

Leadership Principles from the Life of Jesus

Tracy Nyamuda – School of Leadership Series

Session 3

We have been looking at leadership principles from the life of Jesus. We have covered:

1. Jesus was mission-minded and that
2. Jesus was conceived by, led by, anointed by and empowered by the Holy Spirit.

Today we will be covering 2 more crucial leadership principles from the life of Jesus.

3. Jesus was secure in his identity

A. Jesus was secure

secure – *se cura* – without care. Not careless. But without care of what others will think or how we will be seen. Jesus was outside that matrix. Security is that sense of “everything is going to be ok” it also goes with another phrase “I feel safe”. It’s in safe environments that we find ourselves being loving and authentic. It is important that we carry that sense of “safeness” wherever we go”.

“I baptize you with water for repentance. But after me comes one who is more powerful than I, whose sandals I am not worthy to carry. He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit and fire. His winnowing fork is in his hand, and he will clear his threshing floor, gathering his wheat into the barn and burning up the chaff with unquenchable fire.” Then Jesus came from Galilee to the Jordan to be baptized by John. But John tried to deter him, saying, “I need to be baptized by you, and do you come to me?” Jesus replied, “Let it be so now; it is proper for us to do this to fulfil all righteousness.” Then John consented. Mt. 3:11-15.

John's baptism symbolised repentance. Jesus was perfect. He didn't need to repent. John and Jesus both knew this.

But Jesus was aware of His Father's will. He knew He needed to fully identify with sinners in order to provide righteousness for sinners. By being baptised, Jesus identified fully with the sinners he came to save.

- Do fully identify with those God has called us to?
- Are we willing to remove those "kingly robes" we attire ourselves with, whether it's graces or privileges, or so-called "rights" and do what needs to be done to fulfil our Father's will? Are we willing to do this even if it means being misunderstood, labelled or judged? Jesus was the perfect Son of God and was unapologetic in stating this. Yet he chose to be baptised (symbolising repentance). Some mouths would definitely have been wagging!

"You must have the same attitude that Christ Jesus had. Though he was God, he did not think of equality with God as something to cling to. Instead, he gave up his divine privileges; he took the humble position of a slave and was born as a human being. When he appeared in human form, he humbled himself in obedience to God and died a criminal's death on a cross." Phil. 2:5-8.

- Are we willing to make ourselves of no reputation for the cause of Christ?
- Can we speak out and share the gospel when in situations where people mock and make fun of us.
- Can we stand for truth and integrity in our businesses, families, friendships, when others are bending the truth and gaining from lies?

This is how John the Baptist saw the situation:

"John told them, "I baptize with water, but right here in the crowd is someone you do not recognize. Though his ministry follows mine, I'm not even worthy to be his slave and untie the straps of his sandal." Jn. 1:26

- Are we willing to be ministered to by people we consider to be “below” us? Kingdom rank; societal perspective (maybe by a woman, a child, the “wrong” colour; someone less educated, someone much poorer, with no money, a drop out, a homeless person?).
- How OK are we with not being recognised by perceived authorities and leaders?
- We need to be humble enough to realise that God may use us to minister to those who He is calling to greater things than us. We may play a small part in their lives.
- e.g. our children.
- We need to be fully secure in order to do this. If we are not secure, we will not see past our own egos and our need for recognition, status and the praise of man will blind us. We will never see the treasure in others, and become a snare because when we receive the honour that comes from man, we are open to the rejection and fear of man.

“I do not receive honour from men. But I know you, that you do not have the love of God in you. ...How can you believe, who receive honour from one another, and do not seek the honour that comes from the only God”.
Jn. 5:41,42, 44.

We can do these things when we are secure. Jesus cared for the honour that comes from God.

“As soon as Jesus was baptized, he went up out of the water. At that moment heaven was opened, and he saw the Spirit of God descending like a dove and alighting on him. And a voice from heaven said, "This is my Son, whom I love; with him I am well pleased.” Mt. 3:11-17.

Jesus carried that emotional object constancy wherever He went. Do you feel that? Do you carry that sense of the Father’s delight and pleasure? When that is the loudest voice, the other stuff doesn’t matter and that’s where the sense of security comes from. Perfect love drives out fear.

