

MESSAGE

Anonymity

"To be a good critic a man must have all the essential elements of a good author; and yet, while we have but few good authors, even the solitary places and the wastes teem with critics."

We touched on the issue of anonymity in a previous episode. Too often criticisms, comments, requests, differences of opinion come to us, the leader, via anonymous channels. Someone will come to you with the concern of someone else, but not be willing to share their identity.

A famous preacher once remarked about some criticism that he had received by saying. "I received a letter today that said a single word 'Fool'. It is strange that a man would only sign his name and leave no message."

Dealing with this in a Christ like manner is a real must if we are seeking to lead through criticism. We need to develop a strategy to deal with these instances when they arise, such as saying, "Could I suggest you go back to the critic and ask them to speak to me directly about their issue, otherwise you will appreciate that I cannot take on board the

Leslie Stephen has this to say about damaging criticism: "When naturalists wish to preserve a skeleton, they bury the animal in an ant-hill and dig him up after many days with all the perishable matter fairly eaten away. That is the process that great men have to undergo. A vast multitude of insignificant, unknown and unconscious critics destroy what has no genuine power of resistance, and leave the remainder for posterity."

respond to the 'what'. A comment coming from a person who is negative about everything and everyone would not hold as much weight as coming from someone who has demonstrated loyalty and who has my best interests at heart.

criticism (or suggestion)." If we respond like this and repeat this response often enough, we change the expectation within the culture of what behaviour is tolerated and what is not.

I firmly believe that *who* said it is as important as *what* is said, and if we do not know the 'who' we cannot begin to understand, frame or

Matthew 9:10-13 paints an accurate picture that sometimes can mirror behaviour that occurs in our human networks. The Pharisees wanted to find fault with Jesus so they spoke with the disciples behind Jesus' back, not only criticising Jesus' actions but his entire ministerial philosophy. Jesus overhears the interaction and then models for us how we are to interact in those situations. He caused the comments that were given, to be owned by those distributing them. This needs to be a key principle as we seek to work with people who may act as the Pharisees did in this story.