

Qualifications for Spiritual Leadership - Part 2

by Stephen Kaung

Spiritual leadership requires brokenness, humility, and a willingness to lay down one's life for the vision and the people, and it comes with its own set of dangers and consolations.

Duration: 35:26

Scripture: Exodus 4:13, Judges 4:4, Matthew 25:21, Luke 14:28, 1 Corinthians 9:22, Galatians 2:20, 1 John 3:16

Topics: "Spiritual Leadership"

Description

In this sermon, the speaker emphasizes the qualities of a true leader. He highlights the importance of brokenness and humility in leadership, contrasting it with the ambition and self-centeredness often seen in leaders. The speaker also emphasizes the need for leaders to inspire and work with others, sharing their burdens and vision. He uses the example of Deborah in the Old Testament as a powerful illustration of a leader who inspired and led her people to victory. The sermon concludes with a warning against seeking personal success and ambition, instead urging leaders to seek God's approval and blessing.

Transcript

And it was at that very point that God raised him up as a leader to the children of Israel. Oh brothers and sisters, you'll find Moses, the Bible says he was the meekest of all men. I don't think we get that impression.

Oftentimes when you see a picture of Moses, what kind of a picture you'll find in Moses? He didn't look like very meek. All the artists into painting so masculine to the extent of violence. He was such a lawgiver, so serious, so strict, so serious, so hard, so harsh, a lawgiver.

But brothers and sisters, the Bible says he was the meekest of all men. Humility does not mean weakness. Humility is strength.

Because there is strength, you can afford to be humble. Most people cannot afford to be humble because they have nothing left. But dear brothers and sisters, here you'll find Moses, because God had broken him.

And after God had broken him, you'll find he could lead the children of Israel through the wilderness. And when they murmured against him, when even his own brother, his own sister, began to criticize him, when he was faced with all these things, what did he do? He fell upon his face before the Lord. You cannot touch that person.

You cannot touch that person. But oftentimes, in the thing that God works most in a person, that is the very thing he will be tested most. And Moses could not enter into the promised land because just once he lost hope.

He called the children of Israel, you rabble, I give you water to drink. And because of that, he couldn't enter into the promise, just that once. All the other occasions you'll find, he was the humblest person you can ever have.

He was the leader and yet you can kick him, you can push him. He will say, you don't push me far enough. I will lie down.

You cannot touch him. But thank God, even though he was not able to enter into the promised land, yet on the Mount of Transfiguration, he was there. Dear brothers and sisters, brokenness is a quality of leadership.

And sad to say, we do not see much in so-called leaders. Number four, just to mention another thing. A leader is a person who is able to inspire us.

And he is a person who is able to work. You have caught a vision. You have a burden.

You have a distress before the Lord. But how are you going to discharge it? How are you going to fulfill it? It is something that you can never do by your own self. You have to inspire the people of God with the vision that God has given you.

You have to be able to share your burden with God's people. In a sense, you make them distressful too. Otherwise, you will never be able to fulfill your leadership.

How can a general go to the battlefield and fight if his soldiers do not follow him? One of the best illustrations in the Old Testament is that prophetess Deborah. You know, the children of Israel were in such a low state. They were oppressed by the Canaanites.

And God raised up a judge in a woman, a prophetess, Deborah. Why did not God raise up a man and raise up a woman? Shame to the man. There was no man.

God raised up Deborah to be the judge. But here you find Deborah. She did not just do it herself.

She inspired Barrett. Deborah represents the divine principle of inspiration. Dear brothers and sisters, who is a leader among God's people? Not the one who do it all by himself.

A leader is one who is able to inspire other people and get them to do it with him. Oftentimes, especially in the church. How often you may see something that probably nobody has seen.

You find there's something needs to be done. Oh, how easy it is if you just go ahead and do it and finish with it. And probably you can do it much better than anybody else.

But the principle of God's working the church is comfortness. On the one hand, God raised up leaders. Yet on the other hand, not these leaders that monopolize and do everything for the people.

These leaders are raised up by God that they might see further, that they might learn to inspire God's people, to bring them in and get them to work. Nehemiah, he had a burden. He had a distress.

He came to Jerusalem, but he didn't tell anybody what he was going to do. In the night, he went out just with a few to look through that wall that was ruined and broken down. He didn't tell anybody.

He was alone in a sense. But the next day, he gathered the people and he inspired them, burdened them, shared with them his burden. And the people gathered together as one man to build the wall of Jerusalem.

And here you'll find this so-and-so and his people. They built a section. That family built another piece until the whole wall was connected and built.

A leader is one who can inspire people, lead people. But the people are doing that work. And of course, in connection with that, a leader must be able to work with other people.

Some are so individualistic, so independent. Not because you are a leader, you can't be independent. Now oftentimes, we think because you are a leader, therefore you can be independent.

