

# LEADERSHIP FORMATION

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## LOVE IS TO EVANGELIZE

By Jim Murphy

### TEACHING OUTLINE

1. *The plague is a tragedy*
2. *The vision is true*
3. *You are the courier*
4. *The vision fulfilled*

Imagine that the earth was in the grips of a terrible plague. This plague was in every nation, every city and village and in nearly every home. It was prolific, yet subtle. Thousands of people were succumbing to its deadly grasp.

See yourself fervently praying day after day for God to deliver the world from this deadly pestilence. Feel the heartache as you weep for loved ones lost, for co-workers stricken. Hear the sobbing cries as you beseech God for mercy.

Imagine that one night you were at home by yourself praying. As you fervently pray late into the night, suddenly your room was filled with a bright light. Looking up, into the light, you see an angel standing before you. The angel is radiant in light, brilliant in splendor. The angel is holding a small golden vial. It is absolutely beautiful. As you stare at the angel, he holds the golden vial out to you and says "God has heard your prayers for your loved ones. I have been sent to bring you this healing oil. Whoever drinks the oil from this golden vial shall be restored from their infirmity." As you reach out with trembling hand and take hold of the vial, the angel vanishes. You are alone in your room again, holding the golden vial of healing oil.

What would you do next?

It seems that there are three things you must believe before you can share the golden vial with others:

1. You must believe that it is a tragedy that people are dying of the plague.
2. You must believe that the vision of God's messenger was true.
3. You must believe that you have been selected to be a courier of the golden vial.

### The plague is a tragedy

Unfortunately, there is a terrible plague spreading over the earth. It is more vicious than Aids, more deadly than cancer, more contagious than foot and mouth disease. As terrible as all of these blights are, the plague of which I speak is far worse. For the earthly blights have no power over the soul. They may ravage our bodies, but they stop with physical death. This

other plague attacks the soul and intensifies at death, leading its victims into eternal torment. While still on earth, this plague's victims suffer miserably before they die. They have no peace, no joy, no real love. The plague dulls their spiritual senses so that most who have the plague do not even realize it. They simply go about their lives blind to the reality of the condition of their souls. Only too late do they discover their folly.

This ignorance is supported by a massive cover up by a world system that fears the unknown and so tries to give the world the illusion that everything is just fine. It offers more money, more sex, more prestige, more status as a drug to dull the minds of the people so that they will not have to face the horror of their situation. But no distractions can in themselves save anyone from the plague.

The plague we speak of is of course, the spiritual situation of so many souls who live their lives away from God; People who have chosen to live contrary to God's commands, people who in their pride and arrogance mock God and His ways, people who are too self-important, too busy to turn to God.

There is a consequence to separating yourself from God. The good and the bad have different treatment after death. There really is a heaven... and a hell.

The plague is real... and has real consequences.

### The vision is true

God has heard the moans and the cries of humanity. He has taken pity on us and sent us a "messenger from heaven"...

His own son, Jesus the Christ. Jesus Himself has testified that He did not come on His own but had been sent by the Father. Jesus testified that He is "the Way, the Truth, and the Life". He has come on a mission, He has come for a purpose...to save humanity from the ravages of the Plague of sin and death.

Not only is Jesus the "heavenly messenger" He Himself is that golden vial, that healing balm. Whoever partakes of Jesus will be cured of their spiritual ills and will have eternal life. Oh! the healing balm that pours from the pierced side of the Christ! Would that men and women would drink deeply from this healing well! They

would find the forgiveness of sins, the quieting peace for their souls, the love for their hearts!

People will say "If God is so good, why has he allowed this plague of sin and death to overtake us?" The plague of sin and death was not God's idea; it was the free choice of humanity in collusion with the evil one. Yet even in these circumstances God's mercy shows through in that He offers an antidote for the ills we have brought upon ourselves. The antidote is Jesus. He and He alone is the healing oil that can rescue us and restore us from the plague.

