

“Being Seasoned With Salt”

By Bob Heitzler

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Wow. What a powerful message this is, so far, today. God truly has a calling on our youth. And it's not the church for tomorrow, it's for the church of today. They don't have to wait until tomorrow to replace us, they can come up beside us now, and join us on this team. And, I want to share from my heart today about what got me involved in youth ministry, my experiences, what I've learned, and my advice from this point forward.

And, my involvement: Some of you might not know that I've been around since 1979, got baptized in Jesus' name, but, about when I was fourteen, fifteen years old, I had a vision that I would be working with the youth. I might not give all the details, but, I knew someday it was going to come to pass, I just didn't know where, I didn't know how, I didn't know how God was going to lead that. Circumstances got me in a little trouble with my dad, my dad said goodbye. I'm out of the house now. I joined the Navy, I walked across the street and saw, “Jesus Is Coming Soon,” and I got invited up to a little center down in North Chicago; I walked up, and that's where I met God. And, there was an altar call, and I ran to go to the altar, but someone stopped me, and I allowed someone to stop me, Malcolm, and I went back across the street to the Helm Club. That whole night, God was dealing with me. And I couldn't—basically, I couldn't get drunk. God kept me sober the whole night. I got there the next day, before—hours before—it opened, and waited all day long for that altar call, not knowing that I could have just walked up. But, I waited for that altar, and as soon as that altar call, I ran to that altar. I got baptized in Jesus' name. And I remember climbing out of that tank—they had to break up the ice in that tank, a little bit, because it was frozen, a little bit—I didn't care; I just wanted to get saved. I was too afraid to go to Hell at the time. But, I knew that vision was still alive, and I knew it was going to pass, I just didn't know it was going to be here. You know? And the Scripture that I want to share, that encouraged me back then, was:

Habakkuk 2:1-2 *I will stand upon my watch, and set me upon the tower, and will watch to see what he will say unto me, and what I shall answer when I am reproved. And the LORD answered me, and said, Write the vision, and make it plain upon tables, that he may run that readeth it.*

It also taught me that, when God speaks to my heart, I write it down, so I can revisit it when I'm having a bad day. I can revisit it, to remember, when I'm having trials and tests; I can go back where God spoke to me. To write it down. It says here:

Habakkuk 2:3 *For the vision is yet for an appointed time, but at the end it shall speak, and not lie: though it tarry, wait for it; because it will surely come, it will not tarry.*

If God spoke to your heart, it's going to come to pass. Now, keep in mind, it's on God's time. It's not like a microwave, you hit a button, and, then, four minutes later, you've got popcorn. No, it's not like that at all; it's on God's time, because, what God had to do with me is shape me and mold me, and put me in the positions to receive that to come to pass. It takes time. You can't just walk up, “I'm called to do this.” Well, you've got to prove your works, basically. So, I had to prove my works.

And, the experience that I gained: my first class was with Mary Ogden, teaching toddlers. Wow. But I was happy; I thought maybe God was just giving me a test, to make sure I really wanted to do this, teaching toddlers. I ain't gonna share everything that happened in that class, but it taught me a lot! And,

I'm amazed how this one little kid could crawl across the table, and bop his sister in the head, and sit back down like nothing happened. Sister's screaming; he's just coloring his page, like nothing happened, "This is normal for me." I couldn't believe the things I was learning, the experiences I was learning. And, you've got to have a lot of trials and tests and tribulations and patience working with young people. That's how you gain your experiences with God, and that reference is in Romans 5:1-5. For the sake of time, I'll just go right to verse three:

Romans 5:3-5 *And not only so, but we glory in tribulations also: knowing that tribulation worketh patience; And patience, experience; and experience, hope: And hope maketh not ashamed; because the love of God is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Ghost which is given unto us.*

God has given us the young people here, to pass on the torch to them. It's not really passing, it's actually sharing the torch, sharing the ministry, sharing things together. We all heard and saw it, today, already: The kids have a message to say. And, we can't put them in a box and tell them to wait; they need to speak up, now! I can tell you stories after stories of kids in high school that took a stand on every subject you can think of, and the class listened to them, instead, because of the anointing on their lives, and the teacher just sat and listened. Over and over again, they've got something to share, you know?

