

Being Led

by Charles Leiter

The sermon emphasizes the importance of being led by the Holy Spirit, using Jesus' example of humility and submission as a model for Christians.

Duration: 41:30

Scripture: Psalm 23:2, Psalm 32:8-9, Isaiah 53:6, Isaiah 55:12, Jeremiah 31:9, Romans 8:14

Topics: "Spiritual Guidance", "Gods Leadership"

Description

This sermon focuses on the theme of being led, drawing from the example of Jesus allowing Himself to be led by the Spirit, by the devil in temptation, and by wicked men. It emphasizes the importance of consciously asking and depending on God to lead us, being willing to follow His leading, and reflecting on how God has led us in the past. The sermon also highlights the contrast between believers who are led by God and unbelievers who resist being led, choosing to go their own way.

Transcript

Well, I need a moment or two to look around and see the faces. Never have stood up here before. What a privilege, what a blessing.

I'd like for us to turn to Luke chapter four this evening. Luke chapter four. I'll read four verses.

First of all, verse one, and Jesus, full of the Holy Spirit, returned from the Jordan and was led about by the Spirit in the wilderness for forty days. And verse five, and he led him up, that is the devil, led him up and showed him all the kingdoms of the world in a moment of time. And then verse nine, again, speaking of Satan, and he led him to Jerusalem and set him on the pinnacle of the temple and said to him, and then verse twenty-nine, and they rose up and cast him out of the city and led him to the brow of the hill on which their city had been built.

Now, if you have a different version, I just want to assure you, all of those are the same Greek word, led. And that's what I want to talk to you about tonight, being led. One of the great glories of Christianity is that it is not an abstract philosophical system, and it's not a set of timeless eternal truths.

You know, Buddha supposedly was under a tree and he was enlightened to this idea that all suffering is caused by desire and such thoughts as that. That has nothing to do with history. But Christianity is different because it's firmly rooted in history.

And that's one of the great glories of Christianity, aren't you thankful? We're not asking the Apostle Paul or Peter or John, what's your philosophy of life? Those people came as witnesses. They said, we saw something, something happened, we saw it. Our hands handled it.

And so they go out proclaiming things that God did in history, things that happened. And the message of Christianity is that not that man's reaching up trying to find God, but that God has come down and invaded history. He came, the Word, the One who was with God and who was God, became flesh and dwelt among us.

And John says we beheld His glory. It was unique glory that we saw. Glory as of the only begotten from the Father, full of grace and truth.

So, the One who existed before the foundation of the world, and He was conscious that He existed before the foundation of the world. He talks in John 17, He's praying, Father, the glory that I ever had with Thee before the world was. He was conscious of that.

And again in John 8, they said, you're not even 50 years old, have you seen Abraham? And He said, before Abraham was, I am. Before Abraham existed. But He not only existed from the foundation of the world, but He created the world.

All things came into being through Him, and apart from Him, nothing came into being that has come into being. And this One, who existed in the form of God, did not regard equality with God a thing to be held on to, but He emptied Himself and came down and was made in the likeness of men, and humbled Himself and became obedient, even down to the point of death, even death on the cross. And so, what a miracle, what an amazing thing, the Incarnation.

We were talking today, there are many mysteries in theology, and things that we cannot explain, but there's nothing any harder than this. What Brother Mike talked about this morning, of fully God and fully man. Not half and half, not a mixture, but 100% God and 100% man.

So He humbled Himself, the One who created the universe, comes down and is born in a stable, and grows up in a town that is known as a proverb for being a worthless place that nothing good comes out of. Can any good thing come out of Nazareth? And this One was working in a carpenter shop. But not only that, this One, who created the universe, allowed Himself to be led.

He was led. Did you get that word? He was led around. Leading has to do with submission, it has to do with dependence.

You think of a blind man, he's out here, I need somebody to lead me. The Lord Jesus Christ, the Word that existed from eternity, who was God, put Himself in a position where He allowed Himself to be led. Leading speaks of subjection, being led away into captivity.

It speaks of dependence, being led around. And He was led. And we see this in three areas.

And we'll speak first about Christ Himself, that's our launching point here in Luke. These three areas. First of all, in verse 1, He was led about by the Spirit in the wilderness.

