

Lead by Example

by Erlo Stegen

The sermon emphasizes the critical role of being a good example in faith and conduct to inspire others, especially the younger generation.

Duration: 1:23:47

Scripture: Acts 1:1-3, Acts 1:12, 1 Timothy 4:12

Topics: "Example"

Description

In this sermon, the speaker emphasizes the importance of being a good example to others. He shares a story about a young boy named Martyrs who was inspired by his mother's devotion to God and began praying at a young age. This act of courage and faith had a profound impact on others, as they too began kneeling and praying. The speaker highlights the significance of living out one's faith and being a shining example to others, comparing it to a lamp that shines and a plant that grows. He also mentions the historical significance of figures like Martin Luther and John Wesley in bringing about spiritual breakthroughs.

Transcript

In these days when I thought, especially yesterday, about this engagement, a word came to my mind. In a very, very well-known verse. We find this verse in 1 Timothy 4, the 12th verse.

Let no one look down on your youthfulness, but rather, in speech, conduct, love, faith, and purity, show yourself an example of those who believe. Being an example to others, to the heathen, the godless, and even to the believers. I would like to talk about the importance of being a good example.

I would like to talk about the importance of being a good example to others. When Martus was three years old, he saw his mother always kneeling next to her bed and reading the Bible. And he asked his mother, why do you always kneel and read the Bible? And then she explained to him why she did that.

Now we haven't got the time to dwell on that. He said to his mother, that is what I want to do as well. Just as you kneel by your bed, bowing to the Lord, I want to do that same.

The same thing. And then he knelt next to her. And he wanted God to speak to him as well, and give his life to the Lord.

You see, the importance of being an example, even to a little child. And with three years, he made a decision that for the rest of his life, he'll kneel to the Lord, bow his knee to the Lord, and read the Bible. Then he grew up and saw his father preaching.

And then he said, I want to become a preacher as well. I want to preach the gospel as my father does. But now, he's still studying as a lawyer.

And working in a lawyer's office. When I spoke to Gideon, I said, tell me some things about this boy, this young man. And Gideon said to him, this young man is like a young employee here at the station.

And I was overjoyed when I heard what he was doing. And then when Caroline asked me, who is he? What does he do? I could only give a good report of him. But I didn't know about his decision when he was three years old.

His mother told me yesterday or the day before, told me about this. And I called him this morning and I said, is that so? And he said, yes, that's what it's like. And I said, I honor you for that.

And when Caroline asked me, who is he? What does he do? I told him, he's like a young employee here at the station. And I said, who is he? What does he do? And he said, he's like a young employee here at the station. And I said, who is he? What does he do? Not once during his life did he turn his back upon the Lord.

In German, I spoke about that yesterday. It is a delicious thing for the heart to be firm, which happens through grace. It's a precious thing.

I said, it's very good that we are not schizophrenic. In German, we say, ein Mann, ein Wort. A real man speaks one word and that word counts.

He doesn't change it again, right to the end. How many men have we got amongst us? And then the Germans say a strange thing. They are, I think Uncle Heino has got something of the Germans.

Ein Mann, ein Wort. Eine Frau, ein Wörterbuch. The woman is a dictionary.

That doesn't mean that you women are a dictionary. The Bible says we should be manly. Even if you are a woman.

Don't behave like a silly woman. Behave like a man that can stand. The Bible says we should be manly.

Even if you are a woman. Don't behave like a silly woman. Behave like a man that can stand.

But many are not like that. In the morning they say something. During the day time they say something else.

In the afternoon they do say something different. Just marvel, what kind of a creature is this? You can't trust such a person. Even if he tells you, promises you, I'll stand next to you.

The next thing, he may betray you like Judas Iscariot. But before I carry on. Let me just retrace my step or two.

I told you about the importance. Of being an example. How the mother was an example to the three year old boy.

