

leadership of the church.

It is your business to serve and heal the breach - wherever there is discord - you are to be a peacemaker. That is your role. You go to the congregation and minister in behalf of the Pastors of the church. Bring the people together in full support.

Yes, you can influence the spiritual atmosphere of the church. And this would be the atmosphere of the congregation. You can cause it to be what it ought to be. It is your testimony and your life that will lift the level of the congregation.

Now when we come back to my original text here for a few moments. And see if we cannot unfold some of the wonderful connections that we have in the high calling as leaders in our churches.

I. WE ARE HELPERS OF JOY - (2 Cor. 1:24.)

Paul says, not that we have dominion over your faith, but are helpers of your joy for by faith ye stand. What a wonderful task - what a high calling. The Gospel means glad tidings. In the Christmas story, the angel proclaims - behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy.

Phil. 4:4 - Rejoice in the Lord, always. Wherever the Gospel is received in faith, great joy. V. 4. How could it be otherwise. When we go out as leaders, with the Gospel of the forgiveness of sin through Jesus Christ, people rejoice.

And in this hungry world in which we live - we cannot manufacture happiness that lasts. We may do so for a short time but the only lasting joy will be found in Jesus. Therefore, God's co-labours can be helpers of joy since they live in the joy of Christ, their faith is something that lends to everyday life.

II. WE ARE HOSTS OF THE GOSPEL. (Rom. 15:16.)

A minister of Jesus Christ to the Gentiles ministering the Gospel of God. Paul interprets his task as serving the glad tidings of the Gospel to the people. The beautiful picture here is serving a table. What a suggestion.

The head waiter makes his selection of food easy for his guests and he makes the consumption of the food tasty in the way that he serves it.

As servants of God, we are the very ones who by the way we proclaim our message make it easier for others to hear the word and the spirit of love originates in Jesus. And even Christ did not please himself - but he was a host to awaken faith.

If a host gives his attention to the guests, how much more should we as hosts for Jesus Christ give heed to every possible way of presenting the message. We are to pass the word of God on in its original form. In the same direct manner in which we received it.

Psalms 36:8, Matt. 14:19 - Gives great simplicity. "Jesus, break the bread and gave the loaves to his Disciples - and the Disciples to the multitude."

Those who receive the good news went to others and they were host of the Gospel.

it speaks of constructing this building, in which all of us are living stones.

In I Cor. 3:10, Paul speaks of himself as the architect who helps build upon Jesus the foundation. He admonishes the co-laborers. How they build upon the foundation. The servants of God are therefore not only living stones in the house of God but they are also construction supervisors.

The word episkopos is also very fitting here - it is a word that is translated bishop. And according to one scholar in his interpretation of the Greek word, that it means construction supervisor. The episkopos was responsible for supervising and reporting building progress as well as for checking all hinderances to construction.

In like manner, we are God's builders. Every one works on his special part of the building. And is building - the Deacon, the Evangelist, the Foreign Missionary, the Youth Work. We are all assistants to the great architect, Jesus Christ. And of course if the construction supervisor does his work in a sluggish lazy way then it endangers the entire group. Now the work foremen determines the spirit of all of his laborers. What a responsibility - for the leaders of God in the building of his Kingdom.

VI. WE ARE UNDER-SHEPHERDS OF THE GREAT SHEPHERD.

I Peter 5:2 - States feed the flock of God which is among you. Taking the oversight thereof not by constraint but willingly. Neither as being Lord over God's heritage but being examples to the flock. And when the chief shepherd shall appear, ye shall receive a crown of glory, that fadeth not away.

Now this is the wonderful experience that the servant of God is able to perform

his work in love. The great shepherd of the under shepherds. How the people of our day are hungry for life. How they search for security. How they need the leadership of under shepherds who will take the responsibility and feed the sheep.

VII. YOU ARE GOD'S SERVANTS AND MUST BE WILLING TO BE COVERED WITH DUST.

I discovered a new meaning in my reading the other day - of the word Deacon. And the literal meaning given as it often appears in the New Testament is - "going through the dust."

Johann Sebastian Bach was invited from King Frederick the Great to his palace in Potsdam. He desired upon his arrival first of all to freshen himself. The King commanded, however, that the church musician be brought from the coach into the palace. Some of the members of the court smiled. When they say the dust covered musician. But with one rebuking glance, the King childed them for their cheap content.

Zinzendorf said, "Nothing is more beautiful than a dusty warrior."

What a fitting declaration that the word Deacon means going through the dust. That God's people do not object to any task that his servants are not ashamed to become even the most lowly brother, in the ministry of this world. He will become a companion for those in misery. He may help one and encourage another on the way of faith. As a servant, his first concern should be for the man in the dust - a physical and spiritual need. And such a concern downward is a mark of nobility in God's sight. In fact, (this is God's favorite direction.) That we should go to the out-cast, to those in need.

A Deacon should respect even the most lowly as an individual as a worthy candidate for individual life.

Bodelschwingh once received a visit from a government minister. And suddenly as they were walking on the street, he saw a brother on the other side and he hurried over and he threw his arms around him. And then he returned to the government minister and he said, Mr. Pastor, do you know for sure that this strange man has no lice. There upon, Bodelschwingh replied, Mr. Minister - one lice from the coat of this brother is worth more in God's eyes than the medal on your chest. Now the true servants of God are willing to be covered with dust of their labors for the Lord.

