

## Pastors Perspective: THE MASTER IN THE MARKETPLACE

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What **is** the Spirit saying and doing in the church today? Is there a new reformation going on? History records that Martin Luther's actions put the bible into the hands of the people and changed the church forever.

Today, God is putting ministry into the hands of His people, and church as we have know it, is in the process of a new reformation!

There are two Great Commissions in the scriptures and both are foundational to understanding how we are to live our Christian life. First, we are all familiar with Matthew 18:19-20 and the focus being on lost people and their need to hear the gospel.

But the second, which is not so familiar, is Genesis 1:28 and it calls us to take dominion and extend the kingdom of God into every area of life that is lost to the purposes of God.

Sometimes even the intent of scripture is lost. In Ephesians 4:12 we read a truth that many leaders are revisiting today. It makes a clear distinction between equippers and ministers. A very important distinction bringing us closer to God's dream for the local church and the locality it serves.

We need to review a few basic questions. Do we, the people of God, stop being the people of God when the service ends? Are we not His people everywhere, all the time? Are we not the church gathered on Sunday and then scattered throughout the week?

Where did Jesus do most of his ministry? Was it in the synagogue or in the marketplace?

The answer is clear in scripture yet the modern church continues to confine itself to buildings and services. Thank God this limited understanding of church is changing all over the world.

The marketplace is that amazing and complex place just outside the doors of our local churches. It is the place that we will spend the highest percentage of our time each day as employers and employees.

Our workplace can be generally defined under the triple headings of business, government and education. This also includes all the sub-groups of law, medicine, arts & entertainment, media and the home.

As Canadians, let us dream together about the fulfillment of our national scripture, Psalm 72:8, that is inscribed on the Peace Tower in Ottawa. "He shall have dominion from sea to sea." This was the result of a Christian politician, Leonard Tilley, simply having his morning devotions and God gave him a word that enabled the Fathers of Confederation to name our nation the Dominion of Canada.

Imagine what God could do with a church that understood the meaning of Jesus having dominion in Canada from sea to sea?

Let us look at the Master in the Marketplace.

In Luke 19:1-10 we read the story of Zaccheus, the chief tax collector in Jericho. As a wealthy businessman, he heard Jesus was about to pass by and he didn't want to miss it. Having a nice home, good furniture, clean clothes and a full stomach was not enough. He must have said to himself, "there must be more, I need purpose and meaning in my life."

We see him doing what all businessmen and women do, he took a risk and 'went out on a limb' to see Jesus. God likes to use the natural to introduce us to the spiritual. Even though he was one of the richest men in Jericho, he had spiritual needs just like those all around us each day.

As Jesus approached Zacchaeus, the Holy Spirit led Him to look up. With their eyes connecting, Jesus took the initiative to invite Himself to supper. He is taking the same initiative today to invite Himself into the marketplace. He is revealing His heart and strategies for the harvest.

Even though Zacchaeus could overhear the bickering in the background about being a sinner, Jesus continued walking with him to his home, going past the critics and their criticisms.

While Jesus was eating, He also shared the truths of the kingdom of God with Zacchaeus and those gathered at his home. For Jesus, the marketplace was a natural place of meeting people and introducing the life-changing message of God's kingdom.

In Christian business, our goal must be people not profit. If we seek first the kingdom then God will take care of our need for profit.

Zacchaeus' heart was convicted and he knew he had cheated and defrauded others. He wanted to get things right. He was willing to give half of his goods to the poor and to restore four times to anyone he had taken anything from through false accusation. Truly, change had come to his life and home.

Marketplace leaders have influence. Jesus understood the ripple effect Zacchaeus' life would have in his community. His life changed. His attitudes changed. His business practices changed. His reputation in the community changed. His ongoing business life changed and that probably started a transformation in Jericho.

John Maxwell says, "God rewards good stewardship, multiplying the influence of godly leaders." The cry of marketplace ministry is that Christian workers would use their gifts and influence to multiply the effectiveness of the Word of God in daily life.

Jesus concluded his visit with Zacchaeus by saying, "Today salvation has come to this house, for the Son of Man has come to seek and to save that which is lost."

In the marketplace, people are God's #1 priority. It is not just **who** is lost but also **what** is lost. Jesus is bringing the kingdom to the workplace, through us.

Father's business is restoring His dominion in every facet of our culture and the marketplace is no exception. As working Christians, we need to fully serve Jesus with all our natural and spiritual gifts. By doing so, we will be on the front lines of how Jesus is building His church in the 21<sup>st</sup> century.

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