And later the father. Preaching the gospel. And then the boy said, that's what I want to do as well.
But don't now say. But isn't he unfaithful in his calling or his promise. Preaching the gospel.
He studies. But at the same time. He does that.
They made us study. Some time. Which disclosed.
That if both. Mom and dad. Attend church.
Regularly. 72 percent. Of the children.
Remain faithful. If only the father attends church. 55 percent.
Of the children. Remain faithful. If only mom goes to church.
And not the father. Then only. 15.
15 percent. Remain faithful. But.
If don't both. Father and mother. Don't attend regularly.
Only six percent. Go to church. And remain faithful.
Only six. That shows the importance. Of a parent.
The example of a parent. We had an uncle. He didn't attend church regularly.
But. The pub. He attended regularly.
I don't think. That one percent. Remain faithful.
Of the children. But I praise God. That the one got converted.
Before he died. So that shows you. That being an example.
As a parent. And as an adult. Is more important.
Than all the other efforts. We can't fathom what. An impact.
That has. Upon a person. The good example.
Paul writes to Timothy. Let no one despise you. Because of your youth.
Because you are still. So young. But be an example.
To all. Even the believers. Then they don't.
Look down upon you. And frown upon you. But then.
They'll honor you. Mark Twain. You know who he is.
He's the man who said. Giving up smoking. Is the easiest thing.

In the world. I've given up smoking. For a thousand times already.

But he says. There's nothing so annoying. As seeing a person.

Living the right kind of life. And be. An example.

He says. Nothing is so annoying. As that.

That something people can't stand. They can argue. With what you say.

But. They can't argue. With your life.

Every man of God. Whose life. Counts something.

Or women. Or young men. Is always.

Opposed. With hell. With the devil.

And the more you mean. For the kingdom of God. The more.

The devil will go against you. No. No.

No. No. No.

No. If I tell you some things, it would break your heart, and you would say, oh no, I never thought that possible. And then some said, his standard for a Christian is too high, for the lifestyle of a Christian.

So they sent two people to go and be with him for two weeks. And after that, they went home to report. And they said, people, that what he preaches is not half of what he lives.

What he lives is on a much higher standard than what he preaches, and those mouths were stopped. They didn't say, it's a heresy. He lived it.

The importance of being an example. A good, a Christian example. I know of a young boy, he went to the army.

And you know that to sometimes being a Christian in the army isn't so easy. You've got to have a backbone. And this boy was taught at home, before you go to sleep, you kneel down by your bedside and you pray.

And he knew in a day what the people were like. They're joking, disrespectful for godly things. And when they went to bed, a struggle was inside and his heart started beating.

He says, oh no, I can't, in this bungalow where we are so many, I can't kneel down at my bed and pray. What will they say? They'll laugh at me. It's gone.

It was very difficult for him. In his heart, he cried to god, he said, god, help me. And he jumped out of his bed and knelt by his bed and prayed.

And when he had finished praying, he opened his eyes and every young, every one of those soldiers was on his knees by his bedside. Not one that wasn't doing it. Everybody knelt just because of the courage of the man and the grace of god saying, god, help me.

I want to kneel by my bed and pray. And the whole school of people were on their knees because of this timid man. In America, it was a church, very posh, elite, the best.

And it was communion service. In the old way, they came to the altar, knelt, and drank out of the cup. And you know who the first person was to get up and knelt by the altar? It was a black man.

He knelt. And there was only this one cup and they all had to drink out of that cup. And then one young man got up.

He became a world famous man of god. He got up, went to the front, and knelt by this black man. And he said, when he had done that, the whole congregation came to the front and partook of that one cup.

Just his example. The others would be full of crap. Having this and that to say.

But he was an example and he went and he knelt beside this man. And that rocked, shook, and moved the whole congregation. And they all came forward to partake of that one cup.

Yes. Timothy, let no one look down upon you. But be an example.

Even if you're still a child, a young person. Be an example in speech, conduct, love, faith, and purity. Show yourself an example of those who believe.

Be an example to those as well. They're much older than what you are. They may be fathers or mothers.

And they say, who's this young man? And look down upon him because of his years. But you be an example to them. And every one of them will honor you and respect you.

Let us be such people. Martin Luther said of a certain man who was a preacher. His name was Nicholas Houseman.

Luther said of him, what we preach, he lives. Luther, what again? We need that type of man and people like Nicholas Houseman, who lives that what is being preached. I don't know whether you are an example as a young person at school, at home, wherever you are.

Are you a true example? If not, you bring a disgrace upon Christianity. The Zulus say, one day, four people appeared before God. The one was a Muslim.

The second one was a white man. The third one was an Indian. And the fourth one was a Zulu.

Then God said, I want to bless you. What is your wish? What should I give you? And the Muslim says, I want gold. I want to be blessed.

I want to have riches. God said, okay, you can have it. Then the white man came along and said, what is it that you want? He said, I'd like to have wisdom that I can control the whole world.

