

“THE LEADER’S PREPARATION”

Text: Mark 6:1-56

Subject: How Jesus prepares and equips us to serve as healthy leaders.

Introduction

1. It’s no secret that every servant must be equipped before they go forth into battle.
2. It’s no secret that to a great degree, success depends upon how equipped the servant is.
3. It’s no secret that Jesus called His disciples “**unto Him**” to be trained before He sent them out.

Question: Is it that important for you to be here and take “time out” to be equipped for service?

Answer: It sure is, because even a professional chef can starve to death while preparing food for other people. Nuf Sed!

The Setting of Mark 6

- In Ch. 1, Mark deals with Jesus and His Message.
- In Ch. 2, Mark reveals Jesus’ impact upon sinners, theologians and religionists.
- In Ch. 3, Mark reveals Jesus’ impact upon authorities, politicians, friends and His own family.
- In Ch. 4, Mark covers parables that teach us great truth.
- In Ch. 5, Mark testifies how Jesus has authority and power to banish demons.

(But in Ch. 6)

- ...We see the Son of God in His training ministry.
- ...We see how Jesus intensely and intentionally prepares the disciples.
- ...We see Jesus “**calling us to Himself**” (v.7) to....
 1. ...absorb and assimilate His character and behavior,
 2. ...be prepared to serve in an unpredictable world full of highs and lows, pains and pleasures.

(The Question Is)

- How does Jesus prepare us for servant leadership? (What does He consider important?)
- What are the characteristics of spiritual leaders that reproduce after Christ’s kind?
- What exactly is it that will prepare us and enable us to be healthy leaders?

(Unmistakable Lessons from Jesus’ Intensive Training of the Disciples)

I. Spiritual Leaders are Optimistic (while others are full of unbelief) (v. 1-6)

5, 6) “And Jesus could there do no mighty work...and He marveled because of their unbelief.” (v.

- Jesus has just stilled a storm, cast demons out of a mad man, healed an incurable disease and raised Jairus’ daughter from the dead.
- His fame has spread like wildfire and now it’s time to go home to Nazareth.
- Jesus comes as a rabbi (a teacher) followed by His students (the disciples).

Question: What does Jesus teach his disciples in this town of about 10,000 people?

Answer: He teaches us that He is limited only by unbelief!

Fact: The people of Nazareth see Jesus as a carpenter, the son of Mary and a brother of family members – but they are gripped with unbelief and a lack of faith in what Jesus can do.

Question: How does Jesus respond in v. 6?

Answer: “He was **amazed at their lack of faith**” (v.6) in this town in Galilee which had experienced the supernatural ministry of Jesus!

(In other words)

- God is looking for us to believe that Mark 16:20 is still for today:

“And the disciples went forth and preached every where, **the Lord working with them,** and confirming the Word with signs following.”

II. **Spiritual Leaders are content** (while others push and shove for stuff and status) (v. 7-13)

“In what place soever ye enter into a house, there abide till ye depart from that place. (v. 10)

- In v. 7, Jesus calls the disciples unto Himself – then sends them out with full confidence.
- The followers will be transformed into leaders as they receive instruction from Jesus.

Question: What does Jesus tell them as they journey out for ministry?

Answer: He prepares them inwardly (to be spiritually healthy leaders) in a very materialistic world.

(Jesus teaches a spirit of contentment...)

1. Contentment that is rooted in an absolute trust in God’s provision (v.8)

Jesus sends the disciples out and tells them to “**take nothing for their journey except a staff and sandals**” (the essentials for physical protection.)

- In other words, trust God to provide as you do His will!
2. Contentment that is free from the addiction of the love of stuff (v. 10)
Jesus told His future leaders to stay in the homes receptive to them (and not be looking for bigger and better and more lucrative opportunities.)

“Stay there until you depart from that city.” (v. 11) means:

- Forget climbing the ministry success ladder (and seek to be a servant.)
 - Don't bring offense to your message by selfish aspirations.
 - The spread of the gospel takes priority over personal likes and dislikes.
- Fact:** If I'm not content with what I hate I'll not be content with what I want.

