

The Organization of Jesus' Ministry

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It is a difficult thing for many in ministry to accurately appraise the true spiritual success of their ministry. Our gauge seldom equates to His. Some would use a worldly standard measuring their accomplishment according to how the ministry is accepted by the world or its impact upon the world. Others would use a business formula that would cite as evidence of successful ministry such things as building programs, congregation size and income or ministry outreaches. Still others would use a personal standard judging the effectiveness of ministry by the numbers "reached for Christ" or by some other measure of personal achievement.

Now all these can be viewed in some degree as "spiritual" measurements but those who strive for the excellency of father/son order have learned that success of ministry can only be measured as Jesus measured His own ministry. *It is finished and of them which thou gavest me have I lost none.*

True ministry fathers know the only measurement as to the success of ministry is; have I done the will of God by completing the Vision and have I ordered those sons that He gave me? Jesus taught more revelation, walked in more power, saved more souls, healed more sick people and performed more miracles than any man of God in all history. He at times used these as confirmation of His ministry but never as a measurement of success.

What constitutes spiritual success can be argued; what standard do we use to gauge such success and is it even important to do so? Paul in 2 Corinthians chapter 10 gives the measure of those who lack wisdom; *For we dare not make ourselves of the number, or compare ourselves with some that commend themselves: but they measuring themselves by themselves, and comparing themselves among themselves, are not wise.* Unfortunately this is a standard all too often used by ministry in evaluating and assessing its success. The unwise always use a mark other than Christ to gauge their successes and failures.

The Apostle Paul was continually gauging the success of His ministry as marked against the vision and work of God and the measure of Christ. *I count all things but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord: for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and do count them but dung, that I may win Christ. I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, the vision, I have kept the faith:* And finally before King Agrippa the summation of His ministry is; *I was not disobedient unto the heavenly vision:*

We likewise need to do so, so that we can make adjustments in our ministries to bring them into perfected order. Ours is not a measurement gauged against others achievements or opinions but against the vision given us and the care of the people brought to us.

Successful ministry can seldom be measured by material acquisition, nor can the Kingdom be measured in dollars and cents. In the natural world fortunes have been amassed by individuals under a variety of circumstances. Some have inherited great wealth, others have acquired it through dishonest and corrupt means, while others have had the fortune to discover an oil well in their back yard. To be sure the majority who possess wealth have obtained it through a process of hard work, skill and dedication.

The mere possession of wealth is no measurement as to the character or genius of the one who possesses it. "Prosperity" is not necessarily a mark of successful ministry. Likewise Christian ministry is not wise if it does not assess its effectiveness or if it does so by comparisons with other ministries and not by the unique Vision given from God.

There is a wide gulf between spiritual understanding and spiritual implementation. Spiritual understanding requires knowledge, submission and right questioning, while spiritual implementation requires wisdom, preparation, dedication and order. There have been many powerful ministries who understood what God wanted of them but which were never quite able to implement that which they understood.

(Prov 24:3,4 KJV) Through wisdom is an house builded; and by understanding it is established: And by knowledge shall the chambers be filled with all precious and pleasant riches.

God is desiring to build us a spiritual house and to build us into a spiritual house. *(2 Sam 7:11b) The LORD telleth thee that he will make thee an house. (1 Pet 2:5a KJV) Ye also, as lively stones, are built up a spiritual house.*

Spiritual understanding or that which forms the foundation under which we stand always requires the knowledge of God. This knowledge is not just about what God knows but also concerns what we need to know about God. In addition to knowledge, understanding requires submission and asking the right questions. Submission, properly understood, is the fear of the Lord. Some of the most studied ministries walk with little understanding because they have never disciplined themselves to manifest proper submission.

Without valid father/son relationship how will a ministry ever exemplify proper submission or honor? Desire, right motives and a pure heart are the wellspring from which come right questions. Often people with great knowledge lack understanding because they don't know how to ask the right questions that would bring forth understanding from the knowledge they possess.