Then the Indian came along. He says, what do you want? He says, I want to be a businessman and make money. In 1952, when I was studying in Pretoria, I went to the market, sometimes to the Indian market.

You'd surprise, little children, not very much older than three. They'd go around and do business. They'd say, wouldn't you like to buy this or that? So the Indians got what they wanted.

So in 1952, when I was studying in Pretoria, I went to the Indian market. You'd surprise, little children, not very much older than three. They'd say, wouldn't you like to buy this or that? You'd surprise, little children, not very much older than three.

And then the Zulu came. God says, what would you like? He says, I'd like to accompany the others to Pele Zela. He says, I'd like to accompany the others to Pele Zela.

Then the Lord said, all right, you can Pele Zela them. I told them yesterday in the service about this. But I forgot to underline this.

I'm asking all of you, white or black, English, Afrikaans or German. In your Christian life, are you just Pele Zela-ing? Are you just accompanying the others? Forget about worldly things. In the spiritual life, maybe you are all, or many of you, just Pele Zela-ing.

You just run along with them, just accompanying them. You're a bad Christian, don't call yourself a Christian. If your life is like that, you've got to be an example.

You've got to show the others. Don't just follow them, show them how it's done. And stop Pele Zela-ing.

And that's the curse of the members of the church. They just Pele Lup Netsa. They just accompany.

Just have a short look at yourself. What are you like? Or are you the one who shoves the way for others? You are the one who leads the others to Christ, who shoves them the right way. The kingdom of God has got to be spread around the world to all the nations.

And during the reformation and revivals, there has always been something that broke the ice, that opened the way for God to move. And during the reformation with Luther, God broke through, through the word. Justification by faith.

And that opened the people's eyes. And God used that word. Justification by faith.

Justification by faith. And then they say, what kind of stories are you telling us? What does that mean? They don't know. They don't understand.

But during the reformation they understood. And then they say, what kind of stories are you telling us? What does that mean? In the time of John Wesley, there was a weapon, there was a word that broke through. And that was perfect love.

Perfect love. The first love. And when his wife dragged him by his hair through the house, he didn't hit back.

He wasn't a paparuk, but she reaped perfect love from him. The people understood that. Perfect love.

I think maybe we understand more about love than about justification. Perfect love. Read 1 Corinthians 13 and you'll be stunned.

These two, this pair that stood here, they don't know each other very well. But when God revealed to them, this is the way for you, automatically a love arose. Before God, they love each other.

And they're looking forward to the day when they can be together. Well, I don't hope that it will be like that young man who chose a beautiful doll, a nice young girl. And after she had a wash that evening, and she

came out of the bathroom and he looked at her.

He says, oh my, I didn't know that you were so ugly. She had washed away all the makeup. And he was shocked.

He said, are you so ugly? Now, one doesn't say that to a bride just after you had married, but he couldn't contain himself. He said, oh my, are you so ugly? All the powder, all the red paint, everything was gone. Well, he still had to love her even if she was so ugly.

Now, friends, are you living in that first love as these two people, their relationship before God, their dream of once being together? Have you got that love, the first love in your life? That's the greatest point and importance in serving the Lord, in being a co-worker, a preacher. Before Jesus called Peter to be a fisherman of men, he asked him three times, do you love me? Do you love me? Do you love me? If your service doesn't stem and doesn't come out of the fountain of love, you're a hypocrite. Spiritually, you are dead.

It would be better if you stop calling yourself a servant of the Lord. When Jesus called Peter to be a fisherman of men, he asked him three times, do you love me? If your service doesn't stem and doesn't come out of the fountain of love, you're a hypocrite. Spiritually, you are dead.

It would be better if you stop calling yourself a servant of the Lord. And the Bible has got different standards for love. And Jesus wanted the divine, the godly love.

Peter, do you love me with the godly love, the way God loves? And he couldn't say, so he answered with the low love. Yes, Lord, you know everything. You know that I love you as a friend.

The second time, he said, Peter, do you love me? And he said, yes, Lord, you know everything. You know that I love you as a friend. And he said, yes, Lord, you know everything.

You know that I love you as a friend. The second time, he said, Peter, do you love me? Do you love me with the godly love? He says, Lord, you know everything. You know that I love you like a friend loves a friend.

