

LIFELINE BIBLE CHURCH SPECIAL SEMINAR



SPIRITUAL LEADERSHIP

CAUTION IN SPIRITUAL LEADERSHIP & FOLLOWERSHIP

Main Texts: Gal.5: 13-26; Jam.3: 1-18

A. A TYPICAL CHURCH PROBLEM:

1. Provoked Moses & God through Rebellion – Num.14: 20-24; Num.20: 1-13.
2. A Unique Example – Num.16: 1-50.

When the Israelites were delivered by God from bondage and left Egypt, the Bible tells us that a mixed multitude followed them. This mixed multitude was always infiltrating and influencing the flock subsequently. Moses then had a set of whining people to contend with for the rest of his life and ministry. We have these mixed multitude and whining people in every congregation and church too (Matt.13: 24-30; Matt.25: 31-33).

We must therefore exercise caution and learn how to handle this unique challenge of spiritual leadership lest we suffer a major accident or damage like Moses.

B. THE ROOT OF THE CRISIS:

1. Lack of Conviction – Exod.4: 1-9, 29-31; Matt.7: 24-27; Rom.14: 23; Jam.1: 8.
2. Unregenerate Sinful Nature – Exod.32: 9; 33: 5; Deut.9: 6, 13; 10: 16; 34: 9; 2Chron.30: 8; Ezek.3: 7; Acts 7: 51; Matt.19: 7-8.
3. Fear & Unbelief – Rom.14: 23; Heb.3: 12.
4. Mixed Multitudes – Exod.12: 37-38; Num.11: 4-6; Neh.13: 1-3; 2Cor.6: 14-18.
5. The Problem of Carnality – Rom.8: 5-8; Gal.5: 19-21.

C. THE CONSEQUENCES:

1. Children of Israel died in the wilderness without getting to Canaan – Num.14: 26-35.
2. Moses & Aaron also died in the wilderness without entering the Promised Land – Num.20: 12.

D. THE IMPLICATIONS:

1. Implication For Leaders:

The children of Israel provoked Moses and pushed him against God at the water of Meribah (Num.20: 1-13). It was on that account that God disallowed him from entering the Promised Land.

The major implication of that for church leaders today is the risk to miss heaven like Moses missed out of the land of Canaan. If Moses, despite his meekness and pedigree as the Great Law Giver could not enter the Promised Land because of a misdeed the people pushed him into, every church leader now must be careful not to suffer the same fate of missing out of heaven. That would be a terrible tragedy for any servant of God! It is like being a tout at the garage, who does not go with the vehicle after labouring so much to load or fill it up.

Spiritual leadership then is a delicate job that calls for caution and requires God's wisdom and tact if we must succeed at it.

2. Implication For Followers:

How are the mighty fallen! If Moses, the Great Law Giver could not enter Canaan, the Promised Land, what chances had the whining children of Israel? Of the over 600, 000 Israelites that were delivered from and left Egypt originally, none entered the Promised Land except Joshua and Caleb.

Every church member now therefore needs to be careful lest we forfeit the eternal rest in heaven as promised us by God. Church members must quit pettiness and whining at every slightest opportunity but learn to trust the Lord for everything (Heb.11: 6; Rom.14: 23b).

E. POSSIBLE SOLUTIONS:

1. Possible Solutions For Leaders:

- i. Be Sure of Your Calling – 2Pet.1: 10. Most spiritual leaders in the Bible had their calling doubted and questioned and their authority challenged at one time or the other. Examples include the following:
 - a. Joseph – Gen.37: 5-8

- b. Moses – Exod.2: 11-15; 5: 19-23; 14: 10-12; Num.11: 4-15; Num.12: 1-15.
- c. King Saul – 1Sam.10: 26-27
- d. King David – 2Sam.16: 5-10
- e. Even, the Lord Jesus Christ – Mk.2: 23-28; Lk.13: 10-17; Mk.7: 1-16

Every spiritual leader therefore, must be very sure he is called by God into spiritual leadership lest he be weighed down by the whining of the people and be frustrated out of the work mid-way as the followers constantly challenge him – Exod.2: 11-14; 4: 1-9; Jn.10: 10-39; Rom.1: 1; 1Cor.1: 1; 2Cor.1: 1; Gal.1: 1; Eph.1: 1; Phil.1: 1; Col.1: 1, etc.; Jam.1: 1; 1Pet.1: 1; 2Pet.1: 1; 1Jn.1: 1; Jn.10: 11-14.

