

LIBERTY BAPTIST THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY

A LEADERSHIP TRAINING MANUAL FOR THE 21ST CENTURY CHURCH LEADER
BASED ON THE PATTERN AND PRINCIPLES JESUS CREATED TO TRAIN THE
TWELVE APOSTLES

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LIBERTY BAPTIST THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY

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ABSTRACT

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TWELVE APOSTLES

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Liberty Baptist Theological Seminary, 2011

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Christian leadership training for pastors, missionaries, and lay leaders is mostly patterned after academic, business, military, and government models. This leads to a pragmatic, secular, and American approach to building Churches and advancing the Kingdom of God. Secular models of leadership training can inform and supplement but never usurp scriptural principles and values. The best Christian leadership training pattern is the one Jesus created to train the twelve Apostles. This model is found predominately in the gospels. The template this writer will follow is based on A. B. Bruce's 19th century seminal work, *The Training of the Twelve*. This training model is built on Christ's instruction to the twelve in four stages; the calling of the spiritual leader, the character of a spiritual leader, the competence of a spiritual leader, and the commission of a spiritual leader.

ABSTRACT LENGTH: 136 WORDS.

DEDICATION

TO LENORA, MY WIFE, A NOBLE WOMAN AND A BLESSING TO ME FOR OVER 34 YEARS
AND
TO MY FATHER, DONALD B. BAXTER (MAY 21, 1930--APRIL 19, 2011), WHOM I DEARLY
LOVED AND WILL SEE AGAIN IN HEAVEN, WHO DIED DURING THE COURSE OF COMPLETING
THIS PROJECT

ACKNOWLEDGMENT

THANKS TO BILLY HAMM, MY BATTLE BUDDY, AND THE MEMBERS OF FAITH JOURNEY
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Chapter 1

Introduction

Christians in every generation are called to serve and lead in every area of life. Imitating Jesus Christ is the goal of each believer.¹ The methods that Jesus used to train and equip His followers two thousand years ago are still the ones that are effective for the twenty first Century Christian Church. The challenges that Jesus faced in training his original twelve disciples are very similar to the challenges Christian leaders face today.

Bill Hull captures the dilemma of the contemporary spiritual leader today in developing leaders to pass on the truths of Jesus Christ to faithful people:²

There is a stereotype for a person interested in spiritual formation. Since the term comes out of the academic world, this stereotype includes spending long hours in prayer, journaling your prayers and thoughts, and reading ancient mystics named Theresa, Blasé, and Henri, mediating and memorizing scripture. Doing it for hours and loving it, doing it for years and it flows out of you. Yes there are people like that, but to play into such stereotypes will hurt the cause. There must be a way for the non-contemplative common man to practice the disciplines and experience transformation that is not laden with the academy.

The other stereotype comes from the classic discipleship literature. It has been heavily influenced by the parachurch movement in groups like Navigators, Campus Crusade for Christ and others. The classic discipleship literature has been task oriented. Engineers and athletes have been drawn to it. It tends to be linear with steps and methods. It works real well for task-oriented people who are looking for results. So discipleship took on a program approach, a regime to finish, a project to do and a goal to be reached. This has tended to cut out people with non-linear learning styles or those who are repulsed by task oriented programs.³

¹ John 14:6; Philippians 3:8. All Scripture references taken from the *Net Bible* (www.bible.org, 1996-2005), unless otherwise noted.

² 2 Timothy 2:2.

³ <http://bible.org/article/about-choose-life> (accessed 1/3/2011).

There is a model that strikes a balance between the two extremes listed above. One that will “blend the best of both the spiritual formation movement and the classic discipleship movement” so everyone can participate regardless of temperament or style.⁴

For nearly one hundred and forty years *The Training of the Twelve* by A. B. Bruce⁵ has been a seminal work for pastors and other ministry leaders to teach and train disciples and leaders in the church. His work examines the four gospels in detail and documents how Jesus called, instructed, and mentored his disciples from the inside out. Bruce documents how our Lord explained biblical principles, modeled character formation, and infused passion into 12 ordinary men. This was accomplished over a three year period in the context of a vibrant personal relationship, violent opposition from the religious leadership of the day, and in the end the Roman Empire.

Dr. Alexander Balmain Bruce (1831-1899) faithfully served the Free Church of Scotland as a pastor and professor for over forty years. He was born in Aberargie, Scotland (near Perth)) and was educated at New College, Edinburgh. He pastored two churches from 1868-1875. From there he was appointed the chair of Apologetics and New Testament exegesis in the Free Church Divinity Hall in Glasgow (Trinity College). Dr. Bruce served in that capacity until his death on August 7, 1899. His contemporaries knew him as being plain spoken and focused on understanding and knowing “God’s glory in Jesus’ humble humanity.”⁶ His singular focus on studying the gospels and trying

⁴ Ibid.

⁵ A. B. Bruce, *The Training of the Twelve*, (Grand Rapids: Kregel Publications, 1971). This book was first published in 1871.

⁶ For a detailed discussion of the life and work of Dr. Bruce see Donald K. McKim, ed., *Dictionary of Major Biblical Interpreters*, (Downers Grove: IVP Academic, 2007), 234-235.

to understand the historical Jesus⁷ is reflected in a work that has captured the interest of serious Bible students for generations.

STATEMENT OF PURPOSE

The purpose of this project is to take the principles that Dr. Bruce articulated and reformat them into a leadership training manual for Church leaders to use as a template to grow disciples and spiritual leaders in the 21st Century Church. Stuart Briscoe in writing the foreword for the book explains that Bruce's work is still relevant today for three reasons-it uses the gospels as the source material to train believers to minister, challenges the church to function as the church as the body of Christ, and instructs us to grow spiritually by developing a personal relationship with Jesus Christ:

Dr. Bruce would have felt right at home with the present emphasis on training people to minister, and his book has much to offer as a resource for such training as it shows the Master training His special team. Seeing the church as the body of Christ is another healthy contemporary emphasis. It serves to deliver people from the mistaken idea that church is something people attend and introduces them to the biblical concept that the church is something people are. For Christians to see themselves as the body of Christ and to order their lives in loving response to each other as fellow members, committed to mutual nurture, is potentially revolutionary. This book carefully documents the struggles and successes of the first group of people who endeavored so to love each other that they became recognizable as Christ's disciples.

Dr. Bruce's work will greatly benefit modern readers because his studies carefully examine how the disciples grew as a result of their relationship with the Master. The contemporary church needs to remember that the invaluable information gleaned from the social scientist about human behavior must never be seen as a substitute for a personal relationship with the living Lord Jesus similar to that enjoyed by the twelve as they walked the highways and byways together. How they heard his word, studied his reactions, fulfilled his commands, and responded to

⁷ Ibid, 234.

his promises is faithfully recorded for us in Scriptures and beautifully applied to our situation in this book.⁸

This paper will attempt to describe a leadership training plan based on Dr. Bruce's exhaustive exegetical study of the four gospels. He gives his readers a detailed account of how Jesus trained the twelve disciples. Using a total of thirty one chapters he recounts the process by which our Lord calls, trains, and commissions the disciples. In the closing pages of the book he summarizes it this way:

To enumerate the topics, as far as possible in the order in which they have been considered in this work, Jesus gave His disciples lessons on the nature of the divine Kingdom (chaps. 5, 8); on prayer (chap. 6); on religious liberty, or the nature of true holiness (chap. 7); His own Person and claims (chap. 11); on the doctrine of the cross and import of His death (chap. 9, 12, 17, 18, 22); on humility and kindred virtues, or on the right Christian temper required of disciples both in their private life and in their ecclesiastical life (chaps. 14, 15, 17, 21, 29); on the doctrine of self-sacrifice (chap. 16); on the leaven of Pharisaism and Sadduceeism, and the woes it was to bring on the Jewish nation (Chap. 7, 10, 22); on the mission of the comforter, to convince the world and to enlighten themselves (chaps. 25, 29). The teaching conveyed, assuming that we have even an approximately correct account of it in the gospels, was fitted to make the disciples what they were required to be as the apostles of a spiritual and universal religion: enlightened in mind, endowed with a charity wide enough to embrace all mankind, duty, yet delivered from all superstitious scruples, emancipated from the fetters of custom, tradition, and

⁸ A. B. Bruce, *The Training of the Twelve*, x. There are also striking parallels between the end of the 19th Century and the first decade of the 21st Century. Both periods are marked by tremendous changes; the former saw a secularization of the culture after the Civil War, the rise of Darwinism and an emphasis on scientific knowledge and as a result an age of statistics, standardization, specialization, and information. Theological liberalism and higher criticism challenged traditional Christian thought. Also, the Industrial Revolution divided the private realm of family and faith from the public realm of business and industry. Our 21st Century culture is almost completely secularized. Scientific knowledge has replaced God because He cannot be proven naturalistically. The industrial age has been replaced by the information and technology age. Postmodernism posits truth as constructed, not found, but Darwin's evolutionary model is now the only objective fact that is true. Theological liberalism has morphed into the emergent church; a return of old world liberalism couched in orthodox theological language. Not much has changed in 140 years. For further discussion see George M. Marsden, *Fundamentalism and American Culture*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006), 11-62; and Nancy Pearcey, *Total Truth: Liberating Christianity from Its Cultural Captivity* Wheaton, Crossway Books, 2004), 227-243, 325-350.

commandments of men, and possessing tempers purged from pride, self-will, impatience, angry passions, vindictiveness and implacability.⁹

In order to unpack what Bruce is trying to convey this writer will submit a somewhat similar but more complete outline.¹⁰ Appendix A and B will have Dr. Bruce's original table of contents and Bible passages so the reader can follow his train of thought. The leadership training model will consist of four parts; the calling of a spiritual leader (chapters 1-4, 23), the character of a spiritual leader (chapters 5, 7, 14, 16, 21), the competence of a spiritual leader (chapters 6, 8, 9-11, 12- 13, 15, 17-19, 22), and the commission of a spiritual leader (chapters 24-31).

LIMITATIONS

There are several limitations that will frame this project despite the above mentioned purpose statement. First, the author will use the terms 'Leadership Training' and Discipleship Training' somewhat synonymously. There will be a fuller discussion under the review of the literature.

Secondly, this paper is not an attempt to write an exhaustive commentary on the four gospels. The focus is on drawing out biblical principles on Leadership Training based on Jesus method of training the twelve apostles as documented in Dr. Bruce's book.

Thirdly, the author assumes an orthodox hermeneutic (following in the heritage of the Reformers) of interpreting the Bible, stressing the grammatical, historical, literary

⁹ Ibid, 544-545.

¹⁰ Dr. Bruce included only twenty of the thirty-one chapters in his summation. This paper will incorporate all thirty-one chapters under four main themes.

(rhetorical) position.¹¹ Doctrinal positions are based on a dispensational moderate Calvinistic theology.¹²

Fourthly, this project will not attempt to explain or develop Dr. Bruce's apologetic and detailed arguments against the "Tubingen School" of critics. There will be no attempt to explain F.C. Baur's anti-supernatural presuppositions, rationalistic approach to explaining Jesus deity, and his rejection of divine revelation in the New Testament.¹³ Bruce had a crisis of faith during his college years studying for the ministry. He read David F. Strauss's book *Life of Jesus*, where he claimed the Bible was not a supernatural book and the gospels were myth. As a result Bruce places a tremendous amount of emphasis on the historicity of the gospel accounts. He writes in the introduction to the second edition, "*The Training of the Twelve* must, from the nature of the case, have some bearing on this conflict-hypothesis of Dr. Baur and his friends." The last two lines of the book are a parting shot against their position as well, "According to a well-known school of critics, they acquitted themselves very poorly indeed—in a manner utterly unworthy of their great Master. Which view is the more credible, that of the evangelist Luke, or that of Dr. Baur?"¹⁴

Finally, this model is designed for use as a template to enhance existing leadership training models, not to critique or criticize any existing church/ministry models. The goal is to strike a balance between the contemplative cloistered life of a deep

¹¹ Dr. Roy B. Zuck, Bible 301 Class Notes on Hermeneutics, (Dallas Theological Seminary, Fall, 1980, Dallas, TX), 17. See also Graeme Goldsworthy, *Gospel-Centered Hermeneutics: Foundations and Principles of Evangelical Biblical Interpretation* (Downers Grove, IVP Academic, 2006), 39-56.

¹² The author was trained at Dallas Theological Seminary (DTS). See the doctrinal statement from DTS at <http://www.dts.edu/about/doctrinalstatement/> (accessed 1/5/2011).

¹³ McKim, *Dictionary of Major Biblical Interpreters*, 179.

¹⁴ Bruce, *The Training of the Twelve*, ix, 545.

thinker and mystic over against the classic goal oriented programs which have a myriad of steps, processes, and goals.

Literature Review

In order to better understand the leadership style of Jesus and how He trained His disciples one needs to better understand the term leadership. A review of the literature will show that Christian leadership differs significantly from other leadership styles and characteristics. There are many similarities between secular and sacred leaders but there are major differences as well.

Leadership Defined

To better understand the definition of leadership Bennis and Nanus has surveyed the literature and offered these insights:

Decades of academic analysis have given us more than 350 definitions of leadership. Literally thousands of empirical investigations of leaders have been conducted in the last seventy-five years alone, but no clear and unequivocal understanding exist as to what distinguishes leaders from non-leaders, and perhaps more important, what distinguishes *effective* leaders from *ineffective* leaders and *effective* organizations from *ineffective* organizations.¹⁵

According to Gary Yuhl leadership is defined:

...in individual traits, behavior, influence over people, interaction patterns, role relationships, occupation of an administrative position, and perception by others regarding legitimacy of influence....¹⁶

Yuhl continues with a sampling of definitions over the last 50 plus years:

1. Leadership is “the behavior of an individual when he is directing the activities of a group toward a shared goal.” (Hemphill & Coons, 1957, p. 7).

¹⁵ Warren Bennis & Burt Nanus, *Leaders: The Strategies For Taking Charge* (New York: Harper & Row, 1985), 4.

¹⁶ Gary Yuhl: *Leadership in Organizations*, 3rd Edition, (Englewood Heights: Prentice Hall, 1994), 2.

2. Leadership is “interpersonal influence, exercised in a situation, and directed, through the communication process, toward the attainment of a specified goal or goals.” (Tannenbaum, Weschler, & Massarik, 1961, p. 24).
3. Leadership is the “initiation and maintenance of structure in expectation and interaction.” (Stogdill, 1974, p. 411).
4. Leadership is the “influential increment over and above mechanical compliance with the routine directives of the organization.” (Katz & Kahn, 1978, p. 528).
5. Leadership is “the process of influencing the activities of an organized group toward goal achievement.” (Rauch & Behling, 1984, p. 46).
6. Leadership is a process of giving purpose (meaningful direction) to collective effort to be expended to achieve purpose. (Jacobs & Jaques, 1990, p. 281).
7. Leaders are those who consistently make effective contributions to social order, and who are expected and perceived to do so. (Hosking, 1988, p. 153).¹⁷

The best one can say regarding these definitions is that there is no one ‘right’ definition. Yuhl’s own definition is no different:

Leadership is defined broadly as influence processes affecting the interpretation of events for followers, the choice of objectives for the group or organization, the organization of work activities to accomplish the objectives, the motivation of followers to achieve the objectives, the maintenance of cooperative relationships and teamwork, and the enlistment of support and cooperation from people outside the group or organization.¹⁸

Leadership has been defined differently throughout the years. The common element of all the definitions is influence in a relationship or group. There are different ways, manners, and means to exercise this influence depending on the particular situation. There is no general theory of leadership that explains all aspects of the processes. Most theories of leadership focus on a narrow perspective and examine only one part of the entire process. This paper will discuss the various line of leadership theory

¹⁷ Ibid, 2-3.

¹⁸ Ibid, 5.

later in this section. Now, this project will focus on the subject matter at hand; leadership in the Church.

Leadership and the Church

There are a tremendous amount of books and articles being written by pastors, missionaries, other church staff, and theologians with regard to leadership as well. Here is a sampling of how believers define leadership:

1. "Spiritual leadership is moving people on to God's agenda." Henry and Richard Blackaby, *Spiritual Leadership*.¹⁹
2. "Leadership is a dynamic process in which a man or woman with God-given capacity influences a specific group of God's people toward his purposes for the group." Dr. J. Robert Clinton.²⁰
3. Leadership "begins with God himself as the ultimate model of leadership. The underlying premise is that, throughout the Bible, God has demonstrated principles for leadership that can be used profitably by all people who are in a position to lead others –whether in business or ministry, in the school or in the home." Ken Boa.²¹
4. "Transforming leaders are those who are able to divest themselves of their power and invest it in their followers in such a way that others are empowered, while the leaders themselves end with the greatest power of seeing themselves reproduced in others." Leighton Ford.²²
5. "What is Christian leadership? It is leadership motivated by love and given over to service." Ted Engstrom and Ed Dayton.²³
6. "A Christian leader is someone who is called by God to lead; Leads with and through Christlike character; and demonstrates the functional competencies that permit effective leadership to take place." George Barna.²⁴
7. Quoting John Mott spiritual, leadership is: "Leadership in the sense of rendering maximum service; leadership in the sense of the largest unselfishness; in the sense of full-hearted absorption in the greatest work of the world: building up the kingdom of our Lord Jesus Christ." Oswald Sanders.²⁵

¹⁹ Henry & Richard Blackaby, *Spiritual Leadership* (Nashville: Broadman & Holman, 2001), 20.

²⁰ J. Robert Clinton, *The Making of a Leader*, (Colorado Springs: NavPress, 1988), 14.

²¹ Kenneth Boa, *The Perfect Leader*, (Colorado Springs, Victor, 2006), 9.

²² Leighton Ford, *Transforming Leadership: Jesus Way of Creating Vision, Shaping Values, & Empowering Change*, (Downers Grove: InterVarsity Press, 1991), 15-16.

²³ Ted W. Engstrom & Edward R. Dayton, *The Art of Management for Christian Leaders* (Waco: Word, 1976), 27.

²⁴ George Barna, *Leaders On Leadership*, (Ventura: Regal, 1997), 25.

²⁵ J. Oswald Sanders, *Spiritual Leadership*, 2nd ed., (Chicago: Moody Press, 1994), 32. Many recent Christian authors such as Barna, Blackaby, and Clinton, quote Sanders definition of leadership as simply

8. "Leadership is influence---nothing more, nothing less." John Maxwell.²⁶
9. "Leadership is servanthood." Calvin Miller.²⁷
10. Shepherd is a metaphor for Christian leadership. "Shepherd is a felicitous metaphor for human leadership because both occupations have a comparable variety of diverse task that are constantly negotiated." Tim Laniak.²⁸

Christian leadership definitions are much more specific than their secular counterparts. Blackaby defines the spiritual leader's task as moving people away from their own plans toward God and His purposes, depending on the Holy Spirit while remaining accountable to God, and at the same time having a positive impact on the culture at large. Spiritual leaders seek God's will by modeling themselves after Jesus Christ and His relationship with the Father.²⁹

Robert Clinton focuses on the spiritual dynamics that shape the Christian leader. The Lord uses the patterns and processes in life to mold, shape, and form us to become better prepared as leaders. The end result is being spiritually fit to do the specific job God has assigned to the leader.³⁰

Leighton Ford specifically identifies Christian leadership as 'transformational.' He believes that a higher order of leadership is necessary today. It is not enough for

'influence.' This writer disagrees. In the same chapter these authors cite Sanders as defining leadership as influence. Sanders continues, however, to define Christian leadership as confidence in God, seeking his will, being humble, loving others, depending and delighting in God.

²⁶ John C. Maxwell, *The 21 Irrefutable Laws of Leadership: Follow Them and People Will Follow You*, (Nashville: Thomas Nelson Publishers, 1998), 17.

²⁷ Calvin Miller, *The Empowered Leader: 10 Keys to Servant Leadership* (Nashville: Broadman & Holman, 1995), x.

²⁸ Timothy S. Laniak, *Shepherds After My Own Heart: Pastoral Traditions and Leadership in the Bible* (Downers Grove: InterVarsity Press, 2006), 40.

²⁹ Blackaby, *Spiritual Leadership*, 20-24.

³⁰ Clinton, *The Making of a Leader*, 13-16.

leaders to promise rewards in exchange for performance. Transformational leaders motivate by raising values, transcending self-interest, and taking great risks.³¹

Engstrom and Dayton believe Christian leadership is different than secular leadership in its motivation. Being controlled by Christ raises the standard for leadership. The best leaders are those who model attributes of selfless dedication, courage, decisiveness, compassion, and persuasiveness. These traits reflect Jesus' role as a servant (Mark 10:45).³²

George Barna combines the Christlike character of a leader with core competencies that all leaders must possess. He is convinced that leaders must have a call by God to servanthood and possess the characteristics of Christ inwardly and outwardly. One must have core competencies that include casting vision, directing energy and resources, building teams, developing strategy, and being responsible for outcomes. Barna goes on to say that the focus must be on God's call as a leader not the competencies that leaders possess. Without a true calling from God a leader's skill set has no spiritual value or meaning. The end result is people are merely following a person instead of God. Barna also removes much of the subjective nature of "God's call" of a leader by providing eight traits that a Christian leader must possess in order to lead God's people.³³

Oswald Sanders in his classic work on leadership, draws a contrast between natural and spiritual leadership. He compares and contrasts military and political

³¹ Ford, *Transforming Leadership*, 22-27.

³² Engstrom & Dayton, 27-28.

³³ Barna, *Leaders on Leadership*, The eight signs of God's call are; sensing the call, a natural inclination to lead, having a vision focused on the future, being an influencer, being comfortable around other leaders, people validate your leadership skills by following your lead, have the internal strength to stand up for the 'right', and enjoying being a leader in spite of the hardships and controversy that come. 23-27.

leadership with spiritual leadership. There are many similarities but spiritual leadership is unique. A spiritual leader must exercise the gifts and qualities of the Holy Spirit. One must have an overwhelming conviction that God is calling the believer to a task that is greater than self. Sanders goes on to say that, “spiritual goals can be achieved only by spiritual people who use spiritual methods.”³⁴

John Maxwell’s definition that leadership is simply ‘influence’ misses the mark. Generally speaking he is correct but spiritual leadership is so much more. Banks and Ledbetter draw a distinction between secular and sacred leadership:

Within the issue of values, of course, lie core beliefs and worldviews, which ultimately drive attitudes, motivations, goals, and actions. It is at this point that a Christian perspective on life has its entry point and its relevance. A stark contrast can be drawn between God’s and the world’s view of leadership.³⁵

Maxwell has taken basic secular principles of good business practices and overlaid them on the Church. Dr. Gangel, professor of Christian Education at Dallas Theological Seminary, warns the Christian community about this practice:

In one sense this is good news for the church of Jesus Christ. Believers have learned to spoil the Egyptians, to borrow eclectically what the world has done, run it through the grid of biblical understanding, and apply it in ministry. Essential to that process, however, is the recognition that the gospel has always been countercultural in every age and in every place.³⁶

As helpful as Maxwell’s insights into leadership are, there were few overtly spiritual principles or scriptures cited. That being said there are still valuable truths that a leader can learn from Maxwell’s 21 laws of leadership.³⁷

³⁴ Sanders, 26-32.

