

## **#298 Kingdom: Changing the mentality of the church**

There seems to be a “divided mentality” in the church. There is one mentality in the pulpit and another mentality in the pew. Then from one pulpit to another there are multiple mentalities concerning the ministry and what it is supposed to accomplish. From one church to another the mentality of the congregations all seem to differ concerning the purpose of the believer in the scheme of things. This mentality is often set by the messages that come from the pulpit. There seems to also be that “ingrained mentality” that is set in stone and is very slow and difficult to change in both the pulpit and in the pew.

It may be for that reason that every restoration in past church history has been forced to begin outside the established churches. Since every restoration began as a radical idea carried out by what seemed to be radical new people interpreting the same scriptures from a new perspective, it was rejected by the status quo groups. Most of the established groups immediately became the enemies of the “new upstart groups” who were suspect because they began outside the “respected church parameters.” The problems were multiplied when the new groups were started by “lay people” who did not have the formal training of the “theological students in the pulpits.”

In the case of the Pentecostal Restoration that began in 1906, the greatest majority of churches still have not acknowledged its validity. It took about 10 years before the Pentecostal churches began to acknowledge the Charismatic Restoration as valid. The reason was because so many Catholic believers were involved as “Charismatics” and were leaders.

Therefore, we don’t expect the mentality of the established churches to adjust to accept anything as radical as a new dimension of “priesthood ministry” within the whole church. Lay people in a priesthood ministry seems too ridiculous for the theologian. My theory then is that the preaching of the Kingdom must begin with hungry souls wherever they are found. Either in the pulpit or in the pew! The preaching of the Kingdom demands the recognition of “a Kingdom of Priests.” Then do we have to conclude that only trained theologians can be accepted into this “priesthood” **OR** do we have to readjust many doctrines and concepts that are now set in stone?

For the “pulpit ministries” that exist today to acknowledge that their work is to prepare every believer to take their place within this “Kingdom of Priests” and be able to function as such is a little ridiculous. Does that mean that this work of preparing a “priesthood ministry” will have to begin by a “lay ministry?” That is my theory at the present time, as incredible as that sounds. Still, that is how the last two restorations began and that is exactly how the great missionary movements of the 1700 and 1800's began. Most all the “theologians” that went to the mission field failed because formal preaching was not what was needed. The outreach to India, Africa and to China was successful when caring and concerned persons lived with the people and like the people until they could win the people.

The personal spiritual life of the missionary was the key factor to their evangelism and not their teaching of doctrines to a heathen people. What the natives saw was a different life rather than a different philosophy. The highest philosophy of life is nothing if that kind of life cannot be demonstrated. What the missionaries needed was not greater “dispensational Truth” but a “Life of

Truth” lived and demonstrated to the people.

For that reason another doctrine about a “Kingdom of Priests” or a Holy Place Life and ministry will just fall to the ground until someone can actually live that life. One or two “ministers” living that life will not be convincing either. There must be a corporate group that can function together as a “holy priesthood after the order of Melchizedek.” Obviously this is not a Sunday morning exercise or a Sunday School lesson.

When we heard about the “Charismatic Community” that was functioning in Ann Arbor, Michigan with a “membership” of over 1000 people from all different churches [including pastors and Catholic priests] we drove up to stay with a family for three days to see if it was real. That was in 1973 and we were very impressed with the “life demonstrated.” Even if it fell into error and by 1985 was dissolved, the beginnings were wonderful. This was a “lay movement” headed up by several students, many of which were Catholic. We stayed with a Catholic family that was manifesting Christ. The Moravian pastor that went with me was so impressed that he moved his family to Louisville, Kentucky to head up a Charismatic Community there that included many Catholic believers.

All this is irrelevant except to show **the radical change of mentality** that was required to make the transition from Sharon Moravian Church to a Charismatic Community that included many Catholic believers that were still attending the Catholic Church and other believers that attended their own churches on Sunday. We had Lutherans, Methodist, Mennonites and others that attended their own church on Sunday and then came to our meetings on Fair Street during the week.

All this was a big departure from what was “normal at the time.” This “new mentality” of believers from different churches gathering together to study and worship was nearly too radical for most pastors who thought we were stealing sheep. I am speculating that this new restoration will require a greater change of mentality than the last one.

