

Address to the Oklahoma State Senate

Living with Imperfect People in an Imperfect World

Proverbs 14:4

It has been my pleasure to be here this week. I know you hear prayers each day as you begin session, but I do want you to know that my prayers are sincere and I truly do ask that the Lord would bless you with unusual knowledge, insight and direction.

I was told I had 5 minutes to share a word with you. Now, understand, at the church I pastor, First Baptist Mustang, I preach 4 times on Sunday morning. I am used to preaching about 40 minutes a message, so you're going to have to listen quickly.

This is one of my favorite Bible verses. I heard this quoted one time and I have never forgotten it.

- Proverbs 14:4 *"Where no oxen are, the manger is clean, but much revenue comes by the strength of the ox"*

Here is the image of the proverb. You've got a man who is tired of oxen. He is frustrated by all the mess, all the smell, all the work to keep them happy, clean, and fed. So he decides life would be easier without the oxen. So he sells them and cleans the manger. What does he have? He has a clean, nice manger without the smell and without the mess. Everything is perfect. Until...it's time to plow the field. Now what? There are no oxen. He cannot do his work. He cannot make any money. He cannot eat. He learns a valuable lesson...Yes, oxen are messy, but the alternative is worse!

It is much like trying to clean house with 2 little kids. It is true that it's easier to clean without kids and easier to keep it clean without kids, but it sure is more fun with them around.

Examples...*Marriage*--You want to get married? Get ready because you are 2 imperfect people and you are going to butt heads over how to fold towels, and what the definition of "clean" is. You bet it's great, but not without it's headaches. *Friends*...It is so fun to have friends you can spend time with and go on vacations with, but you know what? Friends can hurt you. They can let you down. You can say, "Fine, I'm tired of having friends hurt me, so I'm not going to have any friends, I'll just be a loner." Well, no one will let you down, but you'll be a miserable person. You better learn to deal with imperfect people in this imperfect

world. *Politics*...It can be a tough life. There are lots of meetings, lots of struggle and lots of difficult decisions. I'm know you have to deal with some upset people and there is no shortage of people to tell you how to do your job. So, you can have a clean manger. You can stay out of politics and get in a profession with no responsibility and you can have a nice, clean manger. But, you know what? Much revenue comes from the oxen. Much good comes from being willing to deal with the mess.

So, you have to be able to bend and be able to roll with it a little. (But, you know that better than I do). I want to encourage you to remember two short, simple things:

1) The mess is worth the progress

If you want the revenue, you've got to put up with the ox (frustrations, opposition, etc.)

2) Never forget your first calling is to service, not to honor

You ran for office because you wanted to make a difference in the lives of people. Sometimes politics makes you wealthy, famous, and sometimes, even revered. However, those things cannot be your motivation day after day. Your motivating force must be a desire to serve others, not be honored. "*True greatness, true leadership, is found in giving yourself to others, not in coaxing or inducing others to serve you.*" J. Oswald Sanders

So Remember...

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