

***Teaching, Modeling, and Imparting Responsiveness to the Holy Spirit for Life and Ministry.*****TEACHING:
Pocket Rock***by Mike Flynn*

For many years I've taken a once-a-month prayer day. I always go to some place in nature because I've always connected with God in nature. Once or twice a year I also take 2 or 3 days for more extended prayer retreats.

This year I decided to go to a beautifully stark area called the Carrizo Plain. It's inland from the Pacific about 50 miles in mid-state California. It is very uninhabited, which is what made it appeal to me. As I got set up and then began my prayer times, I remembered that I'm in a new stage in my life. I realized several months ago that, starting at 20 years of age, my life has taken different turns every 11 or 12 years. Now, at 67 years of age, I was asking the Lord, "Who am I now? What am I for? What am I to do?" I wanted his input on the future directions FreshWind is to take.

On the second day, I looked at the map of the area and decided to take a dirt road up to a ridge to get long views. I've always enjoyed long views. But on the way to the ridge as I was leaving the valley floor I noticed a row of a dozen slanting rocks that jutted up from the ground as high as 40 feet and extended about 200 yards. Now rocks have always been my passion, so I decided to stop there on my way back down.

The views from the top of the ridge were lovely, but my mind kept going to that row of rocks, so I headed back down the road until I

came to the place. Parking the car and only taking my note pad and a bottle of water, I crossed the road, slipped through the wire fence and was soon approaching the rocks along a narrow path through 3 foot high desert grasses. I climbed up on top of the second rock just because I love standing on something so solid.

Suddenly a hummingbird was buzzing very close to me, less than 2 feet away. As it kept pausing at arm's length, I wondered if it was thirsty. I grabbed the bottle of water out of my right back pocket, opened it, and held it out to him on a slant. But he didn't approach the bottle, and soon flew off.

I continued down this row of large rocks. Most of them were about 30 to 40 feet high, but in the middle of them there was a rather flat rock pocketed with 24 different sized holes that nature had carved over the millennia. Some were quite normal, compared with similar rocks I had seen in other locales--about a foot or two across and only a couple inches deep. But 5 of the holes were large enough to contain humans. You could put several hundred gallons in one of them. I had never seen such large surface holes.

Then it seemed the Lord was speaking to me, so I put my feet in one of the holes, sat on the edge, took out my pad and began to write.

"I brought you to this rock. Have you ever seen a rock with such capacity for gallons in its pools? Yes, it's dry now and is most of the time. But when it serves My purposes

it has large capacity to bless and refresh many"--and I thought of all the foxes, squirrels, mice, and birds that live here. "You are not a river, lake, or pond. You are like this rock. You have large capacity. Stay ready to be rained on and store up the rain. Meanwhile, let people enjoy the 5 colors of lichen that are all over these rocks. Let them enjoy their stability, and--yes--even their age. Be there for people. Be capacious, decorated, stable for them."

In order to bless what He was saying to me, I poured a few drops of water in each pocket, large and small, realizing that some people will need only a sip or to dip their finger in a cup-sized hole, but others will need full immersion in large pockets.

The Lord resumed, "Note, son, that the pockets can't fill themselves. They are totally dependent on the rains for their capacity to be activated. So you are totally dependent on Me."

I accepted that readily. In fact it was a reminder of a key point I had written in my first book, *Holy Vulnerability*, about "without Me you can do nothing" (Jn 15:5).

As I looked over the other rocks

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FreshWind Scheduled Events

DATE	PLACE	EVENT	CONTACT
June 8	Christ Church, Denver	Reach Out Mission	303-758-3674
June 10-11	Smoky Hill Vineyard, Aurora CO	Advanced Healing	303-328-3468
July 21-Aug 1	Nashotah House Seminary Nashotah WI	Congregational Revitalization	262-646-6500
Aug 7-9	Decatur IL Diocese of Springfield	Thy Kingdom Come	www.a29.com
Oct 9-12	Ch. of Holy Apostles Katy, TX	How to be a Disciple Without Being Weird	281-392-3310
Nov 7-9	Goleta CA	Healing Course I	

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in the row, I realized that this rock I was standing on was not the highest. It is shielded--eclipsed (a telling word concerning my pride)--by higher rocks on both sides. But neither of them has my rock's capacity to hold life-giving water. That made me feel better.

As I walked down to the end of the row of rocks I noticed another at the far end which had two foot-tub sized pockets. "So don't think you're the only one with capacity," the Lord said.

Wandering back to the car and enjoying the rocks as I went, I chose to take a different path. On the way in I had walked in front of the slant of rocks; on the way back I walked under the backside of them.

At the car I reached for my keys which I keep on a clip hooked to my belt. Ah! no keys!

Frantically feeling all around my belt, diving into all my pockets several times, I finally realized that I'd lost my keys. Oh Boy! I was 6 miles from the nearest human being, 70 miles from the nearest gas

station and had no cell phone signal. So if I didn't find the keys, I'd have to walk many miles to be able to phone my wife who would then have to drive about 160 miles--40 of it over dirt roads--to bring me a replacement set.

