

Hopeful Leadership

The two American shoe salesmen!

I want to talk about three types of approach to the task of gospel ministry leadership

The first approach is optimism.

The second approach is pessimism.

And we'll get to the third in due course

Craig Hamilton's book 'Wisdom in Leadership'. See also the references below.¹

Let me make the following three statements.

1. It's better to be an optimist than a pessimist.
2. And yet, the pessimists are invariably right.
3. But optimists are more likely to be disappointed.

The third approach is hopetimism

It's built on two theological foundations

First, the sovereignty of God.

Secondly, the resurrection of Jesus.

¹ Chapter 24, The Way You View a Problem Often is the Problem; Chapter 22, Develop Your Forgettory; Chapter 23 Stop Listening to Yourself; Chapter 77 Bad News is Good News.

As Craig Hamilton says, 'He's infinitely big! He weighs mountains on a scale like they're cherry tomatoes. The nations are like a drop in a bucket and like dust on the scales. You know whom God consults when he needs to be enlightened? No one! That's who. No one has ever taught God anything. Whatever you want to teach him he already knows. God knows every star by name and it's like he calls each of them one by one. They only continue to exist because God wants each one of them to keep existing'.

At the end of Isaiah 40, the prophet joins this all up and says,

³⁰ Even youths grow tired and weary, and young men stumble and fall; ³¹ but those who hope in the LORD will renew their strength. They will soar on wings like eagles; they will run and not grow weary, they will walk and not be faint.

Optimists are irrational. Hopetimists are rational. The future is sure and certain. And so, we have every reason to be confident that the future will be alright and that we will overcome.

- Hopetimism doesn't say that everything will always be good or that everything you attempt will always succeed.
- Hopetimism doesn't say that you're never going to face any problems.
- Hopetimism allows us to confront the most brutal facts of our current circumstances and to have a sure and certain hope for the future based on evidence.
- Hopetimism is in touch with reality, like pessimism often is, but hopetimism avoids the irrationality of optimism.

Developing Hopetimism

We need theological truths to become our mindset.

So, pray to God that he would grow this mindset within you.

Actively pursue it by mulling over the two bedrocks on which it is built.

As Hamilton concludes, 'Your God is bigger than any circumstance and he cannot be stopped. And your King is alive forever and will not be stopped. And so you engage with life not with pessimism, not with optimism, but with hopetimism'.