

Jesus Explained About True Leadership

In our last topic, we saw that we want to help our physical and spiritual children learn to understand that we are not to seek positions of power and authority over others. Instead, we come to an understanding of the fact that true godly leadership is learning to serve Christ and through His strength to serve others. That will be the focus of this topic.

Jesus went on to explain a key lesson to His disciples about godly spiritual leadership. Matthew 20:25-28 says, “But Jesus called them to *Himself* and said, ‘You know that the rulers of the Gentiles lord it over them, and those who are great exercise authority over them. Yet it shall not be so among you; but whoever desires to become great among you, let him be your servant. And whoever desires to be first among you, let him be your slave— just as the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give His life a ransom for many.’” In these verses, we see that Jesus explained that there is a great difference between godly leadership and worldly leadership.

Jesus said that there are two key characteristics of worldly leadership. First, worldly leaders want to lord it over others. The word translated “lord it over” means to *bring under one’s power*. Peter used this same word when he wrote to the leaders of the church, in 1 Peter 5:2-3, “Shepherd the flock of God which is among you, serving as overseers, not by compulsion but willingly, not for dishonest gain but eagerly; nor as being lords over those entrusted to you, but being examples to the flock.” Here, we see Peter wrote that true shepherds of God shepherd and lead the flock by example, instead of using power and authority to drive the flock of God. In these verses, in Matthew, Jesus made it clear that driving others is a characteristic of worldly leadership.

Second, worldly leaders exercise authority over others. The word translated “exercise authority over” means to *exercise absolute authority and control over others*. Diotrephes is an example of one who tried to exercise this kind of leadership in the church. 3 John 1:9-10 says, “I wrote to the church, but Diotrephes, who loves to have the preeminence among them, does not receive us. Therefore, if I come, I will call to mind his deeds which he does, prating against us with malicious words. And not content with that, he himself does not receive the brethren, and forbids those who wish to, putting *them* out of the church.” Jesus made it clear that godly leaders do not do these two things.

Instead, Jesus said that there are two characteristics of godly leadership that are very different from the world. First, anyone who desires to become great as a spiritual leader is to be a servant. The word translated “great” means to *be great in size or number or to be respected*. The word translated “servant” means *one who carries out the commands of another or the servant of a king*. Here, we see that as godly spiritual leaders we are to see ourselves as servants of the King of kings and we are to carry out His commands.

Second, anyone who desires to become first as a spiritual leader is to be as a slave. The word translated “first” means *to be first in influence*. Then, Jesus explained how godly leaders gain that influence. The word translated “slave” means *one who is devoted to another to the disregard of his own interests*. Here, it speaks about one who gives himself up to do the will of Christ by extending and advancing the cause of Christ among men. Romans 6:16-17 says, “Do you not know that to whom you present yourselves slaves to obey, you are that one’s slaves whom you obey, whether of sin *leading* to death, or of obedience *leading* to righteousness? But God be thanked that *though* you were slaves of sin, yet you obeyed from the heart that form of doctrine to which you were delivered.” Before we became Christians, we were the slave of sin and were following sin even though sin was destroying us. Ephesians 6:6 says, “Not with eyeservice, as men-pleasers, but as bondservants of Christ, doing the will of God from the heart.” Together, these verses show us that we are to be slaves of Christ doing the will of God from the heart. That is true spiritual leadership.

Christ is our example of such spiritual leadership. He did not come to be served. Instead, Christ came to serve and to give His life a ransom for many. Galatians 5:13 says, “For you, brethren, have been called to liberty; only do not *use* liberty as an opportunity for the flesh, but through love serve one another.” We see that true spiritual leadership is giving our lives to serve one another as the bondslaves of Jesus Christ. That is the exact opposite of worldly leadership.

Jesus soon had the opportunity to show that style of leadership as He, the disciples and many other people began walking out of the city of Jericho on the way to Jerusalem for the Passover. Matthew 20:29-31 says, “Now as they went out of Jericho, a great multitude followed Him. And behold, two blind men sitting by the road, when they heard that Jesus was passing by, cried out, saying, ‘Have mercy on us, O Lord, Son of David!’ Then the multitude warned them that they should be quiet; but they cried out all the more, saying, ‘Have mercy on us, O Lord, Son of David!’” Here were men that needed mercy shown to them. The crowd did not show mercy. They told the men to keep quiet. Here, we see the worldly attitude. The world does not have a lot of concern for others.

