

The Bondage of a Dead Man's Mantle

Eph. 4:1-2 KJV

John 19:23-24 KJV

I want to challenge our local congregation to a very powerful shift in our vision and direction for 2018!

Look back at Eph. 4:3, all visions, ministry, church work, and family successes is based on this one phrase called:

The Unity of the Spirit

- A. When we have corporate unity from the spirit and not from a program or manmade agreements, we will experience a great flow of the spirit. Both in our homes and in our corporate church services.
- B. I am discerning some disruptions of the flow of the spirit in this ministry.
- C. We have great unity with our staff and our VCA workers. We have experienced more unity in the last 3 years here at POW than its last 18 years. I'm very grateful for the departments that have experienced great participation with workers consistently serving in manna, nursery, J-crew, sound, music department, the finance team, ushers, and greeters. There has been a tremendous unity we have seen with the faithfulness of even the department heads.
- D. But the disruption of the flow of the spirit I am referring to this new challenge the Holy Ghost has given us for shifting into multiplied growth and reproducing ourselves. And I'm sensing we are all not on the same page with regards to allowing God to speak to us for new assignments. Again my focus is unity with the spirit and not with just a pastor or a school mission statement.

Let me explain what goes into the real definition of the phrase unity of the spirit for corporate vision. Look at Eph 4:1-2. This phrase, unity of the spirit, is defined in part in these verses.

- 1. **The prisoner of the Lord**
 - a. I am shackled to leadership and the saints to intentionally promote unity against my own opinions and views when they go against the unity of the spirit.
 - b. I'm in bondage to you at all cost to do whatever God asks to promote the unity of the spirit.
- 2. **With lowliness of my attitude**
 - a. Always watching my attitude when in confrontation with others.
 - b. Always seeking to promote the unity of the spirit with lowliness towards God's people and my spouse and children.
- 3. **With gentleness in my dealings with others**
 - a. I cannot walk in the spirit of unity with a harsh or impatient attitude towards the body or family when we disagree.
 - b. Paul says it's going to require gentleness, lowliness, and an attitude of a prisoner.
- 4. **With longsuffering**
 - a. Longsuffering keeps the unity of the spirit.
 - b. This is why Paul says to endeavor. This word means to work at a relationship.
 - c. To put forth a consistent effort to keep unity with the corporate vision with longsuffering and you. Vs. 2
- 5. **Bearing with one another in love**
 - a. My job is to not allow anything to break the spirit of unity in the church.
 - b. By forbearing in love, in times of strong disagreements. This is endeavoring in the bonds of peace.

- c. Because if I don't, I disrupt the corporate flow of the spirit in the local church and at home.
- d. You see, I cannot tell God what I'm going to do or won't do and not expect a disruption of His flowing presence as a corporate body.
- e. These 5 points define the unity of the spirit, when we choose to become prisoners to each other for the vision of the church.
- f. But permit me to go a step deeper to define the spirit of unity through John 19:23-25.

Why do soldiers want to gamble for the clothes of a dead man?

- a) What does anybody need with the clothes of a dead man?
 - b) Perhaps to use as memorabilia to show their friends and family?
 - c) But in reality, a dead man's clothes serves no purpose – unless you're a part of the KCC.
 - d) I say this because this mantle of Jesus only had power when He died.
 - e) This word mantle or the mantle of Jesus was symbolic of:
 - a. Power in the spirit because of His death.
 - b. Represents the transferring of a ministry from one person to another
 - c. The phrase mantle represents a particular single philosophy, vision, and anointing of a ministry.
 - d. It means a "spiritual unity" in pursuit of the Kingdom Community Culture.
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- In other words without you and me intentionally pursuing after the single vision mantle of Jesus Christ we cannot operate in the spirit of unity here at POW.
 - God links our lives together through the mantle of Christ but also the mantle of the local church ministry.
 - The power of unity is in the mantle of people who are dying daily to selfishness and pride.

Mantles are hard to keep on

- 1) They fall off easy, especially when you are wrestling in disunity with others.
- 2) Mantle's can fall off easy if I do not intentionally seek 2 major Christ like mantle qualities.
 - a. Seeking constant purity with God
 - b. Submitting my will and attitude towards the unity of the spirit

- A. Because purity with God and submission to the spirit of unity produces power with God.
- B. Your power level with God is in direct proportion to your purity and submission with God.
- C. And with purity and submission God can trust us to release His glory through us.
- D. Without purity and submission our sin human nature will try to take God's glory by ignorance and default.

Read Col. 3:5, Math. 5:8, Titus 2:5, 2 Cor. 6:6-7, Phil. 2:14-15

- So seeking purity with submission gives us true unity of the spirit with each other.

What does it mean to Operate in Purity with God?

- A. No guile
- B. Quick to repent
- C. Not playing with sin casually
- D. Constantly seeking to increase the fear of God in your life.
- E. Taking conviction hard and serious in your life.
- F. Desiring to operate under spiritual authority.
- G. Putting God's Word above your very own opinions and strong feelings.
- H. Willing to live and operate as an armor bearer at all times, even when you have been promoted.
- I. You desire to live and increase holiness in your life.
- J. Daily prayer is a heaven or hell issue.
- K. You take rebuke with a teachableness.