Spiritual implementation is the ability to take a Vision from God and bring it to pass in the earth. Spiritual implementation or putting into operation the things we understand in the Spirit requires a different set of criteria than that of spiritual understanding. It is out of wisdom, dedication, preparation and order that spiritual implementation comes.

If a ministry has problems implementing that which they clearly understand the Lord has given them, then the problem is likely to be found in one of the above four areas. Wisdom – the Holy Spirit directed application of knowledge and understanding. Dedication – being consecrated to a godly course regardless of fleshly distractions and desires. Preparation – that which is done beforehand to make that which comes after to prosper. *Prepare ye the way of the LORD and prepare ye the way of the people.* God calls us to prepare, as our ability to be used by Him is largely dependent upon it. Order – conforming to the plan of God. Father/son order is one such plan of God. How can we fully implement Vision without coming into order?

Jesus' ministry displayed both great understanding and great spiritual implementation. Jesus had a plan for all He did. It was not a haphazard ministry deciding at the dawn of each day what should come next. *(Luke 2:52 KJV) And Jesus increased in wisdom and stature, and in favour with God and man.* Jesus used wisdom and prepared Himself. At twelve years of age He knew His identity and purpose because He was submitted to His Father. The increase of these characteristics in Jesus speak preparation.

(Luke 4:16b KJV) As his custom was, he went into the synagogue on the sabbath day, and stood up for to read. Jesus had a custom, a routine or plan in how He ministered. *(Phil 2:8b KJV) He humbled himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross.* Jesus was totally submitted to the Father and this helped bring forth His great understanding. *(Mark 11:2 KJV) And saith unto them, Go your way into the village over against you: and as soon as ye be entered into it, ye shall find a colt tied, whereon never man sat; loose him, and bring him.* Jesus had prepared even the seemingly insignificant details so His ministry might be made complete.

(John 4:4 KJV) And he must needs go through Samaria. Nothing is left to chance in His ministry. He understands what He needed to do and how to do it. *(Luke 9:51 KJV) And it came to pass, when the time was come that he should be received up, he stedfastly set his face to go to Jerusalem.* He entertained no distractions. He was totally dedicated and ordered His ministry to complete the Vision given from His Father.

One of the chief ways He ordered His ministry was in the call and appointment of His Apostles. Jesus ordered His ministry according to the pattern given by God through Moses. He doesn't look for a new plan or a more effective plan but because He has understanding He follows a plan given by the Father because it is a perfect plan and a type of that which His Father would do through Him in the Spirit.

(Rev 21:12 KJV) And had a wall great and high, and had twelve gates, and at the gates twelve angels, and names written thereon, which are the names of the twelve tribes of the children of Israel:

(Rev 21:14 KJV) And the wall of the city had twelve foundations, and in them the names of the twelve apostles of the Lamb.

(Num 11:16 KJV) And the LORD said unto Moses, Gather unto me seventy men of the elders of Israel, whom thou knowest to be the elders of the people, and officers over them; and bring them unto the tabernacle of the congregation, that they may stand there with thee.

(Luke 10:1 KJV) After these things the Lord appointed other seventy also, and sent them two and two before his face into every city and place, whither he himself would come.

Jesus chose twelve, (foundations and government), apostles. He also chose seventy, (7X10, perfection times order), and sent them out two by two. He didn't say as many religious of our day, "I have all these people I want to give them each a job so they feel part of my ministry". No He had a pre-established plan from the Father and the understanding to implement it. The Patriarchs of Israel become a pattern for the number of His apostles. The seventy elders called by Moses become a model for the seventy called and sent out by Jesus.

The apostles were first disciples. *(Luke 6:13 KJV) And when it was day, he called unto him his disciples: and of them he chose twelve, whom also he named apostles.* There was some qualification and preparation necessary for this calling. They were disciples first. There is also a plan for those the Father would bring into our ministries. He certainly chooses some we would discard. He also chooses some who may not be genuine but fulfill His greater purpose. Paul had Demas and of course Jesus had Judas. God knows what we do not and brings to pass that which fulfills His will.

