

Grace in Leadership

Jesus teaches us many great leadership lessons and they are not just for leaders. Today we are talking about the role of grace in leadership, and it is not just for church leaders.

Introduction

We have published a few other teachings focused on an aspect of leadership that Jesus taught us. These are great leadership lessons for us to use whether we are a leader in the Church, in business, in our community, or in our family. Today we are going to look at another aspect of leadership and how Jesus teaches it to us. Our topic today is showing grace in leadership and Jesus showed this over and over in his ministry.

Grace is made up of a few things and all are necessary to fully show grace in any situation. These things are all results of the fruit of the Spirit, of which we all have access to as followers of Jesus. Let us read what the fruit of the Spirit is in Galatians 5:22-23

Galatians 5:22-23

(22) But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, forbearance, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, (23) gentleness and self-control. Against such things there is no law.

Many of the elements of the fruit of the Spirit are displayed when we show grace to someone. This is good because we all need grace in every area of our life.

The Need for Grace

This should not come as a shock to anyone; we are not perfect. Not one of us is. We all make mistakes and have lapses in good judgment from time to time. Our mouths get us in trouble and our actions can lead us down some roads that cause some hurt in other people.

The Apostle Paul tells us in Romans 3:23

Romans 3:23

(23) for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God

We all need grace and forgiveness. Our need for grace and forgiveness does not stop once we invite Jesus into our hearts and ask him to be our Lord and Savior. We are still living in this fallen world and make mistakes. Not one of us is perfect.

None of Us Are Perfect

We often lift leaders up and expect them to do everything the right way at the right time every time. That is unrealistic. This can cause leaders to start to think they are perfect or have all the answers. It is a dangerous place for a leader to be. We must be careful not to lift anyone too high or expect more than a person is capable of doing. We want our leaders to be better than us, that is why we follow them.

Leaders, the people who follow you often expect more from you than they see in themselves and need you to be an example. Showing grace in the face of imperfection is one of the best ways to do that. God



did that very thing back when Adam and Eve disobeyed his simple instructions of not eating from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil.

God Has Shown Us Grace Since the Beginning

When we read the story of the fall of mankind in Genesis chapter 3 we see a big mistake made by Adam and Eve followed by God's reaction. Adam and Eve were deceived by the serpent and ate fruit from one of the two trees God told them not to eat from. This caused them to see the world in a way that God never intended. They now knew good and evil. They now knew what sin was and were bound by it.

When God came to walk and talk with them they were hiding because they were ashamed. God already knew what had happened, but he asked them anyway. Adam spoke up and did what many people do; he tried to shift the blame to someone else. He tried to blame Eve. We know the real instigator was the serpent, but it was still Adam and Eve's individual and collective responsibility to obey God's instructions.

God showed love and grace along with patience as he disciplined them all. He told them what was going to happen and why. His outcome was to see them do better. God wanted them to make better choices and decisions. He then showed compassion and made clothes for them from animal skins to cover their nakedness which they noticed for the first time after they sinned.

God did not abandon Adam and Eve. He stayed with them, continued to provide for them, and set them on a path toward restoration that would take thousands of years to come to fruition.

Peter Denied Christ

At Easter a month ago, we read the Easter story. Part of the Easter story is Jesus' arrest and trial before Pontius Pilate. During that trial, we read about Peter who followed along behind Jesus after he was arrested. Peter was always drawn to Jesus. He had more zeal than he knew what to do with and it got him in trouble sometimes. Peter was also human and without thought, tried to escape being known as one of Jesus' followers even though he could not separate himself from Jesus.

Let's read a few verses and then discuss them.

Luke 22:31-34

(31) "Simon, Simon, Satan has asked to sift all of you as wheat. (32) But I have prayed for you, Simon, that your faith may not fail. And when you have turned back, strengthen your brothers." (33) But he replied, "Lord, I am ready to go with you to prison and to death." (34) Jesus answered, "I tell you, Peter, before the rooster crows today, you will deny three times that you know me."

Luke 22:54-62

(54) Then seizing him, they led him away and took him into the house of the high priest. Peter followed at a distance. (55) And when some there had kindled a fire in the middle of the courtyard and had sat down together, Peter sat down with them. (56) A servant girl saw him seated there in the firelight. She looked closely at him and said, "This man was with him." (57) But he denied it. "Woman, I don't know him," he said. (58) A little later someone else saw him and said, "You also are one of them." "Man, I am not!" Peter replied. (59) About



an hour later another asserted, "Certainly this fellow was with him, for he is a Galilean." (60) Peter replied, "Man, I don't know what you're talking about!" Just as he was speaking, the rooster crowed. (61) The Lord turned and looked straight at Peter. Then Peter remembered the word the Lord had spoken to him: **"Before the rooster crows today, you will disown me three times."** (62) And he went outside and wept bitterly.

Was Jesus disappointed? We do not know. What we do know is Jesus was not surprised. He knew what was going to happen and he was going to be able to teach us something because of it. Was Peter disappointed in himself? I think he was. Peter ran off; he knew he had just gone against what he said he would do for Jesus. Even though Jesus knew what was going to happen and that Peter could not do what he said he was going to, Jesus did not lash out at him.

Peter's Restoration

The leadership lesson comes later in the gospel of John after Jesus' resurrection. Peter is ashamed but is with the other disciples eating breakfast with the resurrected Jesus. Let's read John 21:15-19

John 21:15-19

(15) When they had finished eating, Jesus said to Simon Peter, **"Simon son of John, do you love me more than these?"** "Yes, Lord," he said, "you know that I love you." Jesus said, **"Feed my lambs."** (16) Again Jesus said, **"Simon son of John, do you love me?"** He answered, "Yes, Lord, you know that I love you." Jesus said, **"Take care of my sheep."** (17) The third time he said to him, **"Simon son of John, do you love me?"** Peter was hurt because Jesus asked him the third time, **"Do you love me?"** He said, "Lord, you know all things; you know that I love you." Jesus said, **"Feed my sheep. (18) Very truly I tell you, when you were younger you dressed yourself and went where you wanted; but when you are old you will stretch out your hands, and someone else will dress you and lead you where you do not want to go."** (19) Jesus said this to indicate the kind of death by which Peter would glorify God. Then he said to him, **"Follow me!"**

Jesus restored Peter by forgiving him and teaches all of us how a leader leads through mistakes. Peter completely denied Jesus and yet Jesus forgave him. Jesus made sure Peter was back on track with the mission and then told him to "Follow me!".

Jesus showed patience, compassion, forgiveness, self-control, and grace in how he dealt with Peter and he does the same thing with each one of us every day.

Conclusion

We must have patience, gentleness, and self-control to properly show grace to someone. We must communicate that the outcome we desire is for everyone involved in a situation to be better at what we are doing. The only way to get there is by showing grace to one another.

We must show grace in all we say and do as leaders in the Church, leaders in our business and community, and leaders in our home.