³⁵ Robert Banks and Bernice M. Ledbetter, *Reviewing Leadership: A Christian Evaluation of Current Approaches*, (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2004), 34.

³⁶ Kenneth O. Gangel, “Leadership: Coping with Cultural Corruption,” *Bibliotheca Sacra* 144, no. 576 (October-December, 1987): 451.

³⁷ Maxwell, *The 21 Irrefutable Laws of Leadership*, ix-xiii.

Calvin Miller's metaphor for Christian leadership is servanthood. He states that, "Every Christian who desires to become a leader must first know how to follow."³⁸ Taking a 'one down' posture protects the leader from abusing the power and authority of his position. Being a servant-leader after the example of King David and Jesus Christ keeps the leader from abusing his authority. At the same time the leader learns to lead people by being a follower of God. Miller's exegesis of the four Greek words found in the New Testament are translated servanthood brings clarity to a servant leader's role. A *diakonos* is a servant in relation to his work; a *doulos* is a servant to his master; a *huperetes* is a servant in relation to his superior; and a *leitourgos* is a steward in relationship to his organization.³⁹

Tim Laniak looks at pastoral leadership from the perspective of a biblical theologian. This is especially helpful for the ministry leader who is called to oversee a local church. Laniak meticulously traces the pastoral metaphor from Genesis to Revelation. He also provides valuable insights from various ancient near eastern cultures' understanding of a shepherd. There is nothing that compares in the secular literature to the shepherd image that the Bible presents for the spiritual leader to emulate.

A Christian leader shares many of the same attributes as a secular leader. That being said there are tremendous differences as well. A spiritual leader is concerned about finding God's will and moving people toward it. He searches for God's will in his life and in those he leads. A Christian leader understands that this is a dynamic process and the end result is for the leader to become spiritually fit to do the job God calls him to do. Transformational leadership captures the critical component of motivating others towards

³⁸ Miller, *The Empowered Leader*, ix.

³⁹ Ibid, 14-15.

a Christ centered goal. Raising awareness of a different set of values, looking beyond our own self-interests, encouraging others to do more than they are required to do are at the heart of being a transformational leader.⁴⁰

Christian leadership is motivated by emulating Jesus Christ because He is the consummate servant leader. Believers must also have a holy calling from Him to serve as a leader and embody the core competencies that every leader must possess. This holy calling requires the leader to depend on the Holy Spirit and accomplish the task with spiritual methods.

Even though some leadership principles are gleaned from the world at large, believers must exercise extreme caution in applying them to the Church. The gospel always runs counter to the prevailing culture. As a result, using secular leadership principles may be appropriate for the larger culture but not appropriate for the Christian leader.

Without a doubt the Scriptures teach that Jesus was a servant (Mark 10:45). As a result, leadership is the art of learning to follow Christ. In doing so one becomes a leader by obeying God. A yielded leader embodies our Lord, the true leader of the Church.

Finally, pastoral leadership is described in Scripture as being a shepherd. The pastoral leader is a protector, provider, and guide. A shepherd is accountable for the lives and well-being of the sheep. He is also always looking for ways to better the flock often at great personal sacrifice. Bad shepherds forget about the flock and serve their own needs. They act like hired hands (John 10:13). Shepherd leaders are first and foremost a 'sheep' who relates to and follows God as 'my shepherd' (Psalm 23:1).

⁴⁰ Ford, *Transforming Leadership*, 22.

Leadership Theory

Since there is a distinction between secular and sacred leadership principles and practices is it possible to explain Christian leadership under one general theory of leadership? In order to answer this question an overview of the various theories of leadership are briefly discussed.

Peter Northouse in his book on leadership theory describes ten different leadership approaches. They are:

1. *The Trait Approach*. This was the first systematic theory postulated early in the 20th century. It was otherwise known as the ‘great man’ theory. Leadership traits were studied to determine what made certain people great leaders. The major leadership traits identified are intelligence, self-confidence, determination, integrity, and sociability. This theory lost favor in the middle of the 20th century but has gained back some of its popularity recently.⁴¹

2. *The Skills Approach*. This theory is a leader centered approach as well. The difference is that there is a shift from personality characteristics, which are usually fixed and innate to a skill set that is learned and developed. There are three skills that were identified as necessary for successful leaders to master; technical skills, human skills, and conceptual skills.⁴²

3. *The Style Approach*. This theory emphasizes the behavior of the leader. Researchers identified two kinds of behavior; task behavior and skills behavior. Task behavior focused on goal accomplishment and skills or relationship behaviors which help

⁴¹ Peter G. Northouse, *Leadership: Theory and Practice*, 4th edition, (Thousand Oaks: Sage Publications, 2007), 18-36.

⁴² Ibid, 39-42.

subordinates felt comfortable with themselves, each other, and their situation. This style moved past the actions of the leader and included actions toward subordinates in differing contexts.⁴³

4. *The Situational Approach*. This theory has wide-spread support today. Basically situational leadership is about leadership in differing situations. In order for a person to be an effective leader he must adapt his leadership style to meet the demands of changing circumstances. This approach was popularized by Ken Blanchard's book, *Leadership and The One Minute Manager*. His chart on the four leadership styles of delegating, supporting, coaching, and directing were matched to the subordinates' competence and commitment.⁴⁴

5. *The Contingency Theory*. This theory tries to match leaders to appropriate situations. The goal was to fit the leader's style to the context. The leader's style was either task motivated or relationship motivated. The situation variables were leader-follower relations, task structure, or positional power. People who are task motivated will do well in both good and bad situations. People who are relationship driven will do well in situations that are not completely under their control or out of their control.⁴⁵

6. *The Path-Goal Theory*. Leaders motivate subordinates to accomplish a goal. The focus is on how to best motivate employees to increase performance and satisfaction. The challenge is to find a leadership style that will motivate the subordinate. Basically the leader must define the goals, clarify a path to get there, remove obstacles, and provide

⁴³ Ibid, 69.

⁴⁴ Ibid, 91-93.

⁴⁵ Ibid, 113-115.

support. This is a very complex theory and requires training that will break it down into smaller units to better understand the processes.⁴⁶

7. *The Leader-Member Exchange Theory.* This approach is centered on the interactions between leaders and followers. There is a dynamic relationship that requires the leaders to have high quality exchanges with their subordinates and treat them as part of the 'in group', as a partner to benefit the organizational goals and the leaders goals.⁴⁷

8. *The Team Leadership Theory.* Team leadership has become very popular today. The idea is for the leader to develop a mental model of the situation and guide the team into action. This model that the leader develops describes the team problem and what solutions are possible. The leader functions in a way that helps the group achieve effectiveness. The leader must analyze the internal and external issues and then select and implement the actions that will guarantee success.⁴⁸

9. *The Psychodynamic Approach.* This theory is based on personality. People have a consistent pattern of thinking, feeling, and acting. This model captures personality traits of both leader and follower in order to understand the relationship between them. The primary aim of this approach is to raise the awareness of leaders and followers to their own personality type and the implications of those types on work and relationships. The Myers-Briggs Inventory is the most common model. It measures 16 possible combinations of the four dimensions of personality; extraversion versus introversion, sensing versus intuitive, thinking versus feeling, and judging versus perceiving.⁴⁹

⁴⁶ Ibid, 127-128.

⁴⁷ Ibid, 151-153

⁴⁸ Ibid, 207-209.

⁴⁹ Ibid, 237-264.

10. *Transformational Leadership Theory*. This theory is a process that changes and transforms people. The popularity of this theory has grown in the past twenty years. Transformational leadership changes and transforms people. There is a concern with emotions, values, ethics, standards, and long-term goals. An emphasis is placed on understanding follower's motives, meeting their needs, and treating them as fellow human beings with dignity and respect. The goal is to accomplish more than what is expected and requires a charismatic and visionary leadership style. The bottom line is that this model raises the level of morality in others and is concerned with the common good.⁵⁰

11. *Ethical Leadership*. This is not a unified theory but a guide to some of the ethical issues that one faces in leadership situations. Ethics deals with the values and morals of an individual or society embraces. Ethical theory provides a system of rules and principles for making these decisions. Ethics, therefore, is crucial to leadership because of the nature of influence and the need to guide followers in accomplishing mutual goals. Principles of ethical leadership are: shows respect for others, serves others, shows justice, manifest honesty, and builds community.⁵¹

12. *Servant Leadership*. Robert Greenleaf, a secular author and professor of management research, development and education, developed an unusual approach to leadership called servant leadership. He emphasizes a concern for his followers and a desire to care for them. One becomes a leader by becoming a servant. This model transferred quite easily to the Christian community.⁵²

⁵⁰ Ibid, 175-177.

⁵¹ Ibid, 341-348

⁵² Robert K. Greenleaf, *Servant Leadership: A Journey into The Nature Of Legitimate Power And Greatness*, (New York: Paulist Press, 1977), 1-6.

Bass and Stogdill have identified five models of Leadership theory. They paint a broader brush with regard to how leaders lead.

1. *Personal and Situational Theories*. As the title implies, history moves based on great leaders. Under this heading are Great-Man, Trait, Situational, Personal-Situational, Psychoanalytic, Political and Humanistic theories.

2. *Interaction and Social Learning Theories*. Studies suggest that there is a leader-follower relationship and that activity as well as the circumstances effect outcomes. These models include the Leader-Role, Reinforced-Change, Path-Goal, and Contingency theories.

3. *Theories and Models of Interactive Processes*. Leaders lead better when followers perform well. Followers respond more favorably when leaders display more consideration for the welfare of the followers. Multiple-Linkage and Multiple-Screen models are both based on the interactions between the leader and follower. Vertical-Dyad, Exchange, Behavioral, and Communication theories are based on the social interaction between leader and follower.

4. *Perceptual and Cognitive Theories*. These models are all based on social learning theory. There is a disparity between the leader's intentions and the followers' understanding of what the leader is trying to do. Information Processing, Open-Systems Analysis, and Rational-Deductive approaches all focus on understanding how decisions are made and information is processed by both leaders and followers.

5. *Hybrid Explanations*. The first model is a cognitive, behavioral, and interactive approach that accounts for the relationship and outcomes that both leaders and followers envision. The Transformational model asks followers to transcend their own

self-interest for the good of the group; to consider their long term needs rather than focus on their needs of the moment.⁵³

Gary Yuhl has classified the major Organizational Leadership theories on preferences and conception of leadership. He has four major approaches and a catch-all category:

1. *Trait Approach*. This model focuses on the personal attributes of the leader. Underlying this approach is the assumption that some people are ‘born leaders.’ The research looks for a correlation between leader attributes and leader success.

2. *Behavior Approach*. As the title implies, researchers look for the way leaders actually perform on the job. Leadership behavior and effectiveness and how this affects outcomes. The roles, functions, and responsibilities of leaders offer important insights to positive outcomes.

3. *Power-Influence Approach*. This model seeks to understand leadership by examining the influencing factors between leaders and followers. Leadership effectiveness is measured by how power is exercised. Power is important for influencing subordinates, peers, and superiors.

4. *Situational Approach*. This approach looks at the contextual factors such as the nature of the work performed and the work environment. There is also a focus on the characteristics of the followers as well.

5. *All Others Category*. Yuhl identifies three more leadership theories that do not fit into his four major categories. They are participative leadership (power sharing),

⁵³ Bernard M. Bass, *Bass & Stogdill's Handbook of Leadership: theory, Research, & Managerial Application*, 3rd edition, (New York: The Free Press, 1990), 37-55.

charismatic and transformational leadership, and leadership in decision groups (how to make meetings more productive).⁵⁴

In many ways Jesus used elements of most if not all of the theories that are represented. That being said there is one theory that best embodies a Christian leadership model. The Transformational model fits well with Jesus' overall philosophy and style of leadership.

Leadership Resources

Listed below are a variety of resources that will give the reader a better understanding of the theory of leadership and how to better imitate and apply Jesus' leadership style. Trying to categorize them into a particular theory is very subjective. The reader must make the final decision for himself.

Leadership Theory

1. Bernard Bass's massive work, *Bass & Stogdill's Handbook of Leadership, Theory, Research, & Managerial Applications*, 3rd ed. is the 'bible' of leadership theory. Dr. Bass provides a comprehensive and exhaustive treatment of this important subject. He integrates theory and practice so the student can better understand the concepts, principles, and behaviors that are characteristics of leaders of the past and present.⁵⁵

2. Peter Northouse's *Leadership; Theory and Practice*, 4th ed. fully covers contemporary ideas of leadership. He includes traditional models and theories with chapters on culture, leadership, and women in leadership. Northouse cites research based knowledge and understanding of current leadership models and practice.⁵⁶

⁵⁴ Yuhl, *Leadership in Organizations*, 11-15.

⁵⁵ Bass, *Leadership Theory*, xi-xv.

⁵⁶ Northouse, *Leadership*.

3. Gary Yukl's comprehensive work *Leadership in Organizations*, 3rd ed. focuses on leadership in the context of relationship, work, and community. He deals with the major theories of leadership, the research, and practical case studies of existing models to help the student understand and apply the stated leadership principles.⁵⁷

4. James Berkley edits the *Leadership Handbook of Management & Administration*. This reference book on church administration provides church leaders with outstanding insights and practical suggestion for the Christian leader. There are four chapters on leadership that cover styles of leaders, vision casting, leading volunteers, and dealing with crisis management.⁵⁸

Contemporary Secular Leadership Theory

1. Robert Greenleaf's ground-breaking work *Servant Leadership: A Journey into the Nature of Legitimate Power and Greatness*. Greenleaf is a retired AT&T executive and never claimed that his book was religious in nature. His message focused on business leaders having a servant's attitude when leading their corporations. He observed that when leaders viewed themselves as servants they created stronger institutions and found greater personal joy in their leadership roles. He never uses Jesus Christ as a model or mentor for his views in any of his books.⁵⁹

2. James MacGregor Burn's seminal work entitled *Leadership* understands leadership as the dynamic between the leader and follower. He made a distinction between transactional and transforming leadership. The first focused on what leaders and

⁵⁷ Yukl, *Leadership in Organizations*.

⁵⁸ James D. Berkley, ed., *Leadership Handbook of Management & Administration* (Grand Rapids: Baker Books, 2007), 175-232.

⁵⁹ Robert K. Greenleaf, *Servant Leadership: A Journey Into The Nature Of Legitimate Power And Greatness* (New York: Paulist Press, 1977).

followers gain in exchange for cooperating with each other. Transforming leadership seeks to raise the ethics and level of motivation of both.⁶⁰

3. Bennis and Nanus picked up Burns' theme and expanded the theory of 'Transformational Leadership' with their book *Leaders: The Strategies For Taking Charge*⁶¹ and Bennis wrote *Why Leaders Can't Lead: The Unconscious Conspiracy Continues*.⁶² They divided transformational leadership into four strategies; Attention through vision, Meaning through communication, Trust through positioning by the deployment of self through positive self-regard, and the Wallenda factor (focusing on a positive outcome).⁶³ Kouzes & Posner's book *Leadership: The Challenge* is another very popular book utilizing the theme of transformational leadership. They define leadership as "a process ordinary people use when they are bringing the best from themselves and others. What we've discovered is that people make extraordinary things happen by liberating the leader within everyone."⁶⁴ They have five principles that define their strategy; Model the way, Inspire a shared vision, Challenge the process, Enable others to act, and Encourage the heart.⁶⁵

4. Steven R. Covey's bestselling books on leadership, *The 7 Habits of Highly Effective People*⁶⁶, and *Principle Centered Leadership*⁶⁷ uses transformational language,

⁶⁰ James MacGregor Burns, *Leadership* (New York: Harper & Row, Publishers, 1977), 1-5.

⁶¹ Warren Bennis & Burt Nanus, *Leaders: The Strategies For Taking Charge* (New York: Harper & Row Publishers, 1985), 17.

⁶² Warren Bennis *Why Leaders Can't Lead: The Unconscious Conspiracy Continues* (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 1989).

⁶³ Bennis & Nanus, *Leaders*, 26-27.

⁶⁴ James M. Kouzes and Barry Z. Posner, *Leadership The Challenge*, 3rd ed. (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 2002), xxiii.

⁶⁵ *Ibid*, 13.

⁶⁶ Stephen R. Covey, *The 7 Habits of Highly Effective People: Restoring the Character Ethic* (New York, Fireside Books, 1989), 222, 251-252, 274.

⁶⁷ Steven R. Covey, *Principle Centered Leadership* (New York, Fireside Books, 1990), 285.

processes, attitudes, and practices. Leaders model the way forward, encourage followers, and lead with a team approach.

Contemporary Christian Leadership Theory

In the past twenty years Christian leadership books have grown in popularity. Usually Christian leadership principles were in the autobiographies of individual leaders.⁶⁸ Now there are numerous faith-based approaches to leadership that the Christian leader can access. Listed below is a sampling of the different spiritual approaches to leadership.

1. *An Ecumenical Approach*. Laurie Beth Jones' *Jesus CEO: Using Ancient Wisdom for Visionary Leadership*, Charles C. Manz's *The Leadership Wisdom of Jesus: Practical Lessons for Today*, and Bob Briner and Ray Pritchard's two-book set on *The Leadership Lessons of Jesus: A Timeless Model for Today's Leaders* and *More Leadership Lessons of Jesus* seek to transcend denominations and faith groups. Their contention is that Jesus rose above the sectarian differences. Both books seem to maximize our human potential to achieve personal success in the business and personal world. What they fail to mention is the call to a life of self-denial, trials, and persecution, and the command to share the gospel with a lost and dying world. In Briner & Pritchard's second book, chapter six is about Jesus' global mission of preaching the gospel. Instead of challenging the reader with sharing the gospel with the lost the idea was that, "the wise leader will extend his or her leadership both to people beyond the borders and to people within, who come from a different cultural and ethnic background."⁶⁹

⁶⁸ Robert Banks and Bernice M. Ledbetter, *Reviewing Leadership: A Christian Evaluation of Current Approaches* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2004), 69.

⁶⁹ Bob Briner & Ray Pritchard, *More Leadership Lessons of Jesus: A Timeless Model for Today's Leaders* (Nashville: Broadman & Holman, 1998), 20-24.

2. *Bible Centered Leadership*. In Ken Boa's book, *The Perfect Leader: Practicing the Leadership Traits of God* biblical principles of leadership are presented based on the attributes of God. Boa presents a leadership strategy based on His character and actions as revealed in both the Old and New Testament. Boa also wrote *God's Words of Life for Leaders from the New International Version*. He connects Bible verses with over 140 leader characteristics without any commentary. Both books are very helpful.

3. *Servant Leadership*. After Robert Greenleaf's book on *Servant Leadership* was published Christian writers began to apply the principles of servanthood to believers based on Jesus teaching and behavior. Don Howell's treatment, *Servants of the Servant: A Biblical Theology of Leadership* is a biblical exposition of the language of the servant. Eleven Old Testament and five New Testament leaders are profiled. The ministry of Jesus focuses on servanthood, sacrifice, and freedom. This book was written as a textbook for upper college and seminary courses on leadership.

C. Gene Wilkes, *Jesus on Leadership: Discovering the Secrets of Servant Leadership from the Life of Christ*. The title reflects the content of this popular treatment of leadership based on becoming a servant leader like Jesus. This book would make a good resource for lay leadership in a local church.

Calvin Miller's treatment, *The Empowered Leader: 10 Keys to Servant Leadership* looks at leadership through the life of King David who often called himself the servant of God. Even though David sinned greatly he was also a sterling example of submitting to God's rule over his life. Miller provides a great resource for young ministry leaders and lay leaders in the local church.

J. Oswald Sander's seminal work on leadership, *Spiritual Leadership: Principles of Excellence for Every Believer*, is based on servant leadership. He states, "At the outset of any study of spiritual leadership, this master principle must be squarely faced: True greatness, true leadership, is found in giving yourself in service to others, not in coaxing or inducing others to serve you."⁷⁰ Every pastor must have this book in his library and review it once a year.

4. *Transformational Leadership*. This approach to spiritual leadership provides the most balanced method and reflects not only the overall biblical pattern of leadership but Jesus method of training spiritual leaders. Leighton Ford's *Transforming Leadership: Jesus' Way of Creating Vision, Shaping Values, & Empowering Change* reflect Jesus' model of leadership. Ford's model is very similar to Bass, Burns, and Bennis and Nanus premise of transformational leadership (discussed earlier). He uses nine roles from the life of Christ that reflect transforming leadership.⁷¹ Henry & Richard Blackaby's *Spiritual Leadership: Moving People onto God's Agenda*, uses the same model. They describe Jesus as the ultimate model of leadership. Transformational leadership is Jesus' "absolute obedience to the Father's will."⁷² Leadership is not found in methods but finding out where God is and joining Him in His plan. Spiritual leaders believe God will do what He says be able to understand His plan, and move people to it.

Conclusion

⁷⁰ Sanders, *Spiritual Leadership*, 35.

⁷¹ Ford, *Transforming Leadership*, 7, 21-22. Jesus' nine leadership roles are: strategist, seeker, seer, strong one, servant, shepherd-maker, spokesperson, struggler, and sustainer. He also calls Jesus leadership 'transformational' and credits Burns, Bass, and Bennis & Nanus as the leadership theorists who first came up with the term.

⁷² Blackaby, *Spiritual Leadership*, 28.

The contrasts and comparisons between secular and sacred views of leadership are many. Each can learn from the other but Christian leaders must be careful when developing a philosophy of leadership. Blackaby offers this warning:

Nevertheless, we are concerned that many Christian leaders are reading secular books and are accepting their teachings uncritically. Much secular leadership theory is based on presuppositions that may appear sound yet promote ideas contrary to the Scriptures. They leave God out! Secular and spiritual leaders may use similar methods, but there are dimensions to spiritual leadership not present in secular leadership. Spiritual leaders who simply follow secular methods may experience some degree of success, but they will not rise to the higher level of leadership possible for true spiritual leaders.⁷³

Now that there is a frame of reference to understanding Christian leadership principles and guidelines the task becomes developing a specific theory of leadership for the 21st century Church.

Statement of Methodology

A survey of pastors was conducted to determine which spiritual leadership training program (STLP) best reflected a Biblical model and provided meaningful and lasting results in the lives of their congregants.

