

Jars of Clay 2: The community of weakness- how weak leaders strengthen the church

A tale of two types of leader- and why they make churches the best and worst of places.

Vital for leaders and congregations to think clearly.

The Rev. Super Apostle

“Peddling the Word of God for profit”- 2 Corinthians 2:17

“Take pride in what is seen rather than in what is in the heart.”- 2 Corinthians 5:12

Well trained speakers? 2 Corinthians 11:6

“You even put up with anyone who enslaves you or exploits you or takes advantage of you or puts on airs or slaps you in the face.” 2 Corinthians 11:20

Tim Chester’s description of an advert for a “super apostle” leader- *“The Ordinary Hero”*

Pastor wanted for a thriving, cosmopolitan congregation. Must be:

A dynamic personality

An eloquent preacher with a theological degree

Highly spiritually gifted

A strong, visionary leader

Attractive remuneration offered.

The Weak Leader

“We do not want you to be uninformed, brothers and sisters, about the troubles we experienced in the province of Asia. We were under great pressure, far beyond our ability to endure, so that we despaired of life itself. Indeed, we felt we had received the sentence of death. But this happened that we might not rely on ourselves but on God, who raises the dead. He has delivered us from such a deadly peril, and he will deliver us again. On him we have set our hope that he will continue to deliver us, as you help us by your prayers. Then many will give thanks on our behalf for the gracious favour granted us in answer to the prayers of many.”
2 Corinthians 1:8-11

1. We don’t want you to be uninformed- a church where weakness can be safely acknowledged

“I feel utterly unable to preach to you...I have been utterly unable to study...Oh Spirit of God, magnify thy strength in thy servant’s weakness.”
C.H.Spurgeon

Note the implications for pastoral care, small groups within the church.

How do you think weakness can be acknowledged well?

2. This happened that...- a church that understands God's purposes in suffering

3. As you help us with your prayers- a church that learns to pray

"One thing is due, namely that in private as well as public, they must all wrestle in prayer that I may be sustained in this great work." "I cannot forget how earnestly they prayed."

C.H.Spurgeon

4. Many will give thanks- a church that gives glory to God

Applications for a healthy church culture:

Leaders need to be willing to acknowledge they are jars of clay.

"The people who scare me most are the leaders who admit no weaknesses...Never trust a leader without a limp."

Mark Meynell "When Darkness Seems my Closest Friend"

Congregations need to rejoice that they have leaders who are jars of clay.