It was only 1:30 so I had plenty of daylight to look for them, so I carefully began retracing my steps, looking attentively at the shrubs and desert grass along the left side of the trail, for I wore my keys on the right hip. But I had a bit of a sinking feeling since I'd walked more than ¼ mile. They could be anywhere.

First I headed for what I now called "pocket rock" because that's where I had spent the most time. I recalled that the temperature had motivated me to take off my sweatshirt and tie it around my waist. Perhaps I had slipped the keys off my belt in the process of taking it off. "I'll bet that's where they are," I said to myself.

Meanwhile I was telling the Lord, "You know where those keys

are. You know how to guide me to them.” And I was remaining determined not to panic. But they weren’t at pocket rock. So then I went on to the rock at the end which also had pockets. But they weren’t there either.

When I got back to pocket rock and scoured the area once again without success, I realized at a deeper level what a pinch I was in. The thought occurred, “maybe I’ll just have to depend on someone else to bail me out of this.” That was a difficult thought because I’ve always been a loner, a You-and-me-can-do-anything type of guy.

“Help, Lord,” I said. And then I remembered the episode with the hummingbird. Maybe I’d loosened my keys when I’d pulled the water bottle out of my back pocket.... So, while still carefully examining the edges of the paths, I walked back to the front side of the rock I’d climbed when the bird had come around. I looked everywhere but did not find the keys.

At that point I had been looking for the keys about 90 minutes. I finally said, “Alright Lord, I’m completely dependent on you. If You don’t help me I’m in trouble.” And I made myself quiet down to see if He’d give an impression of what to do. Suddenly I remembered bending over and slipping through the wires on the fence. So I walked the 200 feet to the fence. As I remembered where I had scooted through it, I looked and there, barely visible in a mouse hole, was one key on my ring.

As I seized them, I shouted “Hallelujah, Lord! Thank You for guiding me!” And I kept up that line of exultant praise the rest of the day.

Since then--3 weeks now--that empty capacity and His ability to fill it has come to mind numerous times. The interesting thing is that I thought I had known these truths for many years. But here they are

being renewed at such deeper levels that they are virtually new realizations. Two days after the retreat, I was leading an advanced healing course that FreshWind puts on. At each turning point and ministry time, I kept looking to Him with an attitude of total dependence and expectancy. I had done this many times before. But now it was with a new dependency and therefore a new confidence that He would act. And He did! At the end of the conference, many testified about the healings they had received.

Now, about you. What are your God-given capacities? Have you found those capacities useless unless He activates or fills them? Have you savored the exquisite taste of filled radical dependence?

Bits of Feedback

“I wanted to tell you how much I’ve enjoyed your Mustard Seed title. I’m currently on my 4th or 5th reading of it. It seems like there’s new light regarding it every time I read it. ... Thanks again for the clarification regarding so many issues regarding faith.” --John R, Tennessee

“Thank you for all the hard work and wonderful ministry you poured into Christ Church. I know that my life has been changed forever through your witness to what God can do through a ‘garden-variety priest.’” --Jim H., Colorado

“I first heard Mike several years ago at Pastor Jack Hayford’s Autumn Leadership conference on healing. Mike’s style and teaching on being touchable--on everyone can play--and on the realities and honesty of this area of ministry touched my heart and impacted me deeply.” --Sue S., New Jersey

Healing Course Evaluation comments: 0 to 10 they averaged 9.4

“Thank you so much -- I was greatly touched by all of it.”

“I feel like I am leaving with a handy tool belt with many methods and understandings of healing right at my fingertips.”

Most useful: “The actual prayer activities with groups.”

“For the first time when the young man called down the Holy Spirit, He came down and I felt Him.”

Most useful: “Reassurance that nothing like practice will help our giftings in ministry.”

Most useful: “Sound teaching with practical application.” “The practicum portions are great.”

Most useful: “Getting out of my comfort zone and praying with people I didn’t know.”

“I absolutely loved it! It was amazing!! I love listening to Mike teach and the fact that he sat down with me during a practicum time just made me extremely happy.”

“I pray God will open many more doors for you to teach this to the emerging generation of leaders. May you be a father to many emerging leaders and may you father this generations’ revival.”

“Most useful: “Inspired, sound, Biblical teaching--Mike is a great communicator--practicums help put the rubber to the road.”

Most useful: “Dynamic Information makes it easy to learn and apply these tools & techniques + The straightforward approach helps the information sink in more effectively + Group exercises.”

Leader’s Corner: The Necessity for Courage

Because Christianity is a walk of faith, that means--

you don’t get to be sure

you have to take action on what feels like insufficient guidance

you might be wrong about the proposed course of action

you can think of numerous ways the thing could go wrong
you can estimate the negative reactions of many people to the idea you're contemplating
your emotions are clamoring for you to be cautious and that means that you'll chicken out on the thing God may be telling you to do *if* you let those things predominate.