This researcher conducted one survey⁷⁴ in two settings from May 25, 2011 to June 15, 2011. The first survey was administered on line⁷⁵ and the second at a monthly pastors meeting. A total of thirty one surveys were returned.⁷⁶ The eight questions were intended to discover several things:

1. How important is spiritual leadership training?

⁷³ Ibid, x.

⁷⁴ The survey is located in Appendix C.

⁷⁵ The survey was located at/Surveymonkey.com. Pastors on an e-mail list were asked to link to the survey and fill out an eight question survey. This e-mail list consisted of approximately 300 pastors and missionaries affiliated with the Baptist Bible Fellowship International (BBFI). 21 surveys were returned. For more information about the BBFI go to <http://www.bbfi.org>.

⁷⁶ The instrument was given to 11 pastors on June 7, 2011 at the monthly meeting of the Oklahoma Baptist Bible Fellowship held at Bethel Baptist Church, Yukon, Oklahoma.

2. Which STLP did the pastor use in church and how effective was it?
3. What model was the STLP built upon?
4. How was the pastor trained in spiritual leadership?

Every pastor but one had a STLP in their church. 85% of the pastors believed that a STLP was vital to the spiritual health of the church. Leadership training was a high priority for almost every pastor surveyed. Unfortunately only 30% were satisfied with their current program and the other 70% were not satisfied. Of those who were not satisfied almost half of them were looking for something better.

The preferred model to train church members was based on Jesus' pattern of training the twelve. Nearly 50% of the pastors used this model exclusively while another 30% used the Jesus model in combination with other models.⁷⁷ 80% of those surveyed believed that the pattern Jesus used to train his disciples was the most effective way to grow believers in their church.

The material used by over 75% of the pastors was a combination of the Bible and other prepackaged material.⁷⁸ It is interesting that even though the Bible and supporting materials were used the majority of pastors were still not satisfied with their programs. Nearly 50% of them reported a success rate of 'some of the time' and only 25% reported success 'most of the time.' Success was defined in the instructions to the survey this way; "believers grow in the grace of God with respect to their personal life, family life, church life, and public life."⁷⁹

⁷⁷ The other models were 1) The Apostle Paul Model—following his example of leading churches in Acts and the Epistles, 2) The Best Man Model—following the example of great leaders in history whether Christian or secular, 3) The Spiritual/Business Model—following the example of successful business people, 4) The Eclectic Model—following examples from all the models.

⁷⁸ The prepackaged material was Sunday school material from Lifeway, Regular Baptist Press, and Navigators. Several pastors used material produced by other Independent Baptist pastors.

⁷⁹ See Appendix C.

The most discouraging part of the survey measured how the pastor was trained in spiritual leadership. Over 60% did not even respond! 16% trained themselves through a personal Bible study. 13% were mentored by mature laymen in their church growing up and only 10% were trained by a pastor. The majority of pastors have very little personal experience in spiritual leadership training. Not one of the pastors mentioned spiritual leadership training in college or seminary either. Even with all the literature available on leadership in general and spiritual leadership in particular there seems to be a problem in actually training individuals in spiritual leadership.

The best spiritual leadership training program is a combination of three factors: institutional training, field assignments, and self-development actions.⁸⁰ The majority of pastors surveyed were missing the mentoring, training, and evaluation by more experienced spiritual leaders in the churches they served before becoming senior pastors. This could be a major factor in the 70% dissatisfaction rate with the current programs now being used in their churches.

This particular survey was limited in several ways. First, only one independent Baptist denomination was surveyed. There was no attempt to sample pastors from other faith groups. Secondly, there is no breakdown by race, age, or size of church. The survey was sent to senior pastors only. Finally, there was no way to compare this group of pastors to other pastors as to their competence in spiritual leadership training. This survey was a snapshot of one group of pastors who are leading congregations in North America.

⁸⁰ Army Regulation 350-1, *Army Training and Education*, (Washington D. C.: Government Printing Office, 2003), 7-9. Individual training in Army schools and distance learning programs prepares the soldier for operational assignments in which he/she can practice the skills learned and broaden their experience. In the course of an assignment self-development of the skills and experience are learned by maximizing one's strengths, working on one's weaknesses, and setting and achieving personal goals.

This survey does confirm several important facts:

1. A SLTP is a vital local church ministry.
2. A SLTP is best modeled after Jesus' ministry to the apostles.
3. A SLTP that works well is difficult to find.
4. Those surveyed received very little SLT before becoming a pastor.

This project will attempt to provide a comprehensive SLTP for use in contemporary church ministry by using A. B. Bruce's comprehensive book on Jesus' leadership as the guide. The outcome will be a template that church and ministry leaders can use in their specific ministry settings to teach and train believers to be the men and women of God that will advance the Kingdom of God in this generation.

In this project the leadership training model Bruce proposes is based on the life of Christ and is similar to the secular transformational models discussed before but with important differences. This paper divides Bruce's work into four major parts: First, the calling of a spiritual leader (Chapters 1-4). This would be similar to Kouzes & Posner's and Bennis & Nanus' inspire attention thru a shared vision. Secondly, the character of a spiritual leader (Chapters 5, 7, 14, 16, 21), would mirror Kouzes and Bennis modeling the way and trust through positing a positive self-regard. Thirdly, the competence of a spiritual leader (chapters 6, 8, 9-11, 12-13, 15, 17-19, 22) reflects the world's view of how to encourage the heart/challenge the process, and meaning through communication. Finally, the commission of a spiritual leader (24-31) is similar to the secularist worldview of enabling others to act and focusing on a positive outcome. Jesus used this model to instruct the disciples in their spiritual calling and cultivation of a godly character, provided a crucible for ministry to strengthen and develop ministry skills and a holy

disposition, and challenge them to a life of self-discipline and personal growth in their relationship to God.

Summary

Spiritual leadership is foundational for the health and vitality of the Church. The theological, political, economic, and societal issues facing the contemporary culture are profound. The church is being marginalized by a culture that is becoming more and more secular. Biblical servanthood is being replaced with a drive to be number one, win at any cost, and be the best you can be.⁸¹

In order for the church to have effective leaders they must reflect the principles and values that Jesus taught His disciples. In Acts chapter one there are four primary principles that the church would build upon. These core doctrines are developed over the course of the rest of the New Testament. The structure of the church would rest upon the ascended living Lord (1:1-2, 9-11), the power of the Holy Spirit (1:2b, 5, 8a), being a willing witness beginning at Jerusalem and spreading out to the entire world (1:8b), and choosing godly leaders (1:12-26). Biblical Leadership is foundational to the health of the local church.

Even though there is no real consensus on leadership theory in the secular literature or Christian community there is one model that does work-Jesus' *Training of the Twelve*. Using Dr. Bruce's work as the guide for a leadership model is still as relevant now as it was when it was first published nearly a century and a half ago. The focus of the remainder of this project will be on the calling of a spiritual leader, the character of a spiritual leader, the competence of a spiritual leader, and the commission of a spiritual leader.

⁸¹ Ibid: 456.

Chapter 2

The Calling of a Spiritual Leader

Every spiritual leader has the same beginning. Spiritual leadership starts with an invitation by Jesus Christ to follow Him and an acceptance by the one being invited. Dr. Bruce breaks this process down into five constituent parts. First, there is an initial calling based on the disciple's faith in Jesus after witnessing His baptism by John (chapter one). Secondly, they exercise faith in Jesus' authority over them by committing to full-time discipleship (chapter two). Thirdly, the focus shifts to the calling of a single disciple -- Matthew the tax collector. Jesus demonstrates His ability to make a person ceremonially clean and at the same time forgive their sins (chapter three). Fourthly, formal leadership training begins when the entire group of twelve is formed (chapter four). Finally, there are those who are called and fail to commit to follow Christ and betray Him like Judas (chapter 23).⁸²

The Beginnings

Chapter one begins with unpacking John 1:29-51 and describes, "This first meeting of Jesus of Nazareth with five humble men, Andrew, Peter, Philip, Nathanael, and another unnamed!"⁸³ The fifth man was probably the writer of the fourth gospel discreetly identifying himself as one of the original followers of Jesus.

⁸² Dr. Bruce did not include the chapter on Judas in the calling of his original disciples. He does deal with Judas but not until he betrays Jesus at the Last Supper. This writer included him at this point because Judas is an object lesson that calling does not necessarily guarantee spiritual success as a leader. According to Dr. Harrison, "Even Jesus' knowledge of the true character and leadings of Judas from the beginning does not carry with it a determination of Judas' ultimate sin." See Everett F. Harrison, "*The Son of God Among The Sons of Men, part 13, Jesus and Judas*", *Bibliotheca Sacra* 105:418 (April-June 1948):172.

⁸³ Bruce, 1.

Andrew and John heard the witness of John the Baptist about Jesus being the ‘Lamb of God’⁸⁴ and immediately gave themselves over to Jesus and began to follow Him. Our Lord responded by inquiring about their true intentions. They answered back that they were very interested in learning more about Him. Then Jesus invited them to stay with Him for the remainder of the day (John 1:37-39).

The next day Andrew, now identified as the first disciple, brings his brother Simon to meet the man he understood to be the Messiah. Jesus immediately recognizes him, calls him by name, and then changes his name to Peter (John 1:40-42). The third day Jesus finds Philip and Philip witnesses to Nathanael about finding the promised One that the Old Testament describes will rescue Israel. There is a problem, however, because Nathanael cannot understand how the Messiah could come from such a poor town like Nazareth. Philip’s response was simply come and check Him out (John 1:43-46).

Jesus’ supernatural knowledge inspired Nathanael to confess Him as the ‘Son of God’ and ‘The King of Israel.’ This led Jesus to declare that Nathanael was a true Israelite in contrast to Jacob. Jesus used the imagery of Jacob's dream at Bethel (Gen. 27:35-36; 28:12; cf. John 1:51) to describe the greater revelation that Nathanael and his fellow disciples would see over the course of their time together (John 1:47-51). In three days’ time there are now five disciples. John and Andrew become followers of John the Baptist who then point them to Jesus as the ‘Lamb of God.’ The next day Andrew brings

⁸⁴ John 1:35-36. The term ‘Lamb of God’ was probably a connection to the Old Testament Passover Lamb (Ex. 12) and the fact that Isaiah pictures the Messiah as a sacrificial lamb (Isa. 53:7) who dies for the sins of the world (Isa. 53:12). See Edwin A. Blum, *John*, New Testament Edition, of *The Bible Knowledge Commentary*, (Wheaton: Victor Books, 1983), 275.

his brother Simon and Jesus immediately changes his name. On the final day Jesus calls Philip and he brings Nathanael.

These very humble beginning of the first spiritual leaders trained by Jesus is described by Bruce this way: “The faith of these brethren was, therefore, just such as we should expect in beginners. In substance it amounted to this, that they recognized in Jesus the Divine Prophet, King, Son of Old Testament prophecy; and its value lay not in its maturity, or accuracy, but ...it brought them into contact and close fellowship with Him....”⁸⁵

The Commitment

The disciples’ intimate relationship with Jesus begins by simply believing in Him and accompanying Him to various special occasions and preaching events.⁸⁶ In chapter two the relationship moves from simple belief in His person to a fulltime commitment. Jesus meets with the two sets of brothers; Peter and Andrew then John and James at their place of employment -- on their boat at the Sea of Galilee.⁸⁷ Our Lord had begun His teaching and preaching ministry and a crowd had followed Him down to the shores of the lake. He got on Peter and Andrew’s boat to better minister to the scores of people who had gathered (Luke 5:1-3). After our Lord finished speaking to the crowd He instructed Peter to let down his fishing nets. Simon protested because they had not caught anything all night. Nevertheless he did what Jesus asked him to do. In just a few moments his net

⁸⁵ Bruce, 10.

⁸⁶ They were with him at the wedding in Cana (John 2:11); the cleansing of the temple (John 2:12-22); at the Passover in Jerusalem (John 2:23-25); and returning by way of Samaria observing him talking with the woman at the well (John 4:1-30).

⁸⁷ See Matthew 4:18-22; Mark 1:16-20; Luke 5:1-11. Since these men had been called earlier (John 1:35-51) they had probably returned to their day job-fishing. Their commitment to Christ was growing by degrees. The disciples made the commitment to follow Jesus fulltime the morning after the miraculous catch of fish. See D. A. Carson, *Matthew, Mark, Luke*, vol. 5 in *The Expositor’s Bible Commentary*, (Grand Rapids: Zondervan Publishing House, 1984), 119.

was so full of fish that it began to tear (Luke 5:5-7). This miracle caused Peter to humble himself and submit to Jesus' authority over his life. At that point Jesus prophesized that Peter and his companions will become fishers of men. Immediately Peter and the other three men left their boats and joined Jesus company fulltime (Luke 5:8-11). Bock provides a valuable outline of this scene and the important themes:

- a. Setting: teaching from Simon's boat (5:1-3)
- b. The marvelous fisherman and his promise (5:4-11)
 - i. Miracle of the catch (5:4-7)
 - (1) Jesus' command (5:4)
 - (2) Peter's trust (5:5)
 - (3) Full catch (5:6-7)
 - ii. Response to the miracle: confession and commission (5:8-11)
 - (1) Peter's confession and fear (5:8-10a)
 - (2) Promise of new fish (5:10b)
 - (3) Departure to follow Jesus (5:11)

For Luke, the gathering of disciples begins with the fishing bonanza of Luke 5:1-11. These disciples will become great witnesses of the Book of Acts. They will declare with great boldness the way to Christ. Fishing for people will become a dangerous calling...The account focuses on Peter as the leader and representative of the group. Peter has simple faith. He responds to Jesus' call to go into the deep and cast the nets, despite failure the night before...Jesus promises Peter a ministry that will share in the task of gathering people. In turn, Peter and those who with him drop their nets and begin the lifelong task of following Jesus in the pursuit of catching people...A higher call causes them to abandon their nets. God transforms sinners into servants.⁸⁸

These men went from catching live fish and killing them to catching dead men in order to give them life.⁸⁹

The Outcast

⁸⁸ Darrell L. Bock, *Luke 1:1-9:50*, vol. 1 of the *Baker Exegetical Commentary on the New Testament*, (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 1994), 452-453, 462.

⁸⁹ Thomas L. Constable, "Notes on Luke", <http://www.soniclight.com/constable/notes/pdf/luke.pdf> (accessed February, 24, 2011).

Now Jesus turns His attention to revealing His authority over one who is a spiritual outcast. He forgives his sins and invites him into the inner circle of spiritual leaders. Dr. Bruce describes the call of Matthew⁹⁰ this way:

The call of Matthew signally illustrates a very prominent feature in the public action of Jesus, viz., His utter disregard of the maxims of worldly wisdom. A publican disciple, much more a publican apostle, could not fail to be a stumbling-block to Jewish prejudice, and therefore to be, for the time at least, a source of weakness rather than of strength. Yet, while perfectly aware of this fact, Jesus invited to the intimate fellowship of discipleship one that had pursued the occupation of tax-gatherer, and at a later period selected him to be one of the twelve.⁹¹

As a tax collector Matthew was unclean and unable to participate in Jewish life and society. J. Dwight Pentecost explains:

Levi was a custom house official. ... Levi occupied the detestable position of a publican of the worst type—a little *Mockhes* (emphasis mine), who himself stood in the Roman custom-house on the highway connecting Damascus and Ptolemais, and by the sea where all boats plied between the domains of Antipas and Philip.... The Jews detested these publicans not only on account of their frequent abuses and tyrannical spirit, but because the very taxes they were forced to collect by the Roman government were a badge of servitude and a constant reminder that God had forsaken His people and land in spite of the Messianic hope, founded on many promises of the ancient prophets....

According to Rabbinism there was no hope for a man like Levi. He was excluded from all religious fellowship. His money was considered tainted and defiled anyone who accepted it. He could not serve as a witness. The Rabbis had no word of help for the publican, because they expected him by external conformity to the law to be justified before God.⁹²

Jesus is again teaching the crowd by the lake and He sees Matthew at his tax collector's booth. He personally and deliberately invites Matthew to follow Him and immediately he leaves his station and becomes Jesus' disciple (Mark 2:13-14). Shortly thereafter Matthew hosts a dinner party and invites Jesus, His disciples, and all of his

⁹⁰ Matthew 9:9-13; Mark 2:13-17; Luke 5:27-32.

⁹¹ Bruce, 19.

⁹² J. Dwight Pentecost, *The Words and Works of Jesus Christ*, (Grand Rapids, Zondervan, 1958), 155.

former tax collector associates and sinners⁹³ (Matt. 9:11; Mk. 2:16; Lk. 5:29). By making this event public he was identifying himself with Jesus and breaking all ties with his former boss --The Roman Empire.

Almost immediately the Pharisees chided the Lord about socializing with Levi and his friends. He responds by referring to Hosea 6:6. According to Hosea covenant love was more important than sacrifice. The nation had lost its spiritual center even though they were still continuing in the formal temple worship. If these leaders had known God's heart they would not be criticizing Jesus. Instead they would turn to Him in faith believing He is their Messiah and King⁹⁴ (Mark 9:12-13).

Matthew's conversion and calling to discipleship was proof that Jesus is able to save all those who acknowledge their need and turn to Him in faith to meet that need.

Geldenhuis provides the application for us today:

The highest vocation of the church of Christ always remains to call sinners to repentance to the glory of God. The church must never be satisfied to preach to "respectable" people only, but should continually be engaged in evangelizing those who have fallen into sin or who religiously are outsiders. If Jesus came not to call the righteous but sinners to repentance, this is also the supreme function of His church.⁹⁵

Matthew's selection by Jesus was stunning. His background and current profession as a tax collector made him a social and religious outcast of the first order. With his conversion, however, Jesus gave hope to everyone who was willing to confess their sins and trust Him as Messiah. Even more important was the fact that anyone can

⁹³ 'Sinners' is a technical term used for the common people who the Pharisees labeled as untaught in the Torah and did not observe the strict Pharisaic standards. See John D. Grassmick, *Mark*, New Testament Edition, of *The Bible Knowledge commentary* (Wheaton: Victor Books, 1983), 113.

⁹⁴ Stanley D. Toussaint, *Behold The King: A Study of Matthew* (Portland: Multnomah Press, 1980), 130.

⁹⁵ Norval Geldenhuis, *Commentary On The Gospel Of Luke: The English Text with Introduction Exposition and Notes in The New International Commentary on the New Testament* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans Publishing Company), 193.

serve as a spiritual leader if they were willing to forsake their sins and unconditionally commit themselves to follow Christ.

With six of the twelve disciples called and committed to follow Jesus the next phase of the plan of God was about to unfold. The remaining six disciples are revealed by the gospel writers when the twelve apostles are sent out on mission.⁹⁶

The Band of Brethren

The disciples' formal training begins now. The team was complete and now the message of the Kingdom was entering a new and exciting phase⁹⁷. Dr. Bruce states:

The selection by Jesus of the twelve from the band of disciples who had gradually gathered around his person is an important landmark in the Gospel history. It divides the ministry of our Lord into two portions, nearly equal, probably, as to duration, but unequal as to extent and importance of the work done in each respectively....But by the time when the twelve were chose, the work of the kingdom had assumed such dimensions as to require organization and division of labor; and the teaching of Jesus was beginning to be a deeper and more elaborate nature, and His gracious activities were taking on ever-widening range.⁹⁸

These twelve men were not just traveling companions or menial servants but co-workers with Jesus in the work of the Kingdom of God. The Scriptures indicate that the twelve became a distinct body with their commission to preach the Kingdom to Israel (Matt. 10:1-4). In Luke the time of this calling is fixed just prior to the Sermon on the Mount (Lk. 6: 12-17). They were being trained, through intimate contact with Jesus to become ambassadors as well as witnesses of the gospel and proclaim it beginning at Jerusalem and eventually to the world. Carson charts the list in the New Testament of the twelve and reveals several interesting details about them:

⁹⁶ Mark 3:13-14 and Luke 9:12-13 state that Jesus prayed all night then called the 12 from a multitude of disciples that had been following him. See Pentecost *Words and Works*, 169.

⁹⁷ Matthew 10:1-4; Mark 3:13-19; Luke 6:12-16; Acts 1:13.

⁹⁸ Bruce, 29.

	<i>Matthew 10:2-4</i>	<i>Mark 3:16-19</i>	<i>Luke 6:13-16</i>	<i>Acts 1:13</i>
1	Simon Peter	Simon Peter	Simon Peter	Simon Peter
2	Andrew	James	Andrew	John
3	James	John	James	John
4	John	Andrew	John	Andrew
5	Philip	Philip	Philip	Philip
6	Bartholomew	Bartholomew	Bartholomew	Thomas
7	Thomas	Matthew	Matthew	Bartholomew
8	Matthew	Thomas	Thomas	Matthew
9	James, son of Alphaeus	James, son of Alphaeus	James, son of Alphaeus	James, son of Alphaeus
10	Thaddaeus	Thaddaeus	Simon the Zealot	Simon the Zealot
11	Simon the Cananaean	Simon the Cananaean	Judas, brother of James	Judas, brother of James
12	Judas Iscariot	Judas Iscariot	Judas Iscariot	[Vacant]

Several important insights are gained from the differing lists:

1. Peter is always listed first. Judas Iscariot last. Peter is first by position not calling (John 1:40).
2. The first four names are always the two pairs of brothers mentioned first (Matthew 4:18).
3. In each list there are three groups of four lead by Peter and Philip (not the evangelist) and James the son of Alphaeus respectively. Within each group, however, the order varies except that Judas is always last. This may suggest that the twelve were organized into smaller groups, each with a leader.
4. Jesus commission in Mark 6:7 sent the men out in pairs; this may account for the pairing in the text of Matthew 10:2-4.

5. The order of the names was based on the relationship to Jesus and calling. Peter, James, and John, witnessed the raising of Jarius's daughter and the Transfiguration and were invited to be close to Jesus in the garden of Gethsemane. Matthew focused on family ties and put himself last in his group probably based on his past as a tax collector.
6. There seems to be agreement that Simon the Caananite (Matt., Mark) is the same person as Simon the Zealot (Luke, Acts). Thaddaeus, then, is another name for Judas the brother of (or son of) James.⁹⁹

These twelve obscure common men taken from Jewish society are by no means the best and the brightest. Bruce says,

“The truth is that Jesus was obliged to be content with fishermen, and publicans and quondam zealots for apostles. They were the best that could be had. Those who deemed themselves better were too proud to become disciples, and thereby they excluded themselves from what all the world now sees to be the high honor of being the chosen princes of the Kingdom.”¹⁰⁰

The majority of the twelve apostles are never heard from again. Only Peter and John became great leaders. There is very little that the Church knows about any of these men except some biographical information based on their name. The truth of the matter is spiritual leadership is about ordinary people who show themselves strong towards God and in turn are given a divine assignment to expand His Kingdom.

