

Acts 20:17-24



HONOURING LEADERSHIP

Part 02 – The Value of Leadership

The following document is a rough copy of Pastor Drost's sermon notes
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✚ Last week we started talking about Honouring Leadership.

I chose this title because it's not about honouring a leader, honouring a leader you like; it's about honouring, valuing, giving worth, to the principle of leadership.

It's about understanding that leadership matters!

**Behind every great team there is a great leader!
And behind every great leader there is a great team.**

"Everything rises and falls on leadership." Dr. John Maxwell

Leadership matters!

Illustration: Snow-blowing my back yard...

- Ground is on a bit of a slant
- Snow-blower tries to turn down hill (So you have to turn it to keep it on course)

Perfect example of the value of leadership:

- Leadership is not about power. (The snow-blower has the power.)
- **Leadership is the ability to rally people to a common purpose.**
 - Their abilities into one goal – one direction
 - Their strengths into one goal – one direction
 - Their skills into one goal – one direction

Imagine a team of horses... They have the power, the ability.



The **farmer** guides them in one direction!

Their joint strength is able to accomplish a great task!

✚ Twice in the book of Judges it says

"In those days there was no king in Israel; everyone did what was right in their own eyes." Judges 17:6 & 21:25

Every time you see that line "in those days there was no king in Israel" there is trouble! **Why?**

"Where there is no vision, the people cast off restraint." Proverbs 29:18

Without that leader to give direction and build that cohesive united vision, **the team of horses falls apart** and the horses run each their own way. **LEADERSHIP MATTERS!**

If we want to see this church go forward, we need to get this right and value leadership!



But while we all would acknowledge the need for leadership, we also tend to have some negative feelings about leadership! **Here are some reasons why:**

We looked at some of these last week.

(1) Our bad personal experiences (Last week)

Many of us have had leaders in our life that displayed a less than honourable character. Leaders that were bullies, arrogant. Leaders that were abusive of power and position...

These emotionally painful negative experiences taint how we look at leadership in general.

(2) Our exposure to so much negative news (Last week)

The saturation of negative news distorts our view of our world, including our image of leaders in general.

- Newspapers are way more interested in writing stories about a crooked leader than about the thousands of great leaders that serve our communities with excellence.

Another reason we have negative feelings about leadership is...

(3) Our North American history

- For the first **1000** years or so after Christ, the Christian Church was essentially united and led by the Apostles and their successors:

The Church Fathers and the Bishops.

- Then in the year 1054, the East–West of the church split in what is called **the Great Schism**. Being in the west, most of Europe came under the Roman Catholic Church.
- Power abuse, politics, control, materialism and corruption started to filter into the Western Roman Church. So, in the 16th century the **Protestant Reformation happened** (Made famous by Martin Luther’s famous posting of his 95 Theses). It was a desire to return to the early Church and reject the political system that the Church had become. **It was called “protestant” because they protested the authority of the Pope and broke away from the Western Church.**
- Then in **1536**, King Henry VIII of England wanted to divorce Catherine of Aragon but **the Pope said “no”** so he broke away from Rome, seized the church's assets in England and declared the Church of England as the established church with himself as its head.
- Many protestant groups rejected the hierarchy within the Church of England and so they moved to the New World seeking to practice their faith free of Bishops or any top-down church control.
- All of North America became a melting pot of all kinds of independent self-governing church fiefdoms.
- Then in **1775**, the American War of Independence started and led to what we know today as the **United States of America** and the submission to the Crown became “we the people”.
- Here in Canada we are different than our American neighbours in the south. In many ways. Even in the way we rebel! We rebel silently!

We use “Passive rebellion” to authority. **WE ARE VERY “SUBTLE” ABOUT IT!**



- When the Americans wanted to separate from the British Crown, they went to war...fought battles, shed blood... That's called **OPEN REBELLION!** We Canadians did not do this.

We gave lip service to the British Crown, named our front streets Queen Street/King Street, put the queen on our dollar bills and on the back of our coins (along with a moose, a beaver and the loon), got land grants, protection & sing about her in our Royal Anthem:

*God save our gracious Queen
Long live our noble Queen,
God save the Queen:
Send her victorious,
Happy and glorious,
Long to reign over us:
God save The Queen.*

If you ask most people today in Canada “What power does the Queen have?”, they will answer “Oh, she is just a figure head”.

We are politely rebellious!

We do the same with our leaders. If we do not like what they do, we silently resist them. We murmur about our politicians in the back rooms and then vote them out in the next election.

Most elections are protest elections.

We are not as openly vocal as Americans about it. We practice “passive rebellion”.

We like a country where no one is really in charge.

Our protestant independent history **DEFINES** very much how we think about leadership and influences our attitude towards leaders.