VIII. AS A SERVANT, YOU ARE GOD'S REPRESENTATIVE

I Peter 2:9 Abmonishes to proclaim the praises of Christ. This does not mean that we serve him only by word of mouth.

Everything about us should proclaim and represent love of Christ. People today are weary of talk and notice rather the walk and life of the person who is a leader in a church. We need to be living examples of faith.

The exalted position of the servants of God must demonstrate their spirituality.

Our failures must not dim the picture of God's great expectations. We are to be as Jesus said, to the Glory of God - salt and light. Psalm 34:3. Oh magnify the Lord with me. Let us exalt his name together.

Now since so many people today no longer attend churches, and since there is a

large population that has never heard a Gospel message - how shall they learn what faith is. How will they ever hear the Gospel if they do not see and hear about your faith. In this troubled world, where we live, and where they live - we must stick to our high calling in Christ Jesus. Because every man has to give an account as a steward of the mysteries of God.

Moreover, it is required in stewards that a man be found faithful.

Zinzendorf said, our joy until we die -- is to win men for the Lord.

Now if the last part of our text is to be fulfilled in your life, and you are to be found faithful, there must be an element of great faith in your own soul.

✓ By faith, Moses refused to be called the son of Pharaoh's daughter - choosing rather to suffer the afflictions of the people of God. He refused the life of luxury to take up poverty. He refused ease and chose hardship. He refused the throne to enjoy the praises of people - to go out to an unappreciative mass as a leader and a servant. The choice was the most daring and adventurous, and self-sacrificing experience. And as Moses passed through the gates of the palace, with its glorious structure, and then to go and live and dwell and think of those in the dark reed huts where the slaves dwelt - it was certainly heroic faith. And if you are going to be a leader, you must have heroic faith.

✓ A young man named Borden - a Chicago millionaire chose appointment as a foreign missionary to a far away land rather than the bright lights, fast automobiles, and fast society in his home land.

✓ Miss Levering, of Baltimore, born in the lap of luxury - reared in the best

culture, many opportunities - turned her back on all of the world's ways and went to China as a missionary. There are those who say she has buried herself, and there are others who say if buried, there will be one day a glorious resurrection. But there is nothing but faith that can inspire you.

Faith in God. Faith in God's work. Faith in God's Word. And faith in yourself about the possibilities of leading for him.

Now remember Moses had many things blocking his pathway. There was the pleasures of sin, the treasures of Egypt, and the dangers of death. All three of these stood in his way. But faith can overcome all of these and the faith of Moses had been implanted in his heart by his mother who served as his nurse. Many men today have become great - even though they may have had an unworthy father - but they have had or maybe have not had a worthy mother. But the choice has been made by faith. And it was the call of a job that needed to be done that inspired Moses to take up the leadership of his people.

Col. W. S. Crittendon was condemned to die in Cuba. And when ordered to kneel before the firing squad, he answered "A soldier kneels only to God." And stood erect.

Gabriel Petite, a brave Belgium girl, being led out to execution by the Germans was about to have a hood placed over her eyes when she refused it saying - I want the world to know how a Belgium girl can die for her country.

A soldier of the cross kneels only to God Almighty. Now if you, as a leader, in your church - will take this same stand, then you will make no choice or no decision or step in your conscience that is not born of faith and nurtured of God's Holy Spirit. It will have his approval.

So I say, whatsoever a man soweth that shall he also reap. The power to chose the spiritual rather than the material - the vision which sees him as only the eyes of the flesh behold, and the ability to strive onward serving, working, and being willing to be covered with dust as your chief asset - the consecration of your whole personality. This kind of faith, you will hear the words, moreover, it is required of stewards that a man be found faithful. This will be fulfilled in your mission. The ministry to which you have been called is more than mere profession. It is more than a trade. It is a calling from God for stewardship. And of course, it has to do with here on this earth which is local. And so he pronounces that a man be found faithful. That is the result of all of your mission - is fidelity which is one of the essential requirements in all such human relationships. In other words, plain honesty in handling money. Like a bank clerk. Or any other position of trust like a public office. Jesus - through Paul is saying, this is one of the most important things. Fidelity, faithfulness.

Now closely linked with your faith will be your love for the Lord Jesus. There is such a wonderful experience that took place in the life of Mrs. Elizabeth Prentiss. Her husband was a minister and as the tears rolled down her cheeks she said, why should this happen to us of all people. Maybe we should ask ourselves why a thing like this should not happen to us. Are we better than any of the other families who have lost loved ones in this epidemic - her husband asked sympathetically. Does God owe us some special favor that he does not owe any other family - or does God play favorites. Mrs. Prentiss dropped her face in her hands and wept, for a long time. For she felt that she had no more tears to shed. She thought of all she had done. Up until that time when death had suddenly come to her loved one. She was the daughter of a devout clergyman and was a very talented person. And she married Rev. Geo. Prentiss. And they moved to New York City where he was the pastor of a Presbyterian Church. And it was 11 years after their marriage in 1856 that the tragedy struck.