The Deserter

Unfortunately there are those who are called to leadership positions that use their position against the people whom they lead. They use influence and power to manipulate and control others, or indulge in selfish sensual desires. Wanting more for themselves they acquire lavish material possessions at the expense of those whom they lead. Judas was that kind of leader.

⁹⁹ See Carson, *Matthew*, 237; Pentecost, *Words and Works*, 170-171; Bruce, 36; Constable, *Matthew*, 149.

¹⁰⁰ Bruce, 37.

Luke makes the most profound statement about him in Luke 6:17b, “and Judas Iscariot, who became a traitor.” This was an accurate description of a member of Jesus’ inner circle. Dr. Bruce does not deal with Judas in the context of the calling of the disciples. This writer takes the position, however that in the calling of spiritual leaders the inherent risk of training a Judas is possible and there is no way of preventing it from happening. Bruce introduces the reader to him the night before Jesus’ crucifixion in chapter 23.¹⁰¹ He picks up the story at the last supper¹⁰² but does try to understand him and his motives for betraying Jesus.

Judas took on the responsibility of treasurer for the group (John 12: 5-6; 13:29). The logical choice would be Matthew since he was a tax collector by profession. He may have decided that when he resigned as a Roman revenue official he did not want anything to remind him of his past life. Apparently Judas was very good at collecting, managing, and spending the monies that came their way.

His true character (John 12:2-4) was not revealed until six days before Jesus’ death. When Mary took a very expensive bottle of perfume and anointed the feet of Jesus John makes two observations. The first insight was Judas did not care for the poor or indigent. He was more concerned with making a profit and keeping as much as he could for himself. The second insight gets to the core of his character. He was greedy and stole from the common fund every chance he got. The truth was “Judas was a self-serving thief who followed Jesus not because his inner man had converted to Him, but because he hoped for personal gain by the relationship.”¹⁰³ Jesus did not let his selfishness go

¹⁰¹ Bruce, 368-377.

¹⁰² Matt. 26:2-23; Mk. 14:17-21; Lk. 22:21-23; Jo. 13:21-30.

¹⁰³ George E. Meisinger, "Did Matthew Call Judas a Thief." bible.org. <http://bible.org/article/judas> (accessed March 1, 2011).

unnoticed. He immediately rebukes Judas and praises Mary for her selfless act of devotion (John 12:7-8).

In rebuking Judas, Jesus was fully aware that he would eventually betray Him. King David was the first to predict this treachery (Psalm 41:6). In fact Jesus quotes the same verse from Psalm 41 at the Last Supper (John 13:18) and knows already that the betrayer is Judas. After Judas turned our Lord over to the authorities in the garden of Gethsemane he is filled with shame and self-loathing. Not being able to overcome the guilt and living with knowing he was responsible for condemning the one who loved him the most he hangs himself. Jesus prediction came true when he said at the Last Supper: ‘Woe to that man by whom the Son of Man is betrayed! It would have been good for that man if he had not been born’ (Matthew 26:24).¹⁰⁴

Leaders who serve God can learn much from Judas:

1. Spiritual beginnings do not guarantee future spiritual growth and success.
2. Jesus was the one who was hurt the most and He still had compassion for Judas. Leaders are able to have compassion for those who betray them.
3. God will protect leaders from those whose intention is destroying Kingdom work. Jesus turned the deadly kiss of treachery into victory by rising from the dead three days later.
4. Carnal leaders cannot stop the mission of the Church.
5. Spiritual leadership training can degenerate into selfish and sinful practices.

¹⁰⁴ Ibid.

Summary

Spiritual leadership is a process that begins with a personal relationship with Jesus Christ.¹⁰⁵ He then invites the person to become a disciple or learner. Disciples who make the commitment to follow Christ will have great boldness to share the gospel with the lost. God will partner with them to bring many people to faith in Christ. This higher calling will cause the spiritual leader to abandon their own desires and goals and become faithful servants. Understanding biblical truth and growing in the Christian faith is a process that takes discipline, study, and wisdom. All of Jesus' disciples grow from the inside out through the Word, prayer, and fellowship. The original twelve disciples received their initial training over a period of less than three years.

Jesus made it plain that like Matthew, the tax collector, anyone can become His disciple regardless of who they are or what they have done in the past. The most important thing is to repent of their sins, acknowledge their need of a savior, and trust Christ in faith to meet their need.

Leadership training then moves from the individual to a group or team. God knows that working together as a group strengthens each person and enables the group to accomplish much more together than anyone person could achieve separately. Almost immediately after Jesus chooses His disciples He sends them out two by two on an evangelistic mission to Israel (Matthew 9:35-11:1; Mark 6:6-13; Luke 9:1-6).

The final lesson that spiritual leaders must face is the possibility of failure. Jesus called Judas as one His disciples even though in the end he betrays our Lord and full of

¹⁰⁵ First, a person must believe that Jesus died on the cross for their sins (Romans 5:8). Secondly, they must repent of their sins (Luke 13:3) and receive Christ as their personal savior (John 1:12). Finally, one must make a public confession as soon as possible to give strength and courage to witness to others (Romans 10:9-10, 13).

remorse commits suicide. Remember two things: Do not be discouraged. Not all followers of Christ end well. Be careful! Each follower of Christ is capable of falling away, so guard your hearts and remain 'doers of the Word' (James 1:22).

Chapter 3

The Character of a Spiritual Leader

Someone has said that, “Character is doing the right thing when nobody's looking.” J. C. Watts, former congressman from Oklahoma adds some very helpful commentary when he says, “Character is doing the right thing when nobody's looking. There are too many people who think that the only thing that's right is to get by, and the only thing that's wrong is to get caught.”¹⁰⁶

After Jesus calls a person to become a spiritual leader the next phase of training begins. He wants to change their life from the inside out. Dr. Bruce has identified four critical characteristics of character development. They are inner character, the Kingdom ethic (chapter 5), outer character, true holiness (chapter 7), other character, humility (chapter 14, 21), and selfless character, self-sacrifice (chapter 16). Jesus trained His disciples to do the right thing by both example and exposition.

Inner Character

Bruce describes how the first disciples developed a godly character:

“In the training of the twelve for the work of the apostleship, hearing and seeing, the words and works of Christ necessarily occupied an important place.... In the early period of their discipleship hearing and seeing seem to have been the main occupation of the twelve.... These may be comprehended under two heads: the doctrine of the kingdom, and the philanthropic Work of the kingdom.”¹⁰⁷

The first lesson in character development was about the requirements for entrance into the Kingdom. Jesus sat down and taught a series of lessons about the Kingdom over the

¹⁰⁶ J.C. Watts, former African American congressman, <http://thinkexist.com/quotations/character/2.html> (accessed March 14, 2011).

¹⁰⁷ Bruce, 41-42.

course of several days. The Sermon on the Mount¹⁰⁸ was heard by thousands of people as well as His twelve disciples (Matthew 5:1-7:29; Luke 6:17-42). Bruce describes the sermon this way:

“In the great discourse delivered on the mountain-top, the qualifications for citizenship in the kingdom of heaven were set forth, first positively, and then comparatively. The positive truth was summed up in seven golden sentences called the Beatitudes, in which the felicity of the kingdom was represented as altogether independent of the outward conditions with which worldly happiness is associated. The blessed, according to the preacher, were the poor, the hungry, the mournful, the meek, the merciful, the pure in heart, the peaceable, the sufferers for righteousness sake... The salt of the earth, the light of the world raised above other in spirit and character, to draw them upwards, and lead them to glorify God.

Next, with more detail, Jesus exhibited the righteousness of the kingdom and of its true citizens, in contrast to that which prevailed... In contrast thereto, he described the *ethics* of the kingdom as a pure stream of life, having charity for its fountainhead; a morality of the heart, not merely of outward conduct... The *religion* of the kingdom he set forth as humble, retiring, devoted in singleness of heart to God and things supernal; having faith in God as a benignant gracious father for its root, and contentment, cheerfulness, and freedom from secular care for its fruits; and finally, as reserved in its bearing towards the profane, yet averse to severity in judging, yea, to judging at all, leaving men to be judged by God.”¹⁰⁹

Pentecost describes how Jesus breaks down more fully the requirements for entrance into the Kingdom:

¹⁰⁸ There are numerous approaches to the understanding of the sermon. 1) *The Soteriological view*. This was widely held by liberals and has fallen out of favor. The sermon was what God required people to obey in order to receive salvation. 2) *The Sociological view*. This closely followed the soteriological interpretation in that this view is a guide to the salvation of society. 3) *The Penitential view*. The sermon is a body of law which makes him aware of his sin and moves him to God. 4) *The Ecclesiastical view*. This is the most common approach by liberals and conservatives alike. The sermon is the rule of life for believers in this age. 5) *The Millennial view*. This view sees the sermon as applying to the earthly messianic kingdom exclusively. All of these views have major weaknesses. They do not take into account the already/not yet understanding of the kingdom, the grammatical-historical method of interpretation, and the primary addressees—the twelve disciples. 6) *The Interim view*. The sermon is an ethic for disciples for the time prior to the establishment of the kingdom. Those who were not genuine disciples were warned concerning the danger of their hypocrisy and unbelief. The author takes this view. See Toussaint, *Behold the King*, p. 94. See also Albert Schweitzer, *The Quest of the Historical Jesus*, p. 354; Carson, *Matthew*, 128, Saucy, p. 18, Constable, *Notes on Matthew*, 64.

¹⁰⁹ Bruce, 42-43.

“The subjects of the kingdom are described (5:1-16), the relation of the King to the law is established (5:17-20), the false interpretations of the Pharisees of the requirements of the law are exposed (5:21-48), and the false practices of the Pharisees are revealed (6:1-7:6). Instructions are given to those who would enter the kingdom concerning prayer (7:7-11), true righteousness (7:12), the way of access into the kingdom (7:13-14), false teachers (7:15-23), & concerning the two foundations (7:24-29).”¹¹⁰

Jesus requires that the character of a spiritual leader is nothing less than what Carson calls, “the demand for radical submission to the exclusive lordship of Jesus, who fulfills the law and the Prophets and warns the disobedient that the alternative to total obedience, true righteousness, and the life in the kingdom is rebellion, self-centeredness, and eternal damnation.”¹¹¹

Jesus had defined character as a matter of the heart in contrast to the conventional wisdom of the day which focused exclusively on the outward actions or religious duties of a person. Next Jesus will turn his attention to teaching habits of true holiness or what Bruce calls “lessons in religious liberty.”¹¹²

Outer Character

Living out the Christian faith is sometimes harder than it looks. The issue is not trying to live right *per se* but to have the right motive behind the right living. Bruce begins the chapter on living the Christian life by stating: “Christ’s *ratio vivendi* was characteristically simple; its main features being a disregard of minute mechanical rules, and a habit of falling back in all things on the great principles of morality and piety.”¹¹³

¹¹⁰ Pentecost, *Things to Come*, 457.

¹¹¹ Carson, *Matthew*, 194.

¹¹² Bruce, 68. This begins chapter 7 in his book.

¹¹³ *ibid*, 69.

The disciples were presented with a choice. They could practice the principles of organized Judaism that taught that a person is godly if he attended the feasts, observes the sacrificial rituals, and adhered to the traditions of the Pharisees. On the other hand they could depart from these practices and focus on holiness that is lived out based on faith in Christ as a gift from God not rituals and works.¹¹⁴

Jesus used three rituals to illustrate true holy living. They are fasting (Matthew 9:14-17; Mark 2:16-22; Luke 5:33-39), ceremonial purifications (Matthew 15:1-20; Mark 7:1-23; Luke 11:37-41), and Sabbath keeping (Matthew 12: 1-14; Mark 2:23-3:1-6; Luke 6:1-11, 13:10-16; John 5:1-18, 9:13-17).

Fasting was deeply embedded in Jewish religious law and life. Beside the annual fast on the Day of Atonement (Leviticus 16:29) there were four fasts which became widely practiced in the fourth, fifth, seventh, and tenth month (Zechariah 8:19). Also in Jesus day the Pharisees would fast twice a week; on Monday and Thursday.¹¹⁵ Even John the Baptist's disciples fasted as well (Matthew 9:14). Jesus responded to this misguided piety by explaining that since He was the Messiah and the kingdom was being offered the time of fasting was over. Pentecost explains:

In the Gospels, Christ is seen as offering Himself as Messiah. He offered to bestow the millennial blessing covenanted by God upon the nation that had been summoned to the feast. John and Jesus both proclaimed, "The kingdom of heaven is near" (Matt. 3:2; 4:12). It was inappropriate that those who had responded to this invitation and had been persuaded that Jesus is the Messiah should give themselves to fasting (cf. Matt.9:15). Christ announced that the time will come when he will be taken away from them. By this statement He anticipated His death and return to the Father's right hand. As the departure of the bridegroom from the wedding feast signaled the termination of the feast, so Christ's

¹¹⁴ Pentecost, *Things to Come*, 173.

¹¹⁵ Bruce, 72.

departure would bring these disciples to a time when fasting and prayer would be proper.¹¹⁶

Bruce applies fasting to those in the church age:

The principle underlying this graphic representation is, that fasting should not be a matter of fixed mechanical rule, but should have reference to the state of mind; or, more definitely, that men should fast when they are sad, or in a state of mind akin to sadness—absorbed, pre-occupied—as at some great solemn crisis in the life of an individual or a community... in all voluntary religious service, where we are free to regulate our own conduct the outward act should be made to correspond with the inward condition of mind, and that no attempt should be made to force particular acts of habits on men without reference to that correspondence.¹¹⁷

Fasting has fallen out of favor in many churches today. Even though fasting is not a requirement of the Christian faith Elmer Towns explains why the spiritual discipline of fasting is needed in the life of the contemporary believer:

1. Because more than ever before, believers are in bondage to demonic powers and need strength to stand against sin (see The Disciple's Fast).
2. Because believers throughout the world need solutions to many complex problems and threatening situations they are facing (see Ezra Fast).
3. Because the Church is in desperate need of revival, and every tribe and tongue, and nation is in desperate need of evangelization (see The Samuel Fast).
4. Because the world in general and the Church in particular are crying out for people of character and integrity—people who have found in Christ the emotional healing and strength to overcome sinful and destructive habits (see Elijah Fast).
5. Because the abundance of food has insulated North American believers from the realities of starvation and malnutrition in the two-thirds world (see The Widow's Fast).
6. Because the media has so captured the national attention that even believers are operating according to principles completely alien to God's will for their lives (see The Saint Paul Fast).
7. Because a great many believers have become so entangled in economic and social pursuits that they need to be set free to establish their testimonies and to influence others for Christ (see The John the Baptist Fast).
8. Because of the growing influence of demonic forces and the waning economic influence of biblical Christianity in North America, and the fact that believers need protection from the evil one (see The Esther Fast).¹¹⁸

¹¹⁶ Pentecost, *Things to Come*, 156-157.

¹¹⁷ *ibid.*, 74-75.

¹¹⁸ Elmer L. Towns, *Fasting for Spiritual Breakthrough: A Guide to Nine Biblical Fasts*, (Ventura: Regal books, 1996), 13-14. Also see Richard J. Foster, *Celebration of Discipline: The Path to Spiritual Growth*,

There is no doubt that Spirit-filled leaders must practice fasting to re-connect with God and to allow the Holy Spirit to empower the Church to expand the Kingdom of God.

The next issue Jesus addresses is ceremonial or ritual purifications. The real issue was whether external traditional rituals (Matthew 20:1-2) could make one righteous or whether an inward change of heart produced righteousness (Matthew 15:16-20). Jesus sided with the latter view. Constable commenting on Matthew 15:17-20 says:

Jesus' point was this: what a person is determines what he or she does and says (cf. 12:34-35; Rom. 14:14, 17; 1 Cor. 8:8; Heb. 9:10). Note that Jesus presupposed the biblical revelation that the heart (the seat of thought and will) is evil (cf. 7:11). True religion must deal with people's basic nature and not just with externals. The Pharisees and scribes had become so preoccupied with the externals that they failed to deal with what is more basic and important, namely, a real relationship with God. Jesus had more concern for human nature than for the form of worship. He came to seek and to save the lost (1:21; cf. 6:1-33; 12:34-35).¹¹⁹

Jesus made it perfectly clear that He, as the Messiah, was the authentic interpreter of the Old Testament not the Pharisees or the traditions of the elders. This became the central theological issue that led to His arrest, trial, and crucifixion. Walvoord brings this issue into focus for spiritual leaders in every generation:

"The occupation with the outward religious ceremony, instead of inner transformation of the heart, has all too often attended all forms of religion and has plagued the church as well as it has Judaism. How many Christians in church history have been executed for difference of opinion on the meaning of the Lord's Supper elements or the mode of baptism or for failure to bow to church authority? The heart of man, which is so incurably religious, is also incurably evil, apart from the grace of God."¹²⁰

(San Francisco: HarperCollins Publishers, 1978), 47-61 and Dallas Willard, *The Spirit of the Disciplines: Understanding how God Changes Lives*, (San Francisco: HarperCollins Publishers, 1988), 166-168.1988

¹¹⁹Constable, *Notes on Matthew*, 214 <http://www.soniclight.com/constable/notes/pdf/matthew.pdf>, (Accessed on March, 21, 2011).

¹²⁰ John F. Walvoord, *Matthew: Thy Kingdom Come*. Chicago: Moody Press, 117-118.

Sabbath keeping (Matthew 12:1-14; Mark 2: 23-3:1-6; Luke 6:1-11, 13:10-16, 14:1-6; John 5:1-18; 9:13-17) was the third illustration that Jesus used to teach the disciples about righteous living. Bruce describes Jesus' position on keeping the Sabbath in contrast to the Pharisees this way:

“These acts which you condemn are not transgressions of the law, rightly apprehended, in its spirit and principle. The importance of the laws was conceded, but the pharisaic interpretation of its meaning was rejected... The key to Christ's teaching on the Sabbath, therefore, lies in his conception of the *original design* of that divine institution... The Sabbath was meant to be a *boon* to man, not a *burden*; it was a day taken from man by God in an exacting spirit, but a day given by God in mercy to man.¹²¹

In fact Jesus makes Himself the issue again. There was no need to fast because with Jesus in their midst it was a time of celebration not mourning. With outward rituals or long held traditions the issue was whether they are practiced by one whose inner man is transformed by a personal relationship with Christ. Now, Sabbath keeping was about rest and worship. Jesus is the Lord of the Sabbath (Mark 2:28) so He has the authority to change, cancel, or correct the institution of Sabbath keeping.

Jesus shapes the outer character of the spiritual leader by emphasizing the importance of an inner change of heart because man's basic nature is evil (Jeremiah 17:9; Romans 3:10, 23). No amount of religious practices will change that fact. With Jesus Christ at the core of one's being religious acts are born out of a desire of love, devotion, and obedience not formalism, ritual, and legalism.

Other Character

Humility is a core characteristic of the spiritual leader. Unfortunately the default position of the human heart is pride and self-promotion. Jesus taught His disciples several

¹²¹ Bruce, 91.

lessons about humility. Bruce devotes two chapters (chapter 7 and 14) and reveals five situations where Jesus explained the importance of exercising humility as a spiritual leader. The five separate incidents include:

1. *Practice child-like humility.* Children are not concerned with their standing in the community. Commenting on Matthew 18:1-4 Carson says, “The child is held up as an ideal, not of innocence, purity, or faith, but of humility and unconcern for social status. Jesus advocates humility of mind (v. 4), not childishness of thought.”¹²² They are unconcerned with rank or privilege. Children do not seek positions of power or influence over others. Their thoughts and actions are devoid of manipulating behaviors to make them better than they are. The disciples are exhorted to put others before themselves and receive people with graciousness and care for their well-being (Matthew 18:1-4; Mark 9:33-37, 42-50; Luke 9:46-48).¹²³

2. *Exercise humility in Church discipline and forgiving others.* The situation is now reversed. Instead of competing for a position of influence or power in Jesus’ inner circle, the disciples are taught how to handle those who offend them. When a fellow believer sins be willing to confront him privately and humbly for the purpose of revealing his sin in order to win him over—not judge him. If private conversations do not solve the problem then the next step is to take two or three witnesses and confront the offender. If that does not work then the offender is sent away from the congregation until he confesses his sin and is reconciled. The purpose of this three part process is, restoration not retribution, and to preserve unity in the church. Forgiving others is not limited by a certain number but believers are to forgive as many times as God has forgiven them.

¹²² Carson, *Matthew*, 397.

¹²³ Bruce, 199-206.

Only a humble follower of Christ can be slow to take offence and quickly be willing to forgive (Matthew 18:15-35).¹²⁴

3. *The temple tax.* This was a voluntary tax paid by every Jewish male over the age of twenty to support the upkeep of the temple.¹²⁵ It was not required by Jesus or His disciples to pay but He paid it willingly in order to humbly submit to the ruling authority of the religious leaders. Carson makes an interesting observation on the miraculous way (Peter catching a fish with the four drachma coin) by which Jesus paid the tax, “Perhaps, too, we are reminded again of Jesus’ humility: He who so controls nature and its powers that He stills storms and multiplies food now reminds Peter of that power by this miracle, while nevertheless remaining so humble that He would not needlessly cause offense.”¹²⁶ Even though Jesus is the greatest in the kingdom He is not willing to offend others or give His enemies an opportunity to attack Him or His work on behalf of the Father (Matthew 17:24-27).¹²⁷

4. *Jesus rebuked the superior attitude of the disciples.* Our Lord had just chastised the disciples because of their pride for arguing about who was to be the greatest in the kingdom. He told them that one must practice child-like humility (see #1 above). In trying to move the conversation away from a strong rebuke John chastises a man who was casting out a demon in Jesus name but who was not part of their band of brothers. The apostles thought that they were the only ones doing God’s work. Jesus’ response was to allow the man to continue because anyone who exercises faith in Christ has the right to work on God’s behalf. No one person or group has the corner on all of God’s truth.

¹²⁴ Ibid, 207-222.

¹²⁵ Pentecost, *The Words and Works Jesus Christ*, 262-3.

¹²⁶ Carson, *Matthew*, 395.

¹²⁷ Bruce, 222-229.

Spiritual leaders must guard against believing that their views are the only right views (Mark 9:38-40; Luke 9:49-50).¹²⁸

5) *Jesus demonstrated humility by washing the disciples' feet* (John 13:1-11). The greatest demonstration of humility was when Jesus washed the feet of the disciples the night before his crucifixion.¹²⁹ Constable explains the importance of this event:

“Washing feet in such a situation was the role of the most menial of servants (cf. 1:27). Here Jesus reversed normal roles and assumed the place of a servant rather than that of a rabbi. His act demonstrated love (v. 1), provided a model of Christian conduct (vv. 12-17), and symbolized cleansing (vv. 6-9). Jesus even dressed Himself as a slave (cf. Phil. 2:6-7; 1 Pet. 5:5). His humble service would take Him even to death on the cross (Phil. 2:8)... The disciples did not want to wash each other's feet since they had just been arguing about which of them was the greatest (Luke 22:24).”¹³⁰

Jesus was modeling the most important lesson for future disciples. He expects spiritual leaders of every generation to be a servant of others. They were not to lord over others or be motivated by selfish love but instead serve out of a motive of selfless love. He was not advocating a new action (foot washing) but a new attitude.