**Then what could be some of the changes that might be required to begin the transition?**

(1) The mind of the “lay person” must be focused upon the “pragmatism of the Kingdom” rather than upon the “theology of the Kingdom. **pragmatism** >noun 1 a pragmatic attitude or policy. 2 An approach that evaluates theories or beliefs in terms of the success of their practical application. In other words the Kingdom must become a practical enablement that has an obvious and practical application. That means dealing with things in practical terms rather than in theoretical platitudes. (Cliches)

(2) The mentality today seems to be that theologians are not actually supposed to do anything to help people prepare for eternity or to demonstrate the gospel. It seems they just “study” and decide the higher issues of life and discuss what each other say. If two or three “theologians” say the same thing that settles the question and we can move on to even higher thoughts and platitudes. They just discuss abstract ideas and research antiquities and decide which scriptures are valid today. The “lay person” is too unlearned and naive to comprehend such complicated

thought.

(3) The “knowledge to do” and the “decision to do” are two different things. Knowing without doing is nothing. Faith is active in the doing not in the knowing and believing a truth.

(4) Teaching evangelism as a class and doing evangelism daily are eternally different. Teaching “classes” is a big waste of time unless people are motivated to do what they learn. “Doctrinal Christianity” is based upon proper classes of accurate doctrine but unless there is a life change “doctrinal truth” soon becomes irrelevant.

(5) The only thing we really believe is what we believe enough to actually do it.

(6) The decision is not just to come forward to have someone lay hands on you to “activate you” but a decision to begin to practice Kingdom Truth rather than postpone until a more opportune time. The time for debating an issue is past and the time has come to make a decision to move forward. I think of all the “resolutions” made at board meetings to investigate something that never got resolved. Our intentions were good but the doing was not. It is not a matter of “caring” but “caring enough” to do something about it. Caring is NOT an emotion but a deed completed. We will be judged upon our deeds and not upon if we cared.

(7) Church cannot be just a study group where we discuss and evaluate ideas about various doctrines and denominational emphasis. It is not a place to come and have Christian dialogue about new ideas and programs. Just discussing irrelevant ideas that have nothing to do with what God is saying or doing is a waste of time.

(8) I am using the term “Theological Pragmatism” to indicate that “theology” must translate into helping people in a practical way. It must create a new “church climate” where “outreach” is a practical application of the Christian Life and not a week long emphasis of contacting people and inviting them to church.

(9) The “church life” is blanketed with announcements, programs, fun events, dinners, seminars and about every other thing except the central issue which is the Kingdom of God! In all these events there is still a famine for the Word of God and its demonstration.

(10) Another term I will use is “self-reference” which I am using to mean evaluating and judging everything and measuring everything against ourselves. Using ourselves as the standard for others to live their lives before God.

(11) There are various “reference points” that are easily seen from church to church. There is the “family reference point” where things are measured against a certain “family value.” There are “church reference points” where things are measured against the way we work. Of course there are “ministry reference points” that set our ministry as the standard for everybody. There are “doctrinal reference points” where we determine if something is orthodox. It is clear that none of these are valid in the next restoration where everything is evaluated against The King and His Kingdom. The Kingdom Life and ministry will be evaluated by the standard of the Kingdom of

God. For example; The New Jerusalem is measured by the “Gold measuring rod” so everything must come up to the gold standard. Bringing the church up to the “Kingdom Standard” will be a major event.

(12) Developing a change of mentality using the Kingdom as our reference point for everything. That is trying to see everything as God sees it. A new sensitivity to an Eternal Viewpoint rather than what is expedient today to fill the pews.

(13) A major change will be in trying to use our knowledge as a reference point for ministry. Using a “racial references” for fellowship. Using sympathy and pity as a reference point to meet human needs. Using “social standing” as reference for acceptance. Using any “superficial Reference points” and ignoring the central issue which is the King and His Kingdom.

(14) Developing a new sensitivity to God’s ways! For example; “If a man won’t work neither shall he eat.” This may sound callous with a lack of social consciousness but this IS God’s way from a Kingdom viewpoint. Give according to the need but don’t encourage apathy and laziness. Another example; We must discourage “vicarious Christianity” and insist upon each person having their own genuine experience and testimony.

(15) Beginning again from the position of not “destroying” but with a focused vision upon “fulfilling within our destiny” mentality and to accept the personal challenge of “fulfilling the Christian Life” for our time period.

(16) Accepting the challenge and responsibility for the areas and regions assigned to us and to turn as many as possible toward the Kingdom and to develop “believers” into Kingdom people. Kingdom people are those who can “manifest the Kingdom” in daily life.

(17) Changing our thought from a two class church system into a one class church system where everyone is “Christian” instead of other artificial divisions called “ministry.” Understanding by experience that in the Kingdom the least is the greatest and being the servant of all is the goal.

