

Sermon Title: The Anointing Flows From the Top Down, October 17, 2010 (Scripture is from ESV)

Scripture Reading: Psalm 133:1-3

Introduction

Today marks the fifth sermon in our church's series on our 9 core values. So far we have already covered the core values: "Be extravagant in worship," "Freedom is for everyone," "Father the fatherless," and "Be faithful in the small things."

The anointing flows from the top down is actually a subject that I spoke on last March before the church plant team was sent to Itaewon. That sermon was titled, "A Most Important Lesson" and emphasized the power behind humility and submission to authority. If humility or submission to authority are struggles for you, then I encourage you to download the podcast on iTunes under New Philadelphia Church 2010 and take a listen. Once again, the title of the message was "A Most Important Lesson."

While preparing for this sermon I felt the Spirit leading me in a different direction in terms of what to preach about regarding this core value. So prepare yourself for something new today, some fresh bread regarding the flow of the Holy Spirit. If you want something new and something fresh today, please repeat after me, "**I want something new.**" Amen.

What is the Anointing?

The first question we need to ask regarding the value, "The anointing flows from the top down" is, what is the anointing? The anointing is God's presence by the Holy Spirit. The word anoint used in the Bible means: "to pour on, smear all over, or rub into." The purpose of the anointing is to empower us for the task or position God has called us to.

Isaiah 61:1 – The Spirit of the Lord God is upon me, because the Lord has anointed me to bring good news to the poor; he has sent me to bind up the brokenhearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives, and the opening of the prison to those who are bound.

I want to emphasize those words, "The Lord has anointed me to..." **The anointing is what gives us a sense of purpose in life.** The anointing enables us to fulfill God's calling over our lives. The anointing ebbs and flows with our relationship with the Holy Spirit. The more we obey and the more we seek His presence, the more He covers us and consumes us. But if we turn to disobedient ways and reject His presence, the anointing over us for God's call begins to dissipate.

After King Saul was anointed king, Scripture says that the Spirit of the Lord came upon him and enabled him to rally the army of Israel and deliver their people from their enemies. For a time, he won great battles and did a great job as king over Israel. But gradually fear, disobedience, and pride began to take over him. God eventually rejected Saul as king and sent the prophet Samuel to anoint David and set him apart to take up where Saul had fallen. The anointing for leading the people of Israel moved from Saul to David.

1Samuel 16:13-14 – Then Samuel took the horn of oil and anointed him in the midst of his brothers. And the Spirit of the Lord rushed upon David from that day forward. And Samuel rose up and went to Ramah. Now the Spirit of the Lord departed from Saul, and a harmful spirit from the Lord tormented him

This was a very specific anointing to enable Saul or David to effectively lead God's people. If you read of the life of David there are times when he is clearly not walking as close with God and is not in right relationship with the Holy Spirit, and in those moments in his life great mistakes were made that affected him and the nation. But for most of David's life he walked in right relation with God, and his life was marked by victory, favor, and intimacy with God.

Gifted vs. Anointing

I want to make sure you understand the different between gifting and anointing. All of us are gifted in certain ways. But not all of us are anointed, at least not yet. For example, there are many gifted musicians and singers in the church today, speaking of the church worldwide. But sadly, there are not as many anointed musicians and singers in the church. There is a marked difference between a gifted worship leader and an anointed, gifted worship leader. A gifted worship leader will play the song perfectly and sing well and everything will be technically perfect. But there will only be so much accomplished in the spirit. But when the worship leader is not just gifted but is anointed to lead worship, the songs go to another level. Suddenly it isn't just singing a song anymore, it is intimacy with God and new revelations of His presence. That worship leader, by the anointing of God, is able to lead the people into the deeper realms of God. And that is what worship is truly about, going deeper into the presence of God, seeing Him for who He is, and responding to Him.

The anointing enables us to do what the Lord has called us to do. I could preach this message with perfect delivery and use every public speaking skill to keep your attention. But if the anointing of the Spirit isn't upon me and isn't at work in the words I say, then this message will just pass through you and will quickly be forgotten. But thankfully I am an anointed man of God. =)

1Samuel 3:19 – And Samuel grew, and the Lord was with him and let none of his words fall to the ground.

Samuel grew with the Lord and God's anointing was covering him to the point that every word he spoke would pierce the hearts of those around him. That is what we want. The vision of the church is to raise up an army of mighty warriors **who will go out in the anointing of the Holy Spirit** to bind up the brokenhearted and proclaim freedom for the captives.

So how do we receive and walk in the anointing? For one, you need to be seeking the presence of God. You need to be having personal time with the Lord each day and acknowledging His presence. When you open your Bible you need to not read it just as a book, you need to ask God for revelation from His Spirit before you read. Let His anointing open up messages meant just for you as you read His Word. Invite His presence when you pray and spend time praising Him and worshipping Him. As you walk with the Lord, like Samuel and like David, His presence is going to grow in and around you. His anointing will begin to come upon you.

But it is not just through our personal walk with God that we are enabled to walk under His anointing, it is also through fellowship that His anointing flows. Let's look back at the Scripture reading in Psalm 133...

Psalm 133:1-3 – Behold, how good and pleasant it is when brothers dwell in unity! It is like the precious oil on the head, running down on the beard, on the beard of Aaron, running

down on the collar of his robes! It is like the dew of Hermon, which falls on the mountains of Zion! For there the Lord has commanded the blessing, life forevermore.

The precious oil in this psalm clearly symbolizes the anointing of God's Spirit. The anointing is also often symbolized in the Bible by water, fire, wind, and even a dove. In this passage we see the anointing flowing, from the top of Aaron's head down his beard onto the collar of his robes. The anointing is flowing from the top down. And what is the context of this chapter? The context is brothers dwelling in unity. **The basis of the flow of the anointing in this passage is honor. Honor.** Honor not just releases the flow of the anointing but it enables the anointing to keep flowing and flowing and flowing. And it starts from the top down.

The Waterfall of God's Anointing

If you look at the picture of the waterfall behind me you can clearly see a torrent of water flowing from the top of the cliff on down to the pool of water at the bottom. The top represents the Father. He is the one who sends the Holy Spirit and releases His presence into our lives. The pool of water at the bottom represents God's will that He wants to accomplish. It represents the callings He has placed over our lives. God, according to His love and divine will, has chosen us to be His witnesses here on earth. So God pours out His Spirit upon us to anoint us to do His will and bless those He has sent us to. The waterfall represents the body of believers. God has not commissioned us alone but rather as a family. We are together representing the flow of the Holy Spirit. We are not a bunch of separate trickles of water, but rather we are together a mighty torrent of His Spirit. So if you look at the waterfall, I want you to imagine yourself somewhere amidst the flow of the waterfall. The anointing is falling upon you. And, the anointing is flowing through you.

So how do we both receive the anointing and keep it flowing through our lives? As Psalm 133 clearly shows, it is through honor. And honor goes both ways, to those above you and to those who are under you. Without honor to those above you, you have cut yourself from flow. And without honor to those who are under you, you have created a dam and restricted the flow of God's Holy Spirit. The anointing flows from the top down.

- **It is God's desire that we honor those above us to receive His flow.**
- **It is His desire for us to honor those under us to release the flow of His anointing through us into their lives.**
- **And it is His desire for us to gradually move up the waterfall so that we are able to more greatly influence and spread His anointing to more in the body of Christ.**

These three are the foundation of the core value, "The anointing flows from the top down." Let's start with the first: It is God's desire that we honor those above us to receive His flow.

Honor Above

Turn your Bibles to 1Peter 2:13-19

1Peter 2:13-19 – Be subject for the Lord's sake to every human institution, whether it be to the emperor as supreme, or to governors as sent by him to punish those who do evil and to praise those who do good. For this is the will of God, that by doing good you should put to silence the ignorance of foolish people. Live as people who are free, not using your freedom as a cover-up for evil, but living as servants of God. **Honor everyone.** Love the brotherhood.

Fear God. Honor the emperor. Servants, be subject to your masters with all respect, **not only to the good and gentle but also to the unjust.** For this is a gracious thing, when, mindful of God, one endures sorrows while suffering unjustly.

It is God's command for us to submit to our authorities, not just in the church but also in our work and in our country. And we are called not just to submit, but to honor our authorities. In fact, we are called to honor everyone.

What is honor? To honor someone is not just to give them credit for something, but to show them respect and esteem. How does Peter instruct servants to serve their masters? In verse 18 he tells them to be subject to their masters with all respect. And he instructs them to show respect not just to their master when their master is good, but also when their master is unjust. **That is true honor... showing respect and love regardless of how we are treated.**

When you live by a code of honor, **how you react is no longer based upon other persons' actions toward you.** You show them the same love and respect regardless. You will never let their character defects control your emotions. You will never allow the way they conduct themselves to affect how you conduct yourself. You're not going to allow how honorable they are to you to determine how honoring you are. You're not going to allow how loving they are to determine how loving you are in return.

Joseph, David, and Daniel all lived in this culture of honor. They were faithful in serving their superiors, no matter how wicked and unjust their superiors were. The only times Daniel did not submit was when his authorities tried to force rules on him that would cause him to disobey God, such as eating unclean food or not praying to his God. But even when Daniel could not submit, he still showed honor and **never once** spoke poorly of his leaders. As for David, even when his authority, King Saul, tried to kill him David continually showed him honor. His love and respect towards Saul never changed from when Saul was a good king to when Saul was living in complete sin. David's love for Saul remained the same to the point that David wrote a song of mourning in respect to Saul after King Saul's death. That is honor!

How are you able to develop honor in your life? **The first step is to pray and bless those God has put in your life, especially those whom you have issues with.** When you pray you are able to begin to see those around you as God sees them. Compassion and love will grow within you. An even deeper step into honoring them is to praise God for them and give thanks for them to the Lord for who they are and for anything they may have done to bless you. This can break the grip of any bitterness or rebellion that may try to hinder you.

The next step to develop honor is to obey Peter's instructions in verse 15 and to "do good" to those around you. This step would seem to be pretty obvious, but it is actually one of the hardest things for people to do. Most people are able to show honor and do good to those whom they like and respect, but they would rather leave the room than do good or even simply interact with those they don't agree with or don't get along with. But you must understand, **if you cannot do good and show honor to all who are around you then your love is false.** Your love is based upon performance and not based on grace. And I want to warn you that you reap what you sow. That if you demand a certain standard from others in order to show them honor and do good to them, then God will demand a certain standard from you for His favor. And because none of us are perfect, you are then only able to receive a portion of God's anointing because you can never fully meet God's standards apart from His grace. Just as unforgiveness towards others restricts us from fully receiving God's grace

for us, dishonor and rebellion, especially towards our authorities, restricts us from receiving God's anointing and favor on our lives.

If you need Biblical examples, please read the book of Numbers. Miriam and Aaron, Moses' siblings, gossiped about Moses and dishonored him. God rebuked them to their faces and struck Miriam with leprosy. After Moses prayed for mercy and healing on her behalf, God lessened her punishment to being afflicted for only seven days. As for the sons of Korah and other groups who directly rebelled against the leadership, God caused the earth to open up and swallow them. And as for all the Israelites who rebelled against Moses, Aaron, Joshua, and Caleb, God refused to let them enter the Promised Land. God puts authorities in our lives so that we can learn love, honor, and selflessness. Jesus said that whoever desires to be greatest must become servant of all. For us to receive our full anointing from God, we must develop honor in our lives.

If we want the full flow of God's anointing, we must learn to show honor and do good to those around us, especially to our leaders. But honor is not meant to be just for our leaders. For us to walk in the full anointing of God we also must release honor to those who are below us.

