

Leadership

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[0 : 00] This is the evening service of Holy Trinity on the 26th of May 2002. The preacher is Steve Brown.

The sermon is entitled Leadership and is based on Mark 10, verses 35-45. We cut down our leaders. We love to laugh at them and draw cartoons of them in our newspapers.

We mistrust our leaders and don't believe they really care about us at all. We're quite sarcastic when it comes to leadership. We're a real bunch of cynics.

We're always sending up our leaders, betraying them in the worst possible light. Well, why do we do it? Why do we do this? Well, maybe I've thought about it. Maybe because it's true.

They are a shocking bunch of leaders who don't care about us. During my three years at Deakin University studying commerce, I regularly investigated leadership styles and methods and theories and I've developed my own leadership model.

[1 : 23] It's called the Stephen Brown leadership model. The Stephen Brown leadership model has four basic leadership styles.

Leadership style number one. The tyrant. The tyrant has no mercy. They rule with an iron fist.

They get their own way and they hurt people getting it. And they won't tolerate any challenge to their authority because underneath their hard tyrant exterior, they're afraid.

They're afraid of losing their power and authority. I wonder if tonight some of us are tyrants because Mr Perks was a tyrant.

Mr Perks taught metal work at Branham Park Technical College where I went and he was a retired plumber from Collingwood. Tough as they come.

[2 : 28] And he ruled his metal shop room like a king. And if anyone did something wrong on a machine, which he hadn't instructed, he'd stop the class, gather everyone around and just mock, ridicule and hurl abuse on the student.

He was the ultimate tyrant. Whenever we walked in there, we just started to come out in a sweat. It was scary. No one challenged Mr Perks.

Well, leadership style number two is the glory seeker. The glory seeker wants it all. They want all the attention and all the headlines.

They want the fame. They love adulation and cameras and pats on the back. I wonder if anyone here tonight is a bit of a glory seeker because I was a glory seeker.

I used to do middle distance running when I was a teenager and I was given free trips to travel around Australia and run and free clothing and shoes and sponsorships and I've even brought some of my gear along for you to have a look at.

[3 : 41] Look at that.

Look at that. No. That was a long time ago.

This is the best one. You like that?

Don't know how I fit into them. Paul will tell you that I still often wear it though we go out for runs. I loved wearing that stuff.

I used to get heaps of attention. I was a glory seeker.

[4 : 43] Leadership style number three is the liar. The liar is a type of leader who kisses babies and makes huge promises and they usually come out at election time.

They lead by compulsive lying looking to better their position and they lie even when they don't have to.

I don't know if you've seen the movie Liar, Liar but Jim Carrey plays an executive who always lies. He lies to his colleagues. He lies to his ex-wife even his own son and his son makes a wish on his birthday that his dad wouldn't lie to him anymore and it comes true and he goes around Jim Carrey, his character goes around telling the truth all the time without any tact and he gets in quite a lot of trouble and it's quite funny.

But this guy is such a liar that the way he brings up his son is to lie to him. The way he leads his son is by lying. You see some leaders are like that.

They just can't tell the truth. They're liars. Leadership style number four is the wimp. They lead...

[6 : 00] This leader is a people pleaser. They want everyone to get along. They want everyone to just be happy. No conflict.

They can't understand when people take advantage of them. They're weak. I don't know if you've seen the show Yes Minister. Some might be a little bit young.

It's a fantastic show. I used to love it. In one particular episode Minister Jim Hacker discovers a massive rot in the system. There's a hospital with 550 staff and zero patients.

Well, he calls in his advisor, Humphreys, and says, This must stop. Taxpayers' money is being wasted.

Humphreys likes the status quo. Some of his friends administer the hospital, the running of the hospital. So he doesn't want change. So he goes behind the scenes and gets the union to threaten massive industrial action if this 550 people get the sack.

[7 : 09] Jim Hacker, under pressure, buckles. And he ends up increasing staff levels from 550 to 650, still zero patients.