Selfless Character

Jesus' teaching on leadership and authority is countercultural. He called the disciples to a radical servanthood that required a core commitment to humility and service toward others. Principles of self-sacrifice and selfless service were not the norm in Jesus' day or today for that matter. Becoming a spiritual leader requires a revolutionary change in the way a person views leadership and authority.

¹²⁸ Ibid, 230-240.

¹²⁹ Ibid, 341-355.

¹³⁰ Constable, *Notes on John*, 199, <http://www.soniclight.com/constable/notes/pdf/john.pdf>, (Accessed on March 22, 2011).

Bruce deals with the doctrine of servant leadership or self-sacrifice (as he calls it) in chapter 16. He uses three events to illustrate this important principle to the disciples:

1. *Putting God first.* Dr. Bruce calls it ‘Counsels of perfection.’ These were questions concerning marriage and divorce (Matthew 19:1-12; Mark 10:1-12), the little children being brought to Jesus (Matthew 19:13-15; Mark 10:13-16; Luke 18:15-17), and the rich young ruler (Matthew 19:16-20; Mark 10:17-27; Luke 18:15-7). Our Savior drove home the point that obedience and sacrifice toward God comes first in every area of life.

Jesus illustrates the principle of servant leadership to the disciples by applying it to three core areas of life; marriage, children, and material possessions. Concerning marriage, the Pharisees try to trap Christ in a controversy about the validity of divorce. There was a raging debate in first century Judaism on the interpretation of the law of divorce. One school of thought was very liberal in their interpretation of the law while another was very strict. Both schools of interpretation cited the Deuteronomy 24:1-4 passage as the basis of their particular view. Jesus’ response was based on God’s original plan for marriage as outlined in Genesis 2:24-25—one man for one woman until death separates them. A cancellation of the marriage contract was only possible during the betrothal period before the marriage. The Pharisees saw marriage as a social institution¹³¹ governed by the laws of men. Jesus understood marriage as a divine institution governed by God’s laws.

The disciple’s response to Jesus’ interpretation was never marry in the first place (Matthew 19:10). Putting God first in marriage means selflessly serving one’s mate and

¹³¹ For a more in depth discussion on marriage and divorce see Pentecost, *The Words and Works of Jesus Christ*, 354-358; Carson, *Matthew*, 410-420; John Murray, *Divorce*. Philadelphia: The Presbyterian and Reformed Publishing House; Constable, *Notes on Matthew*, 259-267.

putting their spouse's best interest over their own (Ephesians 5:21-32). Being a spiritual leader meant having an attitude of humility and servanthood in the home as well as in the community.

Jesus willingness to bless the children brought by their parents was a testimony of the parent's faith in the person of Christ. Selfless character required a genuine faith in God. The disciples failed to understand that faith is the center of gravity for the servant of God. Our Lord would never turn anyone away who was exercising faith in His person. This harsh rebuke was meant to emphasize the necessity of faith for entrance into the kingdom. Since the children were small enough to be taken into His arms this indicates that they were too young to exercise faith. Therefore, the faith was expressed by the parents.¹³²

The final illustration Jesus used to teach the disciples about servant leadership concerned wealth and possessions. Jesus challenged the rich young ruler to sell all he had in order to inherit eternal life. He was unwilling to do so and walked away unconverted. Carson makes the application to those who want to be Jesus' disciple:

His money was competing with God; and what Jesus everywhere demands as a condition for eternal life is absolute, radical discipleship. This entails the surrender of *self*. Keeping the individual commandments is no substitute for the readiness for self-surrender to the absolute claim of God imposed through the call of the gospel. Jesus' summons in this context means that true obedience to the Law is rendered ultimately in discipleship.¹³³

Spiritual leadership is practiced in marriage -- the most intimate relationship between a man and woman. Serving a spouse and being unconditionally committed to them is evidence of a servant's heart. Faith in Christ is at the heart of discipleship.

¹³² Pentecost, *The Words and Works of Jesus Christ*, 359.

¹³³ Carson, *Matthew*, 424.

Without faith it is impossible to please God (Hebrews 11:6). Finally, material possessions and the pursuit of riches cannot take the place of surrender to God's will for one's life.

2. *The rewards of self-sacrifice* (Bruce's title). The previous events prompt the disciples to question Jesus about rewards for being his disciples (Matthew 19:27-30; Mark 10:28-31; Luke 18:28-30). Jesus taught that neither poverty nor wealth will earn a person eternal life. This was diametrically opposed to what Jews were taught in the first century. Riches were considered a sign of blessing and right living.¹³⁴ The most important thing is faith in his person not finances and possessions. This is the only thing that will guarantee eternal life. That being said Jesus confirms that great rewards are available to all those who sacrifice in this life. God will not be a debtor to any man. Because the apostles left everything to follow Christ they will be appointed to very important positions in the kingdom.

Jesus illustrated the basics by which the Father will distribute rewards to believers with the parable of the workers in the vineyard (Matthew 20:1-16). Workers are hired throughout the day to labor in the vineyard. Each worker is paid the day labor wage and goes to work. Other workers are hired throughout the day. At the end of the day each worker is paid the same -- a day's wage. Those who have worked all day object to those who came after receiving the same amount of wages. The landowner reminds them all that they all agreed to the wage so there was no injustice. Pentecost interprets this parable for us:

[The Landowner] had a right to do what he had so graciously done. By this parable the Lord desired those who had asked what they would receive to learn the lesson they were to work in the vineyard and leave their reward to Him. He would be just and fair, and He could also be counted on to be gracious. He had a right to do as He chose in dispensing

¹³⁴ Pentecost, *The words and Works of Jesus Christ*, 361.

the rewards. Their responsibility was to labor faithfully for Him, not with a view to the reward, but to please the One who had sent them to labor in the vineyard. They were also to trust the graciousness of the one who had commissioned them to be fair in the reward.¹³⁵

Knowing God will do the right thing with regards to rewards will keep the spiritual leader's focus on piety not payment.

3. *Servant leadership* (Bruce calls it 'The First Last, and the Last First'). Jesus makes the final point that positions of prominence are only earned by being a slave or servant not a ruling master who lords over others. Bruce says, "The great outstanding thought set forth therein, . . . is this, that in estimating the value of work, the divine Lord whom all serve, takes into account not merely quantity, but quality; that is, the spirit in which the work is done. Rewards are based on selflessly serving others with a godly motive." See Matthew 19:30, 20:1-20; Mark 10:31.¹³⁶

When Robert Greenleaf came out with the book entitled *Servant Leadership: a Journey into the Nature of Legitimate Power and Greatness* it was hailed as a revolutionary approach to leadership (see the first chapter). In fact Greenleaf did not claim that his book was religious in nature nor did he use Jesus as the model for servant leadership. A leader as a servant may be new to the contemporary business world but Jesus invented this model over two thousand years ago. With one sentence Jesus changed the course of history with regards to leadership, "But many who are first will be last and the last first (Matthew 19:30; Mark 10:31).

John Hutchison applies servant leadership to today's disciples:

Embracing the servanthood paradigm of leadership may be just as challenging to followers of Jesus today as it was for his earliest followers.

¹³⁵ Pentecost, *The Words and Works of Jesus Christ*, 362.

¹³⁶ Bruce, 272-280.

Practicing this paradigm and carrying out Christian ministry with a servant's heart goes against the grain of everything people have been taught by Western culture. At the heart of sin is self-centeredness and a desire to be seen by others. In addition most models of leadership in secular settings reward those who are self-promoting and "climbers" on the ladder of success. Many leaders instinctively seek out positions of control over others and try to avoid showing weakness or vulnerability. Not surprisingly, this pattern has also influenced many church leaders.

By contrast Jesus is the great example of servanthood *and* of powerful leadership. Servanthood does not avoid leadership. Instead it is a different kind of leadership, one committed to meeting the needs of others.¹³⁷

Sanders challenges leaders as well:

True greatness, true leadership, is found in giving yourself in service to others, not in coaxing or inducing others to serve you. True service is never without cost. Often it comes with a painful baptism of suffering. But the true spiritual leader is focused on the service he and she can render to God and other people, not on the residuals and perks of high office or holy title. We must aim to put more into life than we take out.¹³⁸

Spiritual leaders must be servants in every part of their life; private, personal, and professional. Nothing less will do because God requires that He comes first in every area of life. The rewards of self-sacrifice are not apparent in this life. The Christ-centered leader must be able to serve by faith and trust that God has a just reward for service regardless of the trials and tribulations that he must endure. Faith in Christ is not only the only way one inherits eternal life but the way by which one lives each day. Training as a servant leadership is counter intuitive. There is nothing natural about it. Meeting the needs of others over our own does not make sense. Servant leadership is only effective when the person follows the example of Jesus and focuses on the needs of others for the glory of God.

Summary

¹³⁷ John C. Hutchison, "Servanthood: Jesus' Countercultural Call To Christian Leaders," *Bibliotheca Sacra*: vol. 166, no. 661 (January-March, 2009), 69.

¹³⁸ Sanders, *Spiritual Leadership*, 15.

Character is caught as well as taught. The spiritual leader develops godly character from the inside out. Jesus used the Sermon on the Mount as the standard by which one measures character. Devotion to God is first and foremost a matter of the heart. The Ten Commandments were reinterpreted as an internal submission to God based on a cleansing of personal sin and exercising faith in Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior. The Old Testament precepts became a heavy burden to bear for the average Jew. The rules and regulations were practiced without an inward love and devotion to God. Jesus had raised the standard from external regulations to a personal relationship with God. The true spiritual leader observed the Law because he loved God and had a passion to serve Him.

Godly character leads to righteous living. Jesus taught that fasting, religious duty, and observing the Sabbath only has meaning when the heart is changed. Religious works are never the cause of a righteous standing before God. They are always the result of a right relationship to God. Many Christians believe that Godly living is a matter of just 'doing the right thing.' Unfortunately they are misinformed. Service to God flows out of a heart of gratitude and thanksgiving based on an intimate and personal relationship with Jesus Christ.

Spiritual leadership brings great privilege and honor. Sometimes this leads to pride and self-promotion. Jesus understood this principle all too well. The disciples began to maneuver for positions of power and influence. They were arguing about who would be the greatest in the kingdom and excluding other from working on God's behalf. Jesus sharply rebuked them and explained that spiritual leaders must be humble. They must renounce positions of power, forgive others unconditionally, submit to the ruling

authorities, and guard against sectarianism. Our Lord modeled humility in a profound display of servanthood. He washed the feet of the disciples in order to show that Christian leaders must serve others out of a motive of love for them.

The final lesson on character is a radical commitment toward others. Selfless service is a principle that applies to every area of life; marriage, family, and possessions. There is no distinction between serving those in private life versus serving those in public life. The rewards of self-sacrifice do not earn eternal life but God will honor all those who faithfully and sacrificially serve Him. The greatest spiritual leader is the one who serves others selflessly and graciously—the servant leader.

Chapter 4

The Competence of a Spiritual Leader

Spiritual leaders are first invited into a relationship with God-- a holy calling to be consecrated for His use. Then their inner nature is reconstituted to more fully reflect the image of God -- a new creature in Christ (2 Corinthians 5:17). The next step is identifying the core cluster of skills that leaders need to guide God's people. Competent Christian leadership is both knowledge and experience that the Holy Spirit will apply to the everyday situations of life.

Bruce identifies six core competencies that believers must learn, practice, and develop to a high level of proficiency: prayer (chapter 6), evangelism (chapter 8), the doctrine of the Person of Christ (chapters 11, 13), the cross (chapters 9, 12, 15, 17, 18, 19, 22), conflict and persecution (chapter 10), and the second coming of Christ (chapter 20).¹³⁹

Prayer

The first skill that spiritual leaders must master is prayer. According to Bruce, Jesus practiced prayer regularly, consistently, sometimes all night (Mark 1:35; Luke 6:12; Matthew 14:23). He taught the disciples how to practice prayer (Matthew 6:5-13, Luke 11:1-4) and how to prevail in prayer (Matthew 7:7-11; Luke 11:5-13; 18:1-5).¹⁴⁰

Practicing Prayer

Jesus frames the important issue of prayer against the practices of the Pharisees.

Pentecost describes the context:

After rejecting the Pharisaic interpretation of the law, Christ now moved on to show that the Pharisees' practices, arising out of their

¹³⁹ See appendix A- the table of contents for the location of each chapter.

¹⁴⁰ Bruce, 52.

interpretation of the law, were likewise to be rejected. There were certain so-called acts of righteousness on which the Pharisees set great store. These acts were giving alms, praying and fasting. . . . He noted at the outset that Pharisees were hypocrites, for giving of alms, praying, and fasting was designed to be Godward, not man ward.¹⁴¹

In contrast to the Pharisees, the disciples were to practice prayer the way God intended. Christ then gave the disciples a model prayer to use that would help them. The Lord's Prayer, as it is commonly known, expresses the disciple's submission to God in the community and personally. Their desire is to honor God and depend upon Him in every area of life. Both Matthew and Luke record the prayer. Even though there are minor differences they both communicate the same message. In Luke's form of the prayer two lines are missing: the references to God's will being done and the request to be delivered from evil. The best explanation is that these are two prayers in two separate settings.¹⁴² There are several ways to categorize this prayer:

1. *According to Bruce (Matthew 6:5-13; Luke 11:1-4).* He uses six petitions divided into two sets. The first set is to reveal God's glory and the second set for man's good.

- A. Pray for God's glory
 - 1. Pray for God's kingdom to come
 - 2. Pray for universal reverence of God's name
 - 3. Pray for obedience to God's will
- B. Pray for man's needs
 - 1. Pray for daily needs (bread)
 - 2. Pray for pardon
 - 3. Pray for protection from evil for ourselves¹⁴³

¹⁴¹ Pentecost, *Words and Works of Jesus Christ*, 181-182.

¹⁴² Darrell L. Bock, Luke 9:51-24:53, vol. 2 of the *Baker Exegetical Commentary on the New Testament*, (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 1994), 1046. D. A. Carson carefully explains 7 different theories that would account for the differences between Matthew and Luke. At the end he agrees with Bock. See Carson, *Matthew*, 167-168.

¹⁴³ Bruce, 55.

2. *According to D. Bock (Luke 11:1-4).* He identifies two parts with two declarations and three requests. They are a set of second-person singular declarations to God, followed by first-person plural requests.

- A. Two declarations to God
 - 1. Pray that God in his greatness will manifest himself
 - 2. Pray that his kingdom program is realized as a result of Jesus' presence
- B. Three requests
 - 1. Pray for daily food provision
 - 2. Pray for forgiveness of our sins
 - 3. Pray for spiritual protection

3. *According to D. A. Carson (Matthew 6:5-13).* His view is simple--six petitions. This prayer looks forward to the consummation of the kingdom and understands that the kingdom has already broken into human history. The result is that the prayer is for the kingdom to expand now and that it will soon appear in its ultimate and final form.

- A. Pray for God's will to be done on earth as in heaven.
- B. Pray God's will be fully accomplished.
- C. Pray God's will be done on earth the same way it's accomplished in heaven.
- D. Pray God will provide our physical needs.
- E. Pray God will forgive us our sins.
- F. Pray God will deliver us from temptation.¹⁴⁴

4. *According to I. Howard Marshall (Luke 11:1-4).* He describes this section as instructions on how to pray followed by a pattern to use. The pattern is two sets of petitions: the first is concerned with the establishment of God's purposes for the whole creation. The second set is concerned with the personal needs of all of us.

- A. God purposes
 - 1. Pray for God's name to be hallowed (made holy)
 - 2. Pray God's kingdom be established

¹⁴⁴ Carson, *Matthew*, 169-174.

B. Man's needs

1. Pray to provide the necessities of life
2. Pray for forgiveness of sins
3. Pray believers will not be brought into temptation¹⁴⁵

5. According to D. Pentecost (*Matthew 6:5-13; Luke 11:1-4*). He describes the prayer as a model not one to use repetitiously. There are five different kinds of prayers.

- A. Prayer should include worship.
- B. Prayer will focus on the work in which God is engaged.
- C. Prayer for daily provision.
- D. Prayer of confession/for forgiveness.
- E. Prayer for protection and deliverance from Satan.¹⁴⁶

6. According to S. Toussaint (*Matthew 6:5-13*). His understanding of this prayer is that it contains six kingdom-based principles. The first three are petitions for the coming kingdom and the last three are for the period prior to the kingdom.

- A. Petitions for the coming kingdom
 1. Pray revering God's person
 2. Pray for God's kingdom soon arrival in its fullness
 3. Pray God's sovereignty is fully manifested on earth
- B. Petitions for the interim period
 1. Pray God will supply our physical needs
 2. Pray God will forgive our sins
 3. Pray God will protect us in light of the trials and temptations prior to the kingdom being established¹⁴⁷

7. According to E. Towns (*Matthew 6:5-13*). He sees seven petitions and divides the prayer into two sections. The first sections are about praying for God's glory in heaven and the second section is praying for our spirituality on earth.

- A. God's glory in heaven
 1. Pray God's name is hallowed
 2. Pray God's kingdom come

¹⁴⁵ I Howard Marshall, *Commentary on Luke, New International Greek Testament Commentary*, (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1978), 454-462.

¹⁴⁶ Pentecost, *The Words and Works of Jesus Christ*, 185, 303-304.

¹⁴⁷ Toussaint, *Matthew*, 107-112.

3. Pray God's will be done

--The Hinge--

4. Pray for our daily bread

B. Our spirituality on earth

1. Pray for forgiveness of our debts

2. Pray that we are not lead into temptation

3. Pray that we are delivered from the evil one¹⁴⁸

The model prayer that Jesus wants the disciples to use can be understood in basically three ways:

1. *The Five Category Prayer*. Bock, Marshall, and Pentecost divide the prayer into five categories with Bock and Marshall dividing the five into two parts-two and three respectively.

2. *The Six Category Prayer*. Bruce, Carson, and Toussaint see six prayer categories with three focused on God and three focused on people.

3. *The Seven Category Prayer*. Towns sees seven petitions divided into two sections with prayer for our daily provisions as a hinge and the prayer for spiritual protection being divided into victory over temptation and protection against Satan.

Prevailing in Prayer

Spiritual leaders need to “learn how to pray and need to be given encouragement that God will hear them”¹⁴⁹ Now Jesus moves from practicing prayer to prevailing in prayer.

Bruce believes the second part of the lesson on prayer is intended to teach the disciples to persevere in their prayers.¹⁵⁰ There are two parables which teach the principle with an application sandwiched in between (Luke 11:5-13, Matthew 7:7-11).

¹⁴⁸ Elmer L. Towns, “Spiritual Factors of Church Growth,” Class lecture, Evangelism 500-910 from Liberty Baptist Theological Seminary, Lynchburg, VA, June 11, 2009.

¹⁴⁹ Marshall, *Luke*, 454.

Jesus' model prayer deals with content and does not address the attitude that the disciples must have in their prayer life. Because God is holy and sovereign there is concern about how to approach Him with our needs. The first parable deals with this issue (Luke 11:5-8). God is approachable unlike the man who did not want to be bothered to help a friend at midnight. The result is Jesus encouraged people to be persistent in prayer. It is not that God is unwilling to listen because He desires the prayers of the righteous (1 Peter 3:12). The principle is, like an unwilling friend who is moved by persistent intercession, how much more is God moved by the persistence¹⁵¹ of an intercessor.¹⁵²

Jesus applies this truth in Luke 11:9-10 and Matthew 7:7-8. The three imperatives direct the believer to continue to ask, seek, and knock.¹⁵³ This shows one's faith in the faithfulness of God who in his time will respond.¹⁵⁴

Finally, Jesus explains his point about God being compassionate and willing to answer the prayers of His people (Luke 11:11-13; Matthew 7:9-11). The picture is of a father who gets a request from his children for food. The father would not get his child something harmful like a snake or a scorpion. That would be unthinkable! Instead the

¹⁵⁰ Bruce, 58-59.

¹⁵¹ The word *anaideian* in Luke 11:8 is a *hapax legomenon*. The meaning is a combination of persistence and literally shamelessness. See W. Bauer et al. *A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature*, 2nd ed. (Chicago: University of Chicago Press), 54. Bock translates the word as a combination of 'shameless' and 'boldness' not persistence. He sees the emphasis on the 'nerve' of the requestor not the repetition and the resolve of the petitioner, Bock, *Luke*, vol. 2, 1059. In this author's view there is not much difference in persisting and having boldness. The *NET Bible* has a helpful note: "The term *anaideia* is hard to translate. It refers to a combination of ideas, a boldness that persists over time, or "audacity," which comes close. It most likely describes the one making the request, since the unit's teaching is an exhortation about persistence in prayer. Some translate the term "shamelessness" which is the term's normal meaning, and apply it to the neighbor as an illustration of God responding for the sake of his honor. But the original question was posed in terms of the first man who makes the request, not of the neighbor, so the teaching underscores the action of the one making the request." <http://net.bible.org/#!bible/Luke+11> (accessed on March 29, 2011).

¹⁵² J. Dwight Pentecost, *The Parables of Jesus*, (Grand Rapids: Zondervan), 77-78.

¹⁵³ See Marshall, *Luke*, 466-467 for a detailed discussion of the three verbs.

¹⁵⁴ Pentecost, *Parables*, 78.

father gives his children fish or an egg. Now Jesus makes the weaker to stronger argument; surely God will give good gifts and respond graciously since even sinful people do as well.¹⁵⁵

The spiritual leader is blessed with the privilege of prayer. In the Lord's Prayer the disciples are taught the fundamental principles of prayer; being concerned about God's character, His person, and a desire for the kingdom to be established here on earth. They are also able to make requests for material needs, forgiveness, and spiritual protection. The disciple should be persistent in prayer because God is a willing Father that wants to give good gifts to His people. His greatness may cause the believer to shy away from approaching the throne of heaven or he may think God is too busy running the world to be concerned with a single person's petitions. That is simply not true! Pray constantly and consistently because this reflects a dynamic and intimate relationship with the Lord.

Evangelism

The most interesting principle that Jesus taught about sharing one's faith was how quickly He required His disciples to evangelize their own communities in Galilee. A very influential writer and expert in evangelism states that Bruce's work is, "...probably the most careful study to date in the Master's larger plan of evangelism."¹⁵⁶ Almost immediately after our Lord chose the twelve apostles He sent them on mission (Matthew 10; Mark 6:7-13; Luke 9:1-11). Bruce breaks down the first evangelistic training event into two parts:

- A. The Mission
 1. The sphere of the work
 2. The nature of the work

¹⁵⁵ Bruce, 66, Bock, *Luke*, vol. 2, 1062.

¹⁵⁶ Robert E. Coleman, *The Master Plan of Evangelism*, (Old Tappan: Spire Books), 14.

3. The results of the work
 4. The return of the 12
- B. The Instructions
1. Care not
 2. Fear not¹⁵⁷

The Mission

Jesus gave the disciples a very detailed mission statement. He began by describing the sphere of the work in Matthew 10:5-6. Commenting on these verses Constable says:

The apostles were to limit their ministry to the Jews living in Galilee. They were not to go north or east into Gentile territory or south where the Samaritans predominated... The apostles were to go specifically to the lost sheep of the house of Israel, a term that described all the Jews (Isa. 53:6; Jer. 50:6; Ezek. 34). The designation highlights the needy character of the Jews. Jesus sent them to the Jews exclusively to do three things. They would announce the appearance of a Jewish Messiah, announce a Jewish kingdom, and provide signs to Jews who required them as proof of divine authorization. Jesus did not need the additional opposition that would come from Gentiles and Samaritans. He would have to deal with enough of that from the Jews. His kingdom would be a universal one, but at this stage of His ministry Jesus wanted to offer it to the Jews first. We have already noted that Jesus had restricted His ministry primarily but not exclusively to Jews (8:1-13). He was the King of the Jews.¹⁵⁸

Not only did Jesus restrict the mission to Galilee for the reasons mentions above but Bruce adds another very important point. The disciples were very inexperienced. He says, “The twelve, at the period of their first trial mission, were not fit to preach the gospel, or to do good works, either among Samaritans of Gentiles. Their hearts were too

¹⁵⁷ Bruce, 99-119.

¹⁵⁸ Constable, *Notes on Matthew*, 150-151, <http://www.soniclight.com/constable/notes/pdf/matthew.pdf> (accessed on March 30, 2011).

narrow, their prejudices too strong: there was too much Jew, too little of the Christian, in their character.”¹⁵⁹

The nature of their work was very specific (Matthew 10:7-8; Mark 6:7; Luke 11:1-2). Jesus sent them out two by two and gave them the content of the message; proclaim the kingdom of heaven at hand (is imminent) by exercising authority over demonic forces and physical disease. This was the same message that John the Baptist preached (Matthew 3:2) and Jesus proclaimed (Matthew 4:17, 23: 9:35). Even though repentance was not specifically mentioned it was implied as part of the preparation needed to enter the kingdom. Finally, these evangelists must offer this message free of charge because they received the good news of the kingdom by grace. The disciples illustrated this by traveling and relying on God’s providence to sustain them. Practically speaking the disciples were restricted to a very narrow theological message. They did not understand the doctrine of the cross, the nature of the kingdom, or the Holy Spirit’s work. They were almost on the same level as the people they were trying to reach.¹⁶⁰

The contemporary results of the work seem mixed at best but ultimately there would be great success. Luke 9:6 summarizes the mission positively; the good news was preached and people were healed everywhere. Mark 6:12-13 adds more details. He notes that the disciple’s message was one of repentance. They were also able to cast out demons and anoint people with oil and healing them. More good news came when Jesus commissioned an additional mission -- seventy-two disciples were sent to exploit the gains made by the original twelve (Matthew 9:37-38; 10:7-16; Luke 10:1ff).¹⁶¹

¹⁵⁹ Bruce, 101.

¹⁶⁰ Ibid, 102.

¹⁶¹ Bock, *Luke*, vol. 2, 988-992. He discusses in detail that there were two missions not one.

The not so good news was when Herod heard the reports about Jesus. He was curious but did not commit to trusting him as savior. The Tetrarch rightly connected Jesus and John the Baptist as having the same message but did not make the step of faith to follow Christ (Luke 9:9-11).¹⁶² Bruce makes an insightful observation with regards to results of the evangelistic mission. There are two dynamics at play:

There were *two* religious movements going on in the days of the Lord Jesus. One consisted in rousing the mass out of the stupor of indifference; the other consisted in the careful, exact training of men already in earnest, in the principles and truths of the divine kingdom. Of the one movement the disciples, that is, both the twelve and the seventy, were the agents; of the other movement they were the subjects. and the later movement, though less noticeable, and much more limited in extent, was by far more important than the former; for it was destined to bring forth fruit that should remain—to tell not merely on the present time, but on the whole history of the world.

The final part of the mission was the after action report by the disciples and a debriefing by our Lord (Luke 9:10). The text simply says that the disciples made an oral report about their experiences; however, Luke does not record Jesus' response. The report by the seventy-two may shed more light on Jesus possible responses. In Luke 10:17-20 He responds to the excitement and joy the disciples experienced over sharing His authority over the demonic forces (verses 17-18). He wants them to focus on their secure standing before God not on their abilities to crush the satanic forces opposed to them (verses 19-20).

The Instructions

The means by which spiritual leaders are to engage in evangelism is two-fold-faithfully and fearlessly. Sharing the gospel requires trust in God to accomplish the change in a person's heart. Disciples are incapable of changing anyone's life on their

¹⁶² Bock, *Luke*, vol. 1, 822-824.

own. Modeling this message was extremely important. This faith in God's message is not blind or irrational faith. Bruce says:

On entering on the duties of the apostolate, they should have to live literally by faith, and Jesus mercifully sought to inure them to the habit while He was with them on earth... While requiring His disciples to walk by faith, Jesus gave their faith something to rest on, by encouraging them to hope that what they provided not for themselves God would provide for them through the instrumentality of His people.

To further encourage the disciples and emphasize faithfulness to the ministry Jesus explains that those who engage in the work of evangelism will receive great rewards in the future (Matthew 10:40-42).

Fearless evangelism is best understood in the context of persecution. In Matthew 10:16-25 Jesus warns the disciples there will be opposition and their response should be shrewd but blameless and innocent. He goes on to explain that resistance will come from the community (verses 17-19) and the family (verse 21). Rely on the Holy Spirit for guidance and strength (verse 20). Instead of fearing what men can do fear God because he has ultimate power over life (verses 26-33). Bruce sums up fearlessness this way, "Therefore they might go forth without fear, trusting their lives to His care; remembering also that, at worst, death was no great evil, seeing that for the faithful was reserved a crown of life, and, for those who confessed the Son of man, the honor of being confessed by Him in turn before His Father in heaven."¹⁶³

Spiritual leaders have the privilege to share the gospel message. They are witnesses to the power of God in Christ. Their message will either be accepted or rejected. There is no middle ground. Opposition will arise but remain faithful and fearless because God has rewards for those who endure and do not fall away.

¹⁶³ Bruce, 119.

The Person of Christ

Without a doubt the most perplexing issue the disciples faced was who Jesus was and where did he come from. Looking through the lens of Scripture and two thousand years of church history, the conclusion is obvious to believers today; Jesus was and is God and man -- two natures, one person. For the disciples the issue was far from clear at all!

Bruce identifies two situations which Jesus uses to teach his disciples about His true identity. They are Peter's confession (Matthew 16:13-20; Mark 8:27-30; Luke 9:18-21) in chapter eleven and the transfiguration (Matthew 17: 1-13; Mark 9:2-13; Luke 9:28-36) in chapter thirteen.¹⁶⁴

Peter's confession that Jesus is the Messiah comes after Jesus spends considerable time in prayer by Himself and is alone with the disciples (Luke 9:18a). The disciples answer with what could be viewed as conventional wisdom. The consensus was that Jesus was some sort of prophet. Pressing the point Jesus asked for their personal opinion. Peter, speaking for the group, declared that Jesus was both the Messiah and divine.¹⁶⁵

Bock summarizes Peter's confession declaration this way:

All three Synoptic accounts portray Peter's answer in messianic terms: "You are the Christ" in Mark 8:29 and "You are the Christ, the son of the living God" Matthew 16:16. Matthew follows with a long section unique to him, where Jesus accepts Peter's confession and notes that it is the product of divine revelation. All the gospels agree that Jesus is the promised eschatological leader who will bring deliverance and fulfillment to those who ally themselves to him.¹⁶⁶

In this brief dialogue Christ reveals his Messiahship and deity at the same time. He validates Peter's confession by calling him blessed (Matthew 16:17) and by

¹⁶⁴ Ibid, 163-172 (ch 11), 190-198 (ch 13).

¹⁶⁵ Ibid, 167.

¹⁶⁶ Bock, *Luke*, vol. 1, 840.

proclaiming his response was a revelation from God.¹⁶⁷ Carson commenting on verse 17 explains both concepts being expressed by Peter this way:

Jesus' Father has revealed to Peter the truth he has just confessed. Indeed, no one knows the Son except the Father (11:27; cf. John 6:44), who has now graciously revealed his identity to Peter. Such knowledge could not have originated in "flesh and blood"--a common Jewish expression referring to man as a mortal being (cf. 1 Cor. 15:50; Gal 1:16; Eph 6:12; Heb 2:14). We must neither minimize nor exaggerate this revelation of the Father to Peter. Similar confessions by others do not necessarily evoke similar theological conclusions (e.g., 21:9 27:54); so Peter's confession assumes a God-given insight deeper than these.

On the other hand we need not suppose that the idea that Jesus was Messiah was here entering the apostle's minds for the first time. ...John's witness is surely sound: the disciples began following Jesus in the hope that he was the Messiah (John 1:41, 45, 49). But their understanding of the nature of Jesus' Messiahship was hindered by their own expectations (see on 16:21-23); and they did not come into a full "Christian" understanding til after Easter... Peter's firm grasp of the fact that Jesus is the Messiah set him apart from the uncertainty and confusion of the crowd and could only be the result of the Father's disclosure.¹⁶⁸

Peter's confession contains "in germ" the doctrine of the deity of Christ.¹⁶⁹ The apostle would teach this doctrine in a much more refined form to the Jews in his sermon in Acts 2:14-36.¹⁷⁰

Another unveiling of Christ's deity is the transfiguration (Matthew 17:1-13; Mark 9:2-13; Luke 9:28-36). Luke's version of this event is shorter at various points but provide more detail about what actually takes place on the mountain. The outline of this passage follows:

- A. Jesus takes his inner circle (Peter, James, and John) aside to pray 9:28
- B. Jesus is transfigured and two witnesses join him (Moses and Elijah) 9:29-31
- C. Peter wants to celebrate the Feast of Tabernacles 9:32-33
- D. God's endorsement of the Son/greater prophet than Moses 9:34-35
- E. The disciples silence and reflection of the event 9:36

¹⁶⁷ Toussaint, *Matthew*, 201.

¹⁶⁸ Carson, *Matthew*, 367.

¹⁶⁹ Bruce, 167.

¹⁷⁰ Robert Duncan Culver, *The Life of Christ*, (Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1976), 277.

Bock summarizes this event well:

Luke 9:28-36 presents the transfiguration as a major event of confirmation. After Jesus received the disciples' confession and warned them about his approaching suffering, three disciples hear the heavenly voice testify to Jesus' uniqueness. ... Not only is Jesus pictured as the Messiah-Servant, he is portrayed as the "Prophet like Moses." He is to be heeded. The disciples have much to learn from Jesus. Much of what they hear, they do not expect. So they must listen. The one who follows Jesus must be taught by him about suffering, sharing in that suffering, and pleasing God.

The suffering he promises will occur, for God planned it. It is Jesus "exodus." But in the face of impending suffering, Jesus' glory reveals who he really is and how he will ultimately manifest himself. Moses, the founding figure of the nation, and Elijah, the prophet of the eschaton, testify to him and are subordinate to him... Just as the disciples were silent and had time to take in the implications of the transfiguration, so the reader should reflect on Jesus' uniqueness, glory, and authority. When one is with Jesus, one is in the cloud of glory.¹⁷¹

The transfiguration was a preview and object lesson of Christ's second coming to establish his kingdom. There was an unveiling of Christ's glory that was put in place at the incarnation and will not be fully revealed to the world until the Second Advent. Pentecost said, "The Transfiguration was an authentication of the person of Christ, for only One who is righteous, holy, and sinless could be transfigured so as to reveal the intrinsic shekinah glory of God that belonged to Him."¹⁷²

A primary motive for Christ revealing His deity to His disciples was to prepare them for the greatest event in human history; His suffering and death on the cross for the sins of the world.

Spiritual leaders believe that Jesus is human and divine. He is God's Son and not just a great teacher or wise leader. He is the creator of all things and He will come again to establish His kingdom on earth. In the meantime His followers must continue to

¹⁷¹ Bock, *Luke*, vol. 1, 876.

¹⁷² Pentecost, *The Words and Works of Jesus Christ*, 258.

worship and serve Him by faith and in the future they will rule with Him. Our attention will now turn to the cross of Christ.

The Cross

Over one fifth of Bruce's book deals with the cross -- seven out of thirty one chapters. He divides Jesus' cross sayings into two categories. There are four lessons He gave to the disciples¹⁷³ about His death and resurrection and three lessons which apply to everyone. The four lessons are:

- A. Live for God not yourself
 - 1. Chapter 12
 - 2. Matthew 16:21-28; Mark 8:31-33; Luke 9:21-27
- B. Be a servant leader
 - 1. Chapter 17
 - 2. Matthew 20:17-28; Mark 10:32-45; Luke 18:31-34
- C. Sacrifice your best
 - 1. Chapter 18
 - 2. Matthew 26:6-13; Mark 14:3-9; John 12:1-8
- D. Remember the cross
 - 1. Chapter 22
 - 2. Matthew 26:26-29; Mark 14:22-25; Luke 22:17-20

The three lessons which apply to everyone are:

- A. The Cross and the Crowd
 - 1. Chapter 9
 - 2. John 6:1-71; Matthew 14:13-21, 24-33; Mark 6:33-34,45-52; Luke 9:11-17
- B. The Cross and the Samaritans
 - 1. Chapter 15
 - 2. Luke 9:51-56
- C. The Cross and the Gentiles

¹⁷³ Bruce, 367. He describes these encounters in strictly soteriological terms. The first lesson- Christ suffered for righteousness sake; an example to all Jesus followers. The second- Christ suffered for the unrighteous-gave his life a ransom for the sinful. The third lesson- Christ suffered in the spirit of self-sacrificing love, based on Mary's example; The fourth- Christ suffered to inaugurate a new covenant of grace and bring about forgiveness of sins. This writer takes a broader view as evidenced by the outline.

1. Chapter 19
2. John 12:20-23

The Four Lessons on the Cross

Jesus carefully and consistently prepared his disciples for His impending death. Even though the Old Testament spoke of a suffering servant (Psalm 22; Isaiah 53) no one made the connection that Jesus' primary mission was to give His life "a ransom for many." It was imperative that the apostles understand that Jesus' primary mission was to suffer and die for the sins of the whole world.

Live for God -- The First Lesson on the Cross

The first lesson Jesus taught the apostles was the high cost of discipleship. Our Lord humbly submits to rejection. The nation will spurn His offers of accepting Him as their Messiah. He declared His impending death at the hands of the Jewish leadership, a public spectacle in Jerusalem, and on the third day His resurrection from the grave (Matthew 16:21; Mark 8:31; Luke 9:22). "The road to glory runs through the cross."¹⁷⁴ Peter would have none of that and objected loudly and passionately. "Peter's strong will and warm heart linked to his ignorance produce a shocking bit of arrogance. He confesses that Jesus is the Messiah and then speaks in a way implying that he knows more of God's will than the Messiah himself."¹⁷⁵

Jesus rebukes Peter harshly (Matthew 16:23). He had just called Peter a 'rock' in Matthew (16:18) and now calls him a stumbling 'rock' or stone and compares him to Satan offering Jesus kingship in the wilderness temptation without the sufferings of the cross (Matthew 4:8-9).¹⁷⁶ Peter was a stumbling block to Jesus in His earthly ministry but

¹⁷⁴ Bock, *Luke*, vol. 1, 848.

¹⁷⁵ Carson, *Matthew*, 377.

¹⁷⁶ *Ibid*, 377.

a foundation stone in the early life of the church after the resurrection. The cross then became a stumbling block to the Jews (1 Corinthians 1:23).

Immediately after this stinging rebuke Jesus applies the first lesson on the cross to the band of twelve and the multitudes who were listening (Mark 8:34). Anyone who desires to be a true disciple must live for God not self and submit completely to the will of Christ (Matthew 16:24). He gives three reasons why a decision should be made to follow Him.

The first reason is safety. Living for God and not yourself will lead to life. Living for self will lead ultimately to death. A believer's life is secure only when one identifies with Jesus Christ (Matthew 16:25). The second reason is the fear of losing one's material possessions. Trying to hold on to physical possession will actually cause a disciple to lose the true riches. "Live for immediate loss but ultimate gain"¹⁷⁷ (Matthew 16:26). The third reason for submitting completely to Christ is He will judge people when He comes to power and assumes His throne. Those who reject Him will be excluded from the kingdom forever. Those disciples who are only partially committed will lose eternal rewards for their lack of faithful service (Matthew 16:27; Luke 9:26).

The Second Lesson on the Cross -- Servant Leadership

The second lesson Jesus teaches the disciples is based on his example of giving His life as a ransom. Greatness as a disciple is about becoming a servant, not receiving benefits and pleasures from this life. The heart of this principle is found in Mark 10:32-45, more specifically in verses 42-45. The concept of servanthood is emphasized by Mark throughout his book:

¹⁷⁷ Walvoord, *Matthew*, 126.

The theme of servanthood permeates the Gospel of Mark, as reflected in Jesus' teachings and actions. The last section of the Gospel (chaps. 11-16) depicts the passion of Christ as the fulfillment of Isaiah's suffering servant (Isa. 52:13-53:12), a theme in the teaching of early church leaders (e.g., Philip in Acts 8:30-35). Jesus' role as a suffering servant was an expiatory act of atonement for sins, but it was more. His use of this motif in His teaching modeled for his followers the need for them to *demonstrate servanthood and sacrifice* (emphasis mine). In Mark 10:42-45 Jesus challenged His disciples to a radical and paradoxical form of leadership and showed that He Himself would provide the ultimate example through His suffering and death.¹⁷⁸

This is the third time Jesus tells His disciples of his impending death. The second time the twelve simply ignore Him (Mark 9:30-32). He also adds new information. The gentile leaders will actually put Him to death by means of crucifixion and He will be resurrected on the third day (Mark 10:32-34).

Immediately two disciples, James and John, ask Jesus a question through their mother (Matthew 20:20) who was Jesus' aunt (his mother's sister). They wanted the positions of honor in the coming kingdom (Mark 10:35-37). Our Lord had promised the twelve ruling thrones over Israel in the kingdom (Matthew 19:28). Jesus responded by explaining glory and positions of authority only come through suffering, sacrifice, and servanthood. Both disciples agree to the conditions not fully understanding what they were to experience. James was the first apostle martyred¹⁷⁹ and John was exiled to the Island of Patmos for his faith. Besides, only God the Father had the authority to make those decisions. Even the other disciples became angry that James and John had requested these special privileges from the Lord (Mark 10:38-41). Now Jesus teaches the disciples that greatness in the kingdom is achieved by being a servant to all.

¹⁷⁸ John C. Hutchison, "Servanthood: Jesus' Countercultural Call to Christian Leaders," *Bibliotheca Sacra*: 166, no. 661 (January-March, 2009): 54-55.

¹⁷⁹ Constable, *Notes on Matthew*, 120, <http://www.soniclight.com/constable/notes/pdf/mark.pdf>, (accessed on April 5, 2011).

Jesus defines a servant leader as being a being a specific kind of person. There are three words that describe a servant. In verse 43 the word servant is the word for deacon (*diakonos*). In verse 44 the word translated slave is (*doulos*). And in verse 45 the word ransom (*lytron*) means buying back someone out of bondage. Constable explains:

Ransom (Gr. *lytron*, cf. Matt. 20:28). In *koine* Greek (the common Greek of the New Testament world), this word often described the money paid to release slaves. In the New Testament, it has a narrower, more theological meaning, namely, release or redemption. The only two occurrences of this word in the New Testament are in Matthew 20:28 and Mark 10:45. The Exodus is the great Old Testament instance of this redemption and release.¹⁸⁰

Servant leadership is summed up this way:

Based on Jesus' example, the definition of greatness is that one becomes a servant not that one does the activities of a servant. Jesus is the example of a great leader by giving his life, not just his death, as a ransom for many. He did this by encountering people in such a way that affected them deeply through liberation or healing. Jesus endorsed and practiced this style of leadership for the disciples to follow. This is not a list of things to do to lead well; it is a dynamic of becoming a different person. This process does not happen by willing it to happen, but happens through an emptying of self in relationship to the Lord...Jesus definition is to become a servant and to follow his example of giving his life as a ransom. This is a process of giving your life in such a way that your life is changed...This is leadership from the inside of the person that manifests on the outside rather than leadership through exercising certain styles of traits.¹⁸¹

Achieving greatness in the Kingdom is rooted in embracing the cross of Christ by being a servant leader. Serving other's personal needs, being willing to perform the most menial tasks, and do for others sacrificially is at the heart of being a member of the Kingdom of God. This is only accomplished by emptying one's self and relying on an intimate relationship to Jesus. This change is only achieved from the inside out.

¹⁸⁰ Ibid, 121.

¹⁸¹ Steven Crowther, "The Spirit of Service: Reexamining Servant Leadership in the Gospel of Mark." *Inner Resources for Leaders* 1, no. 3 (2009): 1-7. <http://www.regent.edu/acad/global/publications/innerresources/1,issue3>, (accessed April 5, 2011).

The Third Lesson on the Cross -- Sacrifice Your Best

Mary's sacrificial act of devotion towards the one she truly believed in is a model for all believers. John's gospel gives a full account of this incident that Jesus used as an object lesson to teach the disciples about His impending death on the cross. The Saturday before Jesus' crucifixion, He retires to Bethany and eats with His disciples and Lazarus' family (Matthew 26:6; Mark 14:3; John 12:1). He had just raised Lazarus from the dead (John 11:38-44), and John tells his readers about the religious leaders' plot to kill Jesus (John 11:45-57). After dinner, Mary took a very expensive ointment and anointed Jesus head and feet (Matthew 26:7; John 12:3). She then wiped them dry with her hair.

