

Scripture Reading

Nehemiah 13:4 – 9

John 2:13 – 17



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SUSTAINING RENEWAL

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**Sustained renewal must be
led by zealous integrity.**

John 2:17 "Zeal for your house will consume me."

1. Leadership is inherently corrupting

**Corruption might surprise you,
but it shouldn't scandalize you.**

Linda Stanley:

"As for accountability, I observed pastors that have put all kinds of safeguards, guardrails, accountability partners, external accountability boards, etc., in place only to hit the wall, burnout, fall from grace, and in a few situations, commit suicide. It wasn't that they didn't really try to be accountable. The pressures and demands became too much and they did not allow themselves to admit that and seek help..



..Some began to "believe their own press" and abused their power and influence. Call it a dysfunction of our society, man's sin nature, pride, etc. It's the human condition and it will keep happening. All that us "whiz-bang church consulting guys and gals" can do is attempt to help pastors, their staff and boards try to manage the behemoth that is the large church and hopefully minimize the damage along the way."



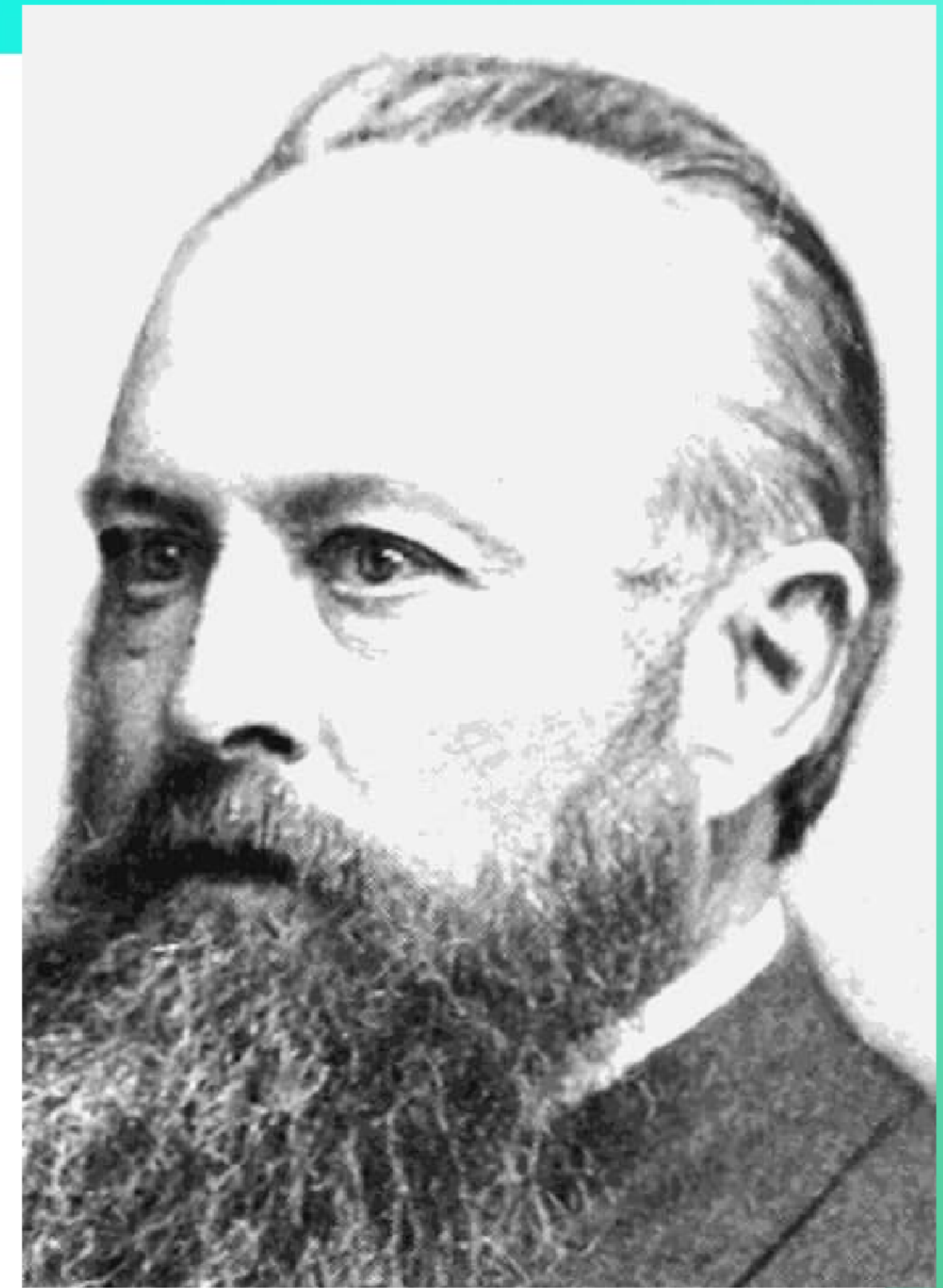
Why is leadership so corrupting?

