

Calling Godly Men to Serve and Lead

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Preacher: Pastor Kenoyer

[0:00] I would like you to turn your Bibles this morning to Exodus chapter 18, Exodus chapter 18, and let me read a portion of the text to you and confess that we are not going to spend all of our time here.

We drew a book expositionally, and guess which book we are in right now? We're in John, and I have it on reasonable information that we'll probably be in John for another year and a half, maybe two, who knows?

You know, I have to tell you, there was a time in my life when I had a great hesitation in launching into the book of John. I really don't know why other than, well, I will tell you.

I started preaching in the book of John when I was called from Bethel to come here. And there's always been that kind of pathological fear that if I start John, I'm not going to finish it, so let's not start the book.

But at 67, I have reasonable hope that I will be able to finish the book of John, Lord willing. And it has been such an incredible blessing to me to be able to look week after week after week at the beauty and the holiness of our Lord Jesus Christ.

[1:26] And my heart has grown in affection for Him. Isn't it happening to you? You've grown in your affection for the Lord Jesus. It says this, as we learn more about Him, we grow to know Him, and that affects us.

And so the normal pattern is to work our way through a passage of Scripture, through a book. Today is a topical sermon.

And if I were to ask my wife to give her opinion on how I do at topical sermons, she would say, Eh, okay. Well, she's a little more blunt than that.

But, you know, the truth of the matter is, so you have to add extra prayer when a pastor decides that it's appropriate to preach a topical sermon. But this is necessary and appropriate.

The reason being that on December the 9th, our congregation is going to hold our annual meeting. And while there are important budget matters that we are going to bring to your attention, the truth of the matter is, is that the way in which we spend the money that God has provided is not as important as the individuals that we place in leadership.

[2:37] And that's critical for us to understand. And so this morning, as we come together, we want to spend time studying what the Word of God has to say about biblical leadership. What are the characteristics?

What are the expectations that God has placed on leadership? And why is biblical leadership so important to the testimony of Christ? Next Sunday, as I mentioned earlier, we are going to have a commissioning service for Caleb and Charity.

And it's going to be a wonderful service in which you are going to hear Caleb and Charity give a short summary of the work of God in their life. You're also going to hear Gary Crawford, who is the missionary that is overseeing the Jamaican field.

He is also going to be giving this congregation an exhortation in response to our responsibility of our ministry to Caleb and Charity. And then it will be my privilege to preach a brief message.

Now, that's interesting, isn't it? Two messages in one day. You're going to have a great time. And we will be finished by 1.30 or so. Don't worry about it. That's hyperbole.

[3:44] Some of you are getting really nervous. But next Sunday, that is a very, very special day for our congregation. And I encourage you to that and keep it in prayer. Let me come now to the passage that we're going to begin in.

And there in Exodus chapter 18, if you will look, it says there in verse 13, The next day Moses sat to judge the people, and the people stood around Moses from morning until evening.

When Moses' father-in-law saw all that he was doing for the people, he said, What is this that you are doing for the people? Why do you sit alone and all the people stand around you from morning until evening?

And Moses said to his father-in-law, Because the people come to me to inquire of God. When they have a dispute, they come to me, and I decide between one person and another, and I make them know the statutes of God and his laws.

Moses' father-in-law said to him, What you are doing is not good. You and the people with you will certainly wear yourselves out, for the thing is too heavy for you.

[4:48] You're not able to do it alone. Now obey my voice, I will give you advice, and God be with you. You shall represent the people before God and bring their cases to God, and you shall warn them about the statutes and the laws and make them know the way in which they must walk and what they must do.

Moreover, look for able men from all the people, men who fear God, who are trustworthy and hate a bribe, and place such men over the people as chiefs of thousands, of hundreds, of fifties, and of tens.

Let us pray. Our Father God, as we take your word in hand, and we preface our study with prayer, our time of prayer is a reflection of our dependence upon you, and a reminder to our own soul of the fact that you're the one who must open our eyes that we may behold wondrous truths of thy law. And we ask this morning that the word would make a difference in the lives of your people, that when we think about leadership, we think about leadership in the frame and with the encouragement and instruction of the scriptures.

