

A New Vision

10/21/07

Opening Comments: Fifth grade comments about God

Text: [Acts 4:13](#) Read

October is Pastor Appreciation Month ... we have chosen today as pastor appreciation day. One of our objectives today is to honor our pastors. To demonstrate our appreciation and respect for the hard work they so for this church on a daily basis.

*A pastor is also a minister
But a minister doesn't have to be a pastor.*

What is a minister? A minister is someone who brings another person into a place of personal contact with God. He or she leads them to the place where they can reach out to God.

A pastor is one who has taken on the responsibility of a body of people, a church, to watch over them pray for them and instruct them to seek and know God.

I. WE FORGET THAT PASTORS ARE PEOPLE TOO!

They have needs and problems just as we all do, but somehow we do not remember to ask them how they are if everything is alright and if we can pray for them.

Today we are going to do a role reversal

Let's consider the needs of our pastors Nick and Jerry above our own. Let's minister to them

Today as God reaches out to you ... turn the blessing back to them as you think and pray for them over yourself and your own needs.

Selfless V selfish

I promise you is will be a refreshing time for all of us!

Read Acts: 4:13

The council recognized that Peter and John were just ordinary guys, with out special training. They did not speak or behave like people with a Master or PhDs that is just like most of us here today. But it also states that they recognized them as people who had been with Jesus.

What does that mean? It means that they did not have the credentials that the men who were studying them did but they had an undeniable authority that was witnessed through their actions and words. Just like Jesus.

Now as I said earlier we want to direct our thoughts to our pastors
but you will not be able to minister to them until you let God minister to you!

They recognized that they had been with Jesus.

You cannot give out spiritual strength to others if you have not received first for yourself.
Are you with me???

There was a 17th century monk called Brother Lawrence a humble man with no formal education. He began his life joining the military and fighting in the Thirty Years War. He would later join monastery called the Order of Carmelites, a very strict, difficult order where he because of his lack of formal training, not be allowed to gain upward movement.

Instead he spent his life doing menial jobs, cooking for the order and later repairing sandals. Yet in a dead end situation this man's life was so outstanding that after his death others who had been influenced by his incredible peace combined his writings into a book that was entitled **Practice the Presence of God.**

Four centuries later people are still reading and being enlightened by this book which still for sale on Amazon among others.

Focus on that word Practice

If you intend to be good at anything it will not happen by chance. It will happen by intention, determination and for a Christian surrender giving our control of our life over to Him.

Christianity is a walk of faith not a one day wonder. To practice the presence of God is to include God in your daily life. Not once a week on Sunday not even once a day for a daily devotional.

It is a decision to find out who God really is by spending time with Him.

II. GOD WANTS US TO BE A SUCCESS

Proverbs 16:3 “Commit your work to the Lord and then your plans will succeed.” NLT

How many people have played or watched some form of baseball? _____

Famous Quote: “It ain’t over till _____.” Said by _____

What is the most difficult most thankless job in baseball? For a player?

Pinch hitting ... A pinch hitter is a bench player who rarely if ever gets to start or play in a game. They are only called on when the team is in trouble, about to loose a game and they are desperate for a big hit or a homerun.

That is how most of us treat God and for that matter our pastors. We only include Him when we are in a difficult spot.

When we need to turn our life around.

We cannot treat God like a pinch hitter. Not if we understand the **Big Picture**.

What's your reason for being here today for attending this church?

You may have to think about that ... you might not even really know the answer. What's going on inside of you right now, are you here to get something or give something?

Perhaps it is part of what you consider a deal. If you go to church, give some of your money and try to be good, God will take care of you and your family. Like an insurance policy ... **Jesus Christ mutual life.**

God wants to give you a greater vision, and it's not just about you.

In our recent trip to Italy we had an incredible time.
The Sistine Chapel, the Coliseum, the Spanish Stairs, Trevi Fountain

There was one experience however, that stands out in my mind and Jennifer will know to what I am referring the museum at the city of Florence containing many of the works of Michelangelo.

We had an amazing guide called Andrea. As you looked and listened to him you began to understand the mind of artist. You began to see the artist as much as the art.

We stood before Michelangelo's 15ft marble sculpture of David and listened to Andrea, it was the only time the 44 people on the tour were totally silent they were captivated. Not understanding that the man they listened to was giving them more than just knowledge.

Andrea understood Michelangelo's relationship with God. As he spoke the coldness of the marble became warm with the presence of God's spirit.

The tour group was like the council that confronted Peter and John that day they knew something was different but they didn't know what.

To be sure I later spoke to the guide ... His response ... Smiling he assured me he believed.

That is what ministry is – those people on the tour were stunned by the majesty of it
That is what God desires for you for us as His people

Proverbs 16:3 *Commit your work to the Lord (turn your life over to him) and your plans will succeed.*

This is why your pastors' work so hard for us.

Your life is more than just the job you hold or the responsibilities you accept. It is more than the things you accumulate or struggle to get.

You want to hear people say the words ... *you changed my life, I will never forget you, You made the difference for so many.*

Guess what, that is what God wants for you ... that's what ministry is.
Michelangelo believed that his artistic talent was God's given. That he was actually an extension of God's hands. He didn't carve a figure out of block of marble

He believed he was freeing figure the person from its marble prison.

That is how God wants to use your life to be his hands extended to free people from their cold stone existence they are trapped in.

We are facing challenging times: This week Portland, Maine middle school is giving birth control pills to 11 year olds ... Spread of lethal staff infectious diseases, racist hangman's noose in Hempstead and the reported tri-state area witches convention on October 27, in the Smithtown Sheraton (Crescent Moon goddess)

Let's begin by practicing the presence of God let Him free you this morning from what ever is holding you and then lets pray for and bless our pastors