describe who He is! (Diakonos means to be a slave or servant). It is where we get our word deacon from.
- This title “minister” means to give up oneself for the body of Christ.

Note:

1. We have done a disservice to the ministry when we try and make it say anything else.
2. Unfortunately many brothers have given this word a bad reputation with their ungodly behavior.
3. This word is not synonymous with wealth, pride, arrogance, selfishness or flamboyance!

It resembles a tireless worker, serving hard, giving their all for the cause of Christ!

Note:

Paul Said the Epaphras not only shared with Colossae, but he also shared with the Church in Rome. He brought back the report of how they loved one another in the Spirit of God!

1. It's good when a church can love like this
2. It is good when a church can persevere in Love
3. It is good when a church has the Spirit of God in their DNA.

Colossae had a good ministry, they had a good name and good reputation, but trouble was on the horizon.

Epaphras came to seek Paul's help in encouraging the church. This letter is going to be good for NBFC. As we continue to grow in grace, we too will encounter some false teaching, and some liars in the church, and we must know how to stand against this doctrine, and contend for the faith.

- Thank God for an Epaphras who can bring good news in troubled times.
- Thank God for a minister who loves God's people and who loves God's word
- Thank God for His spirit that Leads and guides the church into all truth

I am glad today that we have an example of what it means to have compassion for the church.

- As Paul Loved the Church, so did all of those who served with Him
- As Paul Loved the Church, we can see through his example, of how we ought to love her

- The Church is God's Bride on Earth; He loved her enough to establish her governance, and to give her gifts. She is his agenda in the earth!
- The One that loves what Jesus Loves will have favor with God.
- When you love Jesus, and Love his church, you will live sacrificially to see her grow and prosper in the earth.

When Jesus demonstrated his love for his Bride, he did it on the old rugged cross, to prove his love. He was stretched high and dropped low to prove his love. He was placed in a borrow tomb, to prove his love for the church

Compassion for the Church, and a good look at prayer

Col 1:9-14

On Last week we discovered that our brother Paul was in Love with the church a Colossae. We saw how he was passionate for them because of their faith in Jesus Christ and their love for the gospel. Paul said that Epaphras had given them the report of the faith that was in the church. I like this letter for in it we discovered some amazing facts about Church Leadership.

- As a leader in the Church you got to love the church
- As a leader in the Church you have to want to guard the Church, from those who would do harm to her
- As a leader in the Church you ought to want to see her grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord. Paul shows us this week how as a believer and a leader in the church we ought to also have a love for Prayer!

We ought to be so passionate about it that we ought to constantly have it on our minds.

Note:

And just like last week I got a concern today about the Church! Because it seems like we don't pray like we used too.

- I got a concern today about the church, we say we love the church, but don't saturate her in prayer against the wolves of unbelief
- I got a concern today about leaders in the church, who say they Love the church, but are never seen in prayer meeting!
- When the church doesn't pray, the church doesn't care!
- When the Leaders don't lead in prayer, the leaders don't know what they are doing!

Life's observation:

1. I have found out that little prayers, deliver little power, and little visions come from little prayers!
2. Shall it surprise us that little Christians make little impact! But the Giants of the Faith were People of Great Prayer!

Paul was a giant of Prayer! He could not have accomplished what He did without being a man of prayer! (Can I get a witness?)

- In every letter he mentions his Prayer for the Church and how he pursued God on their Behalf.
- Paul sets the stage for the lesson reminding us how important it is to men and women of Prayer!

I. Paul's Prayer for the Saints

9 For this reason we also, since the day we heard it, do not cease to pray for you, and to ask that you

may be *filled* with the knowledge of His will in all wisdom and spiritual understanding;

- The first thing we see is that Paul did not cease to pray for the sister church
- This is evidence that he loved them. Because *you pray about the stuff you love the most.*
- Then he has a list of things that He ask God to do for them

Paul's big 3:

1. Fill them "*to the full*" with Knowledge to know His will
2. Fill them "*to the full*" with all wisdom to know His will
3. Fill them "*to the full*" with spiritual understanding to know His will

The question is why was he so consumed with them knowing God's will?

1. Because he loved them and he knew their faith. If they were walking like Epaphras said they did, they were going to need for God to lead them in the pagan world that they were in.
2. They needed to be filled "*to the full*" with divine understanding, and supernatural-wisdom to (That only comes from above) to live for Jesus in wicked times.
3. They were going to need some "Sure enough KNOW-HOW) to get some stuff done in the earth.

