



## **KEEPERS OF THE FAITH:**

### **ARE WE KEEPERS OF THE FAITH?**

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In church we stand before people. They come to listen. What is the goal that we leaders are trying to achieve every Sunday? Is it to inspire the people or what? I know a pastor that went from his office to the pulpit and back again. No interaction and no mingling. Was his sermon meant to inspire? Did he “the person” play a role after church? Our faith comes in many forms. We believe in God, we believe that Jesus died and rose again, and we grow our faith. Is the person standing before the people just relying on a message from God, or are we more?

The leader in the church is more than just a puppet of God, is he or she meant to inspire those around them? What happens if they become more of a Master than a servant of the people? Isn't that less like Jesus and more like a ruler or CEO? Who are you to the people? I

remember once an elder helping set up a special service. The pastor had decided to change some things at the last minute, the elder as furious. He said “why doesn’t the pastor come down from his loft and change it himself.” Whether the elder was out of line or not is not the question. The statement showed the relationship between the master and servant. Jesus would not be amused. I believe the pastor was out of line.

This comes down to who we are as Christian leaders. Do we keep the word of God consistent in our words and with our actions? Do we preach new thinking because the times have changed, yet the Bible has not changed? Is our definition of Christian floating with the wind or a constant image of God? These days I wonder if were more survivalists from the pulpit than defenders of the faith we have. Is the world breaking the church down one piece at a time? Are we letting it happen on our watch? Below are seven questions to help your team think about why you’re up there before some people.

### **1. WHO DO WE INSPIRE?**

Abraham Lincoln inspired a nation with his Gettysburg Address. I used to attend a church that gave a state of the church sermon every January. It used to be concluded with a call for money. Why give an inspiring sermon and end it with a plea for help? Isn’t that counterproductive? In Joshua 1 God gives his people a motivational speech. He begins with the honest truth “Moses is dead.” Then he inspires them with a reassurance. From the pulpit we can look weak. Sorry it’s true. We panic over money, and plead for help all the time. Discuss the brave factor. What’s that? God said be brave and courageous because God is with you. Are your messages from the pulpit brave and courageous?

## 2. ARE WE SERVANTS OR MASTERS?

Moses is called a servant of God. He is a slave to a Master using that word. Joshua is called a servant to Moses. He is not a slave but a helper or compliment to Moses. There is a difference. I have met pastors and elders that believe they are masters in the church. They know church leadership and they rule with a mighty fist. They are not God but they think they are. I have met church leadership that complements the people they work with. They are the inspiring leaders that make you love to work alongside of them. Which are you if you took a survey at your church?

## 3. SHOULDN'T WE BE CONSISTENT WITH THE BIBLE?

God's word is the same always. God's character is the same always. Why do we revise our beliefs as we go? I bet if you went through 10 years of sermons: the church stance on salvation and sexual preference has changed. Possibly you just neglected to mention stuff that you used to. Hence your church might be a listless rudder with Bible literacy. Talk about how you're church uses Gods word to defend your beliefs? Do you neglect certain parts of the word to avoid strong topics? Should you? Would Jesus?

## 4. GOD'S WORD DOES NOT CHANGE SO WHY DO WE?

We grew up as Christians influenced by another time. Moses influenced Joshua. God told Joshua to keep the law written by Moses. Not the law given by God. Yes it was given by God but that is not what it says. **Joshua 1:7 "Only be strong and very courageous, being careful to act in accordance with all the law that my servant Moses commanded you; do not turn from it to the right hand or to the left, so that you may be successful wherever you go.** That was an Old Testament story Pat? I

thought God does not change? The things written in the law were put there in inspire us to follow God. Ok we don't sacrifice goats but we do offer ourselves unto God. Better yet, we offer Jesus as our sacrifice for our sins. We change to accommodate sin these days. We are not defenders of the Bible, but we sacrifice it to appease sin in this time period. Am I right or wrong?

#### **5. WHAT DOES CHRISTIAN MEAN TO YOU?**

In Jesus day Christians were called "the way." They were known for "the way" they acted. Many people came to Christ during the Black Plague because of the actions of Christians. Today we are known for our sin. We are called apologists for God. I call many in the church leadership survivalists. They spend the year fund raising and recruiting to survive. Pat we need money to run a church. Really? Seriously? Where is the brave and courageous part? Do you really know what that means? God tells them in Joshua to uphold the law and be brave and courageous in doing that. Is Christian mean retreating from sensitive issues; apologizing for Gods past; and neglecting the sin in this world? I would bet my life that if Jesus was here today: he would not recognize the church. What do you think? What would change your church to walk like "the way" did?

#### **6. ARE WE DEFENDERS OF THE WAY OR SURVIVALISTS?**

In the TV series Smallville Tess says religion must adapt or it will disappear. Do you believe that? Someone said that we are one generation from extinction in the church. Do you believe that? I guess I am a God believer. If he said he would never leave I believed him. Why do we act as if God is not the one driving this bus? I think we spend our time surviving these times rather than defending the way of Christ. Defend is in being

Christ followers of the way. Have we lost our way? God said be brave and courageous not retreat and cower. Are we willing to risk the church for the sake of the truth? Do we?

**7. CHURCH IS NOT BEING BUILT UP: BUT INSTEAD THE WORLD IS TEARING IT DOWN  
ONE PIECE AT A TIME.**

Nehemiah set up people to building the wall. **Nehemiah 4:17** “**who were building on the wall. Those who carried burdens were loaded in such a way that each labored on the work with one hand and held his weapon with the other.**” We are not defenders of the faith these days. We are survivalists. Do we really know what is being asked of us by God? Do we understand what strong and courageous is? Being Christian is about picking a fight with Satan. I think we have forgotten that. Jesus picked a fight with the world not apologizing for his father in heaven. Why are we acting different than Jesus? We are the last generation defending a church we have made weak. Are you prepared to answer for that?