Constable comments on this extraordinary scene:

Only John noted that Mary wiped Jesus' feet with her hair, another act of humility. Normally Jewish women never unbound their hair in public since loose hair was a sign of loose morals. Evidently Mary's love for Jesus overrode her sense of propriety. She probably wiped the ointment in and the excess off with her hair. It would have been easy for Mary to anoint Jesus' feet. The guests undoubtedly reclined on mats on the floor with their heads and hands close to the table and their feet extending out in the opposite direction.¹⁸²

The disciples' response was voiced by Judas. He complained that Mary had wasted the oil for it could have been sold and the money given to the poor (John 12:4-5; Matthew 26:8; Mark 14:4). They failed to understand the significance of Mary's action. They were more focused on the price of the oil. Jesus then comes to Mary's defense and explains that her act of devotion was a symbolic act through which to understand His death. The cross was to be the supreme act of love just as Mary's willingness to pour very expensive oil over Jesus' head and feet was a selfless and extreme act of devotion. Bruce compares Mary's sacrifice with Jesus death on the cross:

¹⁸² Constable, *Notes on John*, 185, <http://www.soniclight.com/constable/notes/pdf/john.pdf>, (Accessed April 5, 2011).

There was first a resemblance in motive. Mary wrought her good work out of pure love. she loved Jesus with her whole heart, for what he was, for what he had done for the family to which she belonged, and for the words of instruction she had heard from His lips when she came on a visit to their house...Herein Mary's act resembles closely that of Jesus in dying on the cross, and in coming to this world that he might die...

Mary's good work further resembled Christ's in its self-sacrificing character. It was not without an effort and a sacrifice that that devoted woman performed her famous act of homage...Herein the woman of Bethany resembled the Son of man. He, too, did what he could. Whatever it was possible for a holy being to endure in the way of humiliation, temptation, sorrow, suffering, yea, even in the way of becoming "sin", and a "curse", He willingly underwent...

A third feature which fitted Mary's "good work" to be an emblem of the savior's was its *magnificence*. this also appeared in the expenditure connected with the act of anointing, which was not only such as involved a sacrifice for a person of her means, but very liberal with reference to the purpose in hand...It symbolized a similar characteristic of Christ's good work as the Savior of sinners. *He did His work magnificently, and in no mean, economical. He accomplished the redemption of "many" by means adequate to redeem all.*¹⁸³

The cross was the supreme act of love and devotion and some followers of Christ were moving away and others moving closer to Him. The disciples were more concerned with the economics of the matter and not with the spiritual implications of the moment. Mary is a type of the true Christian worshipper who had given her all for Christ and expresses her love and adoration openly and consistently. Every Christian is either moving toward Christ or away from Him. There is no middle ground.

The Fourth Lesson on the Cross -- Remember the Cross.

The final lesson of the cross is the most visual and experiential (Matthew 26:26-29; Mark 14:22-25; Luke 22:17-20; 1 Corinthians 11:23-26). Jesus reveals to the disciples the true meaning of the Passover meal and festival. On the night before His crucifixion He ate the sacred meal with the men He had been with for three years. Bruce says:

¹⁸³ Bruce, 301-305.

The rite of the Supper, besides commemorating, is likewise of use to *interpret* the Lord's death. It throws important light on the meaning of that solemn event. The institution of this symbolic feast was in fact the most important contribution made by Jesus during His personal ministry to the doctrine of the atonement through the sacrifice of Himself. There-from more clearly than from any other act or word performed or spoke by Him, the twelve might learn to conceive of their Master's death, as possessing a *redemptive* character.¹⁸⁴

Jesus now reveals the true meaning of this sacred tradition that God had required of His people for the past 1400 years (Exodus 12:1-14). Curtis summarizes:

During the Last Supper, Jesus appropriated elements of the Jewish Passover. That is, He endowed them with new meaning, and that meaning was tied to Himself. Instead of having meaning restricted to God's past redemption, these elements now symbolize the redemption of Jesus Christ as the "Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world" by His death at Calvary. At Passover, the Old and New Covenants meet. He is the lamb without defect. He is the broken bread. He is the cup of Redemption. As He said in Luke, He will not partake of Passover again, until He can share it with us in the coming Kingdom. The hand of God delivered from slavery in the past. On the cross, He delivered us from slavery to sin.¹⁸⁵

The early church recognized the connection between Jesus and the Passover as well. Curtis continues:

Your boasting is not good. Do you not know that a little leaven leavens the whole lump of dough? Clean out the old leaven so that you may be a new lump, just as you are in fact unleavened. For Christ our Passover also has been sacrificed. Therefore let us celebrate the feast, not with old leaven, nor with the leaven of malice and wickedness, but with the unleavened bread of sincerity and truth (1 Corinthians 5:6-8).

Leaven represents sin. Allowing sin in our lives and the church has a corrupting influence. But we are unleavened, because Christ our Passover has been sacrificed. Thus we see that Jesus completes the promise of Passover. Note the suggestion in Paul's words, "Let us celebrate the feast." This implies that the early Christians celebrated Passover for some time.¹⁸⁶

¹⁸⁴ Bruce, 356.

¹⁸⁵ Donald E. Curtis, "The Lord's Appointed Times (Leviticus 23)" Bible.org. <http://bible.org/seriespage/lord%E2%80%99s-appointed-times-leviticus-23> (accessed April 6, 2011).

¹⁸⁶ Ibid.

Today there are varying views on how to understand the meaning of the Lord's Supper. Erickson offers the solution:

The Lord's Supper is essentially a commemoration of Christ's death... The value of the sacrament, according to this view, lies simply in receiving by faith the benefits by faith, for the effect of the Lord's Supper is no different in nature from, say, that of a sermon. Both are types of proclamation. The Lord's Supper differs from sermons only in that it involves a visible means of proclamation. In both cases, as with all proclamation, responsive faith is necessary if there is to be any benefit. Christ is not present with the nonbelieving person. We might say, then, that it is not so much that the sacrament brings Christ to the communicant as that the believer's faith brings Christ to the sacrament.¹⁸⁷

As Jesus was sharing the Passover meal with the disciples He was revealing new truths for them and future believers as well. Bock sums it very well:

A variety of truths are portrayed. Oneness is expressed in the sharing of the cup. A new age of salvation will be found in the new, united community that is being formed on the basis of Jesus' approaching death. Jesus speaks of his body being broken for the disciples and of his blood being shed for them, the blood of the new covenant. The covenantal reference makes it clear that a new era is in view, an era that Jesus brings. We have a clear note that God's plan has reached a new phase. At the center is a death and an inauguration of benefits. The mediating source is Jesus, who gives his body and blood so that those who ally themselves to him may receive salvation benefits. He is sacrificially offered for them, and thus a fresh covenant comes. The apostles here take bread and wine to picture this; the church declares it at the Lord's Table. There is, in fact, a greater meal to come.¹⁸⁸

The Lord's Supper will inspire and encourage the believer's faith and love as they reflect on the richness of the death of Christ. All can look forward to the day when Christians will eat this sacred meal with our Savior and Lord. Come quickly Lord Jesus!

The Three Lessons on the Cross for everyone

¹⁸⁷ Millard J. Erickson, *Christian Theology*, 2nd ed., (Grand Rapids: Baker Books, 1983), 1128-1129.

¹⁸⁸ Bock, *Luke*, vol. 2, 1729.

Even though Jesus focused His teaching and training on the twelve He did include the multitudes. There were several occasions when our Lord explains His primary mission to specific groups of people. Bruce identifies three instances where Jesus tells the people that only He is able to meet their spiritual needs; the conflict in Galilee (John 6), the rejection by the Samaritans (Luke 9:51-56), and the inclusion of the gentiles (John 12:20-23). Everyone has an opportunity to exercise faith in Him as their Lord and Savior but many would reject His offer.

The First Lesson-The Cross and the Crowds

The Galilean conflict resulted from the people misunderstanding the primary mission of Jesus. The crowds were convinced the kingdom had arrived and Jesus was going to destroy the Roman rulers and set up the long awaited rule of God promised in the Old Testament. When Jesus feed them they were ready to make Him king on the spot (John 6:14-15). At the beginning of John chapter six Jesus is being followed by thousands of people (John 6:1-2). After feeding the 5,000 He reaches His highest popularity (John 6:14). The disciples are taught that only Christ can supply both physical and spiritual needs they can't (John 6:5-7). That night in the storm on the lake, they learned that only by exercising faith in Christ are they able to overcome the obstacles in life (John 6:16-21). The next day the crowds have returned for more bread. Knowing the crowd was only interested in having their material needs met Jesus preaches his first 'I am' sermon on the bread of life (John 6:25-58). As a result many left Him and only the twelve remain (John 6:59-71).¹⁸⁹

¹⁸⁹ John Martin, "The Gospel of John" (Class notes, Dallas Theological Seminary, Dallas, TX, Fall, 1982).

Jesus' sermon on the bread of life forced the crowds to choose between a political messiah and a redemptive one. They were ready to make Him king but not grasping the fact that suffering precedes glory. Bruce says:

“He spoke, therefore, in the synagogue of Capernaum with Calvary in view, setting Himself forth as the life of the world in terms applicable to a sacrificial victim, whose blood was shed, and whose flesh is eaten by those presenting the offering; not mincing His words, but saying everything in the strongest and intensest manner possible.¹⁹⁰

According to Pentecost the sermon has two parts:

In the first part of His discourse (Jo. 6:22-40) Jesus had led His hearers up to His declaration of the fact that He was the bread of life come down from heaven. He asserted that He had life in Himself and would impart life to the one believing on Him. He also set forth plainly the fact of His incarnation.

In the second division of the sermon (Jo. 6:41-51) He discusses His own personality as the true bread giving life to the world, and leads His hearers on to the further declaration of His sacrificial and atoning death, as the bread to be broken in a fleshly body.¹⁹¹

People cannot come to God by natural or worldly means. They must have a supernatural transformation by believing that Christ died for their sins on the cross and His blood was shed as an atoning sacrifice for sin. The multitudes must accept Christ's teaching that requires everyone to believe His word and put faith in His person in order to receive eternal life.

At the conclusion of His message the majority of the people decided to reject His offer and left following Him (John 6:59-60). They were unwilling to, by faith, believe He was speaking about His death and resurrection. Jesus then turns to the disciples and questions their commitment to Him in the context of explaining that only the Spirit of God gives eternal life and no one can come to Christ except the Father draw him (John

¹⁹⁰ Bruce, 136.

¹⁹¹ Pentecost, *The Words and Works of Jesus Christ*, 236-238.

66-65). The disciples had trouble understanding His message as well but Peter, speaking for the group, renews their faith in the person of Christ as the Holy One from God (John 6:61-71).

The Second Lesson -- The Cross and the Samaritans

In Luke 9:51-56 Jesus begins his final journey to Jerusalem. He will face opposition by the religious leaders that will ultimately lead to His death. In order to get to Jerusalem He took the most direct route was through Samaria. The Samaritans refuse to welcome Him because He is on His way to the temple in Jerusalem. They know He is a rabbi of some renown. The disciples respond with a call for immediate judgment. Jesus rebukes them because the time for judgment is not yet. Now was the time for grace and mercy. Rejection by the Samaritans does not destroy Jesus' the message but because of the cross their rejection turns into future opportunities for forgiveness. Bock summarizes this passage brilliantly:

Jesus is headed for Jerusalem to face the consequences of his being rejected. But rejection is not evinced only by those in Galilee or by the religious leadership. It is widespread. A variety of reasons prevent a hearing: the leadership has theological concerns; the Samaritans have a history of racial and religious hostility that makes accepting a Jew difficult. But despite rejection, the disciples' desire for immediate cataclysmic judgment is wrong. God has a time and place to evaluate what people do with Jesus...The disciples' call is to continue to offer the message; so they learn and move on. The message is an invitation of grace, but the decision does have ultimate consequences. It is a precious message, and one that requires a decision. In his rebuke, Jesus is not rejecting the disciples' conclusion, but their timing and spirit...It is a sad time for Israel and its neighbor. Sitting on the edge of opportunity, they risk missing the call. Such rejection leads to Jesus' death and a "reception" that point beyond death to resurrection. Paradoxically, rejection paves the way for broader opportunity for forgiveness (Rom. 11). Rejection does not kill the promise; it resurrects.¹⁹²

¹⁹² Bock, *Luke*, 2, 971-972.

The disciples are learning the importance of the message of grace. Racism and prejudice has no part in the kingdom. People are not judged on their nationality or race but on their relationship with Christ. The final judgment is reserved for the future. Now is the time to proclaim the good news of the gospel to everyone. His ultimate rejection leads to salvation to all those who will trust Him as their Lord and Savior.

The Third Lesson -- The Cross and the Gentiles

In Jerusalem several Greeks approached Philip about seeing Jesus (John 12:20-23). The Greeks were seekers of truth and probably God-fearers who attended the Jewish festivals and feasts. In fact it was the Magi, gentiles, who were at the birth of Christ and now they appear at the end of His life. Jesus is told by Philip and Andrew about the Greeks request to see Him. His answer is filled with tremendous emotion in verses 23-33. Jesus realized that within a week He would face the greatest trial of His life -- the cross (verses 23-26). Reflecting on the pain, humiliation, and rejection He would soon face He began to pray to the Father (verse 27). Immediately the Father honored the Son for His obedience in life and shortly in His sacrificial death. God would also be glorified¹⁹³ in His resurrection.¹⁹⁴

This interview with the Greeks highlights the closeness of the cross. His death would also bring to faith many gentiles just like one kernel of wheat produces much grain when it is planted and dies (John 12:24). In other words, death leads to life.

God has made a way for the gentiles in the cross of Christ. His atoning death covers the sins of all those who will repent and trust Him as Savior. Even though it seems counterintuitive the death of Christ leads to eternal life. The spiritual leader must always

¹⁹³ Constable, *Notes on John*, <http://www.sonlight.com/constable/notes/pdf/john.pdf>, (Accessed on April 6, 2011).

¹⁹⁴ Blum, *John*, 317.

remember that no person is outside the reach of Christ. “For this is the way God loved the world: He gave His one and only Son, so that everyone who believes in Him will not perish but have eternal life” (John 3:16).

Conflict and Persecution

Antagonism toward Jesus and the gospel message can come from many different sources. In this instance our Lord must respond to both religious and secular opposition. At the same time He admonished the disciples for their lack of faith and spiritual discernment which borders on unbelief (Matthew 12:1-12; Mark 8:11-21).

Returning to Israel after feeding the 5,000 (Matthew 14:13-21; Mark 6:30-44; Luke 9:10-17; John 6:1-14) and the 4,000 (Matthew 15:32-39; Mark 8:1-10) a delegation of religious leaders arrive to demand proof of Jesus’ Messiahship for the second time (Matthew 12:38-50). They were testing Him (Mark 1:13; 10:2) trying to get proof of His source of authority, a sign from heaven. Grassmick comments are helpful:

In the Old Testament a “sign” was not so much a demonstration of power as an evidence that an utterance of action was authentic and trustworthy. The Pharisees did not demand a spectacular miracle, but that Jesus give unmistakable proof that He and His mission were authorized by God. They believed the opposite... In Mark there is a distinction between a miracle (*dynamis*) and a sign (*semeion*). The former evidences God’s presence and power in Jesus. An appeal for a miracle can be a legitimate expression of one’s faith.¹⁹⁵

Sensing their unbelief, He grieves deeply because of their spiritual unfaithfulness and rejects their request (Mark 8:12). He explains that these religious leaders can easily forecast the weather by signs in the sky but cannot make valid spiritual judgments. The only sign they will get is Jonah, a reference to the crucifixion (Matthew 16:2-3). The reason for the leaders’ rejection was not lack of proof of Jesus’ person but their inability

¹⁹⁵ John D. Grassmick, *Mark*, New Testament Edition, of *The Bible Knowledge Commentary*, (Wheaton: Victor Books, 1983), 137.

to interpret the signs that had already been given.¹⁹⁶ Jesus immediately leaves with His disciples to the other side of the lake (Matthew 16:4; Mark 8:13).

While traveling by boat Jesus warns His disciples against the “yeast of the Pharisees and Sadducees” in Matthew 16:6 and includes Herod in Mark 8:15-16. Both the religious leaders and the secular authorities have turned against Jesus. The disciples interpret Jesus’ yeast comments as a rebuke for a shortage of bread on the boat (Matthew 16:7; Mark 8:15). “Yeast was a common Jewish metaphor for an invisible, pervasive influence.”¹⁹⁷ In this situation Jesus was trying to teach the twelve there is a gradual increase in unbelief across the nation so beware -- not get more food.

The disciples were in danger of becoming like the Pharisees and Herod. He explains that they should be more spiritually sensitive and points back to the miraculous feedings to validate his claims as Messiah (Matthew 16:8-10; Mark 8:17-21). He repeats his warning of becoming like the Pharisees and Sadducees. They were dangerously close to unbelief.

Spiritual leaders must guard against the unbelief of the broader culture. Many times unbelievers want proof that Jesus is the Son of God. In reality they are not seeking truth but want to argue and justify their own unbelief and rejection of the gospel. This form of persecution is corrosive and will grow slowly over time if one does not guard against it by remaining faithful and growing in the Lord.

The Second Coming of Christ

When Jesus pronounced judgment on Jerusalem and the nation Israel for her unbelief he grieves over not being about to establish the millennial kingdom.¹⁹⁸ He must

¹⁹⁶ Pentecost, *The Words and Works of Jesus Christ*, 249.

¹⁹⁷ Grassmick, *Mark*, 138.

¹⁹⁸ Bruce, 326-340. He was a pastor of the Free Church of Scotland, conservative Presbyterian in doctrine and practice following the Westminster confession. His eschatology can be described as postmillennial; the

wait for a future time when Israel will say, “Blessed is He who comes in the name of the Lord” (Matthew 23:39). In Matthew 24-25, Mark 13:1-37; and Luke 21:5-36 He reveals the prophetic program for Israel as revealed in Daniel 9:27. Pentecost provides an overview of these passages:

The passages in Matthew 24-25; Mark 13; Luke 21 were written to answer the question concerning the signs of Messiah’s coming, which would terminate the age. The Lord is giving the course of the end of the age prior to the establishment of the Kingdom as it relates to Israel’s program.¹⁹⁹ Matthew 24-25 gives the most complete picture of these future events. Dan Wallace provides a helpful outline of Matthew 24-25; the destruction of the temple and the sign of the Lord’s coming and the end of the age:

- A. The Setting in the Temple (24:1-2)- Jesus walks out of the temple and away; a symbolic rejection of the nation
- B. The Discourse on the Mount of Olives (24:3–25:46)
 - 1. Signs of the End of the Age (24:3-35)
 - a. The first half of the tribulation period (24:3-8)
 - b. The second half of the tribulation period (24:9-26)
 - c. Jesus will come suddenly from heaven (24:27-35)
 - 2. The Day and Hour Unknown (24:36-51)
 - a. Be ready because Jesus will come unannounced (24:36-44)
 - b. Be wise and serve God; unprepared will be judged (24:45-51)

view which gives a figurative interpretation of prophecy and states that the whole world will submit to the gospel before the return of Christ. See Pentecost, *Things To Come*, 384-387. This paper reflects a Dispensational, Premillennial, Pretribulational view. See Charles Ryrie, *Dispensationalism Today*, (Chicago: Moody Press, 1965), 156-176 and Charles Ryrie, *A Survey of Bible Doctrine*, (Chicago: Moody Press, 1972), 159-184.

¹⁹⁹ Pentecost, *Things to Come*, 276.

3. The Parable of the Ten Virgins (25:1-13) -- be prepared
4. The Parable of the Talents (25:14-30) -- be faithful and persevere
5. The Sheep and the Goats (25:31-46) -- an analogy that addresses judgment and reward at the end of the age.²⁰⁰

What was unknown to all of the disciples was the length of time between Jesus death, resurrection, and second coming (Acts 1:6-9). They were also unaware of the ‘mystery’ church age (Ephesians 3:3) and rapture (1 Thessalonians 4:11-17) before the beginning of the seventieth week of Daniel (Daniel 9:27).

The disciples were warned to be prepared, alert, and watchful for the coming kingdom. Believers today need to heed the same advice. Jesus can come for the church at any moment so be ready.

Summary

The spiritual leader is admonished to “renew his mind” (Romans 12:2). This requires a thorough understanding of biblical truths and principles. Jesus trained His disciples in at least six areas of doctrine and practice.

First, Jesus challenges all believers to pray. He gave us a model prayer to use as a guide (The Lord’s Prayer) and encouraged the saints to pray and not give up. Be persistent because God is compassionate and is more than willing to answer the prayers of his people.

²⁰⁰ Dan Wallace, "Matthew: Introduction, Argument, and Outline | Bible.org. <http://bible.org/seriespage/matthew-introduction-argument-and-outline.>, (accessed April 7, 2011).

Secondly, sharing one's faith is essential to being a productive follower of Christ. Personal evangelism is simply sharing the gospel story with whoever will listen. Jesus expects spiritual leaders to be faithful and fearless and trust God to change a person's heart.

Next, Christians must know Jesus' true identity. He is both God and man and will come again to establish his kingdom on earth. This knowledge only comes by the Spirit of God. Christ is the creator of all things and will rule the earth from His Father David's throne in Jerusalem. Until He comes believers everywhere are to live by faith knowing that in the future they will rule with Him.

The fourth area of study and the most important is the cross. Jesus taught the disciples four essential lessons concerning the cross. These principles are the core of a vibrant relationship to Jesus Christ. 1) Believers are to live for God not self. 2) Believers are to be a servant leader giving one's life for others. 3) Sacrifice your best for God and others. 4) Participate regularly in the Lord's Supper. It commemorates Christ's death and atoning sacrifice for sin.

The cross had profound implications for the world as well. 1) The cross leads to eternal life by trusting in the person of Christ by faith. 2) The cross symbolizes rejection. The Samaritans rejected Christ but their rejection does not destroy the message of the cross, rejection leads to ultimate victory in the resurrection! 3) The cross welcomes Gentiles. There is no distinction between race or people group. The ground is level at the foot of the cross. "For anyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved" (Romans 10:13).

The fifth subject Jesus taught the twelve was the reality of persecution and conflict. Many people will reject the gospel with arguments, threats, and selfish motives. Believers must take care and not be drawn away toward unbelief but remain sensitive to the Spirit of God. Apostasy is a real danger and it begins in very small ways until it grows into a complete rejection of the Christian life.

Finally, Jesus gives believers a window into the future. He has postponed His coming indefinitely. Israel has been set aside for a season. Until the time when Jesus will establish his kingdom He expects his followers to carry out the great commission to all nations and people groups. Evangelize and making disciples, baptize them, and teach them to obey the Scriptures.

Chapter 5

The Commission of a Spiritual Leader

Overview

“There is no such thing as self-made spiritual leaders. Spiritual ends require spiritual means, and spiritual means come only by the Holy Spirit.”²⁰¹ A spiritual leader’s holy calling, inward love and devotion to God, and biblical knowledge and skills are not enough to be effective for kingdom work. The final step in the process of training spiritual leaders is commissioning. Lessons Jesus taught His disciples during His final days on earth were critical in making His small band such a powerful and passionate force moving God’s plan forward.