God the Son, the incarnate Word, allowed Himself to be led by the Holy Spirit. We were talking about this today some in one of our discussions. The liberals have tended to deny the deity of Christ, that He was

truly God.

And in reaction to that, many times those who believe the Bible have gone to the other extreme, and they've lost the fact that He was truly a man. And it's incomprehensible that He was truly a man. It's just incomprehensible that our Lord was a man.

And so we have this idea that He was sort of God in a human skin. And He walked around knocking objects out of the way, and nothing affected Him. And He wasn't really in the same position that we are.

And that's the kind of feeling that we have. But the fact is, in order for Him to be the last Adam, and in order for Him to be the head of a new humanity, He had to truly be a man, and He had to win. In the same spots where Adam failed, He had to succeed without relying on any kind of trump card up His sleeve, or going back and relying on His divine power as the second person of the Trinity.

It says, He humbled Himself and came down, and put Himself in the position of a man where He had to be dependent upon the Holy Spirit, and win His battles the same way Adam should have won, and the same way we should win our battles, by utter dependency upon the Holy Spirit. He had to succeed as a man. He had to perfectly fulfill the law as a man.

He had to die for us as a man. Hebrews 2.14, Since then the children, share in flesh and blood, He Himself likewise also partook of the same, that through death He might destroy him that had the power of death, that is the devil. Hebrews 2.17, Therefore He had to be made like His brethren in all things, brothers of Jesus.

He had to be made like His brethren in all things, that He might become a merciful and faithful high priest in things pertaining to God, to make propitiation for the sins of the people. So how is a man going to succeed in perfectly obeying God in a fallen world like this one? Well, he's going to have to depend totally on the Holy Spirit. And that's what the Lord Jesus did.

He steadfastly refused to call upon His powers as the second person of the Trinity, and instead emptied Himself and deliberately stayed in that lowly position, relying on the Holy Spirit. You remember, God, the Holy Spirit comes down a voice out of heaven, this is My beloved Son. People say, well, the devil was tempting Him, you know, if you're the Son of God, tempting Him to doubt His Sonship.

No, that wasn't it at all. There was no way in the world he could doubt His Sonship. He had just received enduement of power from on high and a voice from heaven, Thou art My beloved Son.

What was Satan trying to do? He was trying to get Him to presume upon His Sonship. Being the Son of God, command these stones to be bred. You see what he's trying to do? He's trying to get Him out of this position of a man.

Get Him to do something over here in this realm. If you're the Son of God, how does He answer? Man shall not live by bread alone. He's saying, let's get it back over here.

Jesus did that repeatedly, didn't He? You know, the general that chooses the ground is going to win the battle. And Satan constantly tries to get the ground over here, and we've got to come back to what God said. And so he says, man shall not live by bread alone.

He deliberately stayed in that position. And beloved, even the miracles that Jesus did, He did not as God incarnate, but as a man relying on the power of the Holy Spirit. Acts 2.22, Peter's preaching, he says, Jesus the Nazarene, a man attested to you by God, with miracles and wonders and signs which God performed through Him.

Isn't that a way of talking about it? A man attested to you by God, with miracles and wonders and signs which God performed through Him. And then in Acts 10.38, you know of Jesus of Nazareth. How God anointed Him with the Holy Spirit and with power, and how He went about doing good and healing all who were oppressed by the devil.

How? For He was the second person of the Trinity. No, for God was with Him. Amazing statement.

Jesus is walking along, He curses that fig tree. Peter said, Lord, the tree that You cursed has withered. He didn't say, well, of course, Peter, I'm God incarnate.

He said, have faith in God. He said, you have faith in God. Amazing, isn't it? Every word He spoke.

How was it that He was such a revelation of the Father? He whom God has sent speaks the very words of God. Why? Because He gives not the Spirit by measure unto Him. He had the fullness.

So, all this is tied up in the first verse of Luke 4 that we've read. He begins His public ministry, He has received power from on high. He had to receive power back in the outpouring of the Holy Spirit upon Him.