- ii. Depend on God – Ps.60: 12; Prov.3: 5-6; Jn.15: 5b; Phil.4: 13. What can we really do without Christ? A spiritual leader must live by faith, be humble at all times and depend on God as the source of all his resources. That is a sure way to succeed!
- iii. Seek His Anointing – Exod.31: 1-6; Exod.35: 30-35; Isa.10: 27; Isa.42: 1-4; Isa.61: 1-3; Lk.4: 16-21; Matt.11: 28.
- iv. Be Prayerful (Pray for Yourself & Your Followers) – 1Sam.12: 23; Matt.4: 1-2; Matt.26: 36-46; Mk.1: 35; Rom.1: 9; Eph.1: 15-16; 1Thess.1: 2; 2Tim.1: 3; Philem. 4.
Prayer demonstrates our communion and dependency on God. As the saying goes, 'A prayerful Christian is a powerful Christian while a prayerless Christian is a powerless Christian.' Spiritual leaders who are not praying are possibly playing and would soon stray. Like never before, let us pray! Let us wait on God in prayer for enduement with power from on high and for God to constantly renew our strength for the days ahead (Isa.40: 28-31; Lk.24: 49).
- v. Be Strong, Bold & Courageous – Josh.1: 6-7, 9; 1Chron.28: 20; Dan.11: 32; Eph.6: 10-12; Phil.4: 13; 2Tim.1: 7.
- vi. Work Hard. Be Skillful & Diligent. Give Yourself to Study & Reading; Readers Are Leaders! – Exod.31: 1-2; 35: 30; Prov.22: 29; 27: 23; Dan.1: 4-17; 2Tim.2: 15; 1Tim.4: 13
- vii. Be Exemplary & A Model – Matt.5: 16; 1Cor.11: 1; 1Tim.4: 12. A spiritual leader should not be charismatic; he should be a man of good and godly character. The exemplary lifestyle of a spiritual leader helps him to assert his authority.
- viii. Stand Firm & Take Charge for God – Lk.19: 13b; Eph.6: 13b-14a; 1Tim.4: 12.
- ix. Take Time To Teach The People Sound Word of God – Deut.6: 4-6; Josh.1: 8; Prov.22: 6; Hos.4: 6; Matt.4: 4; Matt.28: 19-20; Col.3: 16; 2Tim.4: 1-4
- x. Avoid Distraction & Be Focused – Isa.50: 7; Heb.12: 2. Ministry work across all ages has always been fraught with distractions which no spiritual leader can afford. He should therefore be well focused and avoid these distractions as much as possible. A spiritual leader must learn how to major in major things and minor in the minor ones. A leader must learn how to manage the cheers and jeers of the people (Jn.2: 23-25).

- xi. Avoid Anger & Provocation – 1Cor.13: 5; Tit.1: 7-11. Some people are particularly good at provoking others. They are in the church too. A spiritual leader must watch out for such troublesome brethren and avoid them. We should learn from the example of how King David handled Shimei (1Sam.16: 5-14) and the crisis at Ziklag (1Sam.30: 1-10). We should never allow anger to get the best of us because it will reveal the worst of us. There are times to answer a fool according to his folly and also times to simply ignore him (Prov.26: 4-5).
- xii. Be Sober, Vigilant & Watchful – 1Pet.5: 8. The need for soberness, vigilance and watchfulness in spiritual leadership cannot be over-emphasized. Without any doubts, Satan is not our friend but an arch-enemy. He would adopt any means to trap the unwary. Let us therefore be watchful and not sleep.

***Please, take note of the stabilizing role of Joshua & Caleb and how God rewarded them.**

Let us watch out for men of faith and courage like Joshua and Caleb in the church who will always support and encourage their leaders.