- 1. Authority is intoxicating (esp. for want of power)**
- 2. Responsibility is exhausting (esp. for seeking ease)**
- 3. Exposure is intimidating (esp. for want of affirmation)**
- 4. Complexity is bewildering (esp. for want of control)**

This is less than 10% of the corrupting dynamics.

Lord Acton to Bishop Creighton

"I cannot accept your canon that we are to judge Pope and King unlike other men, with a favorable presumption that they did no wrong. If there is any presumption it is the other way, against the holders of power, increasing as the power increases. Historic responsibility has to make up for the want of legal responsibility. Power tends to corrupt...



...and absolute power corrupts absolutely. This is true, even when they exercise influence and not authority, still more when you add on the tendency, or the certainty, of corruption by authority. There is no worse heresy than 'that the office sanctifies the holder of it'...Here are the greatest names coupled with the greatest crimes; you would spare those criminals, for some mysterious reason. I would hang them higher than Haman..



...for reasons of quite obvious justice, still more, still higher for the sake of historical [understanding]."



Considerations:

1. Consider whether your thoughts on leadership are naïve.



Considerations:

2. Consider whether you'd be quick to take power and authority... foolishly.



Considerations:

3. Consider carefully how you look at those in leadership: with compassion and suspicion.

John 2:23 – 25 "...he knew what was in a man..."



Considerations:

4. Consider how thankful we ought to be to God as incorruptible in leadership.



2. Sustained renewal requires integrity in leadership

**Every place of trust is always reforming,
or it is corrupting.**

One way or another

Nehemiah

Zealous Integrity

Eliashib

Swift Corruption

**Without good shepherds, we stray.
With bad shepherds, we stray worse and faster.**

Considerations:

I. Do you support the reasonably good leaders God has provided?

Corruption is always present in all men—the issue is dose and the immune system.



Considerations:

2. Are you willing to be complicit in corruption with silence?

Corruption requires complicity
either in gain or by fear.



Considerations:

3. Are you a "might man" (or woman)?

**No one rules alone. Allies with integrity
lessen perverse incentives.**



Considerations:

**4. Do you give leaders
"conditional devotion"?**

**"I'm with you unless you won't let me by
leading somewhere I can't go."**



3. God will provide a zealous shepherd

**Pure spiritual zeal is the only spiritual energy that
reforms faster than sin corrupts.**

St. John Crysostom, *On the Priesthood*

"I have not said that it is a terrible thing to desire the work, but only the authority and the power. And this desire I think one ought to expel from the soul with all possible earnestness, not permitting it at the outset to be possessed by such a feeling, so that one may be able to do everything with freedom. For he who does not desire to be exhibited in possession of this authority, does not fear to be deposed from it..