*Saul did not have a pure spirit (he lived his life through the eyes of the people).

- Seven sons of Sceva did not have a pure spirit
- Neither did Simon, the sorcerer
- Judas did not have a pure spirit
- The sons of Aaron did not as well
- Neither did Eli's sons

Impurities come out of us through:

- 1) Relationship, it inflicts to reveal the content of our hearts (when a district elder handled me roughly)
- 2) Through financial hardships (you are tested to be honest when you have to honor your word to others for your financial commitments).
 - a. Through illness and long term sicknesses
 - b. Through people who get over on you and get away with it
 - c. Through carnal and prideful leaders who rub you the wrong way
 - d. Through people who practice sin and you are around them
 - e. Loved ones who back slide
 - f. Delays fare on God when you finally though the trial was over. And God is silent.

But I must wear and seek the mantle that produces unity in the spirit.

- Paul said act like a prisoner in bondage to the spirit of unity. Because the mantle can easily fall off if I do not seek the purity of the spirit with submission.
- It's not a pleasure to wear a mantle.
- The mantle covers you where you really lose your identity, strong opinions, self-centeredness, and your wants for your life. You are a prison of unity. **You are in bondage to preserving peace with a dead man's mantle.**
- Some of us are struggling with submitting to the unity of the spirit for what God wants for your life and not what you want. For example:

- God is saying if we need to expand to two facilities will you support the unity of the spirit or will you let your mantle fall off you because you know you will be stretched or it's just not what you feel the church should do. You are a prisoner in bondage to a dead man's mantle.
- Sometimes our opinions are adverse to what God wants.
- Some of you will quickly lay hands on people after you've been told not to.
- Some of us can't work in close ministries with others without overextending the gifts of the Spirit on people to justify why you are not serving in ministry.
- Some of us refuse to give up control in a relationship. So you let your marriage partner suffer. You won't let them be intimate with you or you withdraw your emotions. **You are in bondage to a dead man's mantle.**
- Some of you won't join a ministry or serve in leadership because of people you don't agree with running a department. Or you don't want to pay the price to go the next level to live by leadership guidelines at POW.
- The church is a monarchy and not a democracy. Jesus is our Head not me, and His mantle produces purity and submission. This then produces the spirit of unity.

You see, the soldiers gambled and parted or divided the mantle of Jesus.

So, when I don't pursue inner purity, gentleness, lowliness, forbearance, long-suffering, I am gambling like the soldiers with my holiness of the heart. I am causing division with the mantle of Jesus and this disrupts the flow of the spirit in our homes and in the church.

You are covered by God when you wear the mantle.

- He increases purity in your life.
- He increases your ability and capacity to grow the KCC vision at POW.

Read 1 Kings 19:13, 19

- A. In Elijah's depression and facing Jezebel he goes to transfer his mantle to Elisha. He just ran 88 miles from Jezebel.
- B. God tells Elijah, 'If you are going to wear the mantle of the spirit of unity you must be in unity with what I tell you.' Read vs. 15, 18
- C. You fight depression and personal failures by submitting with a pure heart to the spirit of unity.

- You must submit to God redirecting your attitude.
- You are in bondage to a dead man's mantle.
- A mantle is significant in being wrapped in God's authority.

- Notice where Elisha was when Elijah found him in vs. 19, in the field working. He wasn't procrastinating or lazy. He was available.
- Some of you can't or won't return a leaders phone call or email. Your mantle has fallen off of you.
- The mantle Elisha put on caused him to change his attitude about his occupations and his work ethics.
- This is real unity, by the bondage of a dead man's mantle.
- God wants to challenge some hidden sinkhole areas of purity issues with some of us. It hinders the flow of the spirit in our services.
- You must endeavor and work hard at keeping the unity of the spirit in your life.
- Internal purity produces external submission. This releases the power of God to use us in the proportion of our inner purity.
- The power of unity is in the bondage of a dead man's mantle.

What does it mean to operate in purity with God?

To endeavor to keep in unity means:

- a) Not to show discourse
- b) Not to divide myself from others
- c) To be in mind, one accord
- d) To face difficult conversations with patience, love, and long-suffering because if I do not it will affect the singers and the pulpit.
- e) Unity is described as the bond of peace because shackles restrict you in the love of God for unity with each other.
- f) Compliance and suppression is not unity, it's toleration without a pure heart and a mantle.
- g) Possible title, THE BONDAGE OF A DEAD MAN'S MANTLE.
 - a. I am restricted in shackles to long-suffering and walk in peace and unity with the saints.
 - b. This produces unity to the vision of the church.

Read Eph. 4:1-2

We restrict the flow of the move of God when we are not in unity of the spirit in our private lives. (Like Simon in Acts, or Ananias, and Sapphira.

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