

## **THE SECRET OF LEADERSHIP**

### **Ted Schroder, February 14, 2010**

“I am the good shepherd. The good shepherd lays down his life for the sheep...I am the good shepherd. I know my sheep and my sheep know me – just as the Father knows me and I know the Father – and I lay down my life for the sheep.” (John 10:11,14,15)

Jesus is contrasting his leadership with that of the hireling, who abandons the sheep and runs away when he sees a wolf coming, because he cares nothing for the sheep. Ezekiel prophesied against the false shepherds of Israel who only took care of themselves, who did not strengthen the weak, or heal the sick, or bind up the injured, or rescue the strays, or search for the lost. (Ezekiel 34:1-6) In contrast to them Jesus preached the good news of the kingdom and healed every disease and sickness. “When he saw the crowds, he had compassion on them, because they were harassed and helpless, like sheep without a shepherd.” (Matthew 9:36)

Why do we need such leadership? When we have no direction in our lives, when our lives lack meaning and purpose, when they are aimless, when we don't know what we are here for, we become harassed and helpless, at the mercy of circumstances, and the latest news cycle. Christ came to provide direction, to rescue those straying from the path, and to seek out the lost. (Luke 15:6) When we are found by Christ, and follow his direction, we can fulfill our potential, what we are meant to be, and grow up to the whole measure of the fullness of Christ.

“Then, we will no longer be infants, tossed back and forth by the waves, and blown here and there by every wind of teaching and by the cunning and craftiness of men in their deceitful scheming.” (Ephesians 4:14. NIV)

“Then we will no longer be like children, forever changing our minds about what we believe because someone has told us something different, or has cleverly lied to us and made the lie sound like the truth.” (LB)

The good shepherd, as opposed to the false shepherd, lays down his life for the sheep, he takes care of his sheep, he has compassion on them. The power of the spiritual leader lies in his sacrificial love, his compassion and care for his flock.

“He tends his flock like a shepherd:

He gathers the lambs in his arms and carries them close to his heart;

he gently leads those that have young.” (Isaiah 40:11)

It is a beautiful picture of love. On this Valentine's Day it is important to celebrate the sacrificial nature of love, for St. Valentine was a martyr of the church. He died for what he believed. The depth of the love of the Good Shepherd for the sheep, is seen in his commitment to die for them in order to save them.

“We all, like sheep, have gone astray, each of us has turned to his own way; and the Lord has laid on him the iniquity of us all.” (Isaiah 53:6)

This model of leadership in Christ is a paradigm of what spiritual leadership is meant to be in the Body of Christ, the flock of God. These passages about the Good Shepherd were read at my ordination to the Christian ministry in London, England, as an inspiration for ministry. Those of us who were ordained were called to be Stewards of the Lord, to seek for Christ's sheep that were dispersed abroad, to be reminded how great a

treasure was committed to our charge, for they were the sheep of Christ which he bought with his death, and for whom he shed his blood. It was, and remains, a solemn charge.

The word 'pastor' comes from the Latin for shepherd. Like the Good Shepherd, we are called to have compassion and to take care of those who are harassed and helpless. Our mission is to strengthen the weak, to heal the sick, to bind up the injured, to rescue the strays and to search for the lost. It is a challenging vocation which calls for constant attention. But it is not meant to be done alone. It cannot be done alone.

The congregation as a whole is called to have compassion and care for one another. We are all called to be Stewards of the Lord, to minister to one another, according to the gifts God has given us. The Good Shepherd recruited twelve disciples to share with him in his compassionate and caring ministry. They were joined by the Seventy. Then all followers of Christ were given the gift of the Holy Spirit to empower them to witness and serve.

As Stewards of the Lord we have been given time, talents and treasure to give in sacrificial, compassionate care. We do this through the ministry of our congregation. Everything we do is directed to care for one another. We care for one another through our worship, through our classes, through our fellowship, through our pastoral care, and through our outreach ministries. We don't just take care of ourselves, for we support the compassionate ministries of Barnabas Center, Boys Service Brigade, City Rescue Mission, Eagle Ranch, East/West Ministries, Empowered Parents, Gordon-Conwell Theological Seminary, Greater Nassau Women's Services, Haggai Institute, Joy to the Children, Kairos Prison Ministry, MAP International, Nassau Habitat for Humanity, Prison Fellowship Ministry, Safe Harbor, Salvation Army/Hope House, Samaritan's Purse, Seamark Ranch, Teen Community Bible Study, United Christian Academy, Wears Valley Ranch, Wycliff Bible Translators, World Vision, and the YMCA.

When we make our offering each Sunday, we are caring for others, we are being Stewards of the Lord, we are showing our compassion for others. Our giving enables the weak to be strengthened, the sick to be healed, the injured to be bound up, the strays to be rescued and the lost to be found, through the ministry of this church.

When I write a check, I am showing compassion. When I give of myself to others, I am laying down a part of my life for them. When I share what I have of the Gospel with others, what I know of Christ with them, I am being a pastor, a shepherd, a leader.

When St. Paul left Ephesus he charged the leaders of that congregation with these words: "Keep watch over yourselves and all the flock of which the Holy Spirit has made you overseers. Be shepherds of the church of the Lord, which he bought with his own blood." (Acts 20:28)

St. Peter expressed similar sentiments: "Be shepherds of God's flock that is under your care, serving as overseers – not because you must, but because you are willing, as God wants you to be; not greedy for money, but eager to serve, not lording it over those entrusted to you, but being examples to the flock. And when the Chief Shepherd appears, you will receive the crown of glory that will never fade away." (1 Peter 5:2-4)

May we follow the Good Shepherd by being compassionate and caring for others, as he is for us.

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