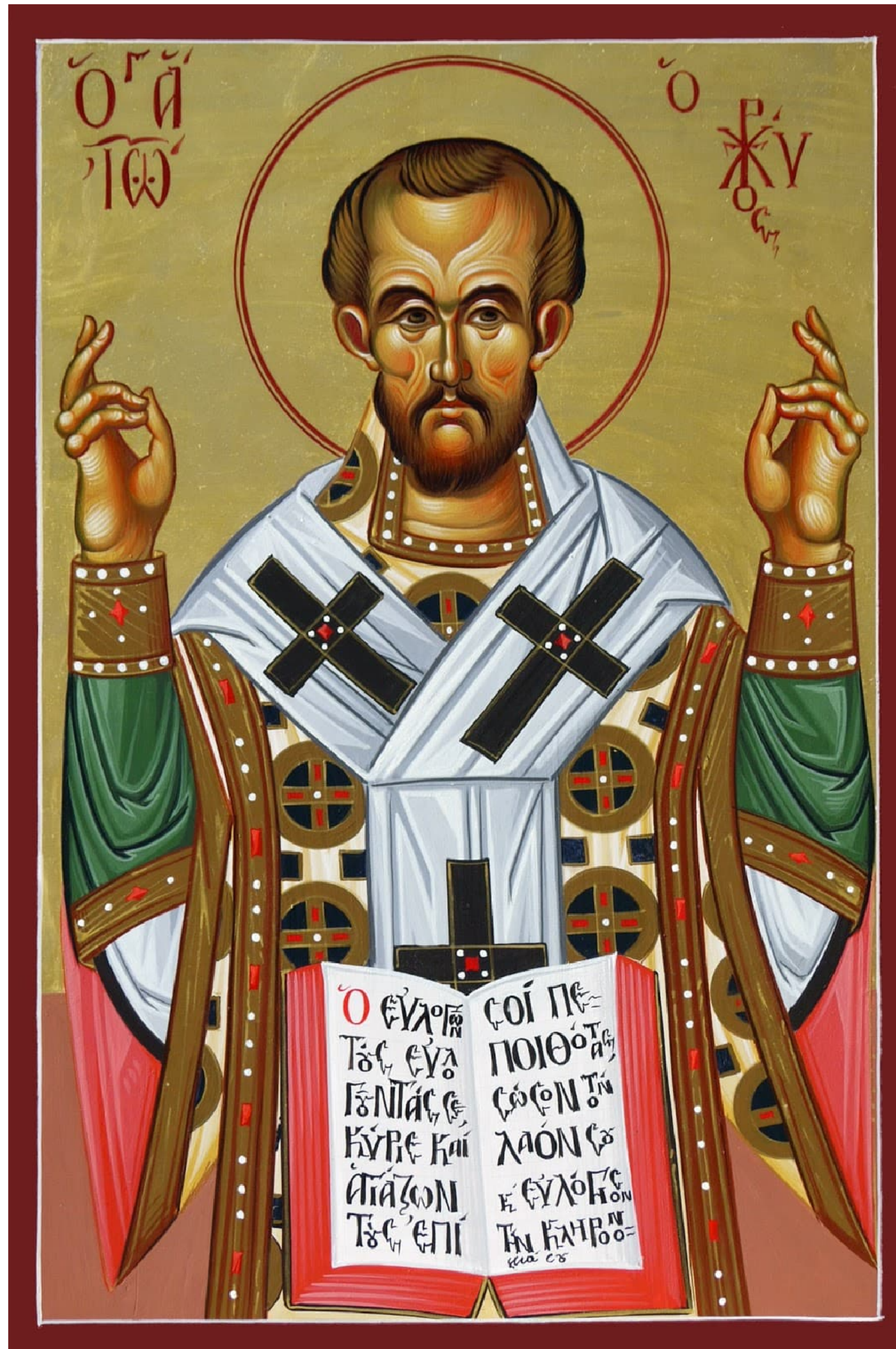


...and not fearing this will be able to do everything with the freedom which becomes Christian men: where as they who fear and tremble lest they should be deposed undergo a bitter servitude, filled with all kinds of evils, and are often compelled to offend against both God and man. Now, as in warfare we see those soldiers who are noble spirited fighting willingly and falling bravely..



...so they who have attained to this stewardship should be contented to be consecrated to the dignity or removed from it, as becomes Christian men, knowing that the deposition of this kind brings its reward no less than the discharge of the office. For when anyone suffers anything of this kind, in order to avoid submitting to something which is unbecoming or unworthy of this dignity...





...he procures punishment for those who wrongfully depose him, and a greater reward for himself."



John 2:13 – 22

When it was almost time for the Jewish Passover, Jesus went up to Jerusalem. In the temple courts he found men selling cattle, sheep and doves, and others sitting at tables exchanging money. So he made a whip out of cords, and drove all from the temple area, both sheep and cattle; he scattered the coins of the money changers and overturned their tables...



John 2:13 – 22

To those who sold doves he said, "Get these out of here! How dare you turn my Father's house into a market!" His disciples remembered that it is written:
"Zeal for your house will consume me."



Considerations:

I. Are you trying to have integrity of life without real integrity of heart?



Considerations:

2. Is something else more important to you than integrity before God?

How is this not an idol?



Considerations:

3. Is your fear of anything strong enough to shut you up in the face of corruption?

How is this not an idol?



Considerations:

4. Is there anything you are more afraid to lose than your integrity before God?

How is this not an idol?





**"...zeal for your house
consumes me."**

**Nehemiah
Psalm 69:9
John 2:17
You**



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