**Leaders and Those They Lead**

**Introduction:** The most obvious characteristic of leadership, is that to be a leader you must first have those who will follow you. If no one is following you then you are just taking a walk.

 Now obviously, just because someone has followers does not mean that they are a good leader in any sense of the word. Throughout history people have followed horrific leaders resulting in often very tragic endings.

 Thousands of cults, all around the world, are being led by very charismatic leaders who are completely deceived and deceiving their followers.

 **Matthew 15:13-14 (NKJV)** But He answered and said, “Every plant which My heavenly Father has not planted will be uprooted. **14**Let them alone. They are blind leaders of the blind. And if the blind leads the blind, both will fall into a ditch.”

**I. Jesus Calls Us to Follow Him**

 **A. A disciple is someone who follows their teacher, intent on becoming like them.**

 **1. Jesus called people to follow Him.**

 **Matthew 4:18-20 (NKJV)** And Jesus, walking by the Sea of Galilee, saw two brothers, Simon called Peter, and Andrew his brother, casting a net into the sea; for they were fishermen. **19**Then He said to them, **“Follow Me, and I will make you** fishers of men.” **20**They immediately left *their* nets and followed Him.

 **2. Jesus set the bar for His followers at a very high level. Luke 14:25-33 (NLT)** A large crowd was following Jesus. He turned around and said to them, **26**“If you want to be my disciple, you must, by comparison, hate everyone else—your father and mother, wife and children, brothers and sisters—**yes, even your own life. Otherwise, you cannot be my disciple. 27And if you do not carry your own cross and follow me, you cannot be my disciple. …33So you cannot become my disciple without giving up everything you own.**

 **3. Jesus’s message was very clear. Count the cost of following me, and don’t start if you are not prepared to finish.**

 **B. The Rich Young Ruler**

 **Mark 10:17-30 (NKJV)** Now as He was going out on the road, one came running, knelt before Him, and asked Him, “Good Teacher, what shall I do that I may inherit eternal life?” **18**So Jesus said to him, “Why do you call Me good? No one *is* good but One, *that is,* God. **19**You know the commandments: ‘Do not commit adultery,’ ‘Do not murder,’ ‘Do not steal,’ ‘Do not bear false witness,’ ‘Do not defraud,’ ‘Honor your father and your mother.’ ” **20**And he answered and said to Him, “Teacher, all these things I have kept from my youth.” **21**Then Jesus, looking at him, loved him, and said to him, “One thing you lack: Go your way, sell whatever you have and give to the poor, and you will have treasure in heaven; and come, take up the cross, and follow Me.” **22But he was sad at this word, and went away sorrowful, for he had great possessions.**

 **23**Then Jesus looked around and said to His disciples, “How hard it is for those who have riches to enter the kingdom of God!” **24And the disciples were astonished at His words. But Jesus answered again and said to them, “Children, how hard it is for those who trust in riches to enter the kingdom of God! 25**It is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle than for a rich man to enter the kingdom of God.” **26**And they were greatly astonished, saying among themselves, “Who then can be saved?” **27**But Jesus looked at them and said, “With men *it is* impossible, but not with God; for with God all things are possible.” **28Then Peter began to say to Him, “See, we have left all and followed You.”** **29**So Jesus answered and said, “Assuredly, I say to you, there is no one who has left house or brothers or sisters or father or mother or wife or children or lands, for My sake and the gospel’s, **30who shall not receive a hundredfold now in this time—houses and brothers and sisters and mothers and children and lands, with persecutions—and in the age to come, eternal life.** **31**But many *who are* first will be last, and the last first.”

 **1.** Jesus set the bar high because He demanded faithful committed disciples. He also knew that without such a high standard of commitment His disciples would never survive the storms they were about to face.

 **C. Paul the Apostle**

 **1 Corinthians 4:15-17 (NKJV)** For though you might have ten thousand instructors in Christ, yet *you do* not *have* many fathers; for in Christ Jesus I have begotten you through the gospel. **16**Therefore I urge you, imitate me. **17**For this reason I have sent Timothy to you, who is my beloved and faithful son in the Lord, who will remind you of my ways in Christ, as I teach everywhere in every church.

**II. The Local Church**

 **A. God calls people to local churches to add their gifts and to that body, as well as to receive the gifts of others within that local community of believers.**

 **1.** God has placed a vision within my heart to impact northern Wisconsin and the nations with the gospel of Jesus Christ.

 **2.** The degree that a local body is able to carry forth the vision God has given them depends upon their faithfulness to that calling and the price they are willing to pay to bring it to pass.

*“People will refuse to pay the price that the vision requires when they begin to complain about the price of the vision.”* ***John Maxwell***

 **3. The children of Israel in the wilderness serves as an example of this. Numbers 14:2 (NKJV)** The carcasses of you who have **complained** against Me shall fall in this wilderness, all of you who were numbered, according to your entire number, from twenty years old and above.