10 that you may walk worthy of the Lord, fully pleasing Him, being fruitful in every good work and increasing in the knowledge of God;

Look Family:

Paul's prayers had a purpose. He prayed this way that they may walk worthy of the Lord.

- Paul prayed that they may Behave themselves in the earth
- Paul prayed this that they may act like they were children of God

Application:

1. Have you ever seen a believer who didn't act like one?
2. Have you ever seen a believer who was misbehaving?
3. Have you ever seen a believer who didn't walk worthy of the Lord?

That's a believer who was not filled with wisdom, knowledge and understanding about who they were or whose they were in the earth.

II. Paul's Purpose for praying (to see them)

11 strengthened with all might, according to His glorious power, for all patience and longsuffering with joy;

Paul's Prayers were that they would be *Strengthened (empowered)* with all power.

Paul is literally saying that they might be empowered to endure under long suffering without retaliating against somebody, and still have the Joy of the Lord.

Application:

- Is there anybody here that knows what it's like to have to hold your peace, when you want to get busy in the parking lot?
- Is there anybody here that knows they have been empowered with all power!
- Is there anybody here that knows about being long suffering with folks who act crazy?
- Is there anybody here that did not go off about something, and the Joy of the Lord in the end was your strength?

Well I stop by to tell you that only come's from Prayer!

You can't do that without some prayer!

You can't do that without some filled up to the full kind of Prayer!

Note:

1. Only God can keep you, when the enemy is acting a fool!
2. Only God can keep you when you are ready to blow your cool!
3. Only God can keep you when you about to lose all of your religion!
4. Only God can teach you Longsuffering when you have to suffer long!
5. Only God can teach you Patience, when the storm is going to be a while!
6. Only God can make you hold your peace when you 're really ready to let somebody have it!

Patience comes from the Lord, and through Prayer you too can learn to wait on him, to fight your battles, to meet your needs, to solve your crisis and help you in the midst of the storm.

III. Paul's Perspective in Prayer

12 giving thanks to the Father who has qualified us to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in the light.

- In Paul's Perspective he remembers that It is all about God!
- He stops in the salutation to tell them that he is giving thanks to the father
- Because God has qualified him and them to be partakers of the Heavenly Inheritance

Note:

In Paul's Perspective, he knew that God had "Hooked" them up with some heavenly stuff, This blessing is not for sinners but for the saints only!

13 He has delivered us from the power of darkness and conveyed us into the kingdom of the Son of His love,

- Because of the Love of the Father, and His compassion for us, he delivered us from the “Dunamis” of the wicked one!
- Satan had to let us alone because of the Power of the Kingdom of His Son “Jesus Christ”

14 In whom we have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of sins.

- Because of Jesus Power we have been “rescued” through the Blood-shed @ Calvary for our Sins
- In Paul’s Mind, Prayer was in order
- In Paul’s mind the church was worthy of being in Loved with
- In Paul’s mind, God was everything because of what He had done for the Church

I’m glad today that Paul had a mind to pray. I ‘m glad today that he talked d to God.

I’m glad today that Paul loved the saints. I’m Glad today for wisdom, knowledge and Understanding about the Cross of Jesus Christ and His death, burial, and His resurrection.

Lessons in Servant Leadership

Mark 9:30-41

Introduction:

It is the last year of the Masters earthly ministry. Jesus is in the region of Galilee, and he is on his way to the cross, where he is going to die for the sins of the world. As he approaches the treacherous death appointed for him, he desires to teach his disciples three crucial lessons of servant leadership.

These lessons being observed today are good for parents, youth leaders, modern day disciples, employees, employers, and students of all kinds. They are ideal for pastors and other servant leaders of the church because they give us instructions on how to serve others from the position of leadership.

(Jesus is the example for all to follow, when it comes to serving others and leading them in the right way of life.)

Background:

Jesus has just entered into his ministry headquarters, The City of Capernaum and the Home of Simon Peter. We know this is Simon Peters Home because it's the place where the Master stays when he comes into town. This house is a special place, a sacred place, a place of retreat and a place of ministry.

Note:

When Jesus was in the House:

One of the greatest pictures of the New Testament is shown here in the word of God.

