

Intangibles That Matter

Welcome back to the Church and Ministry class. In the last presentation, we talked about the seven connections and operating system. We're going to be talking about connections throughout this whole class. Today I'm going to talk about issues related to you as a pastor too because you might even have the whole system down, but there are certain intangibles that matter in church and ministry because they matter because you are a leader.

You know what you're doing when you're asking someone to listen to you or come to your church? You're really, believe it or not, asking them to follow you. Now, theologically we understand that we follow Christ and they will be following Christ. But what we're doing is we're really pointing them to Christ, but in a sense, they are following your lead because you are, as the Bible calls it, a pastor, a leader, a church planter. A trust has been given to you. So as you think about leading people within their seven connections of existence, you're a leader and there's some intangible, necessary key issues that must be dealt with.

The first one is we have got as pastors and leaders to have a humility about ourselves and see ourselves honestly. We don't need to hide from God's transforming glory. Sometimes you'll have people who are in the pastorate and everybody knows something about them. There's like this elephant in the room. But this person is unteachable. This pastor is unteachable. On one level, no one's going to be perfect. There will probably be at least little elephants in the room just because we're human. But as a pastor, we want to sort of like get the big elephants at least in the room out of the room. Do you follow what I'm saying?

It's interesting in 2 Corinthians 3:16 a very interesting passage: "But whenever anyone turns to the Lord, the veil is taken away. Now the Lord is the Spirit, and where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is freedom. And we, who with unveiled faces all reflect the Lord's glory, are being transformed into his likeness with ever-increasing glory, which comes from the Lord, who is the Spirit." This passage is sort of pointing back to the passage of Moses after he receives the law. And after he receives the law, his face is really shiny.

But after a while, the face wasn't shiny anymore, so Moses put a veil over his face. And he kept the veil on there because it sort of gave the impression that God is really near him and he wanted to sort of give the illusion so to speak. Whether it was something he intentioned or not, I don't want to get into that. But this is how leaders often struggle. We really want people to realize that we are from God. We're a pastor and everything like that. But what happens is we can sometimes put veils over the things in our life where we want to sort of not have people see us or we don't want to see ourselves honestly.

But this passage, Paul says, "Take the veil away." Be who you are but be walking with the Lord. See yourself honestly. See yourself in such a way that is actually blessing yourself and others. Don't get into the pride thing where you basically you sort of want to give an illusion of what does a pastor do? Be transparent and be honest. Now when I say this, I'm not talking about what we constantly talk about

during laundry. Constantly blah, blah, blah-ing about. I'm just saying in your heart of hearts, don't go down the trap of thinking you have to sort of give some impression if to please people a certain way. Have that honesty. This is intangible that when pastors don't give this, it really comes back and hurts them.

In seeing yourself honestly, understand that we are all prone to pride and prejudice in our sinful nature and we are all cracked pots. It is clear that God would get all the glory in our sanctification and we see that in 2 Corinthians 4:7 and 10 that we have this treasure in Earth and vessels and it excellently proves that things are of God and not of ourselves. So this is an intangible but it's so crucial to being a pastor. It's so crucial that our egos, that our pride does not get ahead of ourselves that somehow or other we think we are more than we are.

We are always cracked pots. We always need God's grace. We are always growing. He gets all the glory. It does not come at how great and wise and how thoughtful we are. As a pastor, remember, we get out of the way of God's work. We don't do the work. I will say that again. Our humility, we get our way when God is working through us. We're the vehicles of God's work and He gets all the glory.

Love. As a pastor, if you have trouble with love... A pastor has to be able to love the person that just gossiped about them three hours earlier and you heard about it. The pastor is called to be very forgiving. Here is why it's so important. The person gossiped about you. How do you minister to that person? Well, there's two ways to look at it. In church and ministry class, we got to make sure we think about this. Talk about it. If somebody treats you gossipy like, that means they're treating the rest of their family and their work associates and other people probably the same way. If somebody yells at you or they're yelling at their spouse, if someone treats you poorly, they're treating other people poorly.

Now, if you have that biblical love, this is an opportunity to minister, not an opportunity to get bitter. If they're doing that to you, that means they're doing it to everybody else. And you know what? They have just been transparent with you. You know what they need. In love, you can give what they need that they can be helped. "For out of much affliction and anguish of heart I wrote unto you with many tears; not that ye should be grieved, but that ye might know the love which I more abundantly give unto you."

In the end of the day, what's awesome about being a pastor is you get persecuted, you actually get stronger. If you take the bait, you become mad or bitter or you think about it... Because there will be your distracters. There will be people in ministry who won't like you. They'll hate you. There will be things that you do that didn't quite work out the way you hoped and somebody responds with great bitterness and you got to love them. When they persecute you, you bless them. The biblical love is very important.

So a transparency, a biblical love. You have to be okay with accountability. It's okay to have other strong people in your lives. We need pastors, elders, deacons, men, women. There's the Body of Christ to help us see the truth about ourselves and to encourage us to live a life worthy of the name. Okay, so I'll give some examples of those. A pastor with care issue comes before us. A church and ministry issue comes before us. A conflict comes before us. Oh, we can go ahead and do it alone or we could find those

trusted leaders that together, who are also motivated by balance and love, together we might do the work of ministry and church.

I tell you. It's really dangerous for a pastor to just go out there on a limb alone. With your first start out, you won't know what issues you need accountability and encouragement on. Some of that you're going to have some failures. Oh, I should have talked to somebody. Oh, I'm going to talk more to a person on the next time. I'll give you some examples. If you hear somebody says, "I'm thinking about suicide, pastor." You know what? Whatever you think of, it's not going to happen. It's going to happen and I know we're going to talk about this later in the class as well. Talk to another elder. Get out and get some help with that. Don't just hold that in.

Or if there's an affair happening. It's okay to say to the person, the husband or wife, the offended party or whatever, "You know I'm listening to all this. Is it okay if I consult with somebody else concerning you?" If they say no, they say no. But in confidentiality, those types of things can be very helpful because what you're doing is in ministry you're not saying that you know everything. Again, I understand. Each situation is different and you're going to learn when you can share something, when you can't. When elders meet, there's confidentiality in that room.

I guess my point in this whole section is that don't be the lone ranger. That does not work. When Satan knows that you are a lone ranger, it seems like the attacks are even more persistent to get that independent streak of yours, that isolation streak. That's an area where Satan will attack relentlessly and have you just sort of out to dry. As I think about these intangibles, and there are probably many, many more, we are called to be servants so that ego stays on the backburner.

We are called to love. Love when we are persecuted. We are called to be on accountability. These are just intangibles in church and ministry. As you're thinking about this, think about how the calling of God in your life to be God's servant is the motivating factor for your ministry.