### You are the courier

In the vision described earlier....why did the angel appear to you? Certainly there must be someone who is more powerful,



someone smarter, richer, stronger, more articulate than yourself. Why would God impart such an important mission to you?

St. Paul addresses this issue in his first letter to the Corinthians (1 Cor 1:26ff): "Consider your own calling, brethren. Not many of you were wise by human standards, not many were powerful, not many were of noble birth. Rather, God chose the foolish of the world to shame the wise, and chose the weak of the world to shame the strong, and chose the lowly and despised of the world, those who count for nothing, to reduce to nothing those who are something, so that no human being might boast before God. It is due to Him that you are in Christ Jesus, who became for us wisdom from God, as well as righteousness, sanctification, and redemption, so that, as it is written, Whoever boasts, should boast in The Lord."

St. Paul reminds us that God seems to intentionally pick the weak, the less than perfect, the little ones to do His work in order that they may realize it is the grace of God and not their own strength by which they do these things.

Why has God chosen you to be a "courier of the healing balm" because He knows that you will have to rely on Him in order to accomplish your mission. Also, God sees your heart, and notes the sorrow you carry for the lost and the strayed. It is much like His own heart, and so He can entrust His heart to yours... and His work to your hands. God places a higher priority on humility, docility, and obedience than He does on talent, wisdom or strength. Even if you are not perfect in humility, docility, and obedience, God will take those attributes in their fledgling states and bring them to maturity.

If you don't feel qualified, worthy, or capable to spread The Lord's message... you are the perfect candidate! Abandon yourself into His hands, and get to work!

Once, when asked by a sarcastic reporter how, with so many people still suffering, could she consider her work successful, Mother Theresa replied, "God has not asked me to be successful, He only asks me to be faithful." May we focus on being faithful to God rather than successful for Him.

## The vision fulfilled

A terrible plague is sweeping over the earth today. It is a



plague of indifference to God. It has in its grip many, many souls. It is a tragedy of cataclysmic proportions because the long term effects are deadly to the soul.

This plague is grievous to us because we see the human carnage, the great loss. We cry out to The Lord for the sake of the world...and God answers our prayers.

Jesus literally is the only hope for the human race. St. Peter announces to all of humanity that "There is no salvation through anyone else, nor is there any other name under heaven given to the human race by which we are to be saved." (Acts 4:12)

We have come to believe that Jesus is the healer of our souls, the restorer of our lives. Our own rescue is evidence enough that God has sent Jesus to restore humanity.

For reasons, known only to God, you and I have been chosen to take this message of life and healing to the cities and villages, to the schools and shops, to the stranger and our own loved ones. You and I weak as we are have been entrusted with a "healing balm" that can save lives.

Yet we hesitate.

Why?

If you saw people suffering from a physical illness and you had in your possession a medicine that would heal

them...wouldn't you rush to their aid?

Since we are aware of the suffering around us, we are morally bound to try to reach as many people as possible. Even if only some will respond, those are souls that will find healing, refreshment, and new life in Christ. Whatever we have to endure, whatever we have to put up with, it is worth it all even if only one more soul finds life in God!

We often act as if by sharing our faith we are imposing upon people. We act ashamed, as if we were putting some kind of a burden on them by talking of God's love. With how little regard we hold the message of life! If this gospel is life, if this is hope, and healing... why can we not share it openly, happily, freely?

We may not be the "ideal" couriers, but it was God's choice, not ours. Let us accept our duty and faithfully serve God as best we can. Let our mission be one of hope, joy, peace and love. Let us willingly take the "healing oil" to anyone, anywhere, any time, under any circumstances. God decrees it! Love commands it! We must do it!

## Questions for discussion

1. **Do you believe firmly that people all over the earth are suffering a plague which is spiritual and can bring to eternal death?**
2. **Do you think you need talent and wisdom to be God's messenger or do you rather think it is faithfulness that is really needed?**
3. **How do you act when you share your faith with somebody else who does not know Jesus' love?**

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