1. It is the picture of the sovereign God of heaven and earth fellowshipping in the dwelling place of MAN.
2. It is the picture of the creator of all creation coming down to earth involved in a divine relationship with His creation.
3. It is the picture of the visible image of the invisible God, spending time with His most prize possession
4. It is the picture of God who has come to bring the good news of salvation to earth.

In Jesus coming into the HOUSE, we see something that we have observed before in this book. (Mark 1:29/Mark 2:1)

- When the Master is in the house healing is available
- When the Master is in the house forgiveness is present
- When the Master is in the house wholeness is available
- When the Master is in the house the supernatural can be seen
- When the Master is in the house TRUTH and GRACE can be understood
- When the Master is in the house something is getting ready to happen, and the people of God are going to be alright

Note:

That Jesus has taken this opportunity to pull his disciples to the side and to give them instruction (IN THE HOUSE) concerning their opportunities on earth to bring Him Honor and glory.

THE HOUSE IS A PLACE OF INSTRUCTION, AND PREPARATION.

33 *They came to Capernaum.* When he was in the house, he asked them, "What were you arguing about on the road?" 34 But they kept quiet because on the way they had argued about who was the greatest.

I. The Lesson in hearing

The first thing that is taught to the disciples is that God is all seeing and all knowing.

He sees them when they are in contempt with one another

1. He sees them when they are fighting with one another
2. He sees them when they are jealous over one another
3. He sees them when they are envious of one another
4. He sees them when they are in opposition of one another
5. He sees them when they are at odds with one another

Textual observation:

- In this lesson they learn that nothing gets past the Master
- In this lesson they learn that Jesus is aware of their behavior
- In this lesson they learn that what's done in secret is also seen in the open
- In this lesson they learn that when they think God has gone asleep, he is yet awake

Note:

They argued about who *was going to be the greatest* in the kingdom! They argued about who was going to be *the big dog* when things were all over!

- These brothers were in competition for position and power
- These brothers were jockeying for control in the movement
- These brothers were looking for spots they could control
- These brothers were looking for ways to be greater than the other
- These brothers were held hostage by selfish ambition

God had heard their arguments; He had heard all they said about each other;

- He heard the name calling
- He heard the negative comments
- He heard the gossip
- He heard the put downs
- He heard the hate filled thoughts
- He heard the jealousy of their hearts

And the time had come for Him to call them on it! What were you arguing about along the road?

Application:

1. One day brothers and sisters we will all be called into account for all that we have said about one another.
2. God isn't playing; our idle words are being heard by God.
3. And on that day we must pay for the cruel stuff that has been said to one another.

II. The Lesson in Humility

35 Sitting down, Jesus called the twelve and said, "If anyone wants to be first, he must be the very last, and the servant of all."

Note:

1. The first observation in this verse is that Jesus sits down. *Whenever we see Him sitting in the scriptures it represents his sovereign authority and power.*
2. It is from this seat that he summons the disciples to come unto him and to receive His instruction.

The Master gives them the Eye opening instructions; if you want to be great in the kingdom you must;

- You must be willing to be last and not first
- You must be a servant first

- You must put others before yourselves
- You must be a giver not a taker
- You must be willing to do for others before you do for yourselves
- You must be a servant of all

Application:

- Greatness in the Kingdom, is slave “kind of stuff”.
- Greatness in the Kingdom being willing to serve anybody, anytime, anyplace and in any condition.
- Greatness in the Kingdom is serving people who don’t deserve to be served
- Greatness in the kingdom is serving your enemies, even when they disrespect you, mistreat you
- Greatness in the kingdom is serving all.....

36 He took a little child and had him stand among them. Taking him in his arms, he said to them,

Note:

To drive home the lesson of humility Jesus reached for a little child who was in the house that day, and used him to reveal a lesson to his disciples;

- He took a child that was totally dependent on a parent for survival.
- He took a child who knew no ambition
- He took a child who knew no competition
- He took a child who knew no position
- He took a child who knew no self-exaltation
- He took a child who knew no envy and placed them among the disciples

Observation:

This child was made in His image – His property – His creation.

- Jesus Set Him in the midst of them just like he did Adam in the garden before the angels.
- Jesus knew the greatness of man made in his image
- Jesus knows the potential in every man, who submits like a child unto HIM
- Jesus knows greatness when He sees it

The Master wants the disciples to change their attitudes about leadership

Application:

If you are going to lead in the kingdom of God you must see everybody as being a valuable resource for the Master.