The brothers and sisters, they should not be independent. And if anyone begins to be independent, you will deal with them. But because you are a leader, certainly you can do what you think must be done all by yourself.

Now, fellowship is the principle of the body. God raised you up as leaders, but you need to fellowship with the brothers and sisters. There must be a working.

Our brother mentioned something about that this afternoon. Why is it that in the church, the elders, the elderhood is always held in mind? In the church, God does not just raise up one elder. We will think if God raised up just one elder, that will be the simplest and easiest way to govern and to rule.

But eldership is always prone. In the church, God will raise up certain elders, even though there might be a divine order among the elders. That's true.

Not in the sense of a presiding elder by vote. But there is a divine order even among the few elders. And yet, there is the elderhood because the working of the body of Christ is following the principle of fellowship.

Through the fellowship among the elders, when they come into one mind once, and not only that, but the elders do not just stand apart and try to do everything or decide everything by themselves and then order the brothers and sisters to carry them out. Not so. Even before the elders come to the decision before the Lord, they try to find out the feeling of it.

They try to be open to fellowship with the brothers and sisters in the church. There is an open fellowship, that openness between the elders and the brothers and sisters. And when they allow the people to fellowship, then they bring everything before the Lord so that the mind of the Spirit may be known.

Brothers and sisters, there must be a coordination. There must be a cooperation. There must be a working together.

A leader is a person who is able to work together with all the brothers and sisters. Work together with other leaders whom God has raised up. It is true.

Sometimes this becomes very troublesome. It seems that because of this, lots of things you have to wait. It may seem like a wasting of time, but eventually you will find there is great blessing in it.

The unity of God's people must be kept in unity. So a leader is a person who is not just rule over everything, decide everything and go to it all by himself. A leader is a person who is able to inspire and to work with other people.

These are the qualities of spiritual leadership. And dear brothers and sisters, again we will emphasize, it is not something naturally in us. The Holy Spirit has to work Christ.

It is Christ. It is Christ that is true spirituality. It is Christ that is brother.

Christ is the vision. He is the burden. He is your distress.

It is Christ who is the ability to inspire and to work together with others. Before we close, I would like to mention something else. And that is the cost.

We mentioned last night that it was very costly in the making of leadership. When God is making a leader, it costs a lot. But after you have been called into spiritual leadership, it doesn't mean that from now on, it is all prize and no cost.

When God has put people into the position of leadership, you will find it is very, very costly. You remember the disciples when the two sons of Zebedee came to the Lord with their mother and said, Lord, just promise us whatever we ask, you will give. Sign the blank check because they are not too sure the Lord will give.

And the Lord, you know, He never signs such a check. He said, now what do you want? Bring it out. And they said, Lord, in your kingdom, let James sit on your right hand and let John sit on your left.

And you know what the Lord said? The Lord said, are you able to drink the cup that I drink? Are you able to be baptized with the baptism that I'm to be baptized with? They do not really know what the cup means. They do not really know what the baptism means. But they are so anxious to be on the right and the left.

So they will say anything. They will promise anything. They will say yes to anything.

They say, surely, we will. And the Lord said, yes, you will. Whether you like it or not, you will.

But to sit on my right and on my left is not for me to give, but it is for my Father who is in heaven to give. Brothers and sisters, what does it mean? It means that to be in leadership is you have to drink the cup that the Lord drinks. You have to be baptized with the baptism that the Lord be baptized.

When did the Lord drink the cup? In the Garden of Gethsemane. When was the Lord baptized with a baptism that He was to be baptized with? On Calvary's cross. In other words, in order to be a true leader, you must lay down your life.

The Lord said He laid down His life for us. We ought to lay down our lives for one another. Our brother mentioned that verse, 1 John 3, 16.

One day someone asked a great man, how much does it cost you to build up such an empire? And his answer was, not very much. Just one's own life. Dear brothers and sisters, the cost of leadership is your very life.

You have to lay down your life for the brothers and sisters. Lay down your life for the vision that God has given to you. It demands your life.

If you are not willing to lay down your life, don't be a leader. Paul said, I bear in my body the dying of Jesus, that the life of Jesus may be manifested in you. I die daily, nothing less.

It is not just a sudden thing. Oh, how brothers and sisters, people say, if only I can die a martyr's death, then I will get a martyr's crown right away. But unfortunately, there is no persecution here.

Dear brothers and sisters, if we do not live a martyr's life, how can we die a martyr's death? The Bible said we are living sacrifice. That's a martyr's life. What is a sacrifice? A sacrifice is something that is offered on the altar.

A sacrifice is to be consumed, slowly but surely, until it is all reduced to ashes. But the smoke rises in a sweet, smelling flavor. And the Bible said it is the fruit of a living sacrifice.