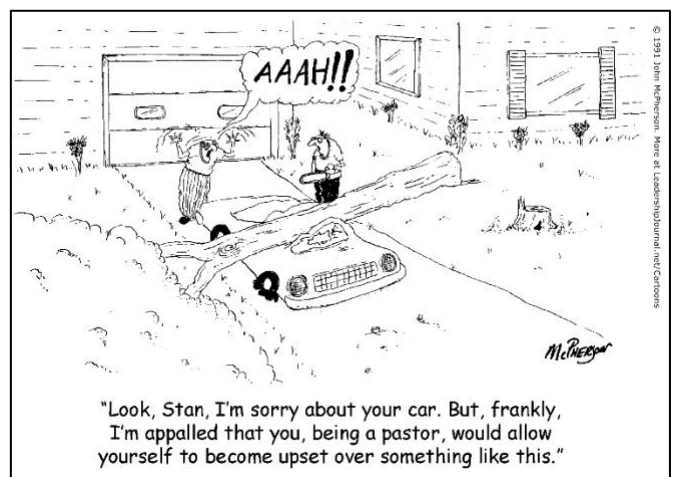
(4) Our unrealistic expectations

A few years ago I heard that a friend of mine who had been an MLA resigned from politics. I called him up to find out why. He told me that he really wanted to serve his constituents well but the “unrealistic expectations” made it impossible. He was expected to fix every pothole within days; he was expected to show up to every special event 24/7, 365 days a year. If he didn't meet people's unrealistic expectations, he would get angry calls, nasty emails... he always felt like he had an impossible task.

We often forget that leaders are also human.

They get tired, they forget, they get discouraged, they have emotions...

I came across this cartoon in Christianity Today: “*Look, Stan, I'm sorry about your car. But, frankly, I'm appalled that you, being a pastor, would allow yourself to become upset over something like this.*”



This brings us to the other reason we have this unfavourable feeling towards leadership that we mentioned last week ...

(5) Our own human nature (Last week)

You don't have to teach a child to disobey! Rebellion comes naturally. **We simply do not like to submit.**

In many ways we are just like King Henry VIII of England who wanted to divorce Catherine and would not accept the Pope's "no you can't".

So, Our own bad experiences,

...Our exposure to negative news about leaders,

...Our North American protestant history ingrained in us,

...Our unrealistic expectations,

...Our own human nature's tendency to "challenge" leadership,

all influence how we treat leadership and think about them!

"Let everyone be subject to the governing authorities. There is no authority except from God, and those which exist are established by God. Therefore, whoever resists authority is opposing the ordinance of God." Romans 13:1–2a

You honour God by treating leadership with honour.

The attitude we have towards leadership is directly related to the attitude we have towards God!

✚ In the Old Testament book of 1 Samuel we find the story of David and King Saul:

- Saul had been chosen by God to be Israel's king but Saul became corrupt and disobedient to God.
- Therefore God chose David to succeed Saul. Saul became jealous and paranoid of David and tried to kill him.
- David had to flee for his life from King Saul.
- In **1 Samuel 24** we find David hiding with his men in the Desert of En Gedi. Saul finds out he's there and heads out with three thousand men to chase and kill him.
- David and his men hid from Saul in a cave and it happened that Saul went into the cave to relieve himself. David and his men were huddled far back in the same cave.
- David's men whispered to him, "*Can you believe it? God has put your enemy in your hands.*"
- David crept towards Saul and cut off a piece of the hem of Saul's robe. But then David's conscience began bothering him and he whispered to his men, "*God forbid I should do such a thing to my master, the Lord's anointed, or lay my hand on him; for he is the anointed of the Lord.*"
- With these words David sharply rebuked his men and did not allow them to attack Saul. Saul left the cave and went his way. **You see, David knew how to honour the office even when the person in the office had a huge character flaw.**

David understood the principle of honouring leadership.

You honour God by treating leadership with honour.

The attitude you have towards leadership is directly related to the attitude you have towards God!

Leadership matters!



Last week we read (what I consider) one of the best passages of scripture on Biblical leadership: **Acts 20:17–38**... I asked you to read it at home looking for the nuggets of truth about Leadership.

You might be saying, “I’m not a leader!” but I would venture to say that most of us are leaders in some capacity. If you are a parent or a grandparent, you are a leader.

The principles we are looking at in this passage will make you a better leader... and **when a leader gets better, everyone wins!**

When we get better as a church in leading, our church becomes a better church!

So, let’s take another look at this passage...

“From Miletus, Paul sent to Ephesus for the elders of the church. When they arrived, he said to them: “You know how I lived the whole time I was with you, from the first day I came into the province of Asia.

Paul is in Miletus on his way to Jerusalem. He knows that he will never see them again. In Jerusalem he will be persecuted and then taken prisoner to Rome and eventually die a martyr’s death.