If you are going to lead in the kingdom of God you must see everybody as being precious in the eyes of God

If you are going to lead in the kingdom of God, you must be willing to have the heart of a child and the motives of a child.

Taking him in His arms.

Jesus gives the disciples a SILENT MESSAGE OF HUMILITY.

- EVERY NOW AND THEN, A PICTURE IS WORTH IS WORTH A THOUSAND WORDS.
- EVERY NOW AND THEN GOD GIVES US A WINDOW TO LOOK THROUGH.
- EVERY NOW AND THEN HEAVEN HAS A WAY OF MAKING IT PLAIN.

Look at this baby;

- Can't work for himself
- Can't defend himself
- Can't fight off predators
- Can't pay the bills
- Can't figure out east from west
- He has no motives
- He has no issues
- He has no schemes
- He has no ambition
- HE IS WHAT HE IS, A CHILD DEPENDING ON HIS PARENT.

III. The Lesson of Helping

37 "Whoever welcomes one of these little children in my name welcomes me; and whoever welcomes me does not welcome me but the one who sent me."

Note:

1. Jesus is preparing the disciples to be good helpers in the kingdom. He is teaching them the importance of serving those who cannot serve themselves.
2. The Master desires for them to never look down on another human being, but to take them in as children of God. (Welcome them in)
3. The master wants the disciples to know that as they serve others they are really serving Him.
4. The master wants the disciples to know when they serve Him they are serving the ONE who sent HIM. (HIS FATHER)

Application:

- Leadership in the kingdom is about service in action.
- Leadership in the kingdom is about heart filled humility.
- Leadership in the kingdom is about giving up yourself
- Pastors ought to help church members to grow in Christ
- Deacons ought to help to serve the membership
- Christians ought to help to serve one another

This is Christian leadership in action.

Note:

Unfortunately the world grabs this example of negative leadership:

- The smoker helps the smoker
- The thief helps the thief
- The addict helps the addict
- The gangster helps the gangster
- The drunk helps the drunk
- The liar helps the liar
- The criminal helps the criminal
- The adulterer helps the adulterer

And this is called negative leadership, but it's still leadership

Observation:

If the world can lead one another in the wrong way then surely we can do it in the right way.

37 "Whoever welcomes one, welcomes me Jesus said.

Note:

1. The emphasis here is on bringing one to Jesus. There is a great significance in the number one.
2. When God got ready to do a great work in the Old Testament he always used one man for the Job.
 - He used Abram 1-man – to become the Father of many nations
 - He used Noah 1-man – to Build an ark and saved his family
 - He used Moses 1-man – To deliver the children of Israel from bondage

- He used Samson 1-man – To defeat the Philistine army
- He used Elijah 1-man – To defeat the prophets of Baal – worship
- He used David 1-man to defeat Goliath the giant
- He used Rahab 1-woman to save her family
- He used Esther 1-woman to save her people
- He used Debra 1-woman to rule a nation
- He used Mary 1- woman to bring in the savior of the world
- In the New testament Heaven rejoices over ONE sinner who gets saved.

Don't be so quick to send away the one He's sent!!

1. Be careful and Watch who's child you are offending
2. Be careful and Watch who's brother you have turned away
3. Be careful and Watch whose sister or daughter you have spoken evil of.

All of these Jesus would love to have in the kingdom of God. To receive one like a child = in His name is to receive Jesus Himself, and the Father who sent HIM.

Example:

- If I send my son Alex to you for you to take care of, and you accept Him – You are accepting me! (If you reject Him, you reject me!) Because I've sent Him, He represents me!
- God the Father sent us Jesus – To see if we would accept Him or reject him! Those that accept Jesus accept the Father; those that reject Jesus reject the Father.

Conclusion:

What happens when the lesson is missed? (Ignorance speaks!)

38 "Teacher," said John, "we saw a man driving out demons in your name and we told him to stop, because he was not one of us."

39 "Do not stop him," Jesus said. "No one who does a miracle in my name can in the next moment say anything bad about me, 40 for *whoever is not against us is for us*. 41 I tell you the truth; anyone who *gives you a cup of water* in my name because *you belong to Christ* will certainly not lose his reward.

Note:

John missed the whole teaching on hearing, humility and helping. Jesus had to reiterate to Him the principles of servant leadership.