3. Contentment that is secure in who you are when people reject you (v. 11)

“Shake off the dust under your feet when rejected” (means)

- Refuse to be controlled by someone's rejection.
- Refuse to stew in your own juice (and live angry).
- Refuse to allow the past to dictate your future of opportunities.
- Refuse to harbor any bitterness, resentment or unforgiveness that will defile and contaminate the fragrance of Jesus in your spirit.

III. Spiritual Leaders are Unmovable (while others drop-out when things don't go as planned) (v. 14-29)

“And when Jesus' disciples heard of John's execution, they came and took up his corpse and laid it in a tomb.” (v. 29)

- Herod imprisons John the Baptist because John rebuked him for marrying Herodias (his brother's wife).
- Herod is in violation of Levitical Law (Lev. 18:16, 20-21) and John shows tremendous courage by rebuking Herod publicly.
- John's courage cost him his life as Herod plays to the crowd and lets politics overrule principle.
- The disciples take up John's headless body and stand firm while processing their unfulfilled expectations.

Question: What do the disciples learn when John is beheaded (Instead of being delivered from prison and execution)?

Answer: They learn truth that prepares them for life and ministry:

1. That painful things can happen to good people in the perfect will of God.
2. That following Jesus does involve bearing a cross in this life.

3. That sometimes there are no answers to some of our “whys”.

Question: What enables you to continue on when you don’t have answers to your questions?

Answer: The answer is in Deuteronomy 29:29:

“The secret things belong unto the Lord, but the things that He has revealed belong to us and our children.”

In other words,

- There are some things that happen to us in life that are painful – and on this side of heaven we’ll never know the reason why!

Remember...

- Stephen and James were church leaders and Jesus allowed them to be killed.
- To the natural mind it doesn’t make sense – but God is still sovereign, makes no mistakes, supplies grace that is sufficient and will finish what He begins!

IV. Spiritual Leaders are Balanced (while the world says, “Hurry, run and Rush ahead”) (v. 30–34)

“Come apart and rest a while...and they departed into a desert place by ship privately.” (v. 31-32)

- Mark resumes his narrative about the disciples whom Jesus had sent out.
 - The disciples have just returned from their mission (and report what they have done and what they have taught.)
 - Jesus is sensitive and notices something about those who serve faithfully and diligently (What is it?)
1. The ministry and demands of people are taxing to human energy.
 2. The human body needs relief and rest after extensive labor.
 3. Everyone who serves God requires extended periods alone with God in prayer, meditation, study and refreshment.
 4. We must receive from God in order to share the presence and message of God.
 5. All of us must be recharged before we charge forward into battle.

(In other words)

- Each of us need a quiet place (daily) to come apart away from noise and busyness to let the Word speak to us, to rekindle the fire of the Holy Spirit, to focus undistracted upon the Lord, to receive the strength and direction of God so we can run and not grow weary.

Remember these words...

- “**Hurry is not of the devil, it is the devil.**” (Karl Jung)
- “**Leaders are qualified in secret.**” (J. Oswald Sanders)
- “**No man can do enough for others, if he is always surrounded by others.**” (Howard Hendricks)
- “**No one can be a public person without risk to his soul, unless first he is a private person.**” (Thomas A’Kempis)

And never forget this:

- Prayer is the breath of the soul; when I breathe I live, when I cease to breathe, I die!
- When I work, I work – when I pray, God works!

V. **Spiritual Leaders are Obedient** (while others hesitate because of their own limitations.) (V. 35 -44)

“Jesus gave the loaves and fishes to His disciples to distribute, and they set the food before the people.” (v. 41)

- Jesus (seeing the tiredness of His disciples) tries to get alone with them for rest.
- The crowds beat them to the spot where they are headed.
- When the disciples arrive, there are 5,000 men plus women and children who are hungry.
- Jesus shocks the disciples in v. 37 by telling them to, “**Give the people food to eat.**”

Question: How do the disciples respond?

Answer: They respond in two ways:

1. The disciples look at themselves and acknowledge that they only have 200 denarii (v. 37) which can never buy enough food for 5,000 + people.
2. The disciples, nevertheless, do what Jesus tells them to do, and pass out what Jesus hands them. (v.41)

Question: What is Jesus teaching every would-be servant in the local church?