He's weak. He's a wimp. Ultimately, he's just out to protect himself. After three years at Deacon Burwood, this is my contribution to leadership philosophy.

The tyrant, the glory seeker, the liar, and the wimp. And tonight, I want to explore the question, what is God's leadership style? What is God's leadership style?

Is he a tyrant? Is he merciless? Does he rule with an iron fist? Does God sometimes hurt people to get what he wants? Or do you think that God's a bit of a glory seeker?

He just loves the limelight, the adulation, all the praise. Does he really care about us? Or do you think that God is a bit of a liar?

[8 : 13] Does he promise to love us? And then when we commit to him, hurl, just put a whole lot of restrictions and burdens on us, making our lives miserable. Nick Cave, the famous Australian musician, said this, God is really interesting, but he needs his spin doctors just like everyone else.

God needs his spin doctors just like everyone else. Is God like that? Does he need his spin doctors to keep him popular? In other words, does he have to lie to us to keep us interested in him?

Is God a liar? Or is he a wimp? Doesn't have much power. In fact, we call the shots, not him. In fact, some philosophers have said, God's dead.

The famous song American Pie puts it quite well. The man I admire most, the father, son and holy ghost, caught the last train for the coast. And you can finish it.

I need you to know. You see, things have gotten a bit hard for God. The pressure's on and God's buckled. He's a yes man and we don't need him anymore.

[9 : 32] In fact, for him to survive, he has to adapt to us. Is God a wimp? What's God's leadership style? Let's find out. In Mark 9, in your Bibles, Mark 9, 33, it says this, Well, Jesus' disciples are sort of like Melissa in the morning.

Now, I love my wife, but I've got to tell you, she's a little bit hopeless in the morning. Okay? Now, I'm worse.

Okay? We're both pretty bad in the morning. But you know what I mean. You're there, you're blissfully sleeping. It's beautiful, warm and comfy and you just don't want to get up.

And all of a sudden, the phone goes and you sort of fumble around for it in the dark and you grab it and as soon as you put it to your ear, it takes you a minute to work out who this person is and what they're on about.

And your vision is still blurry and sensitive. You can't see anything clearly. You sort of know what's going on, but it's just blurry, not quite clear. You see, Jesus' disciples are like that.

[11 : 10] They're like me and Mel in the morning. They sort of know who Jesus is, but it's still blurry and not quite focused. They know he's the greatest of all leaders.

They even know he's a king who's going to do great things and they're going to be a part of it. They're going to be involved. They know that.

And they know they're going to get some fame and they're going to get some glory. And they want all the adulation and the applause and the fame of being his sidekicks, of being his disciples.

You see, Jesus' disciples, they're glory seekers. So they start arguing amongst themselves. Jesus is probably up the road a bit.

They've dropped back, gotten a huddle, so he can't hear them. I'll be the greatest. No way, mate. I'm going to be the greatest. Both of you, you're crazy.

[12 : 11] I'm the greatest. I'm going to sit at Jesus' right hand side when he becomes king. You will not. I will too. You will not. Will too. Not too. Got too. And on and on and on it goes.

Arguing amongst themselves. And at the end of the journey, Jesus just turns to them and says, what were you arguing about on the way?

Silence. They don't answer him. So he sat them down. He called the twelve and said to them, whoever wants to be first must be last of all and servant of all.

Did you catch that? Whoever wants to be first must be last of all and servant of all. You see, that's Jesus' leadership style. That's God's leadership style.

Jesus' leadership style is based on serving other people. Imagine Steve Brax wins the next election and he gives his victory speech to the party faithful and then goes out back and does the dishes.

[13 : 36] Braxie doesn't do dishes. John Howard got a spare lunch break. Walks out of his office, down the hall, into Parliament House toilets and starts scrubbing the floor with the cleaners.

John doesn't do toilets. Imagine if the Queen babysat for the poor couple down the street because they couldn't afford one.