Textual Observation:

1. The disciples thought they were doing something big when they stopped this man from doing God's work because we didn't belong to their denomination!
2. When in actuality what they did was discourage a soldier during the heat of the battle because he wasn't in their platoon!
3. These disciples acted like they had a monopoly on the Holy Ghost,
 - They thought they had the only rights to Christ Authority,
 - They thought deity only worked through a selected few.
 - They thought they were God's dream team all by themselves

Example: In 1993 God called me to start a Prison Ministry here in the Valley;

1. I thought that if I didn't preach in the prison's– Then it wasn't getting done.
2. I thought that if the brothers and I were not there,– Then it wasn't getting done.
3. I talked about prison fellowship – Chaplin Ray – Bill Glass Crusades, other churches and other servants
4. I forbade them – Prevented them – Discouraged inmates to listen to Them... I was wrong!!

In my arrogance and immaturity, I acted like the disciples, and thought I had a monopoly on the Holy Ghost, and was the only one called by God to serve inmates!

Jesus said to them "Forbid them not".

- Don't stop them!
- Don't interfere with what God is doing through others!

According to this verse, The Spirit of God uses who He wants too, goes where HE wants too and saves who HE wants to.

John 3:8 – The wind bloweth where is listeth and thou hearest the sound There of, but canst not tell where it cometh and goeth; so is everyone that is born of the spirit.

Note:

1. God uses who He wants, when He wants
2. How DARE me interfere with deity's plan?
3. No man that does a miracle in Christ's name is going to speak evil of Him!
4. To believe in His authority is to believe in His person.

Vs. 40 For He that is not against us is for us!

1. If they don't oppose the virgin birth! They are for us!
2. If they don't oppose the cross of Calvary! They are for us!
3. If they don't oppose the empty tomb! They are for us!
4. If they don't oppose salvation by Grace! They are for us!
5. If they don't oppose the gospel of Jesus Christ! They are for us
6. If they don't oppose the triune God head! They are for us

If they don't oppose God's great commission! They are for us

- We need soldiers on our side! The harvest is plentiful – But the labors are few!
- We need soldiers for the kingdom, and Some may be COGIC
- We need soldiers for the kingdom, and Some may be Pentecostal
- We need soldiers for the kingdom, and Some may be Methodist
- We need soldiers for the kingdom, and Some may be Anglican
- We need soldiers for the kingdom, and Some may be Presbyterian
- We need soldiers for the kingdom, and Some may be non-denominational
- We need soldiers for the kingdom, and Some may be Ana Baptist, Black Baptist, Southern Baptist
- We need soldiers for the kingdom, and Some may be Mennonite

We need soldiers for the kingdom, and we need them to preach that on one Friday night He died, on an old rugged cross!

We need soldiers for the kingdom, and we need them to tell the story of how he shed his precious blood for the salvation of mankind!

We need soldiers for the kingdom, and we need them to tell the news that he was buried in a grave but death could not kill Him.

We need soldiers for the kingdom, and we need them to tell the story how He rose from the dead with all power of heaven and earth in His hands.

Lessons in Servant Leadership

Mark 9:42-50

One of the greatest passages in the New Testament is found here in this text. It is the ultimate challenge of sacrificial living for the true Christian.

This passage separates the wheat from the tare, this passage separates the true followers from the pseudo followers, and this passage will make the righteous stand out and the unrighteous blush for shame.

Jesus is calling for servant leadership that believes in living a Holy Life. There is no compromise in this passage for those who are willing to follow Him, one must either surrender all or pay the consequences.

Textual Background:

On Last Week we observed the Master calling the 12 disciples to be true servant leaders. If they wanted to be the greatest in the kingdom, they had to become the chief servant of all.

He laid out for them principles of leadership. But these disciples had some issues; they were all about themselves and all about selfish ambitions. So much so that John {one of the 12} Told Jesus of the time that they saw someone else casting out a demon in Christ name and they made the man stop, because He was not one of the 12.

Jesus rebuked this behavior and informed them that if the Man was not against Christ He was for Christ, leave these type of servants alone. Because, anyone working for Jesus will not say anything bad about Jesus.

He continued with the lesson by explaining that if any one does an act of kindness in His name, he would surely be rewarded, even if it was offering a cup of cold water, they would surely receive a reward.

Today's Text:

The Master gives them the consequences of selfish behavior here in verse 42.

42 And *whosoever shall offend one* of these little ones that believe in me, it is better for him that a millstone were hanged about his neck, and he were cast into the sea.