If this is the cost for every brother and sister, how much more it will demand upon the leaders. Peter said, the elders, they are shepherds of the flock. They are not to lord over the flock, but to set an example.

Leadership is costly. It costs your very blood, your very life. Number two, leadership is very lonely.

If God should put us in a position of leadership, you become a very lonely person, in a sense. In one sense, they are the brothers and sisters with you. Yet in another sense, those who are in leadership, they are the loneliest persons in the world.

Even the people do not understand. They do not know. You stand alone with God.

You have to learn to bear the loneliness. Not because you do not want to be friendly. Not because you do not want to be with brothers and sisters and have a good time.

Other people may, but you cannot. God's dealing with you will be severe, will be very strict. More than any other that puts you in a lonely position.

But brothers and sisters, if you have the vision, there is no escape. Number three, a leader is a person that will be criticized. Very few are appreciated when they are living.

So someone says, a leader is one whom people will build a monument after he dies with the stones that they threw at him. That is the cost of leadership. But dear brothers and sisters, take heart, it is worth it.

We have to say, what are the dangers, the perils of leadership? Number one danger, pride. Look at Saul. Before he was put in the position of leadership, he was, he seemed to be humble.

When Samuel disclosed to him that God had chosen him to be the king of Israel, and that was the first king. Oh, he said, no, no, no. Who am I? I am the smallest of the tribe of Israel, and I am the smallest in my family.

Who am I to be that leader? And you know, when Samuel gathered all the people, and to choose from the people a leader, and they took cast lots, and they took out the name of Saul, but they couldn't find him. Why, he hid himself among his baggage. He seemed to be very humble.

Oh, but when he ascended to the throne of Israel, he became, not became actually, what was really him began to reveal. The cross had not worked in the field. His humbleness was full.

You'll find Saul began to be a proud king. Everything for himself. His face was more important than anything else.

Brothers and sisters, the number one danger of leadership is when God began to use a person. When God began to prosper a person, the danger is he can become ambitious. He might not be ambitious in the beginning, because that would disqualify him.

He had no desire to be in the place of leadership. But after he was in the place of leadership, and he began to see that God was using him, he began to like that. And you'll find he began to be ambitious.

He began to try to build a kingdom for himself, instead of doing the work of it. He began to see, now that's my work. This is what I have done.

I remember my brother, who was a general contractor. Oh, he got up very early in the morning. He went to build houses in the city of Shanghai and other cities.

And he told me, he said, there was one thing that comforted him above all things, and that is when he was driving around in the city, he would look at one place and say, now this I build. He saw another building and said, that I build. That is his comfort.

Why? This is his kingdom. And dear brothers and sisters, leadership can turn into such a hideous thing, that you can just be building a kingdom for yourself. Become ambitious.

And of course, in connection with that, you begin to look for success. Who does not want success? But is it success that you are seeking? Or is it God's approval? How easy it is when God prospers a leader. Then he began to look for success.

And if God does not bless certain things, he tries to make it seem like a blessing. He has to make it successful. If it does not come from the Holy Spirit, then he has to supply it for the Holy Spirit.

Because he cannot afford. Oh, that is a great temptation to leadership. And then on the other side, the danger of leadership is jealousy.

When he looks over and he begins to see God has used others more than him, he begins to be jealous. That is a danger of leadership. If you are not in any position of leadership, you do not get jealous very easily.

That is why you find jealousies are often found among leaders. I often say God's people are so good. Nothing wrong with God's people.

If you find any problem, the problem rests with the leaders. Jealousy. And of course, another great temptation is popularity.

Oh, you begin to seek to be popular. And because you want to be popular, you have to compromise. Or going to the other extreme.

You begin to feel yourself so important that you become infallible. Infallibility is a great danger to leadership. Everybody can be wrong, but I cannot be wrong.

These, generally speaking, are the dangers. But dear brothers and sisters, we do praise and thank God. If God raised up people to be leaders, if this is what God wants, let us not draw back.

Do not push yourself into leadership. But if God should call you to leadership, do not draw it. When God called Moses to leadership, He drew back.

He didn't want to go. And you remember, God was angry because He was not thinking of God. He was thinking of Himself.

Dear brothers and sisters, what are the consolations of leadership? One consolation is, Paul says to the church in Philippi, if I may be poor forth with you on your supper, I rejoice. That is the comfort, consolation of leadership. Oh, if only God's people can see, can be built together.

If only they can be offered to God. If it requires me to be poor forth as a drink offering, I rejoice. That is my joy.

That is my crown. And number two, when the Lord shall return, the Lord said, good, well done, faithful, and good servant. You are faithful in little things.

I'm going to give you many things. Enter into the joy. If the Lord shall have it, that's all that matters.

So, dear brothers and sisters, let us look to the Lord. Oh, spiritual leadership is so much needed today among God's people.

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