The Queen doesn't babysit. Imagine if your principal came up to you and said, I'll tutor you for free so that you get the best possible marks, you get a great TER, VCE school and you get into a great university and you live happily ever after.

Principals don't tutor for free, do they? You hardly ever see them actually, I think. Jesus said, whoever wants to be first must be last of all and the servant of all.

You see, that's Jesus' leadership style. That's God's leadership style. It's based on serving others. But it's so hard.

[14 : 49] It's so hard to serve others, isn't it? It's so hard to be the last of all, to be the servant of all. It's so hard because we're so used to serving ourselves.

It's so hard because we're used to serving ourselves. When I'm tired, I don't want to go to Bible study on Wednesday. It's so easy to serve myself and forget about the others who have made the effort.

When I'm talking with friends after church, over coffee, it's so easy to serve myself and forget about the newcomers and just sort of let them go by, ignore them.

When I don't get along with someone, it's so easy to serve myself and ignore them and even slander them behind their back.

When I get rebuked by my superiors, it's so easy to serve myself and go whinge about them. When positions are up for grabs, it's so easy to serve myself and push myself forward and push other people back.

[16 : 13] it's hard to serve others because we're so used to serving ourselves. It's easy to be a tyrant. It's easy to be a glory seeker and a liar and a wimp looking after yourself.

It's hard to be the last of all and a servant of all. Then he took a little child and he put it among them and taking it in his arms, he said to them, whoever welcomes one such child in my name welcomes me and whoever welcomes me welcomes not me but the one who sent me.

My best mate has got a four-month old son, little Stephen. And no, they didn't name it afternoon, though I like to think they did.

Little Stephen has a routine. Sleep, wake up, cry, eat, spew, wee, poo. Sleep, wake up, cry, eat, spew, wee, poo.

He's pretty regular. Like that. This occurs every four hours, every day, every week, every month.

[17 : 42] Little children are tough to serve. They're weak, they're small, they're defenseless, they're needy, they're demanding, they're relentless, they're difficult and they're messy.

But they're also tough to serve because they're the least. They're the last of the last. They're easily forgotten, easily pushed aside and trivialised and easily dominated.

But Jesus calls his disciples to serve and welcome people like this. To serve and welcome the most weak and small, defenseless, needy, demanding, relentless, difficult and messy.

That's good. My wife accepts me then. We're called not to forget people but to remember them, to bring them to ourselves, not push them aside, to make them important, not trivialised, to lift them up and not dominate them.

You see, we're called to serve and welcome because that's God's leadership style. And God has proved that that's his leadership style.

[19 : 07] If you flick your page over in your Bibles, you've got them open. Mark 10, 45. It concludes that section in Mark rather well.

for the Son of Man came not to be served but to serve and to give his life a ransom for many.

You see, God has proved his leadership style. You see, Jesus didn't come as a tyrant or a glory seeker or a liar or a wimp just looking after himself.

Jesus came to serve, came to serve you and me, to serve you and me when we failed to serve God, to serve you and me when we failed to serve others, to serve you and me when all we did was serve ourselves.

He served us by sending his Son to die on the cross, to die for all our tyranny, all our glory seeking, all our lying and all our wimping out and copping out.

[20 : 16] He served us so that we could serve God. Isn't that amazing?

So that through him we can actually turn away from all that tyranny and glory seeking and lying and wimping out God.

So that we can turn away from our sin and start serving God like we're always meant to. Now that's not washing dishes, is it?

It's simply not cleaning toilets. It's a little bit more serious than babysitting. It's definitely not the same as tutoring someone for free. It's a bit more serious.

Jesus served you and me to make us friends with God. What will be your response tonight? Will you turn away from tyranny and glory seeking and lying and wimping out?

[21 : 29] Will you become a servant leader like the one who served you and me? Whoever wants to be first must be last of all and servant of all.

For the Son of Man, Jesus, came not to be served but to serve and give his life a ransom for many.

Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen.