

WADE BRILL

WOOSTER CHURCH OF THE NAZARENE

(330) 262-1471 x222

WADEB@WOOSTERCHURCH.ORG

DEALING WITH PERSONAL ROADBLOCKS IN MINISTRY

JULY 7 & 8, 2010

PREMISE: THE PERSONAL ROADBLOCKS THAT MOST HINDER AND THREATEN MINISTRY ARE NOT ANYTHING OUTSIDE OF US – THEY ARE THOSE AREAS WITHIN US THAT ARE NOT YET TRANSFORMED INTO THE IMAGE OF CHRIST.

“WHEN PETER CAME TO ANTIOCH, I OPPOSED HIM TO HIS FACE, BECAUSE HE WAS CLEARLY IN THE WRONG. BEFORE CERTAIN MEN CAME FROM JAMES, HE USED TO EAT WITH THE GENTILES. BUT WHEN THEY ARRIVED, HE BEGAN TO DRAW BACK AND SEPARATE HIMSELF FROM THE GENTILES BECAUSE HE WAS AFRAID OF THOSE WHO BELONGED TO THE CIRCUMCISION GROUP. THE OTHER JEWS JOINED HIM IN HIS HYPOCRISY, SO THAT BY THEIR HYPOCRISY EVEN BARNABAS WAS LED ASTRAY” (GALATIANS 2:11-13, NIV)

- ❖ PROCEEDING FROM THE ASSUMPTION THAT PETER WAS BOTH SANCTIFIED AND FILLED WITH THE SPIRIT, HOW DO WE EXPLAIN HIS BEHAVIOR?
- ❖ WHAT CAN WE LEARN FROM HIS EXAMPLE?

“WE THINK THAT WE ARE HOLDING NOTHING BACK, AND THAT WE ARE NOT CLINGING TO OURSELVES OR TO ANYTHING ELSE. WE SHOULD RATHER DIE THAN HESITATE TO MAKE A COMPLETE SACRIFICE. BUT, IN THE DAILY ROUND, GOD CONSTANTLY SHOWS US NEW COUNTRIES. WE FIND IN OUR HEARTS A THOUSAND THINGS WHICH WE WOULD HAVE SWORN WERE NOT THERE...WE ONLY SEE THEM AS GOD BEGINS TO MAKE THEM EMERGE” (FENELON, QUOTED IN MULHOLLAND, 84-85)

- ❖ WHAT ARE THESE “NEW COUNTRIES”?

“THE PROCESS OF BEING CONFORMED TO THE IMAGE OF CHRIST TAKES PLACE PRIMARILY AT THE POINTS OF OUR UNLIKENESS TO CHRIST’S IMAGE... *GOD MEETS US IN THOSE PLACES OF OUR LIVES THAT ARE MOST ALIENATED FROM GOD*” (MULHOLLAND, 37, ITALICS ADDED)

- ❖ MULHOLLAND ARGUES THAT THE ROMANS 7 DISCOURSE ABOUT “THE BODY OF DEATH” IS NOT PAUL’S RECOLLECTION OF HIS PRE-CHRISTIAN EXPERIENCE, BUT RATHER A DESCRIPTION OF HIS POST-CONVERSION STRUGGLES IN HIS TRANSFORMATION INTO CHRIST’S IMAGE
- ❖ WHETHER WE AGREE WITH HIM OR NOT, WE CAN ALL GIVE ASSENT TO THE “INCOMPLETENESS” WITHIN US

“HERE IS THE REALITY OF THIS “DEAD BODY”. THOSE OLD HARMFUL HABITS, THOSE DEEPLY INGRAINED IMPRISONING ATTITUDES, THOSE TROUBLING AND DAMAGING PERSPECTIVES, THOSE DESTRUCTIVE WAYS OF RELATING TO OTHERS, THOSE UNHEALTHY MODES OF REACTING AND RESPONDING TO THE WORLD GO WAY DOWN DEEP INTO OUR BEING” (MULHOLLAND, 127)

- ❖ IT IS ONLY IN THOSE MOMENTS WHERE DIFFICULT PEOPLE AND LIFE CIRCUMSTANCES PROVOKE THE EXPOSURE OF THESE “NEW COUNTRIES” THAT WE DISCOVER OUR AREAS OF UNLIKENESS TO CHRIST...AND NO LIFE EXPERIENCE DOES SO MORE THAN MINISTRY
- ❖ “A LEVEL 10 REACTION TO A LEVEL 2 EVENT”
- ❖ ARE WE EQUIPPED AND EMPOWERED AS MINISTERS TO DEAL WITH THOSE AREAS WHEN THEY ARE INEVITABLY EXPOSED *WITHIN US*?
- ❖ THE SERMON THAT CHANGED MY LIFE – “WHAT SANCTIFICATION DOESN’T FIX”

“WE LIVE IN A CULTURE THAT HAS REVERSED THE BIBLICAL ORDER OF BEING AND DOING. BEING AND DOING ARE INTEGRALLY RELATED, TO BE SURE, BUT WE HAVE TO HAVE THE ORDER STRAIGHT” (MULHOLLAND, 30).

- ❖ WHAT IS BIBLICAL HOLINESS?

