

Reaction to Criticism and Opposition

by Zac Poonen

True spiritual leadership requires humility, trust in God, and the ability to fall on one's face in the dust, rather than self-justification and self-assertion.

Scripture: Numbers 12:3-14, Isaiah 53:7, Isaiah 54:17, 1 Peter 2:23

Topics: "Humility", "Spiritual Leadership"

Description

Zac Poonen emphasizes the humility and patience of Moses in the face of criticism and opposition, illustrating how he consistently fell on his face in prayer rather than defending himself or asserting his authority. Despite the rebellion of the Israelites and personal attacks from his own family, Moses exemplified true spiritual leadership by trusting God for vindication. Poonen highlights that spiritual leaders must learn to remain silent and rely on God during trials, as demonstrated by both Moses and Jesus, who entrusted their causes to God. The sermon underscores that true power lies in humility and the ability to endure criticism without retaliation.

Transcript

When the children of Israel were rebellious and said "Let us appoint another leader," Moses just fell on his face and kept quiet. We read that, "Moses and Aaron fell on their faces in the presence of all the assembly of the congregation of the sons of Israel." (Num. 14:5). He refused to vindicate himself. When Korah and about 250 other leaders of Israel rebelled against Moses' leadership, again we read that, "when Moses heard this, he fell on his face." (Num. 16:4). He would not defend himself, or hold on to his position, or assert his authority. When his own sister and brother criticised him behind his back and God began to judge them for it, again Moses was on his face praying that God would show them mercy. "Moses cried out to the Lord, saying, "Oh God, heal her, I pray!" (Num. 12:13).

Truly he was the humblest man on earth during his lifetime. The Bible records that, "Moses was very humble, more than any man who was on the face of the earth." (Num. 12:3). God can commit himself only to such men. Power and authority over others have a way of corrupting people. There is a saying in the world that "Power corrupts, and absolute power corrupts absolutely!" But absolute power did not corrupt Moses even slightly. God tested him again and again through the rebellion of his flock. Each time Moses passed the test.

Spiritual leadership has great dangers attached to it. But blessed are those who know how to fall on their face in the dust again and again, and how to hold their tongues and refrain from self-justification and

self-assertion . God's promise to His servants is that He Himself will vindicate them. He has said, "No weapon that is formed against you shall prosper; and every tongue that accuses you in judgement you will condemn. This is the heritage of the servants of the Lord, and their vindication is from Me" (Isa. 54:17). It is best therefore to leave such matters to God rather than to take them into our hands. Our only task is to commit our cause to Him Who judges righteously, as Jesus did.

"While being reviled, Jesus did not revile in return; while suffering, He uttered no threats, but kept entrusting Himself to Him who judges righteously." (1 Pet. 2:23). Three times in Isaiah 53:7, it is recorded that Jesus was silent - when afflicted, when sheared and when led to the slaughter. "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." (Isa. 53:7).

One who does not know how to keep silent on such occasions can never expect to be a spiritual leader. The opposition that we face is one means by which God tests our faith, to see whether we can trust Him to take care of the situation or not.

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