The only way these two men could survive was by sitting beside the road and begging those who passed by to give them something. Some people would have a little compassion and give them some food or a small coin to help them buy some food. These men had heard other people talk about Jesus as they passed by the place where these two men were sitting along the road. They had probably heard about some of the miracles that Jesus had done. As a result, they wanted to get the attention of Jesus as He was passing by them. That was why they began to cry out, “Have mercy on us, O Lord, Son of David!” They were not going to stop calling when the crowd told them to be quiet because they knew that Jesus was their only hope for help. Instead, that attitude just caused them to cry even louder.

We see how Jesus responded to their cries. Matthew 20:32-34 says, “So Jesus stood still and called them, and said, ‘What do you want Me to do for you?’ They said to Him, ‘Lord, that our eyes may be opened.’ So Jesus had compassion and touched their eyes. And immediately their eyes received sight, and they followed Him.” Jesus always had time to minister to people who were in need. As

a result, Jesus just stood still and called to the two men. Jesus just asked them one simple question. He said, “What do you want Me to do for you?” Since Jesus is God, He knew what they wanted before Jesus even stopped. However, it was important for Jesus to give these men an opportunity to share what they believed about Jesus.

The two men spoke to Jesus and said, “Lord, that our eyes may be opened.” Their very first word is the key to understanding their answer. The word translated “Lord” means *the one who has control of a person*. It was used to speak of kings and emperors. However, the most common use in the New Testament is to speak of the fact that Jesus is God, the Messiah. Jesus would tell the disciples just a few days later, at the Last Supper, in John 13:13-15, “‘You call Me Teacher and Lord, and you say well, for *so* I am. If I then, *your* Lord and Teacher, have washed your feet, you also ought to wash one another’s feet. For I have given you an example, that you should do as I have done to you.’” These two men recognized Jesus as Lord as they made their request.

Here, we see that Jesus gave the two men the opportunity to publicly confess before all of the people who were walking along the road that Jesus is the Lord. This was the reason that Jesus asked these men what they wanted Him to do. He wanted to give them the opportunity to publicly recognize Him as the Lord. They would have another time, just a few hours later, when they could join many other people who said the same thing as Jesus rode into Jerusalem on a donkey because we read that these men followed Jesus. Jericho was the place near the Jordan River where the road started to climb to the city of Jerusalem. We will see in the next chapter that when Jesus and the crowd reached the small town of Bethphage, very close to the city of Jerusalem, that Jesus sent two of His disciples into that town to get the colt on which Jesus would ride into that city a few hours later. As a result, these two men were a part of that crowd.

We also see why Jesus opened the eyes of these two men. We read that Jesus had compassion and touched their eyes. The word translated “had compassion” means *to be moved from one’s inner man to show love and pity to those in need*. This word is used twelve times in the New Testament, all of which are in Matthew, Mark or Luke. In most of the uses, it is Jesus that is moved with compassion for the people. Matthew 9:36 says, “But when He saw the multitudes, He was moved with compassion for them, because they were weary and scattered, like sheep having no shepherd.” Several times, the word is used to show the compassion of Jesus when the people had no food.

Jesus showed His compassion by touching the eyes of the two men and healing them. As soon as Jesus touched them, the men immediately received their sight. They followed Him and, as mentioned earlier, had the privilege of being a part of the crowd that escorted Jesus into Jerusalem as He presented Himself to the people as the King. That action fulfilled the prophecy of Zechariah 9:9, which says, “‘Rejoice greatly, O daughter of Zion! Shout, O daughter of Jerusalem! Behold, your King is coming to you; He *is* just and having salvation, Lowly and riding on a donkey, A colt, the foal of a donkey.’” Here, we see that Jesus greatly rewarded their faith by giving them that great privilege. In the same way, we want to help our physical and spiritual children understand that Jesus will also reward their faith as they recognize Him as Lord. May the Lord richly bless you as you show your children how to recognize Jesus as Lord.

