

MARK

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ESTABLISHING A PLUMBLINE IN THE HEART OF GOD'S PEOPLE

The Plumbline

*Inside Terry's Office:
The Book of Mark - The Priest's Perspective*

We all have our perspective of events. We interpret an event, the motivations involved, and the desirable just outcomes through lenses shaded by our larger life perspectives. In the New Testament Jewish community, and throughout Old Testament history, there were four main perspectives. Among the institutionalist there was the religious view of the Priests and the secular view of the Kings. Among the non-institutionalist there was the religious view of the Prophets and the secular view of the Judges. All these views shared the same Mono-theistic beliefs, but their ideas of how to serve God differed profoundly. We will tend to misunderstand and misinterpret the purposes of God in the Old Testament if we are not aware of how He related to each historical perspective accordingly.

Likewise, we will tend to misunderstand and misinterpret the purposes of God in the New Testament if we don't consider the perspectives from which each book was written. Last month, we considered the book of Matthew's emphasis on the fulfillment of Old Testament prophecy and the historical accuracy of God's actions. Matthew's gospel most reflects the perspective of the Old Testament Judges; normal men being used of God in a historical context.

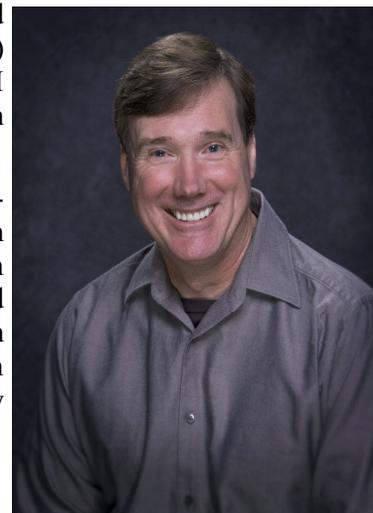
I believe the other three gospels can also be best understood in light of each one reflecting another of the typically Jewish perspectives. Mark's gospel combines stories to make theological points; the perspective of a theologian/priest. Luke's gospel (and the book of Acts) shares with us the nature of the Kingdom of God and the human political dynamics thereof; the perspective of a King. And, John wrote his gospel as 'the Prophet of Love'.

SOOOOO, let's consider how you and I practice communicating our perspectives in much the same way. For instance, scholars may try to discredit Mark for not maintaining the historic chronology of events of Jesus' life (like Matthew did). Yet, Mark might say, "You are missing the point! The truth I'm sharing with you is what is most important. I haven't misrepresented anything!" Therefore, we will misunderstand some of Mark's theology if we read one story at a time. If we can see where his new points begin and end we will follow his thinking better. When making a specific theological point, Mark tends to combine his stories by using "then he ..." or "immediately thereafter ..." etc. When Mark is finished with one point and moving on to another, he seems to jump into the next story without any transitional phrases.

If it were up to me I would accuse Mark of being 'liberal' and 'vague'. He doesn't seem to value historical accuracy and his theology of vague. I prefer Matthew and John; the non-institutionalist who properly value history (like a Judge) and whose theology is directly stated (like a Prophet). Which means I should probably spend more time with Matthew and Luke until I learn to fully appreciate their perspectives.

This same dynamic of learning to properly value varying perspectives is a foundational characteristic of healthy families. If we can learn to really enjoy each other despite our varying perspectives; if we can quit making judgements as to whose perspective is 'truest' and 'honestest' (making up new words adds emphasis to my point..... from my perspective), then we are ready to relate to a big world full of even more divergent perspectives and point them toward a God who really know, understands, and loves them.

In His Grip, TWE



*The Sacrifice of
Service*

*Even the Son of Man came not to be served but to be a servant—to offer His life as a ransom for others.
Mark 10:45*

It's funny how God works; how he reveals himself; how he speaks to me in the most unexpected ways!! I have two lady friends that I meet with over dinner once a month. Whereas most of my friends are friends through association with family, church or Plumline, these two are not. We met working out at Curves and visiting around the training cycle. We decided to continue our friendship outside the facility and we have for 13 years. When I first met one of the ladies, we'll call her, Mary, I learned of her friendship with a very elderly woman and this friendship made such an impression on me---I still remember the elderly woman's name. Mary would often talk about her visits with the elderly woman and include both the frustrations and rewards of her visits. I remember thinking I am not sure I would be so dedicated to give of my time with so many frustrations. The elderly woman is now long passed. I never met her but I have a lasting impression of her through my friend's faithful service.

Today we talk about another friend of Mary who is closer in age and was a high school friend. This friend has battled cancer for the last 15 years and now the cancer is in her brain. She has passed the

prognosis of 3-4 months left to live that was delivered last year but it is well understood that the treatment she undergoes is palliative and is buying her more time but life is difficult. Mary's friend lives hours away but Mary because of her love for her friend has committed to visit her for a few days at a time every month and stay in her home. That in itself is a sacrifice of time and resources but the other issue is Mary's friend has never been a good housekeeper and as a matter of fact, there's no housekeeping at all. Mary describes to us the filth in which she steps into every visit. Of course, we've suggested she stay in a hotel or maybe she could offer to clean, but her answers always reflect her regard for her friend's needs above her own.

She did joke that this is the story of her life of being "NICE," and holding back what is in her head to speak. My other friend and I could relate to that and shared our own stories. We laughed and high fived. This morning I was reflecting on our conversation and it struck me the difference between her "nice" and my "nice." What I recognized in her was sacrifice. Mary in being "nice" to her friend sacrifices comfort for the sake of her friend. She willingly endures the temporary hardships to minister. I, on the other hand, became keenly aware that my being "nice" comes more frequently with strings attached---expectations of return. I consequently get hurt when others aren't nice to me in like kind. So I texted my friend "Mary" this morning and told her of my awareness followed by "I see Jesus in You!"

The Jesus we see in Mark is one who came to suffer and serve and to "give his life a ransom for many." I found this quote from 66 Love Letters intriguing,

To be formed like My Son does not mean indolence disguised as contemplative rest. It rather means Internal rest that releases servant activity. (p. 215)

In case you are wondering what *indolence* means, I looked it up! It means, *avoidance of activity or exertion; laziness*. Hmmm! I thought, yes, and that's exactly what I wanted to promote to Mary by encouraging that she had a right to stay in a nice clean hotel. She did admit it sure would be easier if her friend lived next door! I see now, however, that Mary is much more motivated by the *internal rest* of purpose to minister to her friend.

Thank you, Lord, for bringing the truth of your word and life to life in me!!

~

Carol Anne



Mark??? Luke???

I know that we are supposed to be doing a series in which we pick a topic out of the selected book of the Bible and talk about how it relates to our emotional well being. I'm also sure that by now you have figured out that I can tend to take "some" liberties with this! So, why change now, right? (Besides, I kinda like that about me!)

So as I was trying to think of just one aspect to write about, I remembered something I refer to quite often in counseling. I really enjoy working with couples for two reasons. The first is that because of what God has done in my marriage, I believe that I can empathize and give hope to the darkest of places. The second, is that I get to see the relational dynamics first hand. One of the most common issues I see is the issue of perspectives. I guess to be fair the issue is not really each one's perspective, it is the judgement placed on each one being the "right" one! There was a movie released several years ago now by the title "Vantage Point". The movie started off with a crime being committed in the middle of a busy town square. Then the scene was repeated some ten or fifteen times. Each time from the view point of different people in the square. Each new perspective revealed a clue to solving the crime that none of the other witnesses were able to see. The witnesses were all "right" in what they saw, but none saw the entire scene.

This is where I bring in our buddies Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John. Two of these men were members of Jesus' closest group. I can imagine the others were also very close to Jesus. We know that they were all eyewitnesses to the ministry of Jesus. We also believe that the books they wrote were done so under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit. So, if they all witnessed the same things and they were writing under the guidance of the same Holy Spirit, they how could they write four totally different accounts? Are some not being honest? Are some omitting things on purpose? Are some trying to mislead? NO! They are all just recording things as each one experienced them. Some experiences meant more to some than to others. Even the things that they all wrote about, each saw a different part of the picture. Then we get to benefit by seeing all the different perspectives!

Why then is it soooooo hard to see a different perspective than our own in a situation? Do you think that Matthew ever went to Luke and said "That's not what happened! It was like this!" Or John telling Mark "I can't believe you would think that!" Yet, that's what many of us do when faced with someone who doesn't see things the way we see them or with someone who has different expectations/definitions than we have. If you're like me, I struggled with my own joyful identity so much that I needed those closest to me to "agree" with me just to validate that I thought about something correctly. I was so overly emotionally invested that I couldn't respect and honor in the midst of disagreement and differences. Chances are pretty high that there is always more than one experience or view point for any given situation.

We all want to be cared for and validated in our feelings. Sometimes we want/need that so badly that we lose the ability to care for the feelings of those closest to us. We are striving and struggling to be the kind of people that can care for each other! Remember, **both** feelings matter!

Be who you want to be!

Anthony Elliott

BOUNDARIES

Facilitated by Michelle Carpenter

What are boundaries and why are they important? Boundaries are unseen structures that protect us from harm and support healthy, productive lives. Boundaries are personal property lines that define who you are and who you are not, and influence all areas of your life.

Boundaries give you the freedom to walk as the loving, giving, fulfilled individual God created you to be.

Class Begins: Tuesday March 21st

Time: 6:30-8:30

Cost: \$70.00 plus book

To Register: Send email to michelle@plumblinelineonline.com or call our office at 918-477-9068

What to do: Read Chapters 1 & 2 before class starts.

Books may be purchased at Mardel's, Barnes and Noble, or online at Amazon or Christianbooks.com

Stickman's Prayers

Plumblin's newest book, *Stickman's Prayers* has been published and is now available at Plumblin!

stickman's prayers

the everyday practice of
"loosing prayers"
and the ministry of
"exploratory prayers"



Michelle Carpenter
Terry Ewing
Erin Garcia
Margo Hanne
Carolyn Knippers
Carol McNamarra
Sue Merrill

Would you be surprised to know that the "Prayer of Jabez" was a joke?

Would you be happy to know what kind of prayers are appropriate for you to pray for yourself and what kinds are meant for you to pray for others and others for you?

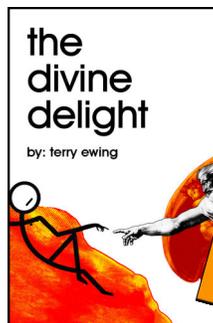
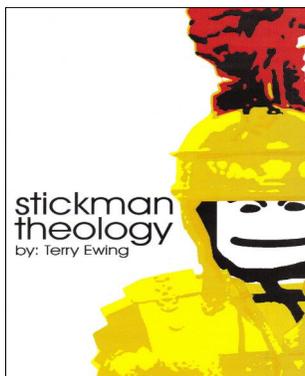
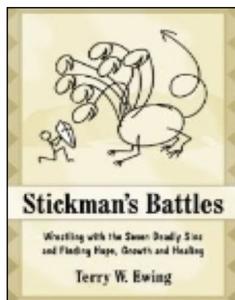
Would you like confidence and freedom to simply enjoy your personal and ministry prayers?

Praying is the most natural thing in the world for Christians; an on going conversation with our best friend, counselor, and confidant; gratitude to our Savior and provider; intercession on behalf of our friends; requests to our Creator. In this regard, a book on prayer may seem presumptuous. When you write a book on Prayer aren't you suggesting that some are praying wrongly, or, at least could be praying better?

That really is not the kind of message we look to promote. So...why the book?

The *Stickman's Prayers* serves two purposes. First, to challenge some ideas that other teaching and preaching concerning prayer has promoted. And, to offer simple encouragements to personal prayer and prayer ministries.

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