

**June 17, 2011**

### **Out of my Mouth Into my Heart—How God uses My Sermons to Help Me to Change**

It never ceases to amaze me how God will take a sermon or teaching that he has given me and use it as a reflection of what he wants me to see in me. I recently told a young man that he had a spirit of procrastination that would impede his ability to fully realize his purpose in the kingdom of God. He carefully listened and slowly admitted that procrastination just might be an enemy to his progress. Then we went on to talk about a project he had agreed to help me with and he reminded me that he was still waiting for information from me. With a shy grin he asked, “Pastor, you aren’t procrastinating are you?” We laughed and he went on his way but the Holy Spirit had plenty to say to me later that night.

As leaders, we don’t always like to admit our shortcomings and certainly don’t always admit that there may be times we struggle to practice what we preach but God has wired me to be a transparent pastor. I remember the first time I learned the word “procrastination”. I was in the fourth grade and it was one of my vocabulary words. To procrastinate—to put off until another day, to defer action, or to delay. When I learned that word all those years ago, I quickly realized that word described a part of my personality. I always said even as a child that I performed best under pressure so deadlines were not important until the day they arrived and I sweated fretted and sometimes froze but always managed to get the job done. Yet despite that, God still chose me to be a leader.

Today I know that deferring action is not an acceptable kingdom mindset, because procrastination leads to slothfulness and slothfulness leads to disobedience. I was scolding the

young man about procrastination because he is called to be a leader and the influence he will have on the lives of others is too important to be side-stepped by habitual ill-focused activities. The Holy Spirit pricked me about this because procrastination can kill purpose and there are too many lives depending on the assignment he has given me. That little girl in the fourth grade who identified with procrastination can't cling to the woman of God called to lead the wounded and hurting to transformed lives. Nor can the eager young man who is called to be an evangelist be satisfied with a last minute, just in time attitude because a soul may not get witnessed to because the last minute becomes the "too late" minute.

The Word of God tells us in 2 Corinthians 5:17 *if anyone is in Christ, the old has gone. The new has come.* Our connection to Jesus, our opening our hearts and letting him take up residence, is our passport to change. Procrastination has no place in a heart where Jesus lives. It is time to put the little girl who was proud to learn such a big word to death because that big word puts huge roadblocks in my purpose for God's kingdom. Today when I write a to do list I make sure it is realistic and contains only what God is asking me to do. Then I look it over at the end of the day to see what I have done. If there are still things left undone, I have to repent and ask God to help me to redirect my focus and retain discipline to do what I need to do. I'm in the process of becoming more and more like Christ, being transformed in his likeness, *from glory to glory.* Me, a pastor of God's people and a leader after his heart. Thank you Lord for using the words you put in my own mouth to help me to change,

Pastor Debra Garner