The key to commissioning is being led, filled, and empowered by the Holy Spirit. Our Lord revealed these truths to the Apostles in five parts according to Bruce:

- A. Jesus’ farewell discourse to the disciples John 13-17
 - 1. Words of comfort- chapter 24
 - 2. Words of concern (be obedient)- chapter 25
 - 3. Words of conciliation (intercession)- chapter 26
- B. Jesus predicts failure by the disciples Matthew 26:36ff; Luke 22: 31-32; John 18:15-18
 - 1. Chapter 27
 - 2. Everyone failed
 - 3. Satan’s efforts to discredit the disciples
 - 4. Peter’s temporary faithlessness
- C. Jesus’ resurrection confirms the disciples’ faith Matthew 28:17; Mark

²⁰¹ Blackaby, *Spiritual Leadership*, 42.

16:11-15; Luke 24:11-22, 36-42; John 2:20

1. Chapter 28
2. Faith is built on the facts of the resurrection
3. The disciples see the risen Lord
4. Thomas' confession of faith

D. Jesus' instructions to future pastors John 21:15-23

1. Chapter 29
2. Care toward the congregation
3. Charge to the pastor

E. The Fulfillment by the Holy Spirit Matthew 28: 18-20; Mark 16:15;

Luke 24:47-53; Acts 1:1-11

1. Chapter 31
2. The power of the Holy Spirit
3. Waiting for the kingdom

Jesus' Farewell Discourse to the Disciples

John 13-17

The public ministry of Jesus is ended and now Our Lord turns His attention to preparing His disciples for His exodus. In His farewell discourse (John 13-17) He offers words of comfort, concern, and conciliation. Thielman gives us a good overview of this section:

In Jesus' farewell discourses, he tells his disciples that the world's opposition will severely test their decision to believe in him. Although he will send the Spirit of truth—the Paraclete—to help them, to teach them, and to remind them of Jesus' teaching (14:16, 26; 15:26; 16:13-15), he will be in a place that they cannot now come (13:33,36; 17:11), and they will be left in a world that will oppose them just as it has opposed him

(15:18-21; 16:1-4, 33; 17:11, 14-15). They must, therefore, persevere in their faith—in Johannine terms, they must “abide” (*meno*) in Jesus (15:4-6) and in his love (15:9). They must not “stumble” in their discipleship as many of the “disciples” in the Galilean crowd had “stumbled” (16:1; cf. 6:61). The one who does not “abide” in Jesus “is like a branch that is thrown away and withers; such branches are picked up, thrown in the fire and burned” (15:6).²⁰²

Jesus comforts the disciples by speaking words of love, trust, and a promise of a comforter.

Words of Comfort

He begins by establishing a new commandment when He tells them He was going to leave without them. He had accomplished the Father’s will by revealing Him to the people (John 1:18). They could not go with Him (John 13:31-33). This news, no doubt, came as a complete shock. The disciples had relied on Jesus for everything, like a child relies on a father (13:33). In some sense they probably thought that going to Jerusalem with the Lord meant their deaths as well (13:37). Now they were being abandoned and felt hopeless. The love they had for Him would now be transferred to each other. They were to love one another (13:34-35). Pentecost says:

The Old Testament demanded that one not only love God but one’s neighbor as oneself. Thus the command to love was old. Christ not only commanded them to love but to do so “as I loved you” (v. 34), and the latter part was new. Under the old commandment the test of love for one’s neighbor was one’s love for oneself. The test under the new commandment was to love as Christ had loved them. Christ had just demonstrated the kind of love that he had as well as the degree of his love (13:1-20)... His love had brought Him from His position at the right hand of the Father to the position of a Servant. Christ demanded this kind of love of these men... Thus Christ was saying that in fulfilling this commandment to love one another, they would provide for each other what He had provided for them while He was with them. This kind of love would be a sign to all people that the Eleven were His disciples.²⁰³

²⁰² Thielman, *Theology of the New Testament*, 178.

²⁰³ Pentecost, *The Words and Works of Jesus Christ*, 434.

Jesus continues to comfort them by encouraging them to be obedient. Trust in God and do not be afraid because He will return for them (John 14:1-4). Pentecost is helpful here as well:

In order to further quiet their fears, the Lord gave them a promise concerning the future. The separation which resulted from His departure would not be permanent; it was only temporary. A Jewish betrothal meant that a man and woman were legally bound in marriage. Before the actual presentation of the bride to the bridegroom, the bridegroom would busy himself preparing a place in the father's house for the bride. Using this imagery Christ said to these men, "In my father's house are many rooms" (John 14:2). In anticipation of their reunion with Him, he told them, "I am going there to prepare a place you." This indicated that while He was absent from them, He would not forget them. Rather, He would occupy Himself preparing a place where He and they would dwell together in "my Father's house." He said, "I will come back and take you to be with me that you also may be where I am (v. 3). This was a promise that the separation which had so distressed them would not be permanent... One day He would come as a Bridegroom for His bride and take them to the place that he had been preparing for them during the time of His absence.²⁰⁴

Finally, Jesus promises them a comforter in His absence. Bruce says:

In the third word of consolation, the leading thought is the promise of another Comforter, who should take the place of Him who was going away, and make the bereaved feel as if He was still with them... He virtually promises to be present with them by substitute, even while He is absent. "I will pray the Father," He says, "and He shall give you another comforter, that he may abide with you forever" (John 14:16). Then he tells them who this wonderful Comforter is: His name is "the Spirit of Truth (verse 17). Then, lastly, he give them to understand that this Spirit of Truth will be a Comforter to them, by restoring, as it were, the consciousness of His own presence, so that the coming of this other Comforter will just be in a sense, His own spiritual return.²⁰⁵

In anticipation of His leaving Jesus comforts His followers with a new commandment to love one another as He loved them, continue to trust God because He

²⁰⁴ Ibid, 436.

²⁰⁵ Bruce, 387-388.

will come for them soon, and the Holy Spirit, the Comforter will illuminate their minds in the knowledge of Christ so they could see spiritual truths clearly.

The disciples respond to Jesus' attempt to comfort them about His departure with four questions that reveal their lack of understanding of His imminent death and resurrection:

A. Peter-“Lord, where are you going?

Jesus – “Where I am going, you cannot follow me now, but you will follow later.

Peter- “Lord, why can't I follow you now? I will lay down my life for you!

Jesus- “Will you lay down your life for me? I tell you the solemn truth the rooster will crow until you have denied me three times! John 13:36-38

B. Thomas- “Lord, we don't know where you are going. How can we know the way?

Jesus- “I am the way, and the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me. If you have known me, you will know my Father too. And from now on you do know him and have seen him” John 14:5-7

C. Philip- “Lord, show us the Father and we will be content.”

Jesus- “Have I been with you for so long, and you have not known me, Philip? the person who has seen me has seen the Father! How can you say, ‘show us the Father?’ do you not believe that I am in the Father, and the Father is in me? The words I say to you, I do not speak on my own initiative, but the Father residing in me performs his miraculous deeds. John 14:8-10

D. Judas (Thaddaeus)- “What has happened that you are going to reveal yourself to us and not to the world?

Jesus- “If anyone loves me, he will obey my word, and my Father will love him, and we will come to him and take up residence with him. The person who does not love me does not obey my words. And the word you hear is not mine, but the Father's who sent me.” John 14:22-24

The disciples' confusion about Jesus death, His deity, and their devotion to Christ was still foremost in their minds. Even so Jesus continued to teach them about the upcoming events and the important part they will play as well.

Words of Concern

Next, Jesus turns His attention to His concerns He has for the eleven. They must remain obedient to the work of ministry. He shows them how they can do the greater things (John 14:12-14). Constable gives an overview of Jesus' teaching in John 15:

Jesus continued to prepare His disciples for His departure. He next taught the eleven the importance of abiding in Him with the result that they would produce much spiritual fruit. He dealt with their relationships to Himself, one another, and the world around them in chapter 15. Their responsibilities were to abide, to love, and to testify respectively.²⁰⁶

The vine and the branches illustrate the importance of fruitfulness in the Christian life and the truth that Spirit-filled service is the result of abiding in Christ not in human achievement. There is also a warning as well. Branches that are not fruitful are purged.²⁰⁷ Service to God is difficult and branches that are burned (John 15:5-6) represent “professing believers who, like Judas, are not genuinely saved and therefore are judged. Like a dead branch, a person without Christ is spiritually dead and therefore will be punished in eternal fire (cf. Matt. 25:46).”²⁰⁸

The disciples will face many trials and tribulations because the world hates the person of Christ and by extension each of them but the Holy Spirit will convince the world of the truth of the gospel message (John 15:18-27-16:15). Even though struggles, pain, and toil lay ahead the Spirit of God will give them complete peace and joy (John 16:16-33).

Words of Conciliation

²⁰⁶ Constable, *Notes on John*, <http://www.soniclight.com/constable/notes/pdf/john.pdf>, 222, (accessed on April, 13, 2011).

²⁰⁷ Morris, *The Gospel of John*, 668.

²⁰⁸ Blum, *John*, 325.

Jesus ends His farewell section with a prayer of intercession for the disciples which provide words of conciliation (John 17). This prayer “falls naturally into three divisions, in the first of which Christ prays for Himself, in the second for His disciples, and in the third for the Church which was to be brought into existence by their preaching.”²⁰⁹ First Jesus prayed for two things: 1) That His resurrection from the dead will guarantee eternal life for all those who believe in him (verses 1-3); 2) That the Father glorify Him, with the glory He had before He came into the world, because He had glorified the Father through His work on earth (verses 4-5).

Jesus, now, prays for those who are with Him. He prayed for their preservation (verse 9-15) and for their sanctification (verses 16-19). Finally He prayed for future believers. He asked the Father to unify them in the faith (verses 20-23), glorify them with the blessing of genuine worship of the Father like the disciples experienced on the Mount of Transfiguration (verse 24), and continue to reveal divine knowledge by the Holy Spirit of God’s love for Christ and the love of the Father and the Son for them (verse 25).²¹⁰

Jesus Predicts Failure by the Disciples

Matthew 26:36ff; Luke 22: 31-32; John 18:15-18

Instead of telling the disciples that everything will be fine, Jesus predicts their failure in the hours and days ahead. In the garden of Gethsemane He takes Peter, James, and John with Him to pray. They immediately fall fast asleep (Matthew 26:40-41). When the authorities came to arrest Jesus all the disciples scattered (verse 56) like sheep (Matthew 26:31).

Jesus predicts Peter’s betrayal (Luke 22:31-34). Bock says:

²⁰⁹ Bruce, 449.

²¹⁰ Pentecost, *The Words and Works of Jesus Christ*, 450-451.

Peter is confident he would never betray Jesus, while Jesus knows that Peter is like a grain at risk of being crushed in the cosmic struggle between Satan and God. Being a player in such a cosmic struggle should humble him and cause him to rely on God...Peter should not be overconfident. The ability to sin runs deep—despite one’s best intentions...Peter will deny Jesus, but Jesus’ intercession will keep him from falling entirely. Only total dependence on the Lord and a sense of weakness without him can preserve even the most zealous disciple...Despite Peter’s failure, Jesus notes that the apostle will be reconciled and called upon to minister to the disciples after his fall. This is a picture of God’s grace.

There is a lesson in the difference between the fate of Peter and Judas. Peter is the faithful one who lapsed into temporary unfaithfulness and is restored. Judas reveals an unfaithful heart that will face judgment and woe.²¹¹

Even after their poor performance, Peter and John did muster enough courage to follow after Jesus to witness His trial before the Sanhedrin (John 18:15-18). John was also with Jesus’ mother at his crucifixion as well (John 19: 25-27). Every spiritual leader has the potential for failure. Remain totally dependent on God and even if failure occurs Christ will restore that one back to serving Him.

Jesus’ Resurrection Confirms the Disciples’ Faith

Matthew 28:17; Mark 16:11-15; Luke 24:11-22, 36-42; John 20:20

Now that the crucifixion is passed and the resurrection accomplished, Jesus appears to the ten (Mark 16:14; Luke 24:36-43;; John 20:19-25). The disciples had locked themselves up in fear of the Jews (John 20:19). Jesus reveals Himself to all of them. He spoke peace (Luke 24:36) because they were terrified. He demonstrated to them the fact that He has a material body having now been glorified. He showed them the scars on His hands and feet and ate with them (Luke 24:42) to prove He was a human being not a spirit masquerading as a person.

²¹¹ Bock, *Luke*, 2, 1750.

Next He appears to the eleven (John 20:26-31). Thomas is with them this time and challenges Him to put his fingers in His side. Thomas was not convinced by the report of the disciples' first encounter with the risen Lord. Jesus commanded him to stop doubting (John 20:27). Immediately Thomas fell down in faith and worshiped Jesus (verse 28).

Spiritual leaders must believe in Christ by faith without the luxury of having Jesus personally appear. When they believe in Him without seeing Him He pronounces a blessing on them.

Jesus' Instructions to Future Pastors

John 21:15-23

After one comes to faith in Jesus Christ their life moves in an entirely new direction. Most new converts are like the disciples, however, believing that trusting in Christ as one's Lord and Savior is all there is to the Christian life. After the resurrection appearances the disciples returned to their business of fishing (John 20:1-3) thinking that their work was done. Jesus meets them on the beach and shares a meal with them (verses 4-14). He then challenges Peter and the rest of the disciples with the mission that will consume them for the remainder of their lives; become transformational leaders and teach the people of God by proclaiming the Word of God, serving the church, and loving each one as Christ had loved them.

Just like earlier settings Jesus trains after a meal (eating with sinners after the call of Matthew; feeding of 5,000 and 4,000; Last Supper). Peter, again, representing the disciples as well as himself is challenged by Jesus. Morris says:

There can be little doubt but that the whole scene is meant to show us Peter as completely restored to his position of leadership. He has three

times denied the Lord. Now he has three times affirmed his love for Him, and three times he has been commissioned to care for the flock. This must have had the effect on the others of a demonstration that, whatever had been the mistakes of the past, Jesus was restoring Peter to a place of trust. It is further worth noting that the one thing about which Jesus questions Peter prior to commissioning him to tend the flock is love. This is the basic qualification for Christian service. Other qualities may be desirable but love is completely indispensable (cf. 1 Cor. 13:1-3).²¹²

The spiritual leader who is called as a pastor is charged with a similar commission. Bruce makes the application:

To be a dutiful under-shepherd is, in another view, to be a faithful sheep, following the Chief Shepherd whithersoever he goes. Pastors are not lords over God's heritage, but mere servants of Christ, the great head of the Church, bound to regard His will as their law, and His life as their model.²¹³

The Fulfillment by the Holy Spirit

Matthew 28: 18-20; Mark 16:15; Luke 24:47-53; Acts 1:1-11

The final or great commission that Christ gave to the disciples is best summed up by Constable quoting James Kingsbury:

To demonstrate that Jesus, in enduring the humiliation of the cross, did not die as a false messiah but as the Son who did his Father's will (21:37-39), God vindicates Jesus by raising him from the dead (28:5-6). Consequently, when Jesus appears to the disciples on the mountain in Galilee (28:16-17), it is as the crucified Son of God whom God has vindicated through resurrection (28:5c-6). Although some disciples show, in doubting, that they are yet weak of faith (28:17; 14:32), they all see in the person of Jesus that crucifixion, or suffering sonship, was the essence of his ministry (21:42). Correlatively, they also grasp at last that servanthood is the essence of discipleship (16:24; 20:25-28). As ones, therefore, who comprehend, in line with God's evaluative point of view (17:5), not only who Jesus is but also what he was about and what it means to be his followers, the disciples receive from Jesus the Great Commission and embark on a mission to all the nations (28:18-20; chaps. 24—25).²¹⁴

²¹² Morris, *John*, 875.

²¹³ Bruce, 524.

²¹⁴ Constable, *Notes on John*, <http://www.soniclight.com/constable/notes/pdf/matthew.pdf>, (accessed on April, 13, 2011).

The disciples are now commissioned as witnesses and Christ promises that the Holy Spirit will empower them to proclaim the gospel message. They are to wait, in Jerusalem together, for the Spirit to empower them (Luke 24:49). While waiting, they were to worship and praise God for the blessings that He had provided in the words and works of Jesus Christ.

While waiting for the Spirit to descend with Jesus, the disciples ask Him when the kingdom of Israel will be restored (Acts 1:6). Jesus told them that only the Father had that information and they were to focus on being worldwide witnesses (verses 7-8). Immediately after speaking He was taken into heaven on a cloud (verse 9).

Summary

Spiritual leaders are commissioned by God to give their lives to engage in an impossible task -- be witnesses to the gospel of Jesus Christ. They must try and persuade sinful people that Christ died for them on the cross and they should accept Him as their Lord and Savior by faith.

Jesus gave this critical mandate to His disciples over a period of several weeks. He began the process the night before He was crucified. Knowing that His followers could not take in the profound implication of His death and departure Jesus began with a farewell discourse. This dialogue following the Last Supper was meant to give the eleven a personal level of comfort by encouraging them to love each other, trust and obey God, and depend on the Holy Spirit to teach important spiritual truth and to increase their knowledge of Jesus Christ.

Even with these spiritual and personal resources Jesus knew the disciples would fail. The lessons from these failures were that “failure is an event not a character trait.”²¹⁵ Christ restores His followers if they will remain totally dependent on God even in failure. God’s grace will sustain them and return them to effective and fulfilling service.

After Jesus’ death and glorious resurrection He continues to prepare the Apostles for their mission. Appearing to them in His resurrection body He proves that He is God’s Son and those who trust Him as their Savior by faith will also worship Him just as Thomas did.

Turning his attention to Peter, a few days later, Jesus completely restores him to a prominent position of leadership again. He affirms His love for Christ three times since he had earlier denied Him three times. Being restored to a place of trust Peter is now commissioned to tend the flock of God in love. Every spiritual leader must understand that the basic qualification for service is to sacrificially love others.

Finally, Jesus pronounces the promise of the Holy Spirit to empower them to carry out the great commission. The message of the gospel will only be effective when the spiritual leader is indwelt, led, illuminated, and empowered by the Spirit of the living God.

Blackaby, *Spiritual Leadership*, 192.

CONCLUSION

Christian leadership in the first decade of the 21st Century Church seems an impossible task. North American culture has replaced God with scientific knowledge and taken the Church and the spiritual life out of the public arena. Theology has become subjective and man centered instead of being grounded in the reality and objective truth claims found in the Bible.

As a result the Church has lost its prophetic voice and ability to change lives, shape the culture for the cause of Christ, and expand the Kingdom of God. Since no one can exercise spiritual leadership based on objective truth and an absolute standard everyone is free to decide for himself. The end result is that too many choices become no choice at all.

Contemporary Church leadership skills have suffered from two extremes; borrowing too much from the culture which leads to spiritual compromise and little or no power to affect eternal change in people's lives or teach that believers must withdraw completely from the culture concentrating on the external rules and rituals of the Christian life having no meaningful dialogue with non-Christians and never experiencing the abundant life that Jesus promised to His followers.

Fortunately there is a solution for pastors and other Christian leaders. Spiritual leadership is grounded in the person of Christ. Cultures will change, governments will come and go, and great men will let us down but not Jesus Christ. A Leadership training model patterned after the principles He created to train the twelve Apostles still works today. His model is built on four principles taught in sequence; the

calling of the spiritual leader, the character of a spiritual leader, the competence of a spiritual leader, and the commission of a spiritual leader.

When pastors and other Christian leaders follow Jesus' pattern for training spiritual leaders they and those they teach will become the man or woman God intended them to become. Ken Boa tells this story:

“One day a beautiful girl kissed a frog. It appeared to be just a simple kiss. As it turned out, it was not quite that simple. Regardless what she thought, the moment she touched her soft lips to the slimy skin of the frog, a transformation occurred. The lime green frog was transformed into a handsome young prince. The prince was liberated to be all that he could be.

What the girl did for the frog, leaders do for their followers. Leaders are in a unique position to help their followers to develop their own leadership skills and to reach their full potential. They can then become all that God created them to be.²¹⁶

Only Jesus can effectively and eternally train, test, and reward leaders.

Using his model will guarantee that the Church will transform cultures and people while preparing the next generation of leaders to continue the work of advancing the Kingdom of God.

In John 13:15 Jesus said, “For I have given you an example—you should do just as I have done for you.”

²¹⁶ Boa, *The Perfect Leader*, 95.

APPENDIX A

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APPENDIX C

SPIRITUAL LEADERSHIP TRAINING SURVEY
 Greg Baxter, Pastor, Faith Journey Church, Lawton, OK

A spiritual leadership training model (SLTP) is a program by which you teach believers to exercise their Christian responsibilities in such a way that they grow in the grace of God with respect to their personal life, family life, church life, and public life.

Spiritual leadership is defined as growing in the Christian faith over time not necessarily preparing for part-time or fulltime vocational ministry as a pastor/missionary/worship leader/Christian educator.

1. Does your church have a spiritual leadership training program (SLTP) as described above?
 - A. Yes, and it is very popular in our church
 - B. Yes, but it is not meeting our needs
 - C. No, but I want to start a SLTP
 - D. No, and I am not planning to start a SLTP

2. Is a SLTP a vital program in your church?
 - A. Yes, it is essential
 - B. Very important
 - C. Important
 - D. Not any more important than other programs

3. What is your SLTP primarily based upon?
 - A. The Fellowship/Mentor Model (the mature believer coaching/training the new believer)
 - B. The Spiritual Disciplines Model (prayer, fasting, solitude, etc.)
 - C. The Christian Counseling Model (finding out the hidden issues that inhibit spiritual growth)
 - D. The Character Formation Model (based on Jesus & the Apostles in the gospels)
 - E. All of the above.
 - F. Other: _____

4. Which SLTP is your preferred model to train church members?
 - A. The Jesus Model: Following the pattern of Jesus' training of the Twelve in the gospels.
 - B. The Paul Model: Following the pattern of Paul's example of leading churches in Acts and the Epistles.
 - C. The Christian and Secular Model: Following the principles and patterns of great leaders of the past and present whether believers or not.
 - D. The Spiritual/Business Model: Using principles from successful businessmen and women and drawing out spiritual precepts and practices.
 - E. Other _____

5. Are you satisfied with your current SLTP?

- A. Very satisfied
- B. Satisfied
- C. Not satisfied
- D. I am looking for something better. Describe what you are looking for

6. Describe the SLTP material you are using in your church?

- A. The Bible alone
- B. The Bible & other material - Name other material: _____
- C. Prepackaged program - Name program: _____

7. How often does your SLTP produce spiritual mature leaders in your church?

- A. All of the time
- B. Most of the time
- C. Some of the time
- D. Hardly ever

8. Describe the SLTP that helped you become a mature believer?

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