

From The Pastor's Study

Great Discoveries

I discovered something a few years ago and it was the greatest discovery I have ever made. We each see ourselves in a particular light, whether it is in our professional life, the hobbies we take up, or our personal life, then there is how others see us. In addition how we see ourselves changes at different points in our lives. Allow me to explain because I am certain I have confused you.

The first part of my Naval career began like every other sailor, I was just one of forty young men in a company. In the eyes of the Chiefs and First Class who were the Company Commanders, the men responsible for us as a group and to insure we received the training we were required to complete. To them we were sub-human, a bunch of kids they had to babysit. From there I went through training, became a professional and then a leader. All along the way I had different jobs, different responsibilities, and I was seen differently by my peers and supervisors, eventually how I was seen by those who worked for me.

And that is where my discovery came in. When I accepted Christ's invitation to salvation I was seen by adults as another kid to tolerate, by my peers as something less than an equal. But from that point I went from a know nothing to someone who studies the Bible and anything else I could get my hands on. At some point I began teaching senior high students, then leading Bible studies on the ship, joined the Presbyterian Church, became an Elder, taught and worked with youth for twenty years, then became a worship leader. That led me to become a Commissioned Lay Pastor and soon accepted an assignment at Greenbrier Presbyterian Church to assist the pastor and then to take over as pastor. And that is part of what I discovered, I am a pastor!

Yes, I am a pastor, more specifically, I am THE Pastor of Greenbrier Presbyterian Church. It was one of the youth who told me that little bit of trivia when he called me Pastor Jim. Had he called me Pastor Hamilton it would have been because he was told to call me that but he called me Pastor Jim. He claimed me as his personal pastor, he didn't lay a formal title on me, he didn't see me as some stuffed shirt but as someone who was on his level to some degree, I have a young friend 60 years my junior. I'm not Mister Hamilton or Pastor Hamilton, I am pastor Jim, that is one of the highest honors ever to come my way.

Most Presbyterian Pastors teach from the pulpit, in fact I would say most of us do, but what is it we preach? You see, before I climbed in the pulpit I spent a lot of time sitting in the sanctuary listening to the pastor in the pulpit and I discovered a few things, some of which I had no interest in:

1. I find history interesting, but I seek inspiration, I seek guidance, I want to know why the Bible is important.
2. Knowing the meaning and history of particular words may be great for some, but for me personally, I need help in maintaining and growing in my relationship with my creator.
3. Who begot who? I am certain there are people who find this very interesting and I am certain there are many Bible Studies that focus on that point. But I wanted to know who Jesus is and about His love for me.
4. A lot of people feel that pastors should wear robes and that is fine, but I find them to be barriers. It makes me feel like there is some display of superiority, not my pastor, but my preacher.

Now these are my feelings, what I like and dislike and that guides me in my method of developing my sermons. I am a story teller and that is how I deliver my message, but my purpose is two fold; to aid in advancing the relationship between the congregation and Jesus Christ and to help make the scriptures relevant to their lives and to make the Bible a place to go in times of need and joy.

So, I discovered I am a pastor even to children, I am a story teller and I make a poor Presbyterian.