Honor Below

Turn your Bibles to 1Peter 3:7...

1Peter 3:7 – Likewise, husbands, live with your wives in an understanding way, showing honor to the woman as the weaker vessel, since they are heirs with you of the grace of life, so that your prayers may not be hindered.

God created man to be the head of the family. Verses 1 – 6 of this chapter are directed towards the wives and Peter's emphasis is upon submission to their husbands. Just as the pastor is the head of the church, the owner is the head of an organization, so is the husband the head of the family and there needs to be proper respect and submission to authority. But here in verse seven there is also a command and a warning given to those who are the head and who are above... we must show honor to those who are under us in order for our prayers to not be hindered. The word hindered in the Greek basically means, "To be cut off, prevented, or impeded." In other words, **if we do not show honor to those who are under us then our own prayers will start to be blocked.**

I want to make it clear that I am not just talking about marriage here and I'm not just talking about pastors in the church. Nearly every single one of us has someone under our authority, whether it is in the church or at your workplace or within your family. God has given us influence in order that we might share His love and allow His anointing to flow into their lives. If you don't have any influence, then I think you have some serious praying to do. God has created us to go into the world and make disciples, so if you have no one you are influencing then you are not walking in obedience of God's call. I don't mean you must be discipling a large group of people formally, but even just reaching out to children in the community or talking about God with friends or co-workers can enable you to be a light in the world.

And whenever you are in a place of authority, it is your responsibility to let the anointing flow. If you are in authority, whether as a teacher in a classroom, a parent in a family, or a Bible study leader in a group, God has placed upon you the anointing to lead and protect. If this anointing and authority is not exercised correctly then Satan can have his way.

You all know that I serve at a children's home during the week. Every Tuesday evening I lead basketball practice for about 10 junior high and high school boys in the home. Each of these boys have different backgrounds, different personalities, and different struggles. At times one of them will be having a bad day and will bring in a wrong attitude or wrong spirit into the practice. Sometimes I will be oblivious to what is happening and that spirit will start to affect the other boys and even get to me. The boys will begin bickering and having attitudes and I will find myself getting angry and frustrated with them. Because of my obliviousness, I have let that wrong spirit on the boy take control of the practice. After this happened a few times I began to prepare myself better for the practices. I knew God's promise in 1John 4:4 that He who lives within me is greater than He who is in the world. I knew that I had the rightful authority over the practice since I am the coach. So during the practices I would immediately start with honoring the boys and speaking words of encouragement and joy. When certain boys would come and I could tell they were in a wrong mindset I would give them extra encouragement and honor. And I would notice that what was hindering them would quickly dissipate and they would begin having fun. If I had to discipline then I would discipline, but I found that the more I showed honor and carried the atmosphere with love and joy that the less there were any issues.

As men and women of God we must take authority over every place we go. We are more than conquerors. We are the light of the world. We are God's messengers. We must not let the enemy's voice have influence. We must not be like Adam and be oblivious or apathetic to what is happening to those under our authority. Rather we must establish the atmosphere of love and honor and provide covering for those God has given us responsibility over. We must let the anointing flow. We must be intentional in praying for and looking for opportunities to share what God has already poured into our lives. This is our duty! God has given us influence that we might bless and care for those we are influencing.

Honor in leadership opens the heavens. Dishonor and dissension close the heavens.

Restrictive Leader?

So what do you do if you feel your leader is dishonoring and is restricting the flow of the Spirit? Whether it be your leader is your pastor, small group leader, manager, boss, or parent, what you need to understand is that there is judgment. Ezekiel 34 is about the shepherds and leaders of Israel who did not care for the flock and did not release into the people the anointing and love God had called them to give. And in that chapter God spoke strong words of judgment against such leaders and promised His oppressed sheep that He would provide a good shepherd for them.

