

Over the past couple of months, we've been talking about the roles and responsibilities of a pastor. One of the chief roles that every pastor is to take on is that of a shepherd to God's people. In Biblical times, a shepherd would walk in front of the flock of sheep or goats and the animals would follow. Likewise, in the spiritual world, a pastor is to lead his or her congregation. However, pastoral leadership is very different from worldly leadership.

The world defines leadership by power, position, and control. Titles matter. Authority is claimed. Success is measured by how many people serve you. Jesus turns that definition upside down.

When the disciples argued about greatness, Jesus did not rebuke their desire to lead—He redefined how leadership works in the kingdom of God. Christian leadership is not about elevation over others, but self-giving service for others.

Let's consider the differences between the World's Model of leadership vs. Jesus' Model

Mark 10:42–45

Jesus contrasts two leadership models:

The world's model: Power over people. It's all about control and in the world's vision of leadership, the more people you have under your control the more powerful you are.

Authority for personal gain: From a worldly perspective the most important question is, "What is in it for me?" "What am I going to get out of it?" Personal gain involves many different things. It may be wealth, or fame or pride or a host of other things

Status-driven leadership. Worldly leaders want others to notice them. Their motto is, Look at me. Look at the great things I have done.

Jesus' model: Rather than power over people in Christ's kingdom it is Service to people. In Mark 10:43, Jesus makes this very clear. "But

among you it will be different. Whoever wants to be a leader among you must be your servant,”

Rather than authority for person gain, Jesus’ model is Authority for others’ good; We all know the Golden Rule, Do unto others and you would have them do to you. One of my favorite authors, Leonard Sweet, says that there is even a greater rule, which he calls the platinum rule, Do unto others as Jesus would do to them. Jesus always put the welfare of others first. Jesus often used his authority, over demons, and illness and even death, yet this was always for the sake of another and never for his own personal gain.

Rather than status driven leadership, Jesus’ model is that of Sacrifice-driven leadership. Think about Jesus’ first miracle, changing water into wine. When the steward tasted the wine and found that it was the very best, Jesus didn’t stand up and say, “I did that, look at me.” Rather he made no claim nor sought any recognition. Of course, the ultimate example of this is when Jesus went to the cross and gave his life as a ransom for many.

Greatness in the kingdom is measured by service, not status.

Jesus didn’t just preach this message of servant leadership, he leads by example

John 13:1–17

This act of washing the disciples’ feet, teaches us three truths about servant leadership:

1. Servant leadership flows from security Jesus knew who He was and where He was going Vers. 3 says, Jesus knew that the Father had given him authority over everything and that he had come from God and would return to God.

When a person is Insecure about who he or she is, that person will always seek to be in control. Security allows for humility. If I were to ask you to describe who you are, I hope among the things you would say is, I am a child of God, I am the son, I am the daughter of the King of kings. For that’s who you are and when you claim these things, you come to the point

where you no longer must win other's approval. This in turn, opens the door to true humility because you have come to understand that who you are is the result of God's grace and has nothing to do with what you have or haven't done.

2. Servant leadership embraces lowly tasks. Foot washing was a servant's job. No task was beneath Jesus. If we ever start thinking, well I'm the pastor, so I shouldn't have to do this lowly task, we have wandered far from Jesus' example of leadership.

3. Servant leadership is meant to be practiced

I have given you an example, that you also should do just as I have done to you" (v. 15).

Servant leadership is not something just to be talked about, but is to be put into practice.

### III. The Heart of Servant Leadership: The Cross

Philippians 2:5–8

"Have this mind among yourselves, which is yours in Christ Jesus..."

Paul describes Jesus' downward movement From equality with God, To taking the form of a servant, To death on a cross

Servant leadership is not merely a way doing something, it is an attitude that permeates our lives.

Humility over pride

Obedience over self-interest

Sacrifice over comfort

Leadership in the church must look like the cross before it looks like a crown.

### IV. The Paradox of God's Kingdom

Philippians 2:9–11

After the downward movement comes exaltation:

“Therefore God has highly exalted him...”

In God’s kingdom, the humble are lifted, the servants are honored, the self-emptying are filled

Servant leadership does not lead to loss—it leads to God’s glory and lasting influence.

Jesus said in Matthew 20:16 So those who are last now will be first then, and those who are first will be last.

What does servant-leadership look like in your church? Examples