“BUT THE HOLY SPIRIT PRODUCES THIS KIND OF FRUIT IN OUR LIVES: LOVE, JOY, PEACE, PATIENCE, KINDNESS, GOODNESS, FAITHFULNESS, GENTLENESS, AND SELF-CONTROL” (GALATIANS 5:22-23)

- ❖ THE TRUEST MEASURE OF OUR GROWTH IN THE IMAGE OF JESUS [I.E., HOLINESS] IS THE INCREASINGLY CONSISTENT PRESENCE OF THE FRUIT OF THE SPIRIT
- ❖ THEREFORE, AT ANY POINT WHERE WE PERSISTENTLY FIND OURSELVES RESPONDING IN A WAY THAT IS INCONSISTENT WITH THE CHARACTER OF JESUS, WE MUST GO BEYOND BEHAVIOR TO ASK “WHY?”

“...THERE IS A CAUSE AND EFFECT RELATIONSHIP GOING ON IN PEOPLE’S PSYCHO-SPIRITUAL ISSUES. TO TREAT THE OUTER LAYERS WITHOUT IDENTIFYING AND MINISTERING TO THE DEEPER ISSUES WILL NOT LEAD TO LONG TERM HEALING AND TRANSFORMATION” (WARDLE, *HEALING CARE, HEALING PRAYER*, 139)

- ❖ *THIS IS NOT MAKING EXCUSES FOR SIN – BUT IT MOVES BEYOND THE ISSUE OF “WHAT YOU DID” TO THE QUESTION OF “WHY DID YOU DO IT?”*

NEGATIVE LIFE SITUATIONS

DYSFUNCTIONAL BEHAVIORS

EMOTIONAL UPHEAVAL

FALSE BELIEFS

WOUNDS

- ❖ IF WE ONLY DEFINE FRUIT BY BEHAVIOR, AND DO NOT ADDRESS THE DEEPER CAUSES, WE WILL REMAIN STUCK AND UNABLE TO PROGRESS IN OUR JOURNEY TOWARD GREATER CHRISTLIKENESS

“THEN CHRIST WILL MAKE HIS HOME IN YOUR HEARTS AS YOU TRUST IN HIM. YOUR ROOTS WILL GROW DOWN INTO GOD’S LOVE AND KEEP YOU STRONG. AND MAY YOU HAVE THE POWER TO UNDERSTAND, AS ALL GOD’S PEOPLE SHOULD, HOW WIDE, HOW LONG, HOW HIGH, AND HOW DEEP HIS LOVE IS. MAY

YOU EXPERIENCE THE LOVE OF CHRIST, THOUGH IT IS TOO GREAT TO UNDERSTAND FULLY. THEN YOU WILL BE MADE COMPLETE WITH ALL THE FULLNESS OF LIFE AND POWER THAT COMES FROM GOD” (EPHESIANS 3:17-19, NLT)

THIS PASSAGE IMPARTS POWERFUL TRUTHS TO US ABOUT OUR GROWTH TOWARD CHRISTLIKENESS:

- ❖ JESUS MAKES HIS HOME IN OUR HEARTS AS WE TRUST HIM
- ❖ ANYTHING THAT IMPEDES TRUST WILL HINDER HIS “HOMEMAKING” WITHIN US
- ❖ IF THAT PROCESS — ABIDING IN HIM — IS HINDERED, THEN THE GROWTH IN THE FRUIT OF THE SPIRIT WILL ALSO BE HINDERED
- ❖ IT REQUIRES THE POWER OF GOD FOR US TO UNDERSTAND THE MAGNITUDE OF HIS LOVE FOR US
- ❖ WE ARE CALLED TO EXPERIENCE THAT LOVE *EVEN THOUGH WE ARE NOT CAPABLE OF FULLY UNDERSTANDING IT*
- ❖ IT IS ONLY AS WE EXPERIENCE THIS LOVE IN EVER-INCREASING MEASURE THAT WE FIND THE LIFE AND POWER THAT ENABLE US TO BE FULLY GODLY

“YES, I AM THE VINE; YOU ARE THE BRANCHES. THOSE WHO REMAIN IN ME, AND I IN THEM, WILL PRODUCE MUCH FRUIT” (JOHN 15:5, NLT)

- ❖ “AREAS OF UNLIKENESS TO CHRIST” ARE THEREFORE THOSE UNADDRESSED DISTURBANCES WITHIN US THAT INHIBIT OUR EXPERIENCE OF HIS LOVE
- ❖ IF WE ARE TO OVERCOME THOSE ROADBLOCKS AND MOVE FORWARD, BOTH IN OUR JOURNEY TOWARD WHOLENESS AND IN MINISTRY, WE MUST SUBMIT OURSELVES TO CONTINUAL INSPECTION BY THE HOLY SPIRIT, AS DAVID DID:

“SEARCH ME, O GOD, AND KNOW MY HEART;
TEST ME AND KNOW MY ANXIOUS THOUGHTS.

SEE IF THERE IS ANY OFFENSIVE WAY IN ME,
AND LEAD ME IN THE WAY EVERLASTING”

(PSALM 139:23-24, NIV)

REFERENCES/SUGGESTED READING

MULHOLLAND, ROBERT. *INVITATION TO A JOURNEY: A ROAD MAP FOR SPIRITUAL FORMATION*. DOWNERS GROVE: INTERVARSITY PRESS, 1993.

WARDLE, TERRY. *HEALING CARE, HEALING PRAYER*. ABILENE, TEXAS: LEAFWOOD, 2001.

WARDLE, TERRY. *WOUNDED: HOW TO FIND WHOLENESS AND INNER HEALING IN CHRIST*. ABILENE, TEXAS: LEAFWOOD, 1994, 2005.

NOTES