- The word offend in this verse is the word {*skandalisee*} *IT MEANS TO CAUSE SOMEONE TO STUMBLE*. *Jesus* is warning them here that anyone who causes a baby Christian to stumble or no longer believe is in grave danger.

Note:

1. John and the others had caused a great offense. The Man who they forbade to stop working for Christ “against the underworld” could have thought he was not welcomed, he was not called by God and because of these thoughts he could have walked away from the Lord, Having being made to stumble by these disciples because of their own SELFISH AMBITION!
 2. Jesus said the one who does this would be punished: it is better for him that a millstone were hanged about his neck, and he were cast into the sea.
- There were two kinds of Millstones in the N.T. One was used by women working to grind flour and wheat for meals.
(these were small stones that would grind together to make the substance usable for cooking.)
 - The other type of millstone was HUGE/LARGE stone AND EXTREMELY HEAVY it was pulled by Donkeys, who were attached to the wheel and forced to walk in a circle while the wheel turned and ground the wheat that was thrown on a cement floor.
 - This is what Jesus used as an example for the disciples, to warn His disciple about causing new believers to fall away, quit, stumble from the following the truth.

JESUS said:

IT WOULD BE BETTER IF A *MILLSTONE* WERE TIED AROUND YOUR NECK, AND YOU WERE THROWN INTO THE SEA, RATHER THAN YOU BOTHERING ONE OF THESE LITTLE ONES;

1. WITH YOUR SELFISH ATTITUDE
2. WITH YOUR PIOUS WAYS
3. WITH YOUR SINFUL BEHAVIOR!

IN OTHER WORDS, THE PUNISHMENT YOU ARE GOING TO RECEIVE IS GONNA BE WORSE THAN THIS!

- A MILLSTONE tied around the neck WOULD BE BETTER
- DROWING IN THE SEA IS BETTER
- A BROKEN NECK IS BETTER
- TORTURE BY SUFFICATION IS BETTER

Example:

Jesus gives this example because drowning by millstone was used by pagans in certain instance for criminal punishment

There were 3 points given last week and they were

1. Lesson of Hearing
2. Lesson of Humility
3. Lesson of Helping

IV. The Lesson of Self discipline

A. 43 *and if thy hand offend thee, cut it off: it is better for thee to enter into life maimed, than having two hands to go into hell, into the fire that never shall be quenched:*

Note:

The Master now warns them about their behavior both personally and because they have dealt wrong to each other.

- If your hand offends {*skandalisee*} *causes you to stumble* then you need to *cut it off!* This statement by Jesus is given to show the severity of offending somebody who is trying to follow God.
- The hand is a symbol used to suggest the things by which we work with “our deeds” that we do. If our own wicked deeds cause us to stumble then cut them off.

- *If the things we do in the name of religion* cause us to mess up somebody else's walk and faith in Christ then we need to stop from doing it.
- *If our deeds in the name of ministry* causes someone else to fall out of service to Jesus then we need to stop doing it.
- *If our deeds in the name ministry* makes someone else lose their faith in Christ we need to stop doing it.
- If the stuff we do in the name of God is offending somebody else working for God, then we need to stop from doing it.
 1. Not make excuses like this is just the way I am
 2. Not make excuses like I just can't help it
 3. Not make excuses like I am too old to change now
 4. Not make excuses like this is just my personality
 5. Not make excuses like the Lord knows how I am

Jesus said;

It is better to live forever with one hand than be thrown into the unquenchable fires of hell with two!

Listen:

The Bible is clear that hell is a real place, and real people will and are going there. This is the first time in Marks Gospel that Jesus is teaching about Hell, and He is teaching it to those who have been following him as his disciples.

Note:

- The true Christian will not go to hell. The N.T is clear that God has given us eternal life and this life is in His Son. He who has the Son has Life; He who has not the Son has not life.
- The Bible is clear that True Christians don't go to hell neither can they lose the gift of eternal life.

