

Passing the Mantle

In considering my lifework, I wondered how I would ensure that the mission was carried on further (beyond my own contribution). I felt the need to pass on my mantle, but I did not really know what kind of mantle that I had. How was I to manage this?

I knew that it was not my worth I had to pass on, but my mission. I was not essential, for the Lord could raise up others¹ to do what I do. After some consideration, I realized that my packet of stories was the mantle that I have to pass on. The portion of them that linked to the magnitude of the Holy Scriptures and glorified the Father of All, at least, I hoped would be useful to those carrying on.

I had no one in mind to take my place. I was not trying to replace myself², but I needed to develop others³ who could continue the work. I recall that Elijah passed his mantle onto Elisha⁴, but I was not such a prophet as he was. I was also not part of a legacy or dynasty, and even though Judas was replaced⁵, the apostleship was not to be an office that carried on forever.

I had always felt that the Kingdom (Old and New) was a place of stories⁶. They were the stories of God's interaction with man, especially in the person of the Son of God, Jesus Christ. Jesus was the genius (Logos⁷) who had the ability to simplify complex spiritual truths in unforgettable and irrefutable ways. I did not want to be guilty with my stories of doing the opposite and actually complicating the Way⁸.

But I realized that I was a storyteller, too, just like the friend I have mentioned before. I find myself compelled to tell stories of God's Glories and His Goodness, even as it is translated into the lives of those who give their hearts to Him. I wanted to find ways to penetrate the outer shell of people and touch the souls within.

It was not just about studying the scripture. Many of us are much more educated than obedient⁹. We need to step back and see the bigger picture, and part of my mission was to help people do that. It involved, as with the storyteller, the continual examination of the pieces in different arrangements to reveal new patterns that helped expand our ideas of God¹⁰.

I did not have anyone in particular to give the mantle to – it was available for anyone who would take it up. I did not think that it would allow someone to part the Jordan with it¹¹, though perhaps it would help them see through the murky water to the bottom. My mantle would not have the power to divide soul and spirit¹², but perhaps it would communicate how I felt about the Glory of God. I hoped that someone would read it and benefit from it¹³. And I hoped that someone reading it could see the love story that lies within it¹⁴.

1. Matthew 3:9b, "I tell you that out of these stones God can raise up children for Abraham."
2. ... one of the hallmarks of great leadership is replacing yourself. William Vandembloemen
3. You replace yourself by developing others, not by replicating yourself. Jeff Henderson
4. Elijah 2:1-17
5. Acts 1:24-26
6. The congregation is a place of stories. The stories of Jesus, to be sure. Peterson, Eugene H., *The Pastor: A Memoir*
7. John 1:1
8. Jesus was a genius. He had the ability to simplify complex spiritual truths in unforgettable and irrefutable ways. I'm afraid we tend to do the opposite. We complicate Christianity. Mark Batterson
9. The truth is that most of us are already educated way beyond the level of our obedience. Mark Batterson
10. Brewster called it a kaleidoscope. Containing fragments of colored glass at the end of a mirrored tube, the kaleidoscope reflects light in an endless variety of colors and patterns. And so it is with Scripture. According to rabbinic tradition, every word of sacred Scripture has

seventy faces and six hundred thousand meanings. If I had to describe Scripture in a single word, it would be kaleidoscopic... Or in keeping with the metaphor, meditation is turning the kaleidoscope to reveal new patterns of light. Mark Batterson

11. Elijah 2:13-14
12. Hebrews 4:12
13. Elijah 2:9-10, a double portion, perhaps, that would lift them way beyond my own thoughts
14. on two levels

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benefit: [like hoping my book gets a response]

Prior to passing on the mantle (considering... what kind of mantle do I have to pass on?)
How to pass on the mantle?

Ref the replacement of Judas; the SSM is not him (Mattathias) nor Justus; thinking that his failures (especially in the garden) kept him out of the running; Elijah to Elisha; the last story in the last book; the SSM is not a part of a legacy or dynasty, but I still thought...

Glorify God; penetrate the shell and touch hearts

He has a valid mantle to pass on (not his worth, but his mission)
I am not essential (a position to be replaced); God can raise up others to continue my mission, but I need those to carry on the mission in their way.

His mantle is his collection of stories

I realize that I am a storyteller, too! I am compelled to tell stories of God's glories... whenever I see them (SZ, etc)

There be heroes here!

Linus Pauling said that the way to have good ideas was to have lots of ideas. God doesn't expect good (correct) ideas, but He wants us to have lots of ideas about Him.

A little muddy?
Knee deep?