He had to receive power from on high in order to fulfill the ministry that He was going to do. The Spirit of the Lord is upon me because He has anointed me to preach the Gospel to the poor. He sent me to proclaim release to the captives and recovery of sight to the blind, to set free those who are downtrodden.

Beloved, how are we ever going to preach the Gospel to the poor? There's only one way that we can ever do it. By the power of the Holy Spirit. How are we going to see anybody set free? We can only do it by the power of the Spirit.

And so, He's received the power to fulfill His public ministry. And every step of the way, all throughout His public ministry, He lived in utter dependence upon the Holy Spirit. And that includes the cross, doesn't it? What's it say? Who through the eternal Spirit offered Himself without blemish to God.

That's the way He did it. What's it say about the high priest? Every high priest taken from among men is ordained for men in things pertaining to God. And I was speaking one time on the miracles of Christ, and I realized the greatest miracle He ever did was when, as a man, He trusted God and offered Himself through the power of the eternal Spirit without blemish to God.

Isn't that incredible? Well, that's the first area where Jesus allowed Himself to be led. But the second, in some ways, is even more amazing. Jesus allowed Himself, did you see it? In verse 5 and in verse 9, He led Him up and showed Him the kingdom.

In verse 9, He led Him to Jerusalem. He allowed Himself to be led by the devil. That's incredible.

The Creator of the universe becomes a man. The Word became flesh and dwelt among us and makes Himself so vulnerable that Satan can lead Him up and show Him the kingdoms of the world or lead Him to Jerusalem. Why would He allow that? Because Adam was tempted by the devil too.

And he's got to win where Adam lost. Amazing humility. The infinitely holy and pure Creator puts Himself in a position where He has to personally experience the temptations of the most morally foul and repulsive being in the universe.

Though Satan surely tried to appear as an angel of light. But you know, in Matthew's Gospel, He says it like this, Jesus was led up by the Spirit in the wilderness to be tempted by the devil. So He's being led all the while by the Spirit and He's led by the Spirit into a position where He can be led by the devil in temptation temporarily.

Amazing. Thirdly, the Lord Jesus Christ allowed Himself to be led by wicked men. Verse 29, They rose up and cast Him out of the city and led Him to the brow of the hill on which their city had been built.

Now this is staggering. You just think of this. You think of who He is.

And He submits to filthy men. Now in this place, it wasn't His time yet, but the time did come, didn't it, eventually. And I won't give you all the references, but listen to this.

Now He who was betraying Him had given them a signal saying, Whomever I shall kiss, He's the one. Seize Him and lead Him away under guard. And having arrested Him, they led Him away and brought Him to the house of the high priest.

And when it was day, the council of elders of the people assembled both chief priests and scribes, and they led Him away to their council chamber. And they bound Him and led Him away and delivered Him up to Pilate the governor. And after they had mocked Him, they took His robe off and put His garments on Him and led Him away to crucify Him.

And when they led Him away, they laid hold of one Simon of Cyrene coming in from the country and placed on Him the cross to carry behind Jesus. Amazing love. He lets men lead Him around like a criminal.

His own creatures. Now think of this. If the God of the universe would let Himself be led and as a man needs to be led by the Spirit, who are we to say nobody is going to lead me around? Amazing love.

Infinite humility. He did not regard equality with God a thing to be grasped, but emptied Himself. How does Isaiah say it? He was oppressed and He was afflicted, yet He did not open His mouth like a lamb that is led to slaughter.

And like a sheep that is silent before its shearers, so He did not open His mouth. Now that's the gospel, isn't it? The Creator of the universe becomes a man so that He can be led around like a sheep to die for our sin. That's the example of Christ Himself.

Now of course, every Christian follows in His steps. First of all, who is a Christian? Well, as many as are led by the Spirit of God. They are the sons of God.

And a Christian takes great comfort in the fact that God is willing to lead him. All the way my Savior leads me. What have I to ask beside? It's a great thing that God is willing to lead me.

He leadeth me. O blessed thought! O words with heavenly comfort for all! Just to know that God by His hand leads. He's leading my life.

Guide me, O thou great Jehovah! God leads His dear children along. Think of these. Over and over we glory in this.