So how does that make you feel? Hmm, so if my leader restricts the anointing and isn't showing proper honor, then my leader awaits harsh judgment from God? If this gives you satisfaction or even joy, then you need to be rebuked. To lead a group of people, whether in the church or outside the church, is a heavy responsibility. Your leaders need your prayers and God is looking for your response. Will you love and honor your leader despite their behavior and trust in God that He can change their heart and bless them, or will you separate yourself from the leader and go your own way?

There may be times that you will need to confront and speak with the someone, especially if they have hurt you and you need to forgive them and explain things. But you must be careful what spirit you are operating under when there is confrontation. If you are operating under the political spirit then you will wash your hands of the matter, which is what Pilate did. You

will create a distant between you and the other person or you and the problem so that you appear to be right to everybody else. On the other hand, the religious spirit takes up stones and brings judgment in order to appear right. People operating under the religious spirit will confront with guns blazing and in their confrontation they will try and cut off any accountability or correction in their own lives. What spirit do you allow to lead you when you are upset with someone, especially a leader, and need to confront them?

To correct or confront a person, whether they are above you or below you, has to hurt. It has to hurt. **It has to hurt the person doing the confronting.** If it doesn't hurt, then you better not do it. When you confront someone it can never be out of desire to vindicate yourself or release frustration. You should never confront on the spur of the moment. And you should **NEVER** gossip or vent to others. That is complete dishonor, disrespect, and poison. Who are you to voice to the community the wrongs of others? We are to do to others as we would have them do to us. I don't think anyone here would enjoy the community gossiping about your every problem or spreading rumors about you. Gossip is immature and wicked.

When I have to discipline the children at my home or confront them about a certain issue, I will take time beforehand to pray and make sure my heart is right. I always make sure to forgive them ahead of time and pray blessings for them. I never want to carry any poison or personal vendetta into the confrontation, it has to be done out of love, grace, and honor. Whenever I confront I have to make sure I do it in a manner where the person I am talking to understands that I love them and want the best for them.

We also need to understand that the higher a person is up in terms of authority over you the greater the honor God expects of you.

1 Timothy 5:17 – Let the elders who rule well be considered worthy of double honor, especially those who labor in preaching and teaching.

Imagine if you worked for Apple Computers and Steve Jobs did something wrong or made a decision that you didn't agree with. Would you have the right to confront him about it? Could you just go up to the executive offices of Apple and into his office and speak to him, even if it were done in love and grace? I'm sorry, but no. You are not on the board of trustees. You are not in his circle of influences.

In the Bible when kings needed to be rebuked never did some random citizen attack them. The only random citizen to confront a king was a man by the name of Shimei in 1 Samuel 16. He was later executed. When the leaders of the nation needed to be rebuked God would send a prophet with a clear word from God. And even then, the prophet of God would speak with respect and honor. God would take care of the matter.

So if a leader, whether in the church or outside of the church, acts in a way that you feel needs correction, then your response needs to be in faith and you need to go to God in prayer and bless that person. So many Christians today want to take correction and judgment into our own hands. We try and set up systems of control that don't allow for mistakes or grace. But if we truly have faith in God then we will trust our leaders in His hands and will pray in faith and in love. God promises to take care of His sheep.

Going Up the Waterfall

Before I close I want to emphasize that God desires for you to move up the waterfall. He always desires for His people to grow in influence and to be a brighter light here in this world.

Last week Pastor Christian preached about the core value “Be Faithful In the Small Things,” and if you take that message to heart then you will be well on your way to going up the waterfall and influencing more and more people with God’s goodness and love. Just as the servants who were faithful with their minas received cities in return, so will God increase your realm of influence as you honor those both above you and below you and keep faithful with the small things God has given you.

Conclusion

So I charge you church, show honor, both to your leaders and to those you are leading. Treat one another as true sons and daughters of God, as people worthy of respect. Don’t allow the actions of another person affect the way you love. You are too good for that. Show honor no matter what and let the anointing flow through your life.

Pray