And the third time, Jesus says, Peter, do you just love me as a friend? And that broke his heart. That for the third time, he said, do you phileo me? Not do you agape me? He said, Peter, what kind of love do you have? Is it that firm, godly love? The Bible says, as Jesus loved his disciples, so he loved them to the end. Jesus, even Judas Iscariot, at the last meal, he said friend.

He called him a friend because of the love he had for him. He didn't say you traitor. Peter said, if all forsake you, of course, I'm not their quality.

They may do it, but I will die for you. And then he denied the Lord. And at the end, after the resurrection, he asked Peter, do you love me? I want you to be a fisherman of men, but you must have the love.

The godly, the divine love. So dear friend, have you got that love? Peter denied his Lord, and Jesus still loved him. The others ran away.

They left him in the lurch, but he loved them to the end. It didn't stop. The love Jesus had for them, even if they ran away from him, even if they denied him, I know him not, didn't quench that love in their hearts.

Even if they ill treated him, didn't take notice of him, he still loved them. Even when he stood on the cross, when he was nailed to the cross, he says, father, forgive them. They don't know what they are doing.

And I'd say they all knew what they were doing. But his love covered the multitude of their sins. In the past, there was a person who wanted the water baptism.

There were services to prepare them for the baptism. And he says he tried his level best. And then afterwards, he wasn't one of the candidates to go into the water.

Others were chosen, and not him. And he says, I give up, it doesn't help. The life you lived when you desired that thing, doesn't stop when you've got it.

You must carry on with that desire. Being baptized or not, that's got to be your life. And if you say, oh, I'm disappointed.

You are not a real Christian. It's spiritual humbug. You're playing the fool.

And God bless. And God be blessed that that person wasn't baptized. He didn't deserve it.

He thought just to get baptism, and then you go slick again. That's spiritual madness. Insanity.

I don't know, friends, where you stand spiritually. I haven't got the time to counsel all of you. Just a few.

So I don't know where you stand. But I ask you today, where do you stand before God? The Pharisees. The Lord said, all that they teach you, keep it, but don't do what they do.

You can't honor and respect Christianity if there's a gap between what a person says and what he lives. If your life and doctrine disagrees, isn't one, it's a disgrace to the Christian church and to Christ and Christianity. If what you do and what you are disagrees with and rejects what you preach, you're nothing different from a Pharisee.

When Jesus spoke, the people marveled. They said he doesn't speak like the Pharisees. Those aren't just empty words.

He has got authority. Why? Because he lived what he preached. Let's give special authority to him.

When the seventh sons of Sceva went, they heard about God's working through Paul. They went to see it. They were convinced this is the right theology.

Let me call it theology. And they went home and said, we are going to preach the same thing and do the same thing. They saw a possessed man and they said, in the name of Jesus who is preached by Paul, come out, you evil spirit.

Then this possessed man jumped upon them, rent their clothing, hurt them. They fled naked and hurt out of that house. But while he beat them, he said, Paul I know, Jesus as well, but who are you? You will be the laughing stock of the devil if you preach and you do the Lord's work and your life is not accordingly.

The devil will play the fool with you and you will live naked and hurt. One of the first points when revival started, to this day, I don't really know what moved me to talk about acts of the apostles. And I said, every church, every congregation, every movement has got their own favorites in the Bible.

The one is you've got to be holy, the other one is love, the other one is this and that. It was a holiness movement and they had a convention about holiness and two of those people didn't agree on something about holiness and they started a fight at the convention. A holiness convention.

Just imagine how such a thing is possible. But it is possible. Speaking and preaching about holiness and then disagreeing, criticizing, fighting each other.

They must have had some demons in their life. There must have been evil spirits at work in their hearts. And when we started, I said to pray for revival.

Let's not be like naughty children that break up the cake just to get out the nice things, the raisins and the cherries on top of it. Let's eat the whole cake. Let's not approach the gospel from a Lutheran angle or from a Calvinistic angle or from any other angle but from God's angle.

And we started with Acts of the Apostle, the first verse. I said let's go through the book, verse 1, verse 2, verse 3, the first chapter, the second chapter and let's search the scriptures and see whether we believe as the Bible says. Now I'm going to read you the first verse.

I asked somebody in my house, could you give me a Bible? I haven't even got a Bible. So the person gave me a Bible and that's the Hebrew-Greek study Bible with the old King James version. One verse one, the first account I composed, Theophilus, about all that Jesus began to do and teach.