(18) A new adjusted mentality to accept that “vicarious Christianity” is doomed for failure. **vicarious** >adjective 1 experienced in the imagination through the feelings or actions of another person. 2 acting or done for another as his ‘substitute’. Example: Hiring a “pastor” to act in our behalf. “Activating” Moses to go up the mountain to hear the word of the Lord instead of the people. Moses acted as their servant and in their behalf. Another example: Trying to experience Christ “vicariously” through the life of another by books, tapes, meetings, testimonies and through “pulpit ministry.”

(19) Discipleship training then is not just distributing information about the Christian life but demonstrating how others can experience Christ personally. Not just teaching a doctrine of prayer but demonstrating a life of prayer.

(20) Purifying the “incentive motive” and defining the difference between a “business incentive” with a temporal reward motive and the “Kingdom incentive” with an eternal reward motive.

Laying up treasures in heaven is NOT for an instant, temporal reward. Redefining “prosperity” from the eternal viewpoint rather than instant gratification to “spend” in this life.

(21) To retreat from the vague and undefined and refocusing upon the real, the exact and the discernable qualities of the Kingdom as a practical Christian life. We can only speak as one who has authority when we possess the life from which that authority comes. The Kingdom authority is the product of the Kingdom life. Convincing doctrine flows out of a convincing life. Saying one thing and doing another thing might pass in the past but these things are rejected in the Holy Place dimension of Life and ministry. It requires a “renewed mentality” [a restored soul] to function in the next spiritual dimension.

(22) Decisively changing the way we think of church, fellowship, discipleship, ministry, revelation, destiny, calling and purpose. Thinking within the Kingdom concepts, precepts, principles, laws, character, attitudes and attributes to evaluate “success”--instead of how full the parking lot is today. Forgetting what lies behind and pressing toward what lies ahead. Not destroying what lies behind but making certain about our fulfilling all that last restorations [experientially] and then getting excited and serious about the next restoration.

(23) Adjusting the way we think about people! Mat 25:45] “Then He will answer them, saying, ‘Truly I say to you, to the extent **that you did not do it** to one of the least of these, **you did not do it to Me.**’ [46] “And these will go away into eternal punishment, but the righteous into eternal life.” When we just “serve people” as our method of serving Christ, the people may become irrelevant in our “higher calling.” Some have no care or compassion for people but see them as a necessity and the down side of “serving Christ.” In the Kingdom the “spiritual and the humanitarian” cannot be separated.

(24) Understanding that an “inner cohesion” in the “spiritual and mental dimensions” is essential to the rigors of the Kingdom Life. A dividing of the soul and spirit but a cohesion in function. The outer life disintegrates when there is no “inner cohesion in the inner man.”

(26) The “Gospel of Equality.” Col 3:10] and have put on the new self who is being renewed to a true knowledge according to the image of the One who created him [11] -- **a renewal in which there is no distinction between Greek and Jew, circumcised and uncircumcised, barbarian, Scythian, slave and freeman, but Christ is all, and in all.**

Gal 3: 27] For all of you who were baptized into Christ have clothed yourselves with Christ. [28] **There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free man, there is neither male nor female; for you are all one in Christ Jesus.**

2 Cor 8:12] For if the readiness is present, it is acceptable according to what a man has, not according to what he does not have. [13] For this is not for the ease of others and for your affliction, **but by way of equality**-- [14] at this present time your abundance being a supply for their want, that their abundance also may become a supply for your want, **that there may be equality**; [15] as it is written, “HE WHO gathered MUCH DID NOT HAVE TOO MUCH, AND HE WHO gathered LITTLE HAD NO LACK.”

These areas of Christian life that still makes distinctions between believers and ministry is the “Old Leaven” that has leavened the whole lump. If we try to remove the “old leaven” we may destroy the whole lump but if we introduce the “new leaven” of the Kingdom it will replace the old leaven until it has no opportunity to function. That may seem too idealistic in today’s society but the Kingdom will eventually change society. At least we can put this “leaven” outside our camp.

The “invisible leaven” of inequality and distinctions is working 24 hours a day in the world system but it should have no place in the “awaking church.” As society disintegrates and corrupts we should easily see the unique difference between the church and those outside. In that same way we should soon see the unique difference between the visible church and the Kingdom people. Identifying ourselves as “the church” today doesn’t require us to be much different than secular society. However, Kingdom people will be a open affront to secular society which will certainly persecute the Kingdom people. Since the “true leaven” of the Kingdom has been neglected by the church the “leaven of the world” is prospering.