**II. A Time of Great Spiritual Battle**

 **A. We are living in an hour of intensified spiritual warfare because the end of the ages is drawing near, and the enemy knows his time is short.**

 **1. Many of God’s people are becoming weary in the battle, and this is by design of the enemy.**

 **Hebrews 12:1-4 (NKJV)** … **3For consider Him who endured such hostility from sinners against Himself, lest you become weary and discouraged in your souls.4**You have not yet resisted to bloodshed, striving against sin.

 **Hebrews 10:35-36 (NKJV)** Therefore do not cast away your confidence, which has great reward. **36**For you have need of endurance, so that after you have done the will of God, you may receive the promise:

 **Joshua 1:1-9 (Amp)** …Just as I was [present] with Moses, so will I be with you; I will not fail you or abandon you. **6Be strong *and* confident and courageous, for you will give this people as an inheritance the land which I swore to their fathers (ancestors) to give them.** **7Only be strong and very courageous;** … **Be strong and courageous! Do not be terrified or dismayed (intimidated), for the Lord your God is with you wherever you go.”**

 **2. Three times God exhorts Joshua to take courage and not be afraid.**

 **B. I believe God is calling forth leaders in this hour with the same mandate. This is not the time for cowardly leadership.**

 **1. The hour of riding fences is over we must stand strong and be courageous.**

 **Jeremiah 12:4-6 (NKJV)** “If you have run with the footmen, and they have wearied you, Then how can you contend with horses? And *if* in the land of peace, *In which* you trusted, *they wearied you,* Then how will you do in the floodplain of the Jordan?

**III. Leaders and Those They Lead**

 **A. John Maxwell defines leadership as influence.**

 **1.** The lowest level of leadership is positional leadership. This is the person who is placed in a position of leadership as a supervisor or the boss.

 **2.** The true leader of any organization is not necessarily the person with the title of leader. The true leader of any group or organization is whoever holds the most influence over its’ members.

 **3.** You can observe nearly any group for about a half hour, and you will soon recognize who the leaders are. It’s those individuals who hold the most influence.

 **4.** John Maxwell often refers to a farmer named Claude in the first church he pastored. He realized that Claude had the most influence over the church board. So he realized that he had to influence Claude, and the rest would follow.

 **5.** This is called influencing the influencers. A good leader doesn’t care who gets the credit for success, he/she cares about accomplishing the vision.

*“When develop followers we add. When we develop leaders, we multiply.”* ***John Maxwell***

 **6.** Therefore Jesus developed 12 leaders not just 12 followers. They began as followers with the intention of becoming His leaders. *“Follow me and I will make you.”*

 **7.** No organization or group can reach its’ potential without good leadership.

**III. God Never Calls Masses He Calls Individuals**

 **A. God imparts vision to individuals and in turn those people impart that vision to those He calls to follow them.**

 **1.** God imparted His vision to leaders like Abraham and Moses, who were faithful men of humility that He could trust with the call and revelation they were given.

 **B. You will also notice that there were many times that the people rejected their leadership.**

 **1.** Moses constantly dealt with the nation of Israel that murmured and complained about his leadership

 **2.** Jeremiah was called the weeping prophet because the nation rejected his message and persecuted him for delivering it.

 **3.** Jesus wept over Jerusalem because they rejected God’s prophets and their Messiah. **Matthew 23:37 (NKJV)** “O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, the one who kills the prophets and stones those who are sent to her! How often I wanted to gather your children together, as a hen gathers her chicks under *her* wings, but you were not willing!

###  B. All does not depend on leadership.

###  *Reverend Tony Cook said, “Success depends not only on leadership but on those who follow as well.”*

### 1. Was God a poor leader because Adam reject God’s authority and eat from the tree in the garden?

###  2. Did the people of Israel complain and murmur against Moses because he was a poor leader or because they were poor followers?

###  3. What about Jesus? He chose Judas, and yet in the end Judas betrayed Him. Was Jesus a poor leader or was Judas a poor follower?

###  4. Was Jesus a poor leader because Peter denied Him? Or was Peter a poor follower?

###  C. The Apostle Paul

 **Philippians 2:19-23 (NKJV)** But I trust in the Lord Jesus to send Timothy to you shortly, that I also may be encouraged when I know your state. **20**For I have no one like-minded, who will sincerely care for your state. **21**For all seek their own, not the things which are of Christ Jesus. **22**But you know his proven character, that as a son with *his* father he served with me in the gospel. **23**Therefore I hope to send him at once, as soon as I see how it goes with me. **24**But I trust in the Lord that I myself shall also come shortly.

###  2 Timothy 1: (NKJV) This you know, that all those in Asia have turned away from me…

 **1.** Here this faithful servant of God toward the end of his life was abandoned by nearly all those he had faithfully served and ministered to.

 **D. I think we can clearly see that while leadership is very important, followers of those leaders are equally important.**