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Leading with the Shepherding Heart of Jesus

Paul told the leaders at Ephesus to "shepherd the flock that Jesus bought with His own blood" (Acts 20:28). This clearly means people are valuable to God. For leaders to be effective they must embrace the shepherding heart of Jesus.

"God so loved the world that He sent" was His heart motivation in the incarnation (God coming and expressing Himself in human flesh). The incarnation was initiated and sustained by the caring heart of God. Jesus, the good shepherd, didn't just preach a message from heaven or simply travel around and preach from platforms. He personally entered into the life of people with great love and care.

John 1:14 *MSG The Word became flesh and blood, and moved into the neighborhood. We saw the glory with our own eyes, the one-of-a-kind glory, like Father, like Son, Generous inside and out, true from start to finish.*

Compassion will cure more sins that condemnation - Henry Ward Beecher

Luke 6:36 Be merciful, even as your Father is merciful.

Most of the mistakes I have made in helping God's people were not just due to what I did, but how I did it. Most of the time I did it in frustration leading to anger. When I did I found out the Bible was true, "the anger of man doesn't achieve the righteousness of God" (Jas 1:20).

Paul said that the three things almost every Christian should aspire to, moving in the gifts of the Spirit, possessing mountain moving faith, and extreme sacrificial living were

all worthless if they were not done with the motivation of love. As a matter of fact he said that they were of not profit or value without it (1 Cor 13:1-3).

God said He would "bring people to His city and give them shepherds who live according to His heart" (Jer 3:14-15). Jesus is the ultimate

People do not care how much you know until they know how much you care.

example of one who shepherds after God's heart. Leaders need to take their example from Jesus both inside and outside the church.

Heart empathy and compassion was the basis of Jesus' design for working in His harvest. *Matthew 9:35-38...(36) When he saw the crowds, he had compassion for them, because they were harassed and helpless, like sheep without a shepherd. (37) Then he said to his disciples, "The harvest is plentiful, but the laborers are few; (38) therefore pray earnestly to the Lord of the harvest to send out laborers into his harvest."*

Jesus loved and cared for people. The gospels are full of accounts of Jesus' incarnational interactions with individuals – Matthew, Nathaniel, a prostitute, Nicodemus, a blind man, a Samaritan woman, and many others. He listened. He was never in a rush and He cared.

When the rich young ruler came up to Him, Jesus "looked at him and loved him." This doesn't mean that Jesus didn't confront people with prophetic challenges. He challenged the rich young ruler. Yet we see that before Jesus gave thundering words of judgment to Jerusalem, and cleansed the Temple with great anger, He wept over the city. His thunder of the prophetic measurement was preceded by the tears of God's love. *Luke 19:41-46 When He approached Jerusalem, He saw the city and wept over it... (44) and they will level you to the ground and your children within you, and they will not leave in you one stone upon another, because you did not recognize the time of your visitation." (45) Jesus entered the temple and began to drive out those who were selling, (46) saying to them, "It is written, 'AND MY HOUSE SHALL BE A HOUSE OF PRAYER,' but you have made it a ROBBERS' DEN."*

We need to call sin what it is to help people escape its bondage, but do so with empathy. If not we will be like a careless surgeon that wounds without healing. People need to hear God's tear in your voice before they can effectively hear God's thunder in it. People need to know how much you care which will open them to care about what you know.

If we want to see His church become a place that demonstrates the good news to people, where sin is confronted, and people liberated from its power we must follow Jesus' example of empathy and compassion (the ability to understand and identify with the feelings of another). It is what the writer of Hebrews identified in Jesus that causes Him to continue to be a perfect high priest. **Heb 4:15** *For we do not have a high priest who cannot sympathize with our weaknesses, but One who has been tempted in all things as we are, yet without sin.*

Consider some of the instruction about the incarnational heart attitude we are to have towards people.

- **Luk 6:35** *"But love your enemies, and do good, and lend, expecting nothing in return; and your reward will be great, and you will be sons of the Most High; for He Himself is kind to ungrateful and evil men.*
- **Eph 4:32** *Be kind to one another, tender-hearted, forgiving each other, just as God in Christ also has forgiven you.*
- **2Ti 2:24** *The Lord's bond-servant must not be quarrelsome, but be kind to all, able to teach, patient when wronged,*
- **Col 3:12** *So, as those who have been chosen of God, holy and beloved, put on a heart of compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness and patience;*
- **Mat 7:12** *"In everything, therefore, treat people the same way you want them to treat you, for this is the Law and the Prophets.*

Check it out and sign up

BLOG

www.dougreighbaum.com

One of the best things a leader can do every day is pray that God would work in them His heart of empathy and compassion in everything they do. **Psalms 51:10** *Create in me a clean heart, O God, And renew a steadfast spirit within me.*

Doug Kreighbaum
dkreighbaum@gmail.com
www.c2cfamily.org