

"WHERE ARE WE GOING, LORD?"

ESTABLISHING YOUR DESTINY BY WALKING WITH GOD

Part 5

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DESTINY'S PURPOSE: GOING 'RIGHT-SIDE UP' THROUGH THE APOSTOLIC/PROPHETIC, cont'd

A MARTYRDOM COMPLEX, OR: PARTICIPATING IN CHRIST'S SUFFERINGS?

Are you "asking for it" or is He asking it of you? Many times we assume that because we have been given a call, a church or leaders recognize it, and we are to be faithful in the exercise of it, that God has given us the responsibility for absolutely every aspect of the entire ministry or congregation. Instead of ministering to the Children's Pastor, we endeavor to minister through the Children's Pastor (for example).

We as leaders often demonstrate a lack of trust in God for what Christ is building (Mt.16:18). We are very spiritual in public, but the way we want to work in private violates the very precepts and heart which visits us publicly by His Grace. And in this way leaders often become the most inconsistent and even hypocritical persons in the church. How? By saying "let God have His way," then leading a private war to achieve preconceived notions which have not been the result of divine guidance. God does not give strength and energy for what He does not call for. And one being trained by God in the Apostolic or Prophetic ministries— whether actively leading in the church or not— will find out very quickly they cannot conduct their personal lives (let alone their daily "work"), by laboring toward goals and ideals supplied by soulish thinking.

In response to my description of work load, report of how I spent my time, and description of my goals I had charted to accomplish, an earlier overseer once told me "pray as though it all depends on God; work as though it all depends on you." I highly respected this man of God and I still do. I am constantly reminded of the 'nuggets' he dropped on me during our association. But even as one leading a church for the first time I immediately discerned the thorough encoding of religious schizophrenia which produced such a statement and mindset. Sad but true, all too evident was the result of that type thinking in the ministry he "managed." What could be readily seen in his ministry was the non-biblical understandings of Eldership, the compromise of essential truths which kept the church "on the verge of a breakthrough" (but never quite getting there for 15+ years) and a sense of futility whenever mustering the gumption to challenge the status quo. While I respected the anointing of the individual, the effect of 30 years of walking with the church this way was very evident to me (to him, however, it was "just the way it is" 'in the ministry'). What will break us out of that natural drivenness which works too hard because of trusting too little? What will jar us from our spiritual complacency which believes nothing by failing to trust that God honors obedience instead of sacrifice?

God calls us to dependance on Him. Dependance on Him is what will change the church. But first, it will change our own lives. That's the key to changing the church: personal change of individuals— regardless of gifting, calling or function. Yes, there is much work to be done, but each day's trouble is sufficient for itself (Mt.6:34). Yes, there is much left undone at the end of every day (even the most fruitful ones), but he will finish what He starts in us (Php.1:6). Yes, it can seem like the more that is done, the larger the task becomes and the more difficult to coordinate, conceptualize and prioritize it all, but He is building His Church (Mt.16:18). Yes, we can feel as though we are holding up God's timetable by our lack of expertise, our inability to resolve an issue, finish a project, or failure to enable "the lights" to "come on" for someone we minister to. But He is watching over our prophetic words, and after all, they are His kids, not ours (Jer.1:12; Psa.24:1).

Since the work and workers are all His, let's yield to what He is saying about how to deal with the task and those called alongside it as well. Since the Church and the promises are His, why don't we defer to Him before engaging— even one more day— in trying "to make this thing work" by our own efforts. We are often much more like the Galatian's of the New Testament than the ones we often tend to minimize today . . . those who are "so heavenly minded they are no earthly good."

Since we are to be Equippers and not just overseers, part of what it means to enhance the gifts of God among us is to give those possessing them the opportunity to grow through experience and personal choice. Many times we need to allow the creativity that is within others to flourish. One way we can do that is by being more responsive to assist department leaders in their ministry, instead of ruling the department by coercing their surrender to us— guaranteeing we get what we want. Those serving (who are maturing) have the heart to assist, enhancing those who lead them. The ones who are maturing do not constantly manifest the desire to contend with or challenge leadership by their 'better way.' ***Those who need more grooming need a different type of oversight, with more explicit instructions and clear boundaries, however. And all need such strict oversight during the period of testing, proving, and developing the working relationship.*** But the goal is to see the Lord raise people to the point they not only have your heart and mind on matters, but moreover His. Once they do, they should be encouraged to create and communicate so your input (& understanding of the larger picture) can be added to their concept. This way, all truly works for the good of the whole body and benefits everyone on the leadership and serving teams as well.

Such an approach does not lessen our authority, rather it allows the gift of God to come forth by the grace given them, not according to the 'need to lead' residing within us. Admittedly, some need more help than others, but the intent of leading the teams should be more to empower and enhance and less toward directing and overseeing, especially if the relationships are fairly developed and the church has been informed of their responsibility in such areas. ***Still (& always), ongoing, regular, intentional, communication is the key. And communication has to flow in both directions without being constantly sought out by one.***

Whenever everything within our reach is fingerprinted with our personal Spiritual DNA, we not only run into a spiritual energy crisis, we fail to be properly 'raising up' those God has given to the ministries they have been called to. The frustration that results from over involvement with others and failing to influence them in the way we have desired is not only unnecessary, it's counterproductive to the specifics for which we are accountable to God. Granted, it's difficult to watch others grow, especially while realizing we could save time, effort, and some failure(s) by simply telling them what to do or doing it ourselves. If we are to show these important vessels the same confidence that God has shown them, however, we will place our confidence in them as well— even when they don't do it as we either would or would like (which in some cases may seem like always).

By allowing those who have been entrusted with responsibility the opportunity to execute it, we will keep from martyring ourselves on issues for which Christ has already paid the price. We will also be setting the stage for what we do to authentically grow, because if we control absolutely everything, it will never get beyond the scope of our energy, knowledge and thinking. Isn't it time your church became larger than the leadership? Isn't it time your life became larger than you? Receiving "more of the Lord" is sometimes as practical as simply "letting go and letting God."