

## Leadership Is Transformation

My years in various leadership positions are a study in transformation. I came into so many of them with a wrong set of expectations, values and ideas about Christian leadership. I was not thirsty for power or obsessed with the trappings of leadership, but I also was not seeking to be a leader of no reputation, nor was I responding to the call to be a servant first.

And it was here that I was wrong. I used to reject the notion that good Christian leaders were only those who were brought kicking and screaming into the position, and that anyone who wanted to be a president or CEO or superintendent or executive director should be automatically disqualified.

I still reject some aspects of this as not entirely in keeping with our giftedness and our desires. However, the truth in this view is that steward leaders are godly stewards first, and it is as godly stewards that they are called to lead.

For those who see themselves as leaders first, the temptations to stray in leadership are enormous. As Nouwen wrote, ***The long painful history of the Church is the history of people ever and again tempted to choose power over love, control over the cross, being a leader over being led. Those who resisted this temptation to the end and thereby give us hope are the true saints.***

I arrived at this point in my own steward's journey with a dramatically transformed understanding of the godly leader, an understanding that continues to be transformed today. In the end, our work as steward leaders is all about lordship. Before it is about vision casting or risk taking or motivating others or building teams or communicating or strategic planning or public speaking, it is about lordship. When Jesus is singularly and absolutely Lord of our life, we seek to be like him and him only. That is our sole calling. We are called to our work, and that work carries God's anointing. We are called to decrease that Christ may increase. We are called to be the people of God before - and as we do the work of God. And we are called to pray and look for the miracle of leadership that God may work in our midst.

In these ways, in responding faithfully to this calling and striving after these ideals at the cost of everything else that may tempt us, we become steward leaders. And as we do, we will be transformed into the likeness of Christ, becoming leaders of no reputation.

Rodin, R. Scott. *The Steward Leader: Transforming People, Organizations and Communities* (p. 26). InterVarsity Press. Kindle Edition.

I want to add my own thoughts here as it ties with this discussion. We as people, wherever we live in the world tend to see our difficulties, economic and social problems as being the “fault” of someone else. Whether it be our governments as institutions, or individuals in positions of leadership, we always seem to assign blame somewhere. Often we fail to look inwardly for some self examination.

Recently in a sermon, I heard this said in relation to the problems in the US. “We always say we need change in Congress, we need change in the Senate, we need change in the White House. But if we as God’s people, as followers of Jesus, get our own houses in order first, God will take care of the rest.

This was given in the context of the church being salt and light in a dark world. It wasn’t about being good church goers, it was about speaking out in the face of evil, not compromising on the issues that go against a biblical world view, not compromising on moral issues. It was about us as individuals honoring God in every area of our life.

He used John the Baptist as an example. John as we read in the Bible, spoke truth to power, and eventually lost his earthly life for it.

Luke 3:7-14 ***He said therefore to the crowds that came out to be baptized by him, “You brood of vipers! Who warned you to flee from the wrath to come? Bear fruits in keeping with repentance. And do not begin to say to yourselves, ‘We have Abraham as our father.’ For I tell you, God is able from these stones to raise up children for Abraham. Even now the axe is***

***laid to the root of the trees. Every tree therefore that does not bear good fruit is cut down and thrown into the fire.”***

***And the crowds asked him, “What then shall we do?” And he answered them, “Whoever has two tunics is to share with him who has none, and whoever has food is to do likewise.” Tax collectors also came to be baptized and said to him, “Teacher, what shall we do?” And he said to them, “Collect no more than you are authorized to do.” Soldiers also asked him, “And we, what shall we do?” And he said to them, “Do not extort money from anyone by threats or by false accusation, and be content with your wages.” 18-20 So with many other exhortations he preached good news to the people. But Herod the tetrarch, who had been reproved by him for Herodias, his brother's wife, and for all the evil things that Herod had done, added this to them all, that he locked up John in prison.***

He then went on to say that Jesus spoke about John with approval. (Matthew 11: 1-18) He did not say that if John had only been more careful about what he said to people, he would not be in trouble.

For this reason, we need to focus on transforming our own lives by knowing Jesus more deeply, more personally, and then completely submit to His lordship in our lives, so that He may increase, and we may decrease so that the miracle of leadership can be carried out in our lives.

I interpret this to mean that if God’s people live lives that show that they fully trust and depend on God’s sovereignty, He will be faithful to work out His plans in their lives. Even though we may face persecution.

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