



THE LEADERSHIP MEASURE

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"For I say to you, that unless your righteousness exceeds the righteousness of the scribes and Pharisees, you will by no means enter the kingdom of heaven." Matthew 5:20

Jesus came not to dismantle the Law of Moses and the Prophets, but to fulfill them. Within that very context, He challenged the practices of the religious leaders.

"No one sews a piece of unshrunk cloth on an old garment; or else the new piece pulls away from the old, and the tear is made worse. And no one puts new wine into old wineskins; or else the new wine bursts the wineskins, the wine is spilled, and the wineskins are ruined. But new wine must be put into new wineskins." Mark 2:21-22

Jesus broke the mold. Despite going against the grain of the Pharisees' conventions, He was not suggesting anarchy. He was addressing something more.

Over the centuries the devil has been busy penetrating the ranks of spiritual leadership in his efforts to redefine the order established by the Law and the Prophets. Jesus came to destroy the works of the devil. His mission served to restore God's order.

The Point of Stumbling

At issue was and is the gauge of success and the measure of leadership that differentiates churchianity from revival-driven, societal transformation. The principal point of stumbling by the religious leaders perverted power and impeded the true leadership that marks the Kingdom. That point of stumbling was blind conformity.

"Take heed what you hear. For with the same measure you use, it will be measured to you; and to you who hear, more will be given. For whoever has, to him more will be given; but whoever does not have, even what he has will be taken away." Mark 4: 24-25

In the late fifties a book titled "The Organization Man" was the rage. Its message was that the pathway to success, corporately, was through corporate conformity. Today, in the political arenas, a similar overlay guiding the conformity of issues has emerged from "political correctness".

In the Church, the adherence to group-think has had its own variation of the "organization man". Perpetuated by the dichotomy between the sacred and secular, along with the separation of the priests and the laity, the mobilization intended by "perfecting the saints for the work of the ministry" is undermined.

The gap between the sacred and secular; and the priests and the laity strategically minimizes the impact of the believing community on the world around it. It was one of the central misguided myths that Jesus came to restore. The role of Kingdom leaders is to replicate themselves and mobilize the community rather than repel them.

"So Jesus said to them, surely tax collectors and harlots will enter the kingdom of God before you. Therefore, the kingdom of God will be taken from you and given to a people bearing the fruits of it." Matthew 21:31,44

When Jesus said He was not replacing the Law and the Prophets, but fulfilling them, it bore on extending the mantle of leadership to those who would break the mold, take up the mantle of the Kingdom, wield change and go beyond the limited, myopic scope demonstrated by the Pharisees.

His reference was to a standard of leadership that incorporated both modeling and imparting the principles of God's truth.

"Whoever therefore breaks one of the least of these commandments, and teaches men so, shall be called least in the kingdom of heaven; but whoever does and teaches them, he shall be called great in the kingdom of heaven." Matthew 5:18-19

The Leadership Priority

The organization man in the Church is the product of replacing mentoring leaders with an organizational paradigm that distorts true Kingdom leadership. True leadership begins by example, but then extends to preparing others with the same mantle to lead. It is a process rather than a goal. It is the means by which the community of believers grows and extends the influence of change to those around it.

"This is the will of God, that by your good works you will put to silence the ignorance of foolish men." 1 Peter 2:15

Leadership is a function, long before it becomes a position. True leadership is based on influence. The counterfeit is power. True leadership may result in a position, but position is in reality secondary, and only then a means to an end. The early church was viewed as turning the world upside down. That was a function of influence, not position. Joseph the patriarch's function as a slave was described with the words: "everyone saw that the Lord was with Joseph and made all that he did to prosper". Then while in prison, the jailer entrusted him with his authority because he saw God operating through Joseph.

"The LORD was with Joseph and showed him mercy, and gave him favor in the sight of the keeper of the prison, who committed to Joseph's hand all the prisoners in the prison. He did not look into anything that was under Joseph's authority, because the LORD was with him; and whatever he did, the LORD made it prosper." Genesis 39:21-23

Each believer has a sphere of influence. It stems from the authority of God operating within them. True leadership engenders trust and is the gateway for wielding the influence for God's authority. The issue bears on what rules and governs the standards by which society lives. The Organization Man is driven by the "rule of profit". Political correctness creates a following governed by adherence to particular issues based on a particular "rule of power".

When the church defines its standards by the rule of profit, political correctness or any other standard other than the Word of God, it succumbs to the lesser order, which undermines the rule of the Kingdom.

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The Conformity Trap

Blind conformity emasculates leadership as God intended and perpetuates the status quo. It minimizes the potential for impact from the community of God's people. Jesus' reference to the religious leaders as whitewashed walls and hypocrites points to their role of leadership falling short; of there being something essential and key that they had missed altogether.

"Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For you shut up the kingdom of heaven against men; for you neither go in yourselves, nor do you allow those who are entering to go in." Matthew 23:13-14

In addressing blind conformity that keeps God's people bound and anemic, Jesus made it clear that there would be hurdles to challenging the status quo. It's why He described the Kingdom path as being narrow and difficult. The Kingdom pathway goes against the grain. Yet, this is the very path from which to release the captives, give sight to the blind and free the oppressed. It is the foundation for activating times of God's favor.

