

Leading by Example: *Becoming Greater Leaders*

In my first official pastoral position out of college I learned more about what not to do as a pastor than what to do. Truth is we can learn a lot from the mistakes of others. My lead pastor was rude, unkempt, his children were undisciplined, he was always yelling at his wife and not long after we moved on to our next pastoral appointment he confessed that he was making romantic advances to a young girl in our youth group. He was a terrible example of commitment to Christ and as a pastoral leader. Still, I was determined to learn as much as I could if even from his mistakes. Fortunately, I had a great pastoral example in my next lead pastor. He was humble, loved God and people, had a great relationship with his wife and children and deeply respected by the church family.

In Matthew 23 we are introduced to the fifth competency of discipleship under Rabbi Jesus – *servant leadership*. Jesus contrasted his own servant leadership style to the pompous leadership example of the Pharisees and teachers of the law – the official spiritual leaders of his day. No one is perfect except Jesus, so no matter what leader we have been paired with we can still learn from them - if only what not to do.

Journey Together:

- 1). Apart from Jesus – who has been your most inspiring leader?
- 2). What are some important things you have learned from others?
- 3). What leadership trait of Jesus do you value most and why?

Road Map: Read Matthew 23

- 4). Jesus opens with several comments about the Pharisees and the Teachers of the law. How would you describe their leadership style? What are some of the most disturbing things that Jesus mentions here?
- 5). Jesus pronounces seven woes on the Pharisees and the Teachers of the law because of their bad example. What is significant about this pronouncement? What is a woe and what does it mean?

6). What word best defines each woe and how are they the opposite of servant leadership:

- Woe # One:
- Woe # Two:
- Woe # Three:
- Woe # Four:
- Woe # Five:
- Woe # Six:
- Woe # Seven:
- Woe # Eight

7). What do we learn about Jesus leadership principles from this chapter? What does Jesus value most? What disturbs him most?

8). Which of these areas of servant leadership is most convicting for you and why? What leadership principle do you most want to develop and why?

Discipleship challenge: Jesus is challenging us to be great leaders. Practice the fifth competency of discipleship under Rabbi Jesus this week by working on your weakest area of servant leadership.

10). How can this group pray for you right now?

My Journey:

- 1). How has God been using *Journey* in your life this week to do *Great Things* for Him?
- 2). Which area of servant leadership have you been working on this week and what has been the greatest challenge for you?
- 3). How can this group pray for you today?

Backstory:

Jesus knew that his time on earth would be short so he had to think of his successors right from the beginning. Godly leaders were Jesus' strategic plan. He developed people not programs. On several occasions, Jesus emphasized the kind of leadership he was after. Discipleship with Jesus is about learning how to lead from as a servant.

Jesus emphasized leadership principles of grace, humility, kindness, integrity, faithfulness and sacrifice. He never asked his followers to do anything that he was not willing to do or hadn't already done. Some of the important passages that reveal Jesus' servant style of leadership are:

"The student is not above the teacher, nor a servant above his master. It is enough for students to be like their teachers, and servants like their masters."

Matthew 10:24

"Jesus called them together and said, 'You know that the rulers of the Gentiles lord it over them, and their high officials exercise authority over them. Not so with you. Instead, whoever wants to become great among you must be your servant, and whoever wants to be first must be your slave— just as the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many.'"

Matthew 20:25-28

"At that time the disciples came to Jesus and asked, 'Who, then, is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven?' He called a little child to him, and placed the child among them. And he said: 'Truly I tell you, unless you change and become like little children, you will never enter the kingdom of heaven.'"

Matthew 18:1-3

The religious establishment sat in "Moses seat." The scribes and Pharisees were the given religious leaders of the day, but they had

forfeited their right to lead when they failed to practice what they taught. Jesus was officially removing these leaders from power and handing the leadership of his kingdom over to the twelve. This is what he meant by "whatever is bound on earth will be bound in heaven." (Matthew 18:18). Jesus was recognizing the disciples with the authority to bind and loose as the priests and religious authority had done in the previous dispensation. Jesus followers would be God's new servant leaders on earth.

The eight woes of Jesus here represent the end of the religious authority of the scribes and the Pharisees. Jesus criticized them for:

1. Teaching about God, but refusing to enter his kingdom.
2. Taking advantage of widows.
3. Converting people to a dead religion.
4. Practicing oaths that were trivial and meaningless.
5. Practicing the law with legalistic precision, yet bypassing the spirit of the law - justice, mercy and faithfulness to God.
6. Practicing ritual cleanliness on the outside, yet putrid on the inside.
7. Outwardly strict in their law keeping, but devoid of the laws real intent.
8. Honoring the prophets of old, while behaving more like those who persecuted them.

The fifth discipleship competency of Jesus was developing **greater leaders** – authentic leaders that lead from the heart and teach by example. Leaders that live and apply the spirit of the law instead of a dead pretense. This is what it's about! Servant leaders are our product! Discipleship with Jesus is about developing people who are learning to take our place. Discipleship that is not discipling others to disciple others in the servant leadership of Jesus is no discipleship at all!