Jesus said in John 10:27-29

27 My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me:

28 And I give unto them eternal life; and they shall never perish, neither shall any man pluck them out of my hand.

29 My Father, which gave them me, is greater than all; and no man is able to pluck them out of my Father's hand.

KJV

- However the pseudo Christian (fake, phony, hypocrite, liar actor) who has not surrendered their lives to Christ is not a Christian, but is one who acts religious but has no real relationship with Jesus.
- This is the type of believer that can hurt others and not be affected.
- This is the type of believer that can reject God's word and feels no remorse.
- This is the type of believer That can sin against God and man and thinks nothing about it
- This is the type of believer That can hear the preaching of the word and yet reject the warning of God
- This is the type of believer That can be mean and cruel, selfish and arrogant and never bat an eye
- This is the type of believer That can curse you out one minute and sing amazing grace the second
- This is the type of believer that can chase skirts, trousers, and steal money, while being in church leadership at the same time. But they don't know JESUS.

The Bible says this to the pseudo believer:

1 Cor 6:9-11

9 Do you not know that the wicked will not inherit the kingdom of God? Do not be deceived: Neither the sexually immoral nor idolaters nor adulterers nor male prostitutes nor homosexual offenders 10 nor thieves nor the greedy nor drunkards nor slanderers nor swindlers will inherit the kingdom of God.

Note:

- a. This is who this passage is warning today.
- b. This is who this passage is screaming too.
- c. This is who this passage is calling this morning.
- d. Jesus wants them to know that Hell is real and will be there home if they don't repent, confess and exercise self-discipline in the flesh.

The Definition of *Hell*: (*gehenna*) It comes from the Hebrew phrase *The Valley of Hinnon*. It was an actual place outside of Jerusalem where wicked King Ahaz worshipped the false god called molech by the sacrifice of children. This became a cursed place. It was used for the city garbage where worms gnawed and fires burned. It is a vivid picture of what eternal punishment is going to be like.

Note:

- In hell mankind will be tortured by the worms that will eat their flesh while they burn alive.
- In hell The soul will not die
- In hell The pains of living will not flee
- In hell Men will want to die, but death will never come
- In hell there will be no relief from this suffering.

B. 45 *And if thy foot offend thee, cut it off: it is better for thee to enter halt into life, than having two feet to be cast into hell, into the fire that never shall be quenched:*

- *The foot in this text is a picture of our Christian walk on earth. If our walk is offensive to us then we need to cut it off, and stop it.*
- If your foot carries you toward evil and causes you to mess up somebody else's walk with Christ then you need to get somewhere and sit down!
- If your foot carries you toward evil and causes someone else to fall out of service to Jesus then you need to get somewhere and sit down!
- If your foot carries you toward evil and makes someone else lose their faith in Christ you need to get somewhere and sit down!
- If the places we go are offensive to someone else working for God, then we need to stop from going to them, and get somewhere and sit down!

Note:

God is calling for radical self-discipline from His true followers. There is more that is expected from us, if we are truly committed to the ways of Christ and the word of Life.

C. 47 *and if thine eye offend thee, pluck it out: it is better for thee to enter into the kingdom of God with one eye, than having two eyes to be cast into hell fire:*

The eye in this verse is a picture of those things we crave. Jesus says if our eyes have caused us to stumble, then we need to gouge it out. It is better to go into heaven half blind then into hell with two good eyes.

- If your eyes cause you to lust for stuff that will make you to stumble, then you need to get rid of your natural vision. So you can make it in the kingdom.
- If your eyes cause you to lust for stuff that will make other Christians stumble, you would be better off to lose all your sight.
- If your eyes cause you to lust for stuff that makes other Christians stop serving Christ, then you need to get blind for the sake of the kingdom
- If your eyes are causing trouble for your soul, be blind so that you may see.

Note:

Hell is waiting for the pseudo Christian, and they will enter it with BOTH HANDS, BOTH FEET AND BOTH EYES FULLY WORKING AND AWARE OF WHERE THEY ARE AND HOW THEY GOT THERE. It will be a terrible feeling they cannot escape.

The Warning is clear!

1. Stop with the crooked and wicked deeds helping people to stumble
2. Stop going to the wicked places that cause baby Christians to stumble in their faith
3. Stop lusting with your eyes causing Baby Christians to suffer in their relationship to Christ

V. The Lesson of Self Sacrifice

49 *For every one shall be salted with fire, and every sacrifice shall be salted with salt.*

Note:

Every one shall be salted with fire. "Every one."