Answer: He is teaching us the importance of obedience (even when we cannot figure it all out in our natural mind!)

Remember this:

- If you want to be a failure in life, just do these three things:
 1. Look at the size of your task!

2. Look at the **little** that you have!
3. Leave the **Lord** out of the picture!

(Let's ask ourselves)

- Am I willing to obey the initial promptings of the Holy Spirit?
- Is there any area of my life (in word, thought or deed) that is not living in total obedience?
- Can God trust me to do what He tells me to do?
- Do I resist or hesitate to obey God because I've been looking at my own limitations?
- Is God's opinion and approval of me more important than man's opinion and approval?
- Do I daily walk in the fear of the Lord (which produces a burning desire to obey Him in every area of my life)?

VI. Spiritual Leaders are **Desperate** (when winds blow out of control around them. (v.45-52)

"But when the disciples saw Jesus walking upon the sea, they cried out to Him." (v.49)

Question: What happens after Jesus miraculously feeds the crowd?

Answer: He constrains His disciples to leave and go to the other side.

Question: Why does Jesus do this?

Answer: Because the excited crowd wants to take Jesus by force and make Him King.

Question: What happens to the disciples while they are crossing the lake?

Answer: A violent storm arises (in the will of God) that teaches us an incredible lesson:

- It's been six to nine hours in rowing. (The disciples have only traveled three miles.)
- There is a contrary wind that leaves them exhausted.
- During the fourth watch, (v. 48) (or sometime between 3:00 am and 6:00 am) Jesus walks on water "**and would have passed them by.**" (v. 48)

Question: What do these leaders in training do in their desperation and exhaustion?

Answer: Verse 49 says it well, "**They cried out to Jesus.**" (What a discovery here!)

1. When we are distressed, struggling and toiling – we may not be able to see Jesus, but he always sees us!
2. Jesus doesn't call out to them – he waits for them to call out to Him! Jesus is waiting for us to call out to Him from the middle of our situation and circumstances.

Question: What happens when we "cry out" and "pour out" our heart to God in prayer?

Answer: The same thing that happened on this night:

1. Fear is erased. 2. Storms are calmed. 3. Strength is received. 4. Faith is accelerated.

Fact: Our spirituality is revealed by the degree of peace we have in the middle of our storms!!!

VII. Spiritual Leaders are Broken (while the selfish live only for themselves). (v. 53-56)

“They ran through that whole region round about.” (v. 55)

- The disciples have just drawn near to the shore line. (v. 53)
- As they land, the people recognize Jesus on board. (v. 54)

Question: What do the people do in response to this Jesus who can meet human need?

Answer: They do what God has called us to do.

“They ran through the whole region, to bring their families and friends to Jesus.” (v. 55)

(In other words)

- No trouble was too great! No pain was too difficult! No cost was too prohibitive! No distraction was too important!

(Why not?)

1. Because the people knew that Jesus could do for them what no one else could do (and)
2. The people were unselfish – and wanted others to experience what they had experienced.

(I beg of you to never forget that...)

- The anointing is not for you to feel good – **it is for you to help someone!**
- And leaders who help people are broken to their plans, their wills, their aspirations, their image and whatever’s!

(Notice v. 56)

- We bring people to Jesus (**that’s our job**) and “as many as touched Him were made whole.” (**That’s God’s job.**)

(In other words)

- God doesn’t work through a void, He works **through human personality!!!**

Conclusion

(Healthy leaders “prepared” to serve in the local church...)

1. Are **optimistic** and full of faith that God will add His “super” to their “natural” and do the **Supernatural**.
2. Are **content** and secure in being a **servant**, having no need to impress people and obtain more stuff.
3. Are **unmovable** when questions go unanswered, knowing that God has reserved some secrets only for **Himself**.
4. Are **balanced** and refreshed through consistent time **alone** with God and His Word.
5. Are **obedient** and “step out” knowing that God is not bound by our **limitations** and inabilities.
6. Are **desperate** and unashamed to cry out to God Who erases all fear and gives Divine **Peace**.
7. Are **broken** to their own will because people without Jesus will be **lost** for eternity!

Amen!

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