And, what I've learned, I have learned, from the youth, just keep it simple, keep it simple. I also learned that, when they pray, Jesus is sitting in the chair next to them, like they're expecting it to happen, right away. What else I learned was to step out by faith, "Let's just do it. We can do it; let's do it." Us adults, "We got to make sure we and call this, and do this, and make this plan," no they're already in motion, you know? They have something to share. And, what I was witnessing at that time was, very time the young people were sharing, some of us adults would interrupt to take over and, if you do that enough times, the kids will be quiet. That's the reason I started the fishing club, was to give them a reason to be able to share their faith with others. They're the ones we went to Mississippi with—the Mississippi River, out in Iowa—they're the ones who got called to be on the radio station, not me, to share their faith in God. There was a door for them to share. They knew I was around, just in case something would happen, but they had the center stage. And I was reading in First Timothy, chapter four, verses eleven and twelve, and I realized there's another way of reading this. Even though Paul was sharing with Timothy, "Let no man despise thy youth," I was reading it, to me, saying, "These things command and teach. Let no man despise thy youth." I shouldn't despise the youth at all. I need to be an example of the believers, in word, in conversation, in charity, in spirit, in faith, in purity, also. I'm not telling Jo-Jo to do it, Jo-Jo's telling me to do it, that I have to be right with God. Because, you know what? Kids repeat everything they hear. Count on it. They do. I'm not even a parent, and I know that. One day—in Clairmont, New Hampshire, there was a little area where one guy would buy a big chunk of land, and he'd build a house. As they had kids, they would build another house in another clearing, and, all of a sudden, you've got four or five houses in a circle, belongs to one family, and they might be two, three, four hundred acre lots where they produce furniture, and things like that. Well, these characters had real long hair, real long beards, and we were told by our parents to stay away from them because they were just drug addicts and alcoholics, and, they're very religious people. Hippies, they called them. One day, we were driving, and they were reminding us stay away from them, and then our car broke down, right in front of their driveway. Guess who came out to help us? The hippies. And here's me, being the oldest of the kids in the back seat saying, real proud, "Mom, I thought you told us we're supposed to stay away from them people. And they heard everything I said. And my mom gave me that look, the "We're going to talk about this after," look. Because I just repeated what I heard, you know? And they got the engine running, and they gave us our way, going, and we went to the gas station and took care of what was needed. But, I realize that kids see, and they repeat everything they hear. So, we as a church need to be—what? That

example. That example, once again, in Timothy, in our words, in conversation, in charity, in spirit, in faith, and in purity. We have to be examples to them. Does that make sense?

1 Timothy 4:11-12 *These things command and teach. Let no man despise thy youth; but be thou an example of the believers, in word, in conversation, in charity, in spirit, in faith, in purity.*

And, then, advice for the future... My reference verse is:

Colossians 4:6 *Let your speech be always with grace, seasoned with salt, that ye may know how ye ought to answer every man.*

Our conversations have to be seasoned with salt, seasoned with salt. Also, in Psalms, which I learned a long time ago:

Psalms 141:3 *Set a watch, O LORD, before my mouth; keep the door of my lips.*

I really need to watch what I say, because it's going to get repeated down-stream, somehow, some way. About a month ago, I got angry at a situation, and I'm still dealing with repercussions from it, because I said something out of turn. Yep, fifty-five years old, I still do. But I know God forgave me, and I know God's going to take care of it eventually. But I realize that God has a calling on each and every one of us. And it's not two groups of people, here; we are a family. We have all ages here, and, if you're below a hundred and twenty years old, then you are a young person. So, everybody has something to do in this ministry. Some of us might like the Baltimore Ravens, but that's okay, you know. We can still get along, you know?

And then I'm going to use one more Scripture in closing; it's just to encourage us, as adults, and also encourage the young people.

Ephesians 4:29 *Let no corrupt communication proceed out of your mouth, but that which is good to the use of edifying, that it may minister grace unto the hearers.*

And, speaking of hearers, they hear everything. The young people ministered to us, if you'll allow it. If you'll allow God's spirit to move through you, and see what they did today, they said a loud message. Even though they didn't say a word, but it was all in actions. It was a loud and clear message for us. And I am thankful to be part of this ministry. I am thankful that God called me here from Hartland, Connecticut, a little town with nobody around but the woods. And God placed me here, in this ministry, to work with the youth, and I'm very thankful to be working with the youth. Amen. Thank you.