And the Bible makes much of the fact that God leads His people. And as I'm dealing with this section related to Christians, I want to do something that normally I don't think is necessarily greatly profitable. But what I want to do is flood you with verses about leading.

I'm not going to give you the references. I just want you to listen to this. First of all, you remember how God led the children of Israel in the wilderness.

There was a pillar of cloud and a pillar of fire. And He led them. Listen to this.

With the pillar of cloud thou didst lead them by day. And with the pillar of fire by night to light for them the way in which they were to go. I mean, each one of these verses you can take and just think about.

To light for them the way. And they did not thirst when He led them through the deserts. He made the water flow out of the rock for them.

As the cattle which go down into the valley, the Spirit of the Lord gave them rest. So didst thou lead thy people to make for thyself a glorious name. God leads us to make for Himself a glorious name.

Thou didst lead thy people like a flock by the hand of Moses and Aaron. Sometimes He leads us through others. Then He led them with the cloud by day and all the night with the light of fire.

But He led forth His own people like sheep and guided them in the wilderness like a flock. These go through Isaiah, through Nehemiah, through the Psalms. Here's Psalm 78.

He led them safely so that they did not fear. But the sea engulfed their enemies. Psalm 80.

O give ear, shepherd of Israel, thou who dost lead Joseph like a flock. Shine forth. O give thanks to Him who led His people through the wilderness, for His loving kindness is everlasting.

All of those relate to God leading His people in the Old Testament. And we look at that, and you know how definite it was. And the cloud goes along and stops, and they spend one day there, or two days, and it moves on.

Sometimes they were there for a year. And you start settling down, and you think nothing's going to happen now. We're kind of settled in here, and all of a sudden that morning the cloud starts to move.

And we read this, and we miss the whole thing. Because we read it, and we think, if only God would do that now. And instead what He's saying is, He's saying, if I would lead my unregenerate nation in that degree, I'm trying to tell you that as my regenerate child, indwelt by my Spirit, I will lead you.

If you want to be led, if you're willing to be led, I'll show you the right thing. I'll show you what to do. It's amazing how much He emphasizes this.

He tells us over and over. He wants to encourage us that He'll lead us. And if you don't get anything else, get this, that God has promised to lead you.

And He will lead you. What are we to do? First of all, we must consciously ask and depend upon God to lead us. Not enough to lean on our own understanding, is it? You remember that story of Joshua with the

Gibeonites.

They showed up with worn out clothes, and they acted and dried out bread. And what's it say? They looked at the outward thing, and they did what they thought was right, and they did not ask God. And they were deceived.

We've got to ask Him. Jeremiah 31.9 says this, With weeping they shall come, and by supplication I will lead them. In other words, by constant dependence and prayer, I'll make them know where to go.

And He says, I'll make them walk by streams of water on a straight path in which they shall not stumble. What a promise. And that's why we have so many prayers for leading in the Bible.

Listen to these. O Lord, lead me in Thy righteousness because of my foes. Make Thy way straight before me.

Lead me in Thy truth and teach me, for Thou art the God of my salvation. For Thee I wait all the day. Teach me Thy way, O Lord, and lead me in a level path because of my foes.

O send out Thy light and Thy truth. Let them lead me. Let them bring me to Thy holy hill.

Teach me to do Thy will, for Thou art my God. Let Thy good Spirit lead me on level ground. How many times, beloved, have we cried out things like that? And God has promised to lead us.

I've seen situations where I was poised on the brink of making a major mistake. And because of taking time to ask God, sometimes just in a matter of a few hours, lo and behold, He's led you. So we have to ask, and then we must be willing to follow His leading.

Many times that's a lot easier said than done, isn't it? Sometimes God leads us where our flesh really doesn't want to go. You think of the Spirit leading Christ into the desert. You remember Peter.

He says, when you get old, you're going to have somebody take you around to where you wouldn't choose to go. Why did he let that happen to him? Because he was being led by the Spirit, and he gave it. He wanted God to lead him.

Some of you know Prem Pradhan, who's since gone to be with the Lord. He was a mercenary soldier in India from Nepal, and converted in India. And he felt God was leading him to go back into Nepal and preach the Gospel.

He said for three weeks he was in misery fighting that. Well, you can see why. They had a mandatory six-year sentence for anybody who caused someone to change their religion.

