

Let us pray,

Lord, guide us to be leaders of your people. Help us lead so that others may also lead, following you.

Amen.

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Let's talk about leadership.

In America, we have this understanding of leadership.

That we want someone strong.

Someone who will "get things done".

Whatever that means.

Someone who will take charge, and do what needs to be done to get a certain desired outcome.

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Much of our leadership framework is built upon the idea that leaders are in charge of others.

But the biblical understanding of leadership shows a different story.

Especially when we look at Jesus and how he leads.

Jesus leads, not with the expectation that he is in charge of people.

He leads by living the way that his Father in Heaven has commanded him to live.

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He lives a life that is dedicated to service to others.

He lives a life that says not who am I in charge of but who am I called to help?

We have confused leadership with dictatorship, rather than mutual care and concern.

A lot of leadership in America is just about telling other people what to do.

I am the boss, I am the governor, I am the president, I am the CEO, you do what I say!

And so often, there are different rules and expectations for those who govern and those who are being governed.

Those who are governing can do things, that those who are being governed, can't.

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But Jesus doesn't want this hierarchy of leadership.

Jesus wants a mutual community of leaders.

We don't need to be Caesar in order to be a leader.

We don't need a degree, or a title, to be a leader in Christ's church.

The disciples of Jesus were nobodies.

And if they weren't nobodies, they were at least hated and despised, like Matthew the Tax collector.

These were not popular people, they were not the people who you would have wanted to listen to.

They would not be the people we would be electing into political offices, or giving raises to or promotions to at the workplace.

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And yet, Jesus calls them to be leaders.

Not because they are the most talented.

Not because they are the biggest go getters.

Not because they are the smartest.

In fact, they have a lot going against them.

If they were an employee, they would probably have a pretty thick file at the church, multiple improvement plans, you know the works.

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And yet, Jesus sends them out as leaders to spread the Gospel and to provide healing to a broken world.

And without their leadership, and their willingness to listen to Jesus and the Holy Spirit, this Christian Church would not be the largest religion in the world.

A faith that started with a handful of people is now 2.6 billion people and growing.

Growing in places that the Gospel was banned, and outcast and shamed.

This Gospel is growing in Asia and Africa, in places that need liberation, that need healing and hope.

Because this Gospel isn't about power.

Its about healing.

Its about Justice.

Its about making things right.

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But here is the thing.

It is not about making things right through strength, or power, or force.

But by a few leaders, who are willing to preach truth to power.

And put full faith in the words that are given them through the Holy Spirit, not through their own intelligence but the wisdom of the one who created all things.

True leadership is not about who we are, but about who we serve.

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And as Christians, as servants of the Christ, of the God who created all things.

We are called to be servants of the people.

Not of our own desires.

Not of some ideology that excludes others while raising up others.

This Gospel that we spread, reaches to the corners of the world, where those who are poor, downtrodden, excluded, pushed away, are brought back into the fold and told and showed that they are loved.

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The Gospel is at its best when we stop getting in its way.

When we stop saying who gets to be in and out.

When we welcome and offer a warm embrace to all people.

Especially to the people whom the world wished didn't exist.

Jesus is calling us.

Jesus is calling us to preach the good news to the people who need it.

Jesus is calling all who are weary, all who have heavy burdens, all who suffer, all who fall short of the glory of God.

And in this invitation, there is rest and a community of leaders, who understand that leadership is not about power over others.

But a call to serve and follow the only leader worthy of our ears.  
Jesus Christ.

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When Jesus says that we are called to reach out and welcome the stranger, the immigrant, the outcast, the prostitute, the tax collector, we are called to listen and follow.

We may have our own opinions, we may even disagree with Jesus.

I certainly do from time to time.

But if we truly desire to be disciples.

We must put our understanding of the world, beneath God's.

And learn to follow the Spirit, and not our own will.

That is what christian leadership is about.

So may we be leaders that Jesus would be proud of.

Amen.