

April 18, 2015

I recall an experience that happened to my favourite Bible teacher of the 70's and 80's Bob Mumford. He pastored a church that had entered into a new building construction programme. The men of the church had agreed to start digging the foundations one Saturday morning and Bob had decided to become part of the team. As the morning wore on men gradually faded from the workforce and at one point, he looked up to find only himself in the "trenches."

He immediately complained to God; "But I am the Pastor. I am God's man of faith and power. Why am I left to do digging?" The "man of faith and power" bit was added tongue in cheek as he told the story. The reply came back immediately; "And WHO DO YOU THINK YOU ARE DOING IT FOR?!"

For the local church to function as God intends requires we view God as our "employer" and our attitude toward the work of God demands we do it unto Him. There will always be situations that challenge our motives regarding our faithfulness, perseverance and consistency in order to test who we are doing it for!

Paul encourages slaves to work for their masters "as unto God" and not just the good ones but the ones that are cruel, mean and harsh. He then quotes the attitude of Christ in His response to false accusations and the planned murder of Himself.

Every community activity will have as much tension as there are people in the team. Sports teams rise and fall on attitude more than skill. Businesses spiral to destruction as a result of internal personality conflicts. Churches split over "I am of Paul, or of Apollos, or Cephas or even Christ," as well as inconsequential issues of doctrine, but the majority is over things that are grounded in wrong attitudes.

I know of situations in the past where this church has almost self destructed because we have ignored God's pattern of working together. This is not my church; it's not yours either, it is Christ's and we are the Body of Christ. If we want things our own way then we become a cancer in the system and all cancers die when they kill the host.

As we grow from strength to strength by God's Grace and Blessing we must keep this clearly in our focus; this is *His* Church and all we do, or fail to do we are doing it for Him or to Him. All offences we face are to test "WHO ARE WE DOING IT FOR?" We must face all rejections, failures, mistakes, false accusations, and lies with the same attitude. We need to be fast "on the draw" to forgive because we are all failures. Jesus said that if we don't "forgive others God will not forgive us."

We are all tarred with same brush. The church is composed of sinners – the only difference is that we are sinners saved by grace. God is determined that we be conformed to the image of His Son. The question is can we stand the test?

Our eternal end is glorious. We will be LIKE Him, we will be ONE with Him, and we will REIGN with Him. Let us put life's experience into this eternal context. To get there, we have to follow the pattern of our Lord. Let's ask God to help us see things from His perspective and surrender to His process of being conformed into the image of His Son.

"Your attitude should be the same as that of Christ Jesus: Who being in the form of God did not consider equality with God something to be grasped, but made himself nothing, taking the form of a servant, being made in human likeness. And being found in appearance as a man, he humbled himself and became obedient unto death on a cross. Therefore God exalted him to the highest place and gave him a name that is above every name that at the

name of Jesus, every knee should bow, in heaven and on earth and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father." PHIL. 2: 5 NIV

Shalom.

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