

## Preparing for Growth *Slide Notations*

**Most Pastors/Leaders...** Would say they want and have a heart for an increased harvest! Think their congregations are ready and willing to receive a greater number of people! Think that there's *"room enough"* to receive them!

**Thought-full questions:** 1. If we serve the Great Shepherd who laid down his life for the sheep on a million hills, *Who is looking for places to put his beloved flock, Why aren't more churches growing?* 2. Are there things in the way of our growth? 3. Is our congregation as ready as we think? 4. Would it be prudent of the Great Shepherd? 5. Are there things we can do to prepare for growth?

**We can prepare...** The Leader's hearts! *Re-viewing* our perspective and removing the separators! Our Congregation! *Renewing* our reach/sight! Our "pens!" *Rebuilding* our place in the world!

### **Part one: Taking shots at the head-strong!**

**Exodus 18/Numbers 11** "You teach them the truth, show them the way to travel, and give them the work they must do... Perceive who is substantial from among the people; reverent, stable, enemies of covetousness and place them to be leaders... the hard cases, let them bring to you, but the smaller issues, let them handle... "Gather those that you have observed to be leaders among the people and let them stand with you and I will come down and talk with you and take *of the spirit* which is on you and I will put it on them and they will bear the burden of the people with you so that you aren't bearing the weight alone..."

**I don't get it either...** But God typically chooses cracked vessels as leaders... And wants to share the spirit that He put on me with others... Who know they are cracked vessels... So His beloved people can be watched over/prosper/peace!

### **To be counted trustworthy, the separators that have to go!**

**"What not to wear!"** "When the fullness of time had come God sent His Son, born of a woman to redeem them that were broken by the law so that we could receive the adoption of sons." **Gal 4.4,5**

Jesus didn't come in Armani! He didn't turn up in rags! He didn't come in desert browns! He came dressed like the *masses* He wanted to touch!

The "few rich" could relax/The very poor could get a hand up/"Fingers" w/i reach

Dressing for the *"haute"* crowd? "The gorgeous/delicate are in kings' palaces..." **Lk 7.25** "Don't the rich oppress you and bring you to judgment?" **Jam 2.6** Who was it who called for the crucifixion? **Dress code:** *How much do we look like the people we "live" with?*

**Giving God our best has little to do with the outward adorning... Giving God our best has to do with where we are in the transformation! R8.29** *And His goal is nothing short of "twins!"*  
**"Transformation makes the man, clothing merely identifies his target!"**

**"Plumber Bob!"** "Don't copy the professionals and separatists. They want to be seen, to magnify the appearance of their knowledge and the high estate of their position. They love their preeminence, especially at church. They love their titles... but don't be like them! Don't be titled! There's only one worthy of a title. So just serve. And by serving w/humility you will be exalted." **Mt 23.1-12**

***Jesus did not subscribe to the concept of "elite distance!"***

My title, "Pastor" is a gracious misnomer... like 'Daddy's little man...' a term of endearment best used, loosely... There's only one Shepherd and Bishop of our souls! We are the sheep of His pasture... *One on whom He hung a bell!*

So if you ever lead here you'll have to drop the "bow ties!" Jesus warned against the snares! No "Elder, Deacon, Mr., Mrs., Leader," separators! *"Don't demand respect by title that you cannot command by rightful actions!"*

**"Their names are Peter, Paul, John and Jesus... what's your name again?"**

**"What am I saying?"** "Though I speak w/the tongues of men and angels, if it's not in love, I am like banging brass or clamoring cymbals..." **1Cor 13.1**

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General excuses: "Raising the bar!" "Who I am!" "Truth!"

*"Cere, I love you like a son. I just wish I knew what you were talking about!"*

**"It's not up to my audience to understand me when I speak, it's up to me to deliver so they can!"**

No higher bar, no one more real, than the Living Truth... Jesus understood that worldly people need *significant topics* and *plain language!* Deliver the message simply and people will respond!

**"People still respond to things they 'get' so let's make it real easy..."**

**"Where oh where...?"** "When they heard that He was in the house, immediately many gathered together, inasmuch that there was no room to receive them, no, not so much as about the door: and he preached the word unto them." **Mk 2.1,2**

People could touch Jesus... *Where are we during the week?* Walking among people or holed up in our small little worlds? *Where are we Sunday before service?* Maintaining our social network? Or Praying for people w/needs? *Where are we after service?* "Neck and neck..." to the door!

**"Jesus was the energizer among the people because His source was not His own... where we are, physically, is determined by where we are in our walk with Him!?"**

**"What was I thinking?"** "I look for ways to save a wide range of people. I don't take on their way of life. My life is in Christ — but I try to see their world from their point of view. All in an attempt to reach and lead them into a God-saved life. **1Cor 9.19**

We must think aggressively in our efforts to war for lost souls!

Must think like fishers-men! Optimists/oblivious/tenacious/Resource/full!

*Truth Project/Alpha, Starbucks Café/Nite-life! Bus/Van shaped kid magnets! Block parties!*

We must think like them... because they are not thinking like us!

*Ask: What would draw me to come to a place like this? What would draw me back and make me want to stay? What do I need to hear to make a difference in my life?*

**"We have to get into their heads before they let us into their hearts... more important we have to get into their heads before they let Him into their hearts!"**

### **"Scribes to Geeks!"**

"I will do what I must to win the lost! And I want to win them! So to stay in the race I am running with you, I discipline myself to be – in the middle – in all things so that when I preach to others I am not cast-away!" **1Cor 9.22ff**

**Time to catch up!** Why would anyone w/surround sound, 50" plasma, home entertainment center want to come and squint at an overhead projector! Why would we not use everything in our power to communicate the timeless message of Jesus!

Use technology; PPT, web, video, digi-light, sound, vid-view's, to better deliver the message... Proves we live in the same world! *Add new resources all the time! 280k web hits last year!* Making it easier for audience to see, hear *and retain!*

**"The tools of the living will keep our church from dying!"**

### **"No Pain, No Gain!"**

Too many people have lost contact with their bodies... That reality can make you lose the opportunity to be counted as a trustworthy leader of increase!

Can't stress someone sick/weak! Ministry is nothing if not stressful! It's important to care for your body! Not painless/but worthwhile!

God made your body/ Jesus lived in one/Holy Spirit lives in yours/Offering of your worship/Vehicle of your service/1/2 of the Gospel/"No joking" matter!

**"You cannot live to serve if your body says there is no life in it!"**

Leaders... do all they can to remove the separators because they are not walling off territory... do all they can to pull down strongholds that keep people from the Great Shepherd... and the Great Shepherd from placing His sheep in their care!