So, he sends to Ephesus and calls for the Elders of the church, these are the leaders of the Ephesian Church.

- There are 50 to 100 Kilometers between Miletus and Ephesus depending on what road you take. (The shorter road went through a dessert area and it wasn’t recommended).
- Paul sent someone to go and ask them to come and then they would have to return. Why didn’t he go to them?

If you want to be a good leader you must first learn to be a good follower.

Paul said to them: “You know how I lived the whole time I was with you, from the first day I came into the province of Asia. I served the Lord with great humility and with tears and in the midst of severe testing by the plots of my Jewish opponents.

Biblical leadership is not about power and control, it’s about servanthood.

If you want to be a good leader you must first learn to be a servant.

Jesus called the apostles and said, “You know that the rulers of nations have absolute power over people and their officials have absolute authority over people. But that’s not the way it’s going to be among you. Whoever wants to become great among must be your servant. Whoever wants to be most important among you will be your slave. It’s the same way with the Son of Man. He didn’t come so that others could serve him. He came to serve and to give his life as a ransom for many people.” Matthew 20:25-28

It's all about servant leadership!



- It's a serve first approach versus a lead first approach (which is about power and position - the exercise of power by one at the “top of the pyramid”)
- A servant-leader focuses on the growth and well-being of people they are called to lead.

Notice the heart of Paul...

I served the Lord with great humility and with tears and in the midst of severe testing by the plots of my Jewish opponents. You know that I have not hesitated to preach anything that would be helpful to you but have taught you publicly and from house to house. I have declared to both Jews and Greeks that they must turn to God in repentance and have faith in our Lord Jesus. And now, compelled by the Spirit, I am going to Jerusalem, not knowing what will happen to me there. I only know that in every city the Holy Spirit warns me that prison and hardships are facing me. However, I consider my life worth nothing to me; my only aim is to finish the race and complete the task the Lord Jesus has given me—the task of testifying to the good news of God’s grace. “Now I know that none of you among whom I have gone about preaching the kingdom will ever see me again.

Paul was able to endure prison and hardships and even death because he understood and was committed to the task Jesus had assigned to him. He had a clear God given purpose!

Good leaders are fully committed to a clear God given task and purpose.

What has God called you to do? What are you willing to endure hardship and suffer for? Is there something so big, so great, that you would give your life to see happen?

Therefore, I declare to you today that I am innocent of the blood of any of you. For I have not hesitated to proclaim to you the whole will of God. Keep watch over yourselves and all the flock of which the Holy Spirit has made you overseers. Be shepherds (pastors) of the church of God, which he bought with his own blood.

Paul understood that the flock, the people, were God’s property, not his property, God’s church, not his church. We lead, shepherd, serve, take care of people for God, not for us!

Good leaders understand that they are caretakers of God’s people and God’s property.

And we must give accounts to Him of what we did with His money, His property, His people, His children, His Church.

I know that after I leave, savage wolves will come in among you and will not spare the flock. Even from your own number men will arise and distort the truth in order to draw away disciples after them. So be on your guard! Remember that for three years I never stopped warning each of you night and day with tears. “Now I commit you to God and to the word of his grace, which can build you up and give you an inheritance among all those who are sanctified. I have not coveted anyone’s silver or gold or clothing. You yourselves know that these hands of mine have supplied my own needs and the needs of my companions.



Paul's motivation was free from money or possessions. He did not do it for the pay. His motivation was the call of God on His life.

Good leaders are driven by what is eternal. Not by what is temporal like money.

One of the words I really loathe (despise) is the word: **VOLUNTEER**

I would like to make this a bad word at Smythe Street Church!

Volunteer has the connotation of doing something without pay!

- Often the word “volunteer” is accompanied by the words “just a” (“I’m just a volunteer”).
- In the North American Church we often look at things as “Paid” & “Volunteers” but in the NT there are **no “volunteers”**...
- Jesus in the parable of the talents doesn't say: **“Well done thou good and faithful volunteer.”**

“Well done, good and faithful servant... Enter into the joy of your Lord.” Matthew 25:21a

Paul considered himself as **“serving the Lord”**

We are all called to serve the Lord, and he always pays!

No volunteers! We are all payed!

The pay is out of this world!

Illustration:

- Chaplaincy
- Playing in the band
- Working in the soup-kitchen
- Coaching some kids

“Whatever you do, do it heartily, as to the Lord and not to men, knowing that from the Lord you will receive the reward of the inheritance; for you serve the Lord Christ.” Colossians 3:23–24 (NKJV)

Stop working for a pay check!

What if we considered ourselves filled with eternal purpose, called by God to be a servant, a minister, a leader for Jesus! with a clear purpose and a clear goal.

Do you really think that Jesus does not pay?

Close

- What are you doing to serve Jesus?
- Who are you working for?