In ordering His ministry with the twelve Jesus has at least four sets of brothers. He chooses fishermen, married and single, tax collectors, a political insurrectionist and even a thief. He isn't going for the prominent or prosperous or even the socially acceptable but for those given Him by the Father. It is not His will but the Fathers that He seeks.

Because the Lord looks at the heart He sees value in people that our prejudices and fears often overlook. He sees in His sons not only what they are but more importantly what they can become. He's not afraid to bring into His ministry those who are less than perfect knowing that it is part of His job to mold imperfect men into vessels fit for use. Even with Judas knowing he would betray Him from the beginning He never ceased to reach out to the end toward him. He knew the Father's will and was predisposed to not only that which was desirable but also that which was necessary to fulfill purpose.

On a cursory survey of Jesus' ministry it would appear that He walked around Judea and Samaria doing good things with twelve companions who were more or less along for the ride. As we look more closely we see that Jesus had a purpose for the apostles far beyond the fulfillment of a biblical type. They were first and foremost to become the foundation for the propagation of Jesus' ministry beyond His death. This three and a half year period was a training and a preparation so that they could be about their father's business. Jesus trained them in many ways and set them in order to foster His ministry. As the tribes of Israel were ordered as to their function so Jesus set the apostles in order to serve His ministry.

Jesus, it appears, broke their service to His ministry down into three areas corresponding to the three dimensions. He groups the apostles into three groups of four as indicated by the four listings of the apostles in scripture. The names of each apostle though in different order always fall within their particular group. Heading each group of four and always in the same positions are, position number one – Peter; position number five – Phillip; and position number nine – James the son of Alphaeus. Judas as the betrayer is listed last in each account.

The first group of Peter, James, John and Andrew are separated from the other two by their closeness to Jesus. Especially the first three form what is called by some Jesus' inner circle. These seem to have the highest connection in the Spirit. The second group headed by Phillip seem to be a liaison between the people and Jesus while the third group seems to minister to the material needs of Jesus and His entourage.

Whatever significance we may want to assign to each group or each apostle it does seem evident that Jesus ordered His followers according to the need of His ministry. Not all the apostles performed the same function or were privy to all the same events of Jesus' ministry. They all varied in glory one from another.

Every ministry is qualified by its development in four areas. First, is the area of leadership requiring vision, integrity and direction. This position is filled by Jesus in His ministry.

Second, by doctrine and purpose. Why does God call this ministry? Like Peter and those of the first group, every ministry needs those who can see the transfiguration of the third dimension, those who seek to understand the coming temple, those who are of a nature that they can participate in the glory of God and those who will not run from the Agony of a garden.

Third, it is qualified by its organization. Every ministry must be organized to address the needs of those it ministers to and to handle the issues of ministry in an ordered way. This group of Jesus' apostles were uniquely qualified. Mathew who will give a written account of Jesus' ministry with the preciseness of a tax collector ledgering his accounts. Nathaniel not afraid to ask if the ministry of Jesus can amount to any good. Thomas to whom seeing is believing and Phillip who heads this group acting as an intermediary between the general public and Jesus.

Finally, a ministry is qualified by the necessities of the material world. Every ministry needs money and materials to supply the needs of the natural world. Much less is written about the duties of this group because dimensionally it is the lowest. This

is not to say that Jesus valued the worth of any of the apostles greater than the others. It was their nature and preparation and his purpose that decided their position in His ministry.

What can we learn from the organization of Jesus' ministry? If we understand His was an ordered ministry then perhaps we can gain some helpful insight in operating ours? Perhaps we will see how to break our ministries down according to required function. Maybe we will understand in a more enlightened way those the Lord is bringing to us. Hopefully we will see that Jesus was not just living for Himself or for His present position but for future generations. Hopefully we will understand that His ministry was entrusted into the hands of a few individuals and it was their training, maturity and success in the Spirit that would decide whether the entrustment given Him of the Father would become completed. Wise men of God know their ministry is not about themselves but about future generations leading to the coming of God's Kingdom.

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