

Evangelist Pat Schatzline: Why Ministry Leaders Must Be Different in 2021

What must ministry be like in 2021? Have we learned anything from 2020? For me, it has meant asking the question, "Have we (I) done it wrong?"

Honestly, self-reflection in the mirror is never as powerful as catching a glimpse of yourself in the eyes of a loving Savior. Jesus said, "Come to me, all you who labor and are heavily burdened, and I will give you rest" (Matt. 11:28). He never said, "Come to me, all who have gotten it all together and have a big ministry platform, and I will give you more approval."

You see, I must first ask forgiveness. Over the last few months, I have realized that I have needed to change. I needed a reset. I have found that the removal of the platform and ministry nonstop calendar dates caused me to awaken to the fact that I had some bad concepts and dangerous misconceptions. I now realize God can do ministry with or without each of us, but He sure loves having partners in the harvest.

The world isn't getting better, and in many locations the church is getting smaller. We must change our approach. Could it be that the demise of morality in our nation is not just a cultural issue but also a problem that lies at the doorstep of the church for which Jesus loves so much that He died (Eph. 5:25)? The greatest hindrance to the gospel and the call to minister is the ego of man.

I once heard it said that "ego" stands for "Edging God Out." Could it be that we are no greater than our last God-encounter? Ministry starts at the cross and ends at the grave

of resurrection. For far too long, we have made ministry a platform instead of a mandate. If we are indeed Christ's ambassadors (2 Cor. 5:20), that means we have died to praise and are pure enough to handle His glory. We must not preach holiness and purity without also exemplifying purity, brokenness and compassion. Yet if our identity is found in our meager accomplishments and accolades of ministry, have we not decided that the prostitution of our calling to be more ingratiating than the simple words, "Well done, you good and faithful servant" (Matt. 25:23a)?

Humanity is crying out for leaders who know the voice of God and not just the echoes of ministry textbooks taught by many who have never once scraped their knees on the floor of brokenness. As vessels that house God's Spirit (2 Cor. 4:7), we must be last in the line of recognition and first in line for fresh revelation. We must be kind in the face of adversity and run far from self-promotion. Ministry is hard, and often it means getting hurt. It costs, but it should never rob of us our new-creation identity. Hurting people hurt people. It is true we are never as bad as our worst critic and never as great as our biggest admirer believes. How often have we allowed our scars to be an excuse to release harshness in the name of spiritual authority?

We are called to be "prisoners of the gospel" (see Eph. 4:1). Nevertheless, the prison of ministry can seduce even the most faithful. I, for one, have been the worst convict in the prison of self-exaltation. To possess true humility and love for the hurting requires that we step back from the platform and plaudits of man. It means loving the unlovable and forgiving the unforgivable. We must listen to the beating hearts of the broken and the exhausted spirits of what the world considers irrelevant. Dare we arrive in heaven and realize that our desire to arrive in the eyes of man on earth resulted in the loss of our heavenly reward? Maybe somewhere along the way, we decided it was better to drink the oil

instead of anointing our weary brow. Rather than dressing for relevance, we instead must put on a servant's robe and grab a towel. Washing feet is a much better approach than the mashing of toes via the latest and most excellent sermon. Sermons matter, but only if they are birthed with tears of compassion.

The next great move of God will most likely not happen in a beautiful cathedral or a stadium that houses our sports teams, but rather in the alley of lost hope at the corner of "Broad and Narrow." You will find this corner in the part of town less traveled. It will be the awakening of the wounded and the transformation of the rebellious. Maybe, just maybe, it will not be about titles bestowed by man. The greatest testimonies of restoration are found at a filthy altar where the righteous and unrighteous, the reverent and irreverent, and the clean and unclean decide to seek the face of a wounded Savior who died for us all.

I pray that Jesus will forgive us for forgetting what it means to be renewed daily.

I pray that He will forgive us for believing our own press.

I pray that He will use us to pull one more person out of despair.

I pray that He will use us as his hands to be repairers of a breach called "trust."

Let's get salty and lit for Jesus. {eoa}

*Find out more about Evangelists **Pat and Karen Schatzline** by going to:*

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