The first account of what Jesus did and what he taught. Before you open your mouth, it doesn't count what you're going to say but what you do. And that was a knockout blow to me.

I wish I'd have time now to dwell on that. But I see the watch says no. Although I don't make an idol of the time, I don't want to do it.

But it shows me how long I've spoken. Let me draw to a close. A person won't give much for your religion and your Christianity unless it can be seen.

A lamp doesn't speak but it shines. Lamps do not talk but they do shine. And your Christian life has got to shine.

You've got to be an example. I said in the days of the Reformation, justification by faith. Now with John Wesley, perfect love.

And you can go down and down and down and you'll see what it was that broke through. We know how God broke through here during the time of revival and he's still working that way. And I think every nationality is different.

I've spoken about, no I haven't. They are the Muslims, they are the Hindus, they are the Europeans, they are the Africans. There is very little that is of greater importance than to be an example in purity.

Especially our engagement is one of the strongest weapons you can face any Muslim, fanatic Muslim. You can face any fanatic Hindu. You can face the nations with this and they respect you and they start to listen to you.

Be an example in purity. Twain says that a noise, a person. You can go to any Hindu.

Just tell them the biblical way of getting engaged. To any Muslim and he'll listen. Talk about something else and he says I don't want it, I don't want it.

I want the pure way. I forget very easily but there are some things that I haven't forgotten. Remember in Germany in a big huge church known as a revived church.

A girl and a boy got engaged. And when they had been engaged they visited each other. You know one thing leads to the other.

You start writing love letters. You go and you meet somewhere in the bush. In beautiful parks around the corners.

And this young girl fell into sin with her engaged partner. And it broke her heart. And I think for the rest of their life, of her life she'll not forget it.

And she went to the minister crying. She said I fell into sin. We visited each other.

Now we're going to get married. I confess my sin. That if you marry us I'll enter the church without a veil.

I want all the world to know I have fallen. I have sinned and I don't want to be a hypocrite and stand before the altar of God with a veil and it being a lie. And that's how she got married.

And I told the preacher I'm sorry for that girl. Did she come and confess it? He said yes. She exposed it.

He brought it to light. She was sorry that they visited each other. And that there was a relationship between them.

It spoiled everything. Did she repent after that? Did they stop visiting each other? He said yes. And I said you know if you ask me my opinion that is one girl that should have put on the veil because she repented.

The others did the same sin. Maybe not indeed but in thought and before God it's the same. Seeing that she repented and confessed it, God forgives and he forgets and we can forget it as well.

And then she could have had the honor with great joy entering the church with a veil because she met with Christ who made all things new. They send each other SMS's, photos. There's some relationship between them.

And that spoils everything. That's not an example to the unbelievers and to the believers. And it must be as clear and as bright as bright sunshine.

That friend or foe can only say amen to that. They can't point a finger. And don't blame those that point a finger.

They've got a right to do it. A man's life is more forcible than his speech. Remember that.

Remember that. Remember that. When a man takes stock of your life like a businessman taking stock in his business when he's a good businessman.

And people they read the Christians. If a person takes stock of your life, then you've got to remember before all Christianity, friends or foes, enemies, that they reckon your deeds as dollars. But your words is pennies.

I don't know. Are you just palisading? Just walking along? Or are you one of those that are an example in this crooked and damned world that they can see the light as bright sunlight. That is the pure way.

Be an example to everybody. And nobody will look down on you. They'll respect you.

If the Bible says flee youthful lusts, it doesn't just say flee in your mind. Flee as Joseph took Mary and the child and fled to Egypt. Do you flee from lusts if you visit each other? If you talk to each other? If you write love letters that just kindles the fire of lust in your life and you want to walk with a veil, a white garment on your wedding day and expect God to bless you.

Beware. Instead of getting a blessing, you may get the curse. That's what the veiled respecters.

And anybody won't look down on you. But everybody will look up and say marvelous and stand in awe. Be an example to the whole world.

Christian, no Christian and believers. Believers be an example to all. I'm just asking them whether they are an example to their people.

They are backsliders. Have you gone to him to speak to him? They are people who have fallen into sin. You go and speak to them.

Do you win the others? Are you a Christian, a flame for God? And are you an example in word, in deed, purity, whatever it may be? As standards, let's pray. Lord, grant by your grace that these people will be like Nicholas Houseman. Of whom Luther, for witness, we preach and he lives.

He lives what we preach. Amen.

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