I find it interesting that this seal of the Father's approval happens before Jesus has officially started His ministry. He has however, performed an act of obedience (in being baptised).

An example of an Insecure Leader

“But Samuel replied:

“Does the Lord delight in burnt offerings and sacrifices as much as in obeying the Lord?

To obey is better than sacrifice,
and to heed is better than the fat of rams.

For rebellion is like the sin of divination,
and arrogance like the evil of idolatry.

Because you have rejected the word of the Lord,
he has rejected you as king” 1 Sam 15:22-23.

Generally speaking when we are not secure, we crave approval from man and it becomes a snare that entraps us and leads us into disobedience to God.

- Is your insecurity hindering your obedience to God? (sin of omission)
- Is your insecurity causing you to disobey? (sin of commission)

B. Jesus' Identity

Who am I and whose am I?

- Do you know who you are? If you don't, then you will be a dangerous leader and a possible liability.
- To whom do you belong? Who has ultimate say over my life?
- What are you first? A black female? An African? A white male? A Christian? A foreigner? How do you define yourself first?

“Then Jesus was led by the Spirit into the wilderness to be tempted there by the devil. For forty days and forty nights he fasted and became very hungry. During that time the devil came and said to him, “**If you are the Son of God**, tell these stones to become loaves of bread.” But Jesus told him, “No! The

Scriptures say, 'People do not live by bread alone, but by every word that comes from the mouth of God.' Mt. 4:1-4

The devil was questioning who Jesus was and His authority. He was also questioning whose Jesus was. Was Jesus really the Son of God, divine? Was He really God's own son, belonging to God?

The enemy loves to question our identity. "Do you really think that...."

Sometimes it arises from within us, where we feel the need to prove something to show people **who we really are...**

And who are we really?

Story of Sister Mary Genevieve.

"I will never forget a retreat experience years ago in the Midwest. It was a rather large gathering, about seven thousand people. An invitation for healing prayer followed each night's service; I would go into a side room and meet with those who felt compelled to come. On one particular night, the line extended well beyond midnight and after finishing, I went straight to bed, not even taking my clothes off I was so exhausted. About three o'clock in the morning, I heard a rap on the door and a squeaky little voice: "Brennan, can I talk to you?" I opened the door to find a seventy-eight-year-old nun. And she began to cry. "Sister? What can I do for you?" We found two chairs in the hallway and her story began. "I've never told anyone this in my entire life. It started when I was five years old. My father would crawl into my bed with no clothes on. He would touch me there and tell me to touch him there; he said it's what our family doctor said we should do. When I was nine, my father took my virginity. By the time I was twelve, I knew of every kind of sexual perversion you read about in dirty books. Brennan, do you have any idea how dirty I feel? I've lived with so much hatred of my father and hatred of myself that I would only go to Communion when my absence would be conspicuous." In the next few minutes, I prayed with her for healing. Then I asked her if she would find a quiet place every morning for the next thirty days, sit down in a chair, close her eyes, upturn her palms, and pray this one phrase over and

over:

ABBA, I BELONG TO YOU.

It's a prayer of exactly seven syllables, the number that corresponds perfectly to the rhythm of our breathing. As you inhale—Abba. As you exhale—I belong to You. Through her tears she agreed: "Yes, Brennan, I will." One of the most moving and poetic follow-up letters I've ever received came from this sister. In it she described the inner healing of her heart, a complete forgiveness of her father, and an inner peace she'd never known in her seventy-eight years. She concluded her letter with these words: A year ago, I would've signed this letter with my real name in religious life—Sister Mary Genevieve. But from now on, I'm Daddy's little girl."

- The enemy loves to put labels on us from the past: sins that we have committed and those that have been committed against us.
- What labels have you accepted as part of your identity?

If I am in Christ, I am a new creation. The old has gone and the new has come.

Your identity determines your behaviour and your morality.

