

“Et tu Brute?”

The Ides of March lands on a Sunday this year. Many know that this will mark the 2,064th anniversary of the assassination of Caesar. The recounting of the Caesar’s final words made famous by Shakespeare (although historically questionable) are, “Et tu Brute?” (You too Brutus?). This has come to represent the ultimate betrayal.

As I was discussing my last newsletter article, in which I mention the loneliness in ministry caused by betrayal, a colleague brought to my attention that there is a lot of a “church hurt” for the congregation member. Often times this hurt is the result of a person in leadership. Honestly, there are easily half a dozen different examples I could throw out, but your mind has already identified a few.

With that in mind I want to address this issue directly from a leader’s perspective, but I will not be able to do so exhaustively. As a pastor, I know that I’ve let people down. Some people I’ve let down, because there was no way I could ever be what they *assumed* I was or *desired* me to be or perhaps *expected* me to be. For many, I simply failed. I never failed in the big hairy audacious gross sort of ways...but in the permissible, “let you off the hook” sort of ways.



I’ve also been the recipient of this type of hurt. Both as a parishioner and as a staff member. What does it lead to...a fear to trust. Whether one cares to acknowledge it or not our “pews” are filled with people who are afraid to trust leadership, because they have been wounded to varying degrees. Some of these people are “transfer” hurt meaning they are coming from another congregation where they were hurt by a leader there and others have our finger prints on the wound.

How do we move forward? I think it starts by moving towards people. I would strongly encourage you to go out of your way to know people’s stories who are changing churches, because of hurt. It is only a win to know their story. Again, this isn’t the only piece, but it’s the first piece.

For those that are the result of our doing. Go to them in humility. Own all that is up to you with a contrite spirit. Embrace the awkwardness, allow there to be silence, and offer to pray. You may be shocked at the healing the Lord is able to do so quickly.

Again, this isn’t intended to be exhaustive, but to be a reminder when you look to your people. Often times we want each and every one of them to follow us to the ends of the earth. But they may not be ready to journey with you until they experience healing.

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