

# Why Have So Many Ministry Mantles Fallen to the Floor?

In the days of Jesus on the earth, He was asked what the greatest commandment was. Jesus was clear when he responded in Matthew 22:37-40:

*Jesus said to him, "You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your mind." This is the first and great commandment. And the second is like it: "You shall love your neighbor as yourself." On these two commandments hang all the Law and the Prophets."*

Jesus was addressing a couple of things here. He was saying that all the Ten Commandments can be summed up with these two, but the part I want to narrow in on was that the prophets hang on these two. Prophets are people God has appointed as His mouthpieces. They still exist today. I believe that there are prophets, evangelists, teachers, preachers and apostles. Contrary to many erroneous teachings out there, what is commonly referred to as the fivefold ministries, are still in operation today (Eph. 4:11-13). These are people God has called and equipped to help the saints—the church—to fulfill their destinies.

Often people will refer to the five-fold as having mantles. A mantle was a big deal in the Bible. This concept is addressed in Ephesians 4:11-13 and when Elijah was ministering in the Old Testament. A mantle is something that is worn, like a coat. A prophet has a prophet's mantle, a pastor has a pastoral one, apostle's is apostolic, an evangelist's is evangelistic and a teacher's is a teaching mantle.

As I was meditating on this Scripture, suddenly, I felt God show me something about what He was saying in the Matthew passage. In order for a prophet or anyone in ministry really

to be used by God, this mantle must hang on these two commandments: Love God first, and love people as yourself. The problem has become that so many people don't love God first or others like themselves. This mantle that they are supposed to be operating in has fallen to the floor. I think, in this Scripture, God is talking about anyone called to be a mouthpiece for Him. We're all called to share the Gospel. We all are in the ministry of reconciliation (2 Cor. 5:18).

In 1 Corinthians 13, the Bible is clear that love needs to be working in a person's life before they prophesy or operate in the gifts of the spirit. If they prophesy without love, then they are just a resounding gong. There are too many clanging people in the church with mantles puddled on the ground around them. They are frustrated because their ministries seem to be on pause, and they don't understand why. Perhaps you've fallen out of passionate love for God and His people. Maybe you're so busy trying to make things happen that you're forgetting it's not all about your face on a website. Maybe you're preaching and prophesying but forgot to really look at the people who desperately need a touch from the Lord.

It can be easy in life to go through the motions. You can continue to preach and to prophesy just because you know you're called to do it but not because you feel it. It can be easy to get so caught up in the work of ministry that one forgets why God called us in the first place. It can be easy to forget our first love. It can be easy to get caught up in the drama of church instead of simply loving the church. How many pastors take the pulpit every Sunday, habitually, but have long stopped loving the very people they are preaching to? How many of us work next to the unsaved, yet those same coworkers have never heard our testimonies?

How can we pick up our mantles and start loving people again?

- Repent. Repent for being so caught up in our own bubbles that we don't see the ones God is calling us to impact.

- Take a time away from the hustle and bustle, and seek God. Rest in your own labor. What worked in your ministry and life yesterday may not work today. Stop trying so hard by doing things the same way you always have, and seek God as to what to do in this new season.
- Ask the Lord to put people in your life to whom you can be accountable, and then make yourself accountable. Ask God to bring people around you who will help keep you grounded and will let you know if they see you going in a direction that God isn't calling you to go down.
- Stay spiritually sensitive and on alert for God to show you where and when to go to places, and do it even if it's not convenient. I once heard a story from a pastor of mine. He'd been on vacation, and God told him to go way out of his way to an open market. While there, he walked those stalls over and over, until finally at the very end God told him to talk to someone. That person was led into the kingdom that day. The time had not been convenient for my pastor, but He'd been sent there on assignment. May we all stay sensitive to God to be led to do these things. This isn't just for pastors, but for all of us. We must stay engaged in the moment.
- If you are in ministry and you can't honestly say that you love God first and you love His people, then perhaps you need to step away for a season. Maybe it's time you start being honest with yourself. You must stop looking at ministry as a business and realize it's about souls. God's heart is for people.

In a world where morality seems to have been flipped on its head and a culture that mocks God more and more every day, what is bad is being called good, and what is good is being called bad. Yet for so many, I believe this constant parade of sin is a desperate cry for help; these people need to see love. They need to see the genuine love of Jesus flowing out of you. They need to see that you're different. They don't want pretension. In all of the sin and all of the shock

factor, so many people are aching for Jesus to come into their lives and fill the void that only He can fill.

Church, we must wake up. Time is short. We cannot spend another moment with our mantles in a puddle around our feet. We must pick them up. We must allow God to use us as His mouthpieces. We must hear the cry of the unsaved and be led to respond as God directs us. We are Jesus' hands and feet on this earth. It's about time we start acting like it. {eoa}

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