

## Leading Like Jesus

Today we want to talk about leading like Jesus. You may think this message is just for church leaders, but it is not. It is for every Jesus follower. Regardless of where you find yourself and the title or position you hold, you are leading others. You have influence in some lives. We all impact others. It is nearly impossible to not impact others, either positively or negatively. Today's message applies to you, whether you are a church leader, business leader, family leader, group leader, or all-around influential person.

There are so many views of Jesus' leadership style and methods. Entire books have been written about them. Books like *Master Plan of Evangelism* and *Master pan of Discipleship* by Robert E. Coleman are great examples and we highly recommend both of these. There will be a link to each of these if you would like to purchase them in the comments below when we are done with the webcast.

There are more Christian leadership seminars than any one person could ever go to in a single lifetime. These are led by great men and women of God and bring a great perspective to leadership, but there are so many. How do you choose which ones to go to and which ones to bypass?

Of course, there are the heroes of the faith. Some of these we read about in the Bible and some are personal to you; people like King David, Noah, Isaiah and Jeremiah, the Apostles, and so on. There is your spiritual mentor or church leader or pastor. There are other personal heroes of the faith that you look up to. For me, one of my greatest heroes of the faith and inspiration for me is my wife, Kelly.

All these sources of leadership styles and methods are great. We can learn both what to do and what not to do by all of these; even the heroes detailed in the Bible. None of them were perfect and they all made mistakes both personally and in their capacity as a leader, but nevertheless, we can learn from them.

However, today we want to look at Jesus and his leadership style and methods. As we talk about Jesus' leadership, we are going to look at his style and method of leadership. We'll also point out the gray areas that allow us to show our own uniqueness, engineered by God, when it comes to leadership.

When we study Jesus' methods and style of leadership, we study the Master. We must understand and accept his perfection as the Son of God and a member of the Trinity. To fully understand, we must understand why he came to earth and have the guidance of the Holy Spirit. Simply being a student of scripture will not do. You must have a personal relationship with Jesus and have accepted him as your personal Lord and Savior to truly appreciate and understand his leadership. You also must fully accept him and have faith in his methods, even when they do not make sense to us.

Let's read Isaiah 55:8-9

(8) "For my thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways," declares the LORD. (9) "As the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways and my thoughts than your thoughts."

This is the first critical thing we need to acknowledge and fully accept as we look at Jesus' leadership model. God's ways are so much higher than ours. He fully understands where we speculate. We must



have faith and trust that what God reveals to us through the life and ministry of Jesus is the best course of action. This does not mean there is no room for our own creativity and wisdom, but we must acknowledge the source of that creativity and wisdom and give credit to God in all we say and do.

As we look at Jesus' leadership model, we are going to look at how he personally developed followers, disciples, and leaders. We are going to look at how he interacted with other leaders, and we are going to look at how he inspired others.

The first observation to make about Jesus is his humility. He was born the Son of God. He had the keys to the Kingdom of Heaven. When you read about Satan tempting Jesus in the wilderness after his water baptism, Satan tries to exploit Jesus' sonship to cause him to falter and bow to Satan. But Jesus never did. In all knowledge of the scripture and humility, he put Satan in his place.

Let's read Matthew 8:19-20

(19) Then a teacher of the law came to him and said, "Teacher, I will follow you wherever you go." (20) Jesus replied, "Foxes have dens and birds have nests, but the Son of Man has no place to lay his head."

Jesus was responding to this teacher of the law, a Jewish Rabbi, who wanted to follow Jesus. He obviously had been inspired by Jesus' teachings. But Jesus let him know very clearly, there was no personal glory or gain in following Jesus, or leading in Jesus' name.

Friends, we have all seen the people who have used the message of Jesus Christ for personal gain or glory. We have seen the men and women who proclaim the good news of Jesus with a Bible in one hand and an offering plate in the other. Jesus' humility was paramount in his ministry and in his leadership. He taught this to his disciples also.

