

NBC Chapel – January 5, 2010

Theme: Some Ideals for Christ Like Leadership

Introduction: Last Chapel Message – The Scripture references in the “eye-blackening” of some college football players, most noticeably, Tim Tebow.

Ephesians 2:8-10 For it is by grace you have been saved, through faith – and this not from yourselves, it is the gift of God – not by works, so that no one can boast. For we are God’s workmanship, created in Christ Jesus to do good works, which God prepared in advance for us to do.

There are some characteristics that are consistently true in the lives of truly born-again persons. These things seem to me to be imperative for Christians and are innate to the conversion experience. One of those is expressed in this scripture quotation and is my first Ideal:

Ideal #1: God’s redemptive plan is balanced and complete; he saves us **from** sin and **to** service. It is a two-sided truth.

This is no issue to consider lightly. We are not Christian **because** we do good works, but neither is service entirely disconnected from our salvation. Good works are a natural expression of our relationship to Christ. One who has no interest in Christian service has no interest in the Christ who came as the “suffering servant”, as expressed in Isaiah 53.

My counsel to you, whatever your intended place of service, is have a genuine salvation experience and let it propel you into joyful Christian service.

John 15:17 [Love each other.](#)

This is an intense portion of scripture, but unfolding it gets us to the profound truth. Allow me to read the entire portion of John

15:9-17. Please note three inter-related ideas: Love, obedience, and service.

⁹As the Father has loved me, so have I loved you. Now remain in my love. ¹⁰If you obey my commands, you will remain in my love, just as I have obeyed my Father's commands and remain in his love. ¹¹I have told you this so that my joy may be in you and that your joy may be complete. ¹²My command is this: Love each other as I have loved you. ¹³Greater love has no one than this, that he lay down his life for his friends. ¹⁴You are my friends if you do what I command. ¹⁵I no longer call you servants, because a servant does not know his master's business. Instead, I have called you friends, for everything that I learned from my Father I have made known to you. ¹⁶You did not choose me, but I chose you and appointed you to go and bear fruit—fruit that will last. Then the Father will give you whatever you ask in my name. ¹⁷This is my command: Love each other.

Ideal #2: True Christian Service is permeated with love.

This portion is specifically concerned with Christian Leadership.

In one breath, Christ talks of love, obedience, and service. In a sense, all three words mean the same thing. If you love Him, you obey Him. If you obey Him, you serve Him. If you serve Him, you love Him. And on and on. But even more, he urges his disciples to make such a cycle their *modus operandus* – their way of continuing the mission of the church.

Christian Leadership only exists within the practice of Christian service. Christ like leadership is not characterized by standing at the top of an organizational pyramid, giving orders that plummet downward, making people jump. Christ like leadership is living in a circle of friends, infusing that whole group with purpose, plans, and energy.

If Christian service becomes just another job, if it becomes a list of duties, if it becomes mechanical, competitive, regimented, then it loses the qualities of “service by friends.”

If Christian service is not shared, bringing bonding and increasing participation, or serves ego more than Christ, it has lost the character of “service by friends.”

Jesus talked about his disciples as his friends. Now, Jesus would have said that “servant” is a perfectly good word, useful to indicate one who serves. But here, he is drawing a distinction. A servant is one who does things one part at a time, as he or she is specifically ordered. A friend, on the other hand, is one who knows what the plans are and is directed by the clear purpose of the enterprise. A servant, on the other hand, “doesn’t know the master’s business.” If we will be Christ like leaders, we will inspire service in others – we will give our ministry away – we will build avenues and not barriers.

I know, there is a certain “vulnerability” in such an approach. Do you suppose one day after He ascended into heaven to sit at the Father’s right hand, Jesus came to a sudden stop and asked Himself: “Okay, I put this whole winning the world business into whose hands? What was I thinking???”

No, his was a strategic choice, for salvation is both salvation from sin and for service. His sort of salvation brings us into his work and his business. I am glad to be his friend.

My counsel to you is this: Serve in the midst of people. Count your successes in terms of how many others you make into the friends of Jesus – friends who share the Master’s business with you.

Philippians 3:10 [I want to know Christ!](#)

Ideal #3: Knowing Christ is the Passion that fuels all genuine Christian service and all Christian leadership.

Knowing Christ

- Brings stability in a sea of uncertainty
- Brings patience with situations that are all too human

- Makes sense of complex issues
- Gives depth to your understanding
- Priorities to your all-too-limited resources

And gives you peace when you pray in the dark hours of the night.

Ladies and gentlemen, I have served for 44 years in ministry assignments.

I have served as Youth Pastor in 4 churches and one para-church organization, senior pastor in two churches; I have twice been interim pastor. I have served Nazarene higher education for almost 33 years, 14 and ½ years at NBC. I was professor for nine years and a vice president for over 23 years.

I have walked with church parishioners and students through unbelievably deep waters, and have been through the fire more than once with my own challenges.

I have seen my own two sons come to saving knowledge in Jesus Christ under my personal preaching.

I have heard others whine about their difficulties in ministry and in Christian service.

But I would not change anything.

I have served as a Friend to Jesus.