When men think about the responsibility of growing to be leaders in their homes and leaders in ministry, that they would recognize that you have spoken clearly on these things, and that our desire would be to be obedient and faithful and know the joy that comes from that.

[6:15] And we ask this in Jesus' name. Amen. As we look at this passage, I want you to understand that it serves as a launching point as we think, first of all, about the significance of godly leaders.

I want you to understand that God has ordained that leadership is very important regardless of the environment in which it is placed. And when we think about the importance of leadership, we need to recognize that the reason that leadership is important is because of their role and blessing that they are to God's people.

You look here in this passage in Exodus chapter 18, and we're not going to dive into it in great detail, but I want you to recognize that Moses, in the process of doing what he was going about doing when Jethro arrived on the scene, he was doing his best to meet the needs of people, recognizing that the needs existed and that their heart's burdens need to be attended to.

The problem, as we see in this passage, is that he was the only one that really had anything to do with meeting the needs of the people. And as a result, guess what was happening? People were standing around from morning till evening.

This was no waiting room environment. How many of you waited in a doctor's office to be cared for? Ever done that? I mean, the doctor says, be there on such and such a time, and usually, because of our pathological fear of being overlooked, when do we arrive?

[7:39] Most of us arrive a little early, we take care of the paperwork, and then we sit around for however long it is, and one thing goes on and on and on, and pretty soon someone finally walks out and says, you may come into the room and you go past the scale, right?

How many of you go past the scale? How many of you get to skip that part? I'm just checking. You know, you go past the scale and you do that little deal, and then you're waiting in the room how long? Wait, wait, wait.

The privilege we have in waiting is generally we get to sit. They, in the ancient culture, weren't carrying around little camp chairs, and they stood standing from morning to evening waiting for the opportunity to speak to Moses, and here is what Jethro observed.

He said, listen, let me help you understand. This is going to wear you out, and it's going to wear them out. Eventually, when a need that exists in a person's heart is not met, it ends up creating

frustration, and frustration breeds over into sinful behavior, and here is Moses being instructed by Jethro, if you continue doing this, it's going to cause harm.

Problems that aren't handled eventually end up creating heartache, and so here we find Jethro giving advice to Moses, and he says, listen, what you need to do is you need to divide the needs up proportionally, beginning thousands, hundreds, tens, and what you will do is that you will recognize, by doing this, you're going to meet those needs, and as needs are recognized, you can address them.

[9:13] I want you to think with me of another passage in relationship to this that I don't need you to turn to, but in Acts chapter 6, you'll remember that what happened in that case as the church grew, it ended up where the needs of the widows, particularly the Gentile widows were not being met, and that created some turmoil, some difficulty, and some argument, and as a result, the apostles came together and said, listen to the congregation, you need to choose seven men that are full of the Holy Spirit, wisdom, have a good reputation, and we are going to give them the task of taking care of this responsibility, and the purpose of that was to see to it that the needs were met in adequate time.

I want you to understand that it is important to realize that the role that God has assigned to leadership is meeting the needs of people. I want you to look at another passage in relationship to that.

You're there in Exodus, but turn over, if you would, to Numbers chapter 27. One of the things that we need to recognize about godly leadership is that they are really a gift from the Lord.

Numbers chapter 27, verse 16 and 17. In Numbers 27, we are given a little bit of the setting around which or in which Moses is given information that he is going to die, and his very, very instinctive desire is found there in verse 16.

And let the Lord, this is Moses speaking to the Lord, says, let the Lord, the God of spirits of all flesh, appoint a man over the congregation, who shall go out before them and come in before them, who shall lead them out and bring them in, that the congregation of the Lord may not be a sheep without a shepherd.

[11:02] So the Lord said to Moses, take Joshua, the son of Nun, a man in whom is the Spirit, and lay your hand on him. And what we find in this passage is here is Moses towards the end of his life, recognizing the need of God's people, and he says, listen, Lord, you're going to take me out of the picture, but my desire for the congregation, for the people of God, the nation of Israel, is that you provide leadership.