"The Spirit of the Lord is upon me to preach the good news to the poor, to proclaim release to the captives, give sight to the blind, free the oppressed and proclaim the favorable year of the Lord." Luke 4:18-19

God's favor, the release of His Spirit to the level of what we refer to as revival, comes when the mold

is broken and God's people, each within their own spheres, begin finding the freedom that God has intended all along. Yet, the people are described as sheep without a shepherd and the leaders deemed as blind guides. So it is until the mold of conformity is replaced with a righteousness that exceeds the leadership of the scribes and Pharisees, we will not see the release of the Kingdom to manifest societal change.

The Righteousness That Exceeds

The "*righteousness that exceeds*" pivots on the Hebrew word *tz'dakah*. *Tz'dakah* is a charitable righteousness that serves to build the community. It underlies the premise of servant leadership outlined by Jesus. In short, it is the community dynamic that takes care of its own.

Isaiah describes this *tz'dakah*-righteousness. He says that the fruit of righteousness (*tz'dakah*) will be peace and effect of righteousness will be quietness and confidence forever. Certainly, the limited interpretation of righteousness by the church as a higher ethical standard has yet to bring this level of result.

When Jesus said "*whoever does and teaches [these principles] shall be called great in the Kingdom of heaven,*" he was giving reference to the influence to be wielded by each within their own sphere. It was the premise by which the book of Moses said that the community of God's people would be "the head and not the tail; to bring increase and not decrease". Deuteronomy 28:13

The Measure of Increase

One of the chief deceptions and challenges, as leaders, is applying the right measures.

Kingdom leadership pivots on influence. Whereas it begins with priorities, those priorities first require embracing the right model. With the right model will come the right influence; the influence with the "Kingdom measure". That measure is increase. Yet, it is not the standard of increase according to the world's measure, although it may incorporate it. But it also may not.

God's Word incorporates the model. Abraham ran a God-centered, entrepreneurial community. Deuteronomy outlines the principles of how God's people should govern and bring increase and blessing to the world they live in. The impact of the influence from this model wielded by the Jewish people has shaped the development of Western society.

Yet, from a human perspective, relegating God to a benign position in the course of politically-correct world-events has perverted the model and the pathway it is designed to uncover. God's truth will always exceed the wisdom of this world. However, without His Spirit at the operational center, His truth will digress into the confines of intellectual debate, which was the very trap that had ensnared the Pharisees.

There is a keen difference between the "rule of profit" and God's increase; as well as the "rule of power" and God's measure of leadership. The measure of God's leadership brings increase and life to those around them. It is being blessed to be a blessing, like Joseph, so that all-the-world recognizes that God is with us. Increase is at the heart of the very strategy of leadership that Moses outlined in Deuteronomy to guide the community of God's people into becoming the head and not the tail.

"When you harvest your field and overlook a sheaf, do not go back to get it. Leave it for the foreigner, the fatherless and the widow, so that the Lord may bless you in all the work of your hands. When you beat the olives from your trees or harvest the grapes in your vineyards, do not go over the branches a second time." Deuteronomy 24:18-21

Jesus both modeled and taught this strategy of increase with His approach to mentoring His disciples. It is the measure for leadership conforming to the community standard for stewardship that He summed up in His command to train the nations in Matthew 28; or to use the common translation of "make disciples of the nations". It evolves from the Ephesians 4 mobilization of perfecting the saints for the ministry that brings increase.

"The things which you have heard from me in the presence of many witnesses, entrust these to faithful men, who will be able to teach others also." 2 Timothy 2:2

This measure of increase in operation by Jesus' followers, aptly illustrating the parable of the talents, was described by a non-believer in Acts 17 as "*turning the world upside down*". God's very DNA is to create, to innovate, to build and to multiply; to bring increase. It's the priority that actuates the model for influence. It is the leadership measure by which the Kingdom is advanced and revival released.

In short, the simplicity of a mature, mobilized Body, growing as they mentor others, will release Kingdom authority for transformation. Its result will bring increase in the magnitude of the exponential. It is the catalyst for the release of the unharnessed fire of God. It is a byproduct of the balanced stewardship we have as God's people in ruling over the work of His hands. It marks the narrow path and foundation for influence and change by which we will release the captives, turn the world upside down and actuate the time of God's favor.

"Do not think that I came to destroy the Law or the Prophets. I did not come to destroy but to fulfill. For assuredly, I say to you, till heaven and earth pass away, one jot or one tittle will by no means pass from the law till all is fulfilled." Matthew 5:17

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Morris Ruddick has been a forerunner and spokesman for the call of God in the marketplace. He is author of "The Joseph-Daniel Calling" and "Gods Economy, Israel and the Nations," which address the mobilization of business and governmental leaders called to impact their communities with God's blessings. They are available from Amazon.com, BarnesandNoble.com and other popular outlets.

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