Every key action I took as a local pastor was accompanied by those thoughts and feelings. In order to be of any use to God, I finally had to reconcile with discomfort. The discomfort of--

not being sure
risking much

being able to see all the negatives and almost none of the positives.

God is so clever when He guides us that we have enough to know what we're supposed to do but not enough to be certain about it. What's more, He conceals the benefits of our obedience until we take action. Then the results are visible and appreciated, but not until we have committed ourselves to action. Something about our minds can produce bucketfuls of reasons not to do the thing God may be suggesting. So risk is unavoidable. It is just part of the territory of being a leader, whether we like it or not. John Wimber truly spoke when he said, "Faith is spelled r-i-s-k." You just have to bite the bullet and take the risk.

One thing that enables courage is self-acceptance. If you have come to the place where you accept yourself, you can afford to take the risk because if

A Driving Challenge

After a long plane ride, I was crawling home from LAX on a car-logged freeway and wishing it would clear up so I could drive faster. Then came the thought, "bless them." So I began blessing all the drivers in front of me all the way up to the end of that freeway. Within minutes, the traffic was flowing at regular freeway speed. I was blown away.

So since then, whenever traffic gets too slow, I just say, "I bless every driver in front of me in the name of Jesus Christ." I say that a few times. Then, within minutes, the traffic seems to open up. How? I haven't a clue, but it does. Then, if it starts to slow down again, I just bless all the drivers again. And it usually opens up again.

My challenge to you is to try it.

Now, in addition, I ask the Lord's protection on the nearby freeway each day, asking Him to protect "every vehicle, driver, passenger, and load." I think that helps too.

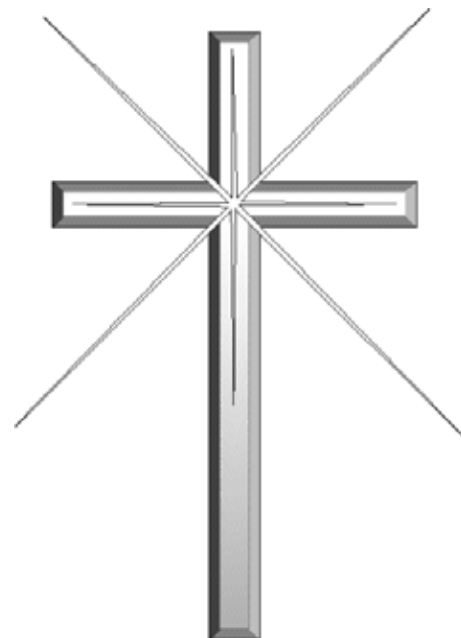
Let me know if you try this and get interesting results.

it turns out you are wrong, your worth isn't compromised by the mistake. You might see my Holy Vulnerability, Ch. 6, "Vulnerability to Self" to lay out the process by which to come to self-acceptance.

I'm not advocating wild-eyed impulsiveness. Once you've tried to see what God may be leading you to do, you can weigh out the possible benefits of success and debits of failure. But, as I've said, you'll do a far better job of assessing the debits than the benefits. You can do the 8-word prayer ("O God O God O God O God!"), and I recommend it. But in the final analysis you have to just do it. Only then can God reward you for faith and obedience.

If you refuse to act, you'll never enjoy or even see the benefits your obedience would have produced.

Remember: faith is neither rational nor emotional. That is, you don't have to see the reasons for it or feel like doing it. Faith is willful. Period. But when you take the willful step He requires, then you will see the reasons and feel the joys. It is indeed a walk of faith.



Responses

FreshWind often donates its time and energy to foreign and domestic churches and organizations that cannot afford to pay normal honoraria and travel expenses. Many of these are missions-focused, as is FreshWind.

About 75% of FreshWind's budget comes from people like you who believe in and feel led to support what we're doing to extend the kingdom.

Here's the bottom line:

+ renewed, disciplined, and anointed people produce ministry and mission

+ FreshWind produces renewed, disciplined and anointed followers

We ask you to help us "produce" FreshWind.

We highly value all forms of aid: prayer, finances, and ministry team participation. Please look over this response form and see if the Lord would speak to you about your support of this ministry.

PRAYER:

If you would like to receive Mike's monthly Intercessor's letter and pray regularly for this ministry, please log onto www.freshwindministries.org and click on the "Contact" heading. In the box for questions or comments, please state you'd like to receive the letter.

FINANCIAL SUPPORT

+ I/we pledge: \$_____ per month for the support of FreshWind Ministries. I understand that FreshWind is a 501(c) (3) religious non-profit corporation and that I will receive regular IRS-approved statements for tax deduction purposes.

+ I do not feel that the Lord is leading me to pledge regularly at this time, but I want to send a one-time gift of \$_____.

Please make contribution checks to FreshWind Ministries. Thank you.

Or:

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