And he was going to go back. He was in prison twelve years. But he knew God was leading him back there, and eventually... I mean, that's how you know you're a Christian.

You hear God is leading you, and you follow. Psalm 32, verses 8 and 9, God promises, I'll instruct you. Christian, listen.

I will instruct you and teach you in the way which you should go. Do not be as the horse or as the mule which have no understanding, whose trappings include bit and bridle to hold them in check, otherwise they'll not come near you. In other words, don't fight it.

Let God lead you. Don't resist God's leading. How many times have we done that to our own misery? He says in Jeremiah 2.17, Have you not done this to yourself by your forsaking the Lord your God when He led you in the way? He's leading you along.

You've brought this misery on yourself. Well, if we're willing to let God lead us, He will. And He promises that.

I will lead the blind. I know some of these verses. Maybe I'll print them out and you can get a copy if you want.

But listen to this. I will lead the blind. By way they do not know in paths they do not know I will guide them.

I'll make darkness into light before them. These are the things I'll do and I will not leave them undone. They will not hunger or thirst, neither will the scorching heat or sun strike them down, for He who has compassion on them will lead them and will guide them to springs of water.

Isaiah 55.12 For you will go out with joy and be led forth with peace. A good promise, isn't it? I am the Lord your God who teaches you to profit and who leads you in the way you should go. Thou art my rock and my fortress.

For thy name's sake thou will lead me and guide me. What more can He say than this? He said, He will lead us. What comfort! You think of the shepherd picture, the shepherd and the sheep.

He says, I'll feed my flock and lead them to rest. Like a shepherd he'll tend his flock in his arm. He'll gather the lambs, carry them in his bosom.

He will gently lead the nursing ewes. He makes me lie down in green pastures. He leads me beside the still waters.

To Him the doorkeeper opens and the sheep hear His voice. He calls His own sheep by name and leads them out. Glorious! What a privilege to be led by such a shepherd.

And you think about this in terms of resisting God's leading. Can I imagine that my Lord let Himself be led and I'm not going to? I mean, you can't think like that as a Christian. It really helps you when there's hard situations where you feel like, I know God wants me to go over here and I don't want to go over there.

And you know, Jesus would have gone. He allowed Himself to be led by the Spirit. Well, another thought on this for those of us who are older.

This is from Archibald Alexander back in the 1800s. And he had a letter. He was an elderly man when he wrote this.

Very godly man. And he has a letter to people who are more aged. And I'm starting anyway to be included in that group.

He talks about the hard things of growing old. But he says, Still, we have some advantages not possessed by the young. We have received important lessons from experience which, if they've been rightly improved, are of inestimable value.

The book of divine providence, which is in a great measure sealed to the young, has been unfolded to us. We can look back and contemplate all the way along which the Lord has led us. Now that's Deuteronomy 18.

What's God say? You shall remember all the way which your Lord, your God, has led you in the wilderness these forty years. So any of us that are getting older, He says, you need to look back. And as I do that, in any measure, I marvel at it.

I could start telling stories about different phases in my life where I could go on for two hours telling about how God did this and that and things that at the time were so hard and impossible to understand. And you look at it now and you say, Oh, I see that now, what He was doing there. You shall look back and remember the way that the Lord, your God, has led you.

Don't forget this. In Archibald Alexander, he says, We can now see the wise design of our Father in many events which at the time were dark and mysterious. The knowledge to be derived from studying the book of God's providence cannot be communicated to another.

The lessons are like the name upon the white stone which no one can read but he that has it. The successive events of our lives we can make known, but the connection which these events have with our character, our sins, our prayers, can be fully understood only by ourselves. He who neglects to study the pages of this book deprives himself of one of the most important means of improvement.

Yet many professors of religion appear to pay little attention to the providence of God in relation to themselves. So he's saying, stop and take time and look back a little bit. Remember the way the Lord, your God, led you.

And you don't have to be old to do this. You've already got quite a bit of things that you can look back and see. If you've been a Christian very many years, not very long even, you can see some of it.

It's a wonderful thing. I mean, those different encounters, those things, I mean, represented right here tonight. Things that appear to be chance.

