



Breaking the Harder Rocks

Redemptive ministry in difficult situations

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In beginning our session, I would like you to read each of the following scenarios, and be prepared to answers the questions that follow in as honest a response possible.

Scenario #1

You're in the middle of giving the altar call when you hear a women's voice cry out, "Usher, Usher get this drunk out of here." Upon looking up, you see a man known for being so drunk that he often had to be helped home or could be found passed out on the sidewalk staggering towards the front.

- a. What is your personal reaction to the situation? How does it make you feel?

- b. How would you respond to this situation?

- c. How would this impact the congregation you currently pastor if this happened in your setting?

The scenario above represents part of Eddie Ogan's father's testimony.

Scenario #2

A recently saved, middle aged woman, named Mary* walks into your office, and starts with the classic question, "Do you have a minute, I need to talk with you about something." Upon giving your affirmative answer, she sits down and says, "I have a problem. I'm in love with someone and I need some help figuring out how it will work out." "ok," you respond wondering where this is going. "Well, I'm in love with Sue*", Mary states.

Thinking to quickly bring this to a swift resolution you reply, "uhm..that's going to be a problem on two fronts from a biblical stand point. One, your both women and two she's married." To which, Mary replies, "it's not as simple as that, you see, I wasn't born as a female. My real name's Matthew, and I was one of the first complete transgender surgery recipients in Seattle twenty-two years ago. I love Sue, and I can be a better husband to her than Steve*."

- a. What is your personal reaction to the situation? How does it make you feel?



- b. How would you respond to this situation?

- c. How would this impact the congregation you currently pastor if this happened in your setting?

Scenario #3

In going through some files in your desk you open an envelope addressed “pastor” and begin to read the revelation of a broken marriage and years of counseling due to abuse written by a woman who has only recently begun to attend your services again. You realize that this was a letter written to a former pastor, and want to gently let the writer know that you are aware of some of her past.

In that meeting, Barb* begins to relate the following: ‘What you read in the letter was the tip of the iceberg. I’ve been raised in church my whole life and have hid this secret from everyone. My grandfather was a pedophile. I was only nine months old when the abuse began. At the age of eight, my grandfather took me to the root cellar and raped me. After being raped, I had feelings of being a dirty, shameful little girl and was filled with guilt and fear. I believed lies, “God will never love me because I am dirty and shameful.” Though my Bible said God loves the world, in the deepest recesses of my heart, I believed God looked at me with disgust because I was contaminated by the sexual abuse. I vowed never to trust anyone again. Forms of abuse continued throughout my childhood. I couldn’t stop the abuse, but no one could make me eat! Enter anorexia! Anorexia gave me a sense of control over something in my life and thus began a long battle with eating disorders.

As an eighteen year old I was raped by a boyfriend who beat me often only reinforcing my core belief that I was a shameful, dirty, powerless victim not even God could love. Fear was a constant companion and panic attacks kept me close to home. To compensate I learned to put on a phony mask, hiding my brokenness behind a neatly built façade. I ran from emotions and buried memories deep inside. Plagued with nightmares, sleep was hard to come by. My attempts at suicide failed. I spent years seeing a counselor who helped me work on issues, read books and journal, but healing still alluded me. I learned how to cope, but still struggled with depressions, flashbacks, fear and feeling I was damaged goods.

Pastor, my marriage is a wreck. I’m a wreck. What do I do? How can God help me?”

- a. What is your personal reaction to the situation? How does it make you feel?

- b. How would you respond to this situation?



c. How would this impact the congregation you currently pastor if this happened in your setting?

Both scenarios, two and three, represent real situations, and are shared with permission. The names have been changed to protect their privacy.

Thoughts on Redemptive ministry

Redemptive ministry opportunities happen in _____ as well as urban settings.

Redemptive ministry begins with _____, but the restoration of broken people has to be intentional _____.

Redemptive ministry seeks to see God's _____ design established, not simply hoping for as good as can be given the circumstances, but truly believing for the life God always intended.

Redemptive ministry is truly based on the belief that God is _____ to His Word, and able to _____.

Redemptive ministry is difficult and doesn't have _____. It requires absolute dependence on the _____.

Truly redeemed and transformed people will be your _____.