The words here by Jesus are to the True Christian and the Non-Christian: *The good and the evil alike shall be "salted with fire."*

1. The fire that the non-believer will be salted with will be the flames of HELL BURNING UPON THEM FOR EVER/ALL OF ETERNITY.
2. This fire is for their rejection of Jesus as Lord and Savior of their lives. And the salting with fire in their case can only mean the anguish of a tormented conscience.
3. The fire mentioned here for the Christian is that fire which purifies us as we journey from earth to heaven. St. Peter, addressing the Christians of the Dispersion (1 Peter 4:12), bids them not to think it strange concerning the "fiery trial" which was among them. This was their "salting with fire."
4. Those persecutions which they suffered were their discipline of affliction, through which God was purifying and preserving them. This discipline is necessary for all Christians.

Note:

- As believers we must arm ourselves with the same mind, get ready to endure the pain of persecution this is the sprinkling of fire that come to purify us, Pain, persecution and trials are given to the child of God to keep us pure in this world.
- This helps us to develop the discipline of self-sacrifice, which is often painful and severe, but nevertheless purifying.
- This is our baptism by fire. The one who suffers for Christ is the one who gets salted with fire; and these are the ones that will be preserved because of their saltiness.

Conclusion:

50 Salt is good: but if *the salt have lost his saltiness*, wherewith will ye season it?

The term here used by Jesus was given to show the disciples that what was in them was good. In Matthew 5:13 He had called them the Salt of the earth.

But the warning here is for them not to lose *their flavor*.

- Their Christian character
- Their Christian zeal for good works
- Their Christian desire for HIM,
- Their Christian drive to lift HIM up.

They were to continue in Christian Character and not become like the world.

1. If they became like the world they could no longer change the world.
2. If they became like the world they could no longer affect the world
3. If they became like the world they could no longer reach the world
4. If they became like the world they could no longer do good to the world
5. If they became like the world they could no longer save the world

Note:

The master needed them to be salty. He needed them to make a difference when He left earth. He was counting on them to spread the good news, and be kingdom minded on earth.

VS. 50 Jesus say's; Have *salt in yourselves*, and have *peace one with another*.

KJV

HAVE SALT IN YOURSELVES.

- Have Character in what you do and how you act.
- Have Character in the way you serve, and way you speak
- Have Character in all that you do and never loose your focus in a sinful world.

HAVE PEACE WITH ONE ANOTHER:

- New Beginnings Don't argue about who will be the greatest, serve one another
- New Beginnings Don't stop others from serving and helping them to lift up Jesus name
- New Beginnings Don't fight amongst yourselves because of ambition, everyone is somebody in Jesus
- New Beginnings Don't talk about each other, love one another, serve one another, help one another, give to those who need it
- New Beginnings Don't have strife between each other but have peace with each other

The Lessons in servant Leadership are hard to handle never the less the Master demands that we obey them.

He himself followed every step.

He Himself modeled for them and us as he walked on earth.

1. He taught us the Lesson of hearing the Words of the Father and obeying the words of the Father
2. He taught us the Lesson of Humility, by giving up everything and coming to earth to die on the old rugged cross
3. He taught us the Lesson of Helping, by helping us to see the fathers Love for us by taking nails in His hands and a crown of thorns on His head
4. He taught us the Lesson of self-discipline, by staying on the cross and sticking to his father's plan for redemption
5. He taught the Lesson of Self Sacrifice, because he hung his head and died in our place that we might be born again

Jesus died and was buried in a grave and rose early Sunday morning to teach us how to be Salt in the earth, and how to have peace among ourselves.

After He rose HE sent us the COMFORTER. THE HOLY GHOST WHO HAS COME TO GIVE US PEACE FROM THE STORMS OF LIFE, PEACE THROUGH PERSECUTION

- PEACE THROUGH TROUBLE
- PEACE THROUGH CONFUSION
- PEACE THROUGH MISUNDERSTANDING
- PEACE THROUGH STRIFE
- PEACE THROUGH DIFFICULTY
- PEACE THROUGH THE VALLEY
- PEACE THAT PASSES ALL UNDERSTANDING

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Angulus was born and raised in Los Angeles California. His academic career has taken him to numerous institutions, such as Conroe School of Theology, of Merced California, Fresno Pacific University, of Fresno Ca, Wheaton College of Wheaton, Illinois, Birmingham Theological Seminary of Birmingham Alabama, and Ecclesia University of Divinity, Fresno Ca. As a licensed and ordained Baptist Pastor for 25 years, Angulus has served 3 Churches and He is currently serving as the Senior Pastor of the New Beginnings Community Baptist Church of Fresno Ca, and the *University Pastor* and *Dean of Spiritual Formation* at Fresno Pacific University.