My theory is that the “true leaven” of the Kingdom will produce a classless “priesthood” that includes everyone in the “Kingdom church” without distinctions. When the “life” of Col 3:11 and Gal 3:17 is the standard for the church, it will demonstrate a distinction between it and the secular society whether that secular society is in the visible church or in the world system.

This is not a matter of “destroying class distinctions” but of rising above them in this new dimension of the Kingdom. Does this mean that there is no difference in maturity or function? Not at all! But maturity and function should not exalt or identify or separate people who are in His body.

We could say that every member of His body is under the government of the Head and living in obedience to Christ. Of course there must always be an Outer Court ministry of preparing and training the new priests.

In the Pattern of the Tabernacle, the priests were taken for ministry when they were 20 years but they didn’t assume their full duties as priests until they were 30 years old. In the type there was 10 years of training. Obviously this would not be all Outer Court preparation and much of the preparation would be in the Holy Place. Since the greatest need today is for Holy Place priests who are equipped to train Holy Place priests we should see that the 5 fold ministries today must make a giant step forward. Certainly, there will be a 5 fold ministry needed for Outer Court preparation but it should not be limited to that basic training. In the military there is always a need for “basic training” but that is just to prepare them for their specialized work. In the church today very few ever advance beyond “basic training.” Clean the barracks, march in line and in step, maintenance of the garments, coming under authority, obeying orders, recognizing your place, learning to shoot, standing in parade, and serving together. This is all essential but is only preparation for “becoming” a specialist.

It is clear that the military example is defective in understanding the Head / body arrangement in the Kingdom of God. The military example has merit in basic training but the functioning body where every member is in full submission and obedience to Christ, the Head, is beyond this basic

type. We might say that Paul and Barnabas were “special forces” who were working behind enemy lines but eventually this example also breaks down. In fact I doubt there are any natural examples that can be applied to the Kingdom of God and the functioning body of Christ that is living within the government of God. This dimension may only be seen by revelation and the final “perfection” is done by the Head and by the ministry of the Holy Spirit in personal training, teaching and discipline. The “completing of the work” must be done within each person which is beyond the ministry of men.

1 John 2: 14] I have written to you, fathers, because you know Him who has been from the beginning. **I have written to you, young men, because you are strong, and the word of God abides in you, and you have overcome the evil one.**

Strong men who will train will differ in their understanding and in their methods. There will always be a difference of opinion. Their vision of eternity and maturity and ministry will be different. This is why strong men must be severely dealt with in their inner life by God. Those who exercise authority must be broken into small pieces. Rev 2:26] `And he who overcomes, and he who keeps My deeds until the end, TO him I will give authority over the NATIONS; [27] AND HE SHALL RULE THEM WITH A ROD OF IRON, **AS THE VESSELS OF THE POTTER ARE BROKEN TO PIECES, as I also have received authority from My Father;**

Strong men who have never been rectified and developed in their inner life by God will always be the source of splits, hurt feelings, power struggles, and all the problems we have seen in church history will just be repeated again. The principle of the Kingdom is this; Strong men can stick together and work together when they have been broken of their self-centeredness, ego and the big “I” complex. Each of us need a “change of mentality” to prepare us for the next transition. The failures of the past need not be continually repeated when we understand and submit to the Kingdom / body life. It requires a revelation of the Headship of Christ, the Kingdom government of God and the King eternal walking among the Lampstands and sees everything.

“He will draw all men to Himself” is a Kingdom principle that will work when “strong men” work with Him instead of on their own. The revelation of this one truth will relieve much burden upon the ministries that are trying to draw all men to their church.

The “Christian movement” is one movement and he that does NOT “gather with Christ” is actually scattering even if he thinks he is ministering. If Jesus Christ is truly Head, Lord and King to us personally we can transcend whatever differences that will surely arise.

The “Christian Movement” is primarily a redemptive movement but it is “redemptive” until full redemption is achieved and God’s purpose is fulfilled. There will always be those who insist that purity and holiness be paramount within the movement. This is right and necessary! There will always be those within the “Christian Movement” that are focused upon the “redemptive side of the gospel of the Kingdom. This is also right and necessary! They will preach the gospel of the second chance [like with John Mark]. Both of these emphases are correct in the developing church.

When we see this within the pattern of the Tabernacle it is clear that if a priest in training in the Outer Court burns the sacrifice instead of eating it he is given a second chance. Here the emphasis is upon training and redemption. However, when a priest in the Holy Place burns strange fire before the Lord the emphasis is upon obedience, purity, holiness and treating the Lord as Holy.

Even if there are differences the work still holds together. The principle of the Kingdom is NOT to destroy the differences but to rise above them and fulfill the law of the Kingdom.