Matthew and Mark place Jesus' temptation directly after His baptism, and yet Luke inserts a genealogy between them. Luke ends His genealogy by describing Jesus as 'the son of Adam, the son of God' (Lk. 3:38). Some scholars say that Luke intends us to associate Jesus' temptations in the wilderness with Adam's temptations in the Garden of Eden. Both were the son of God, both were born sinless, both were representative heads of the human race, and in essence both experienced the same 3 temptations. Adam faced his test in secret and his sin was imputed to all human beings. Jesus passed His test in secret and his righteousness is imputed to all who receive Him. **What you do in secret matters.**

We often face our tests alone, but the result or outcome is often made public. E.g. Adam faced his test with Eve, but his result was definitely public. Jesus

faced His tests in the wilderness and in the Garden of Gethsemane, alone. The results definitely impact all of us.

The point is that as leaders we will go through tests. The question is not if, it is when. When the tests come, whether the Spirit of God leads us into the wilderness to be tested or whether God allows us to face some other type of test, will we be so secure in our identity and have settled the matter of who we are and whose we are that the choice in the temptation is not really a choice for us? Jesus needed to have decided before the Garden of Gethsemane what He was going to do.

“Father, if you are willing, please take this cup of suffering away from me. Yet I want your will to be done, not mine.” Then an angel from heaven appeared and strengthened him. He prayed more fervently, and he was in such agony of spirit that his sweat fell to the ground like great drops of blood.” Lk. 22:42-44 .

Jesus’ identity had consequences.

We can’t wait until we are in the middle of the test to decide whose will wins out, we need to decide beforehand whose will is supreme?

e.g. with one of my sons, a large portion of our music practise sessions is spent establishing who is actually in charge. Literally, how we do the piece or scale, when we are done practising it, whether he counts out loud, goes more slowly, etc. It’s a real challenge for me. At times it’s easier for me to work with his will and let him think he is in charge, and shape the session. I wonder if we are like that towards God the Father a lot of the time?

When are clear about our identity, the basic questions of life are answered:

- Who am I?
- Whose am I?
- Where do I come from?
- Where am I going?
- What’s of ultimate value?

- Who's in charge?

I think a challenge we have in this day and age is linking our identity to our performance or some title of what we do. And we often rank people in terms of significance and importance by this.

“Then his disciples began arguing about which of them was the greatest. But Jesus knew their thoughts, so he brought a little child to his side. Then he said to them, “Anyone who welcomes a little child like this on my behalf welcomes me, and anyone who welcomes me also welcomes my Father who sent me. Whoever is the least among you is the greatest.” Lk. 9:46-50

- Children had little significance in Jewish society. They had no voice and no status.
- The disciples were arguing over who would be “vice-president”, they were hungry for the number 2 spot after Jesus.... They were hungry for positions of power and rank.

Jesus clarified His values: “He sat down, called the twelve disciples over to him, and said, “Whoever wants to be first must take last place and be the servant of everyone else” Mk. 9:35

Jesus' reveals what we should celebrate:

“Then the seventy returned with joy, saying, “Lord, even the demons are subject to us in Your name.” And He said to them, “ I saw Satan fall like lightning from heaven. Behold, I give you the authority to trample on serpents and scorpions, and over all the power of the enemy, and nothing shall by any means hurt you. Nevertheless do not rejoice in this, that the spirits are subject to you, but rather rejoice because your names are written in heaven.” Lk. 10:17-20

Jesus told them to rejoice because they belonged to Him, not because of what they had done or how they had performed.

Jesus measured a man's greatness in terms of his love for and service of others, not in terms of fame, accomplishments, status, gifting, perceived position or wealth.

How do we measure success? Do we measure our success by this? In order to truly do this, we need to be secure in who we are.

John Howard

We all want to be number 1. Somehow this is how we all seem to measure our success today. It would be nice if we could all be number one. It is not possible or realistic. Someone has to be number 2, 3, etc. And that doesn't make them losers.

Contemporary of the Wesleys.

Read: P. 56-57 The Grand Weaver by Ravi Zacharias.

Conclusion:

- Jesus was mission-minded, purpose oriented.
- Jesus was conceived, led and enabled by the Holy Spirit. He was filled with the Holy Spirit and instructed His disciples to wait in Jerusalem until they received this gift. He needed the Holy Spirit to fulfil His purpose. We do too.
- Jesus was secure in His identity. He knew who He was and whose He was.