When we read about Jesus sending out the 72 disciples to prepare the villages ahead for his ministry, he tells them not to take a purse, bag, or sandals. He is instructing them to rely on God and be humble. When he sent out the 12 he gave a little more detail to the instructions. Let's read Matthew 10:7-10

(7) As you go, proclaim this message: 'The kingdom of heaven has come near.' (8) Heal the sick, raise the dead, cleanse those who have leprosy, drive out demons. Freely you have received; freely give. (9) "Do not get any gold or silver or copper to take with you in your belts— (10) no bag for the journey or extra shirt or sandals or a staff, for the worker is worth his keep.

This is what Jesus instructed them, again go with humility. This passage also leads us to the second thing when we look at leading like Jesus. It is more about doing and being an example than telling people what to do.

When Jesus sent out the 12 and the 70, he told them to proclaim the Gospel and tell them the Kingdom of Heaven is coming near, but he also told them to do something. He told them to heal the sick, raise the dead, cleanse the lepers, drive out demons, and so on. He told them to do something practical. Meet the needs of the people God leads you to. It is not just about speaking. We must be hearers and doers of the word. Jesus healed people wherever he went. He met their needs by feeding them and casting out demons. He made their lives better.



As we look at the leadership of Jesus and try to learn from it we learn he was humble in his dealings with people and he met their needs to make their lives better, without expectation of a return. There was no expectation of payment or a gift. He didn't even expect people to give him a place to sleep or rest. He gave as the Father asked him to give. This is how Jesus interacted with every-day people. This is how we are to act and live with every-day people.

Jesus' dealings with other leaders were a little more pointed. He often spoke very clearly and pointed out the selfishness in other leaders. Let's face it, many who desire to be a leader or desire to have followers, generally do it for their own glory and edification, not for the betterment of humanity or to bring people closer to God.

When Jesus would be questioned by religious leaders, he rarely took the bait they left for him in the questions they asked. He often turned it right back around on them. There is no better example of this than the woman caught in the act of adultery. You can read the story in John chapter 8, but we will summarize it. Jesus was teaching in the temple courts when some teachers of the law and Pharisees brought in a woman to him saying she had been caught in the act of adultery and asked what should be done with her as the law dictated stoning. Jesus looked around and said, let him who is without sin cast the first stone. They all started backing away one-by-one until Jesus was left alone with the woman, at which time he forgave her the sin and told her to go and sin no more.

There is much going on in this passage but keeping with our topic today, we see Jesus teaching and being given a situation to answer about that seemed to be clear in the law. Jesus taught that grace and forgiveness were always appropriate. He also shows us here that leaders cannot be so obsessed with the rules and regulations or the law that we lose sight of the person. This woman was a child of God, also. She was precious to God and lost. She needed to be found just as much as any of us. We all want another chance when we make a mistake. We do not deserve it, but we want it, and God's grace grants it.

As leaders and influencers in this world, we must not be so rigidly inline with the rules, regulations, and laws that we cannot see the benefit of showing grace and granting forgiveness to someone who desperately needs it.

The final method or style of Jesus' leadership we want to point out today is how he interacted with his disciples. He ministered to thousands regularly. However, he poured himself into 12. We see time and again throughout the gospels how Jesus would step away with his disciples and talk about the ministry they just witnessed. He would share his parables with them and explain them in detail. This was not something he did with everyone, just the 12. They were with him all the time. They were his personal mission. Friends, you are a leader to some. You are an influencer. Pour yourself into those few people around you that can replicate your ministry and take it even further than you can.

Remember it is not about you, it is about reconciling people to God through Christ the Son with the wisdom and power of the Holy Spirit. Chose a few people that you can mentor, teach, guide, and release into their fullness in Christ. The entire church today has been built on the 12 that Jesus poured his life and ministry into. He didn't stop there. He served thousands and thousands and met their needs, but he poured himself into 12 with all grace and humility, but with the assurance of the knowledge of God.



Today he gives us the Holy Spirit to guide us, equip us, and give us the power to lead like Jesus Led. Today, whether you are a small group leader, pastor, business owner, parent, or influencer of people, lead as Jesus led. Lead with humility, granting grace and forgiveness liberally, meeting people's needs as you are given the ability and resources, and pour yourself into a few that can continue on God's legacy from Jesus, to the 12, to others, to you, to those you pour into, on to others.