God has led you in some way. I remember when I was single, I went out for a walk one night just to pray, and I got way off from where I normally go, or went for a walk, and I saw this group of people sitting in the lawn across the street singing Christian hymns. I thought, that's a group of Christians.

And the verse came to my mind, and he passed by on the other side. I thought, now wait a minute, I'm going to go over there and sit down by those people. I'm going to identify with them.

I don't know who they are, but I'm going to identify with them. That's the night I met Jim and Terry Kelly. And think of all the things that would have been different.

Behold what a weight of history hangs on the slender thread of providence. You shall remember all the way that the Lord your God led you. Profit from it.

Learn something from the past dealings. Not just the big things that arrest your attention, but the little things. How God has worked.

It helps you to trust. It helps you to teach other people to trust. But what an example we have in the Lord Jesus Himself.

Letting Himself be led. But then, in closing, to the unbeliever. Every person here who has not yet turned to Christ.

Isaiah 53 tells us about that, doesn't it? All we like sheep have gone astray. We've turned everyone to his own way. We're not going to be led.

Refusal to submit. To let God lead us. And that's what characterizes every unbeliever.

I think that's what this euthanasia thing is a lot. Men are proud. They want to be God themselves.

And when you start to get old and decrepit, and somebody else has to lead you around, it becomes painfully obvious that you're not God. And stubbornly refusing to be humbled, men want to die instead. Sometimes that's all it is.

We will not have this man to rule over us. Paul says in Romans 2 that the goodness of God even ought to lead you to repentance. But instead, I mean, he does this kindness, and he does that kindness, and you resist, and you feel the tug, you know.

He's leading you to repentance, and you're resisting that. Nobody's going to lead me. I do it my way.

You know, there's a song. You talk about glorying in your shame. I did it my way.

What an epitaph to have on your life. I did it my way. Yeah, look what you did when you did it your way.

Refusing to be led. But see, the problem with that is nobody does it their way. Everybody is led.

You're going to serve somebody. It may be the devil, or it may be the Lord, but you're going to be led. 1 Corinthians 12, 2, You know that when you were pagans, you were led astray to those dumb idols, however you were led.

So the demons are leading them around. 2 Timothy 3, 6, For among them are those who enter households, captivate weak women, weighed down with sins, led on by various impulses. You know, everyone who commits sin is a slave of sin.

He's led around by the nose. Jesus said if the blind lead the blind, they'll both fall. College students, you know, I'm an independent thinker.

You know what that means? They're being led around by some blind person. There are no independent people. You are being led.

You're being led. You're being led by demons. You're being led by blind people.

You're being led by impulses and lust. You're a slave. What a tragedy to be led around by that stuff instead of being led around by the all-wise, almighty, infinitely good shepherd.

It's the most wonderful thing in life to bow down and say, Lord, lead me, Lord, lead me. And it's a wonderful, what wonderful promises. I mean, it's almost like He says, I know you're not going to believe this.

You're not going to believe that I really will lead you. So I'll give you every example in the Old Testament to prove that I'll lead you. I'll lead you.

I'll lead you. You realize as a Christian, as a child, like I said, most of the nation of Israel didn't know the Lord. Some of them did.

And the ones that did had to teach their neighbor and their brother saying, know the Lord. There were some who knew the Lord, but multitudes of them didn't. How do I know that? Because look at their history.

Give them five minutes and they'd be worshipping idols. But you realize, if God goes out of His way to lead them and to make it so clear what He's saying to us, He's saying, if you will ask Me, if you'll let Me, I'll lead you. I'll show you things.

Right down to specific things. Again, not talking about whether you ought to stay in a certain town for one day or a year, but things that relate to even, like with Philip, the Spirit said to him in his heart, go up and talk to that guy. You know, even things like that, he's willing to do.

May God help us. The trust is leading. And you know, many times, there's opposition immediately.

Jesus tells them, get in the boat. What happens? The wind blowing. Contrary.

Doesn't mean you're out of God's will. We could really talk a lot about that, couldn't we? Just the whole thing of God's guidance. It has to do with this whole thing.

Being led. The promises that He will lead us. May the Lord help us.

Amen.

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