

Pastor's Corner: 10-7-17

The Nature of Christ-like Leadership

One day Jesus was paid a visit by the mother of two of his disciples. I'm sure this mom had the best of intentions, after all, she was only thinking about the future of her boys. When she spoke with Jesus she had one thing on her mind: how can I secure a spot for my boys in the leadership of the coming kingdom?

In Mt 20:21 we can read the request she brought to Jesus, "Grant that one of these two sons of mine may sit at your right and the other at your left in your kingdom." Essentially she wanted to make sure that her sons had high positions in the administration. Like all good mothers she really supported her kids and she wanted to make sure they came out on top.

Once the other disciples got wind of all this they became indignant. You see, they also wanted to sit at Jesus right and left hand side in the coming kingdom. They too wanted authority and positions of power in the coming kingdom.

What we see played out in this story is the natural inclination of the human heart towards authority, leadership, and power. In our world we climb the corporate ladder. We strive to be the head and not the tail. We clamber to become the king of the hill. Once we get to the top then we can call the shots, we can set the agenda, and we can lead.

Leadership from an earthly perspective is about being in charge, making the big decisions, and receiving respect from those beneath you. It's good to be the top dog, because then everyone else will get in line behind you. Our human view of leadership insists that those at the top exercise headship while those below should learn how to submit.

Jesus responds to this human view of leadership in Mt 20:25-28 when he says, "You know that the rulers of the Gentiles lord it over them, and their high officials exercise authority over them. Not so with you. Instead, whoever wants to become great among you must be your servant, and whoever wants to be first must be your slave—just as the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many."

In this passage Jesus takes the human view of leadership and flips it on its head. Instead of seeking position and power so that we can be first, Jesus says that his followers should seek to be slaves. His goal for us is not that we become better rulers, but that we become better servants.

If we want to be great in God's eyes, we should reverse the human paradigm and instead of seeking high positions, we should place ourselves below others. We should seek to uplift others rather than ourselves.

This approach might not be the best way to climb the corporate ladder but it is the only way to climb Jacob's Ladder. Let's strive to live Christ-like lives in a world that needs the example of selfless service.

HAPPY Sabbath,

Pastor Tyler