

# The Jesus Model of Leadership

The Vision / March 2010

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**Mark 10:42–45 (NKJV) “But Jesus called them to Himself and said to them, ‘You know that those who are considered rulers over the Gentiles lord it over them, and their great ones exercise authority over them. Yet it shall not be so among you; but whoever desires to become great among you shall be your servant. And whoever of you desires to be first shall be slave of all. For even the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give His life a ransom for many.’”**

Our nation and world are facing tremendous challenges. The way of life we have known is changing rapidly. In reality, if things do not turn around quickly, the world will be radically different than it is today. It is possible that the problems we are facing can be solved. Whether or not our ship will make it through the storm will be determined by the kind of leaders at the helm. Unfortunately the model of leadership used today seeks control through position, authority, influence, and power. This flawed leadership model breeds the kind of arrogance, deceit, and corruption that hinders real solutions. As a result it undermines the hope of finding real solutions in an effort to obtain or maintain control. This leadership model serves the best interests of the leader rather than of the people. Unfortunately, even those who claim to serve the people often find themselves fighting for control.

Jesus came preaching and teaching the kingdom of God. As He did, He portrayed a different model for leadership. The kingdom of God is a “kingdom”. This means that God is the King and those who acknowledge and submit to His reign are part of His kingdom. The kingdom of God is not a democracy (rule of the people), nor an oligarchy (rule of the few), nor a monarchy (rule of one man). The kingdom of God is a heavenly Theocracy (rule of God). God says, “*Heaven is My throne, and earth is My footstool.*” (Isaiah 66:1 NKJV) God has established His Son Jesus Christ as His King over the earth.

The real problem behind this world’s model for leadership is that it refuses to submit to the rule of God through His Son Jesus Christ. The Psalmist David, the earthly king of Israel, declared ‘*Why do the nations rage, and the people plot a vain thing? The kings of the earth set themselves, and the rulers take counsel together, against the Lord and against His Anointed, saying, ‘Let us break Their bonds in pieces and cast away Their cords from us.’ He who sits in the heavens shall laugh; the Lord shall hold them in derision. Then He shall speak to them in His wrath, and distress them in His deep displeasure: ‘Yet I have set My King On My holy hill of Zion.’ I will declare the decree: The Lord has said to Me, “You are My Son, Today I have begotten You. Ask of Me, and I will give You the nations for Your inheritance, and the ends of the earth for Your possession. You shall break them with a rod of iron; You shall dash them to pieces like a potter’s vessel.”’ Now therefore, be wise, O kings; be instructed, you judges of the earth. Serve the Lord with fear, and rejoice with trembling. Kiss the Son, lest He be angry, and you perish in the way, when His wrath is kindled but a little. Blessed are all those who put their trust in Him.*” (Psalm 2:1-12 NKJV) Jesus Christ is King of kings and Lord of lords (Revelation 17:14; 19:16). We are assured that one day every knee will bow and every tongue will confess that Jesus Christ is Lord to the glory of God the Father (Philippians 2:11). Therefore any successful model for leadership must begin and end with submission to the rule and reign of God.

Jesus' model for leadership is diametrically opposed to this world's model for leadership including its emphasis on position, authority and power. Jesus Christ is King of kings and Lord of lords, but He exemplified a different model than the world for those who would lead in His kingdom. Rather than enforce His authority over mankind as a divine Dictator, He came to earth as a servant. Servanthood is the Jesus model for leadership. Jesus said, *"And whoever desires to be first among you, let him be your slave—just as the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give His life a ransom for many."* (Matthew 20:27-28) If Jesus, the Son of God, submitted Himself as a servant of His Father and served those He created—even laying down His life for them, how much more should we, His subjects, imitate His humility in leadership. Paul said, *"Let this mind be in you which was also in Christ Jesus, who, being in the form of God, did not consider it robbery to be equal with God, but made Himself of no reputation, taking the form of a bondservant, and coming in the likeness of men. And being found in appearance as a man, He humbled Himself and became obedient to the point of death, even the death of the cross."* (Philippians 2:5-8 NKJV)

Unfortunately Christians often imitate the world's model for leadership rather than the Jesus model. This is not new. Even Jesus' disciples struggled with the desire for position and power in Christ's kingdom. James and John desired and even requested that Jesus give them a position on His right hand and on His left hand. Jesus said that position in the kingdom was granted only by His Father (Matthew 20:23). Although the other disciples had not requested it, their anger and jealousy over James' and John's request revealed that the desire for position and power was in their heart as well. We often see Christians fall into the same traps of ambition and competitive jealousy that undermines the work of God. Rather than having the same servant attitude as Jesus, we push and shove for the top places of position, power, and influence. How grievous it must be to God our Father to see His children wrestle with one another for top positions of authority when the greatest positions of servanthood are left vacant.

On the night before He was crucified, Jesus ate the Passover with His disciples. He knew it was time to pass the torch of leadership to His apostles. The success of His kingdom required that they imitate His leadership model. During the meal Jesus laid aside His garments and clothed Himself as their servant. He poured water in a basin and washed their feet. Jesus said to them, *"Do you know what I have done to you? You call Me Teacher and Lord, and you say well, for so I am. If I then, your Lord and Teacher, have washed your feet, you also ought to wash one another's feet. For I have given you an example, that you should do as I have done to you. Most assuredly, I say to you, a servant is not greater than his master; nor is he who is sent greater than he who sent him. If you know these things, blessed are you if you do them."* (John 13:13-17 NKJV) Only those leaders who imitate Jesus' model for servant-leadership will be blessed.

Only a servant-leadership model can bring real solutions to the problems we face in our homes, churches, nation, and world. Only servants of Jesus Christ are qualified to lead. Only servants willing to wash feet are ready to lead. A leader who is motivated by anything other than service to God on behalf of his fellow man is part of the problem rather than part of the solution. Find leaders who imitate Jesus' model for leadership and follow them. They are the true servant-leaders in God's kingdom.