2. Possible Solutions For Followers:

- i. Be Sure of Your Salvation & Calling – Neh.13: 3; Matt.7: 21-23; Jn.1: 12; 2Cor.5: 17; Rev.20: 11-15; 2Cor.13: 5; 2Pet.1: 10. Every church member should be sure of his/her salvation. Again, a member, just like the leader must be well convinced he is where God wants him to be and should not just follow the leader like a zombie (Rom.14: 5). This would help to reduce the level of friction, complaints and murmuring in congregations and churches.
- ii. Be Prayerful (Pray for Yourself & Your Leaders) – Lk.18: 1; 1Thess.5: 17; 1Tim.2: 1-4.
- iii. Be Humble, Loyal, Obedient & Submissive – Prov.16: 18; Rom.13: 1-7; Heb.13: 7, 17
- iv. Be Committed to Genuine & Practical Christian Love. Love your leaders as yourself – Matt.22: 35-40; Jn.13: 34-35; Jn.15: 13; Rom.13: 8-14.
- v. Avoid Carnality & Mortify the Deeds of the Flesh – Rom.8: 5-13; Rom.12: 1; Gal.2: 20; Gal.5: 19-21; Col.3: 5-6.
- vi. Avoid Seeking for Attention, Pre-eminence & Vain Glory. It breeds envy, jealousy, rivalry, murmuring, complaining, gossip, backbiting, slander, etc. – 1Cor.3: 1-3; 3Jn.9-10
- vii. Avoid Cliques & Ungodly Peer Group Pressure – Exod.23: 2; Prov.1: 10; 1Cor.15: 33.
- viii. Avoid Unjust, Negative & Destructive Criticism of Church Leaders - Exod.5: 19-21; 14: 10-12; Num.11: 4-6; Num.12: 1-12; Num.16: 1-33; Neh.2: 10, 19-20; 4: 1-9; 6: 1-14; Mk.2: 23-28; Lk.13: 10-17; Mk.7: 1-16.

- ix. Endure Hardness & Avoid Unnecessary Comparison of Congregations & Church Leaders – Exod.14: 10-12; Num.11: 4-6; 2Cor.10: 12; 2Tim.2: 3-5.
- x. Tame Your Tongue (Public & Private), Don't Exaggerate or Tell Lies – Ps.64: 1-10; Ps.109: 1-5; Ps.120: 1-4; Prov.6: 16-19; (e.g. Matt.26: 59-66); Jam.3: 2; 1Pet.3: 10-12.
- xi. Know That Your Leader is Human & Has His Weaknesses & Battles Too. So, be tolerant and learn to forgive and overlook the wrongs of others – Eph.4: 2-3; Col.3: 13.
- xii. Be Sober, Vigilant & Watchful. Be a vessel of honour and do not to yield yourself as an instrument to be used by Satan against God's work – Rom6: 11-13; 2Tim.2: 19-21; 1Pet.5: 8.

F. CONCLUSION:

1Cor.10: 12; Gal.5: 13-16

It is true that we have been called unto liberty in Christ Jesus but we are warned in Scripture not to use our liberty for an occasion for sin. Satan's strategy against God's people across the ages has always been to *'smite the shepherd so the sheep can scatter'* (Zech.13: 7; Matt.26: 31). It is a device we must not be ignorant but be wary about and guard against as the devil has used it to scatter many churches. At the end of the day, it is a wild wind that blows no man any good. God warns all – leaders and followers alike in 1Cor.10: 12 who think they are standing now to take heed lest the adversary takes advantage of them and they fall.

What a terrible tragedy of unquantifiable magnitude it would be for any of God's servants who have been labouring in His Vineyard for so long to miss out in heaven eventually? What a terrible tragedy would it be also for any of God's children at all for whom Christ suffered, bled and died on the cross at Calvary to go to hell at the end of this earthly life? It is my sincere prayer that that would not be the portion of any of us in Jesus name. Amen. We therefore need to heed the voice of the Holy Spirit as He speaks to the Church and take caution as we go about our activities both as leaders and followers in the church. God bless you all.