Good shepherds ultimately are gifts from the great shepherd. And a good shepherd cares for the flock of God and serves the Lord by caring for his dear people and blessing them and guiding them with the word and with godly counsel.

I want you to recognize that the significance of godly leadership is not only in that they serve as a means of blessing, but they're also relatively different from the world. And I want you to see that.

Godly leadership are different from the world's standard of leadership. Boy, I tell you, as I was studying early this week and praying about that, or last week, I was really struck by what is happening in our American culture with politics.

How many of you at this point are kind of brain dead over the issue of what's happening in the political scene? It's like, you've got to be kidding me. Anyway, I want you to think with me about what Jesus had to say about leadership.

[12:22] Turn in your Bible to Luke chapter 22, verse 24 through 27. Luke chapter 22, verse 24 through 27. Incidentally, do remember that context is very important to understanding Scripture.

And I think it's appropriate to recognize this evening we're going to have the Lord's table. We're going to come together and remind ourselves of what the Lord Jesus did for us on the cross. In this passage that we're looking at, we find out that once again, the disciples are having this intramural bickering about who's going to be first.

That's what this is all about. And it's taking place right after the Lord's Supper. Now think with me just for a moment. In the context of the Lord's Supper, several very significant things had happened.

For one, remember when Jesus had said to the disciples, one of you, you here together, are going to betray me? See, I have to tell you, I am struck by the fact that instead of every one of the disciples thinking, well, I imagine it's Peter, or I think it's John, or I think it's Judas, what did they say?

What did they say? They actually ask a very perceptive question, which is kind of a stunning thought to me. They said, is it I? Am I the one?

[13:52] One, usually when something ill falls out about somebody here did something, we think, well, I know who did that. It's him, right?

We're great finger pointers. But strangely enough, they, whoa, it might be me. Second, after they had celebrated the elements, reminding themselves of what Jesus was going to do for them, after that, what did he do with a towel and a wash basin?

He washed their feet. And he said, listen, I'm giving this to you as an example and a model of servanthood. Right after that, they fall into their favorite little intramural bickering about who's going to be first.

Verse 24, a dispute also arose among them as to which of them was to be regarded as the greatest. And he said to them, the kings of the Gentiles exercise lordship over them.

I want you to think with me just for a moment here and pick up on this because here are the disciples having their little jockeying for who was going to be most important in the kingdom.

[15:03] And I want you to recognize how Jesus started into this. Now, here are the disciples all together, right on the other side of the Lord's table. And the first hint of Christ's disapproval of their intramural bickering comes out in the statement, the kings of the Gentiles.

Now, think with me. Why would I say that that was a little negative hint? What did the good Jewish community think of Gentiles?

What was their attitude towards Gentiles? Y'all here are my favorite Gentiles. If he had said that, what would have their Jewish flesh kind of risen up and said, who are you talking to? Right?

He says, the kings, the despots, the rulers, the ones who are in charge in the Gentile nation. And he says, hey, they're the ones that think this way.

And so he takes this negative picture. The kings of the Gentiles exercise lordship over them. When he used that little word lordship, he was talking about an individual who was in complete control of other people.

[16:22] Complete control. Absolute authority. The one who had the right of determining not only what a person did, but whether or not the person continued to exist. And he says, the kings of the Gentiles, they exercise lordship over them and those in authority over them are called benefactors.

Stop just for a moment. Why do you think the kings of the Gentiles were called benefactors? Were they really benefactors? What's the answer? Shake your head.

No. They really weren't benefactors. Do you think Herod wanted to be called a benefactor? The answer is yes. About as much as King, how does it go here?

Kim Jong-il. Yeah, there we go. How many of you know who Kim Jong-il is? He is my favorite despot. If you want a classic illustration of what a tyrant is, Kim Jong-il, or whatever his name is, that's the classic one.

In North Korea, people that he is unhappy with, guess what happened to them? They're blown up. Or they're fed to dogs. I mean, there are all kinds of cruel things that he does.

[17:36] But you know what? Do you know what his favorite title is? Or one of his favorite titles? Beloved leader. Beloved leader. You see, those who were abusing their power just love for people to refer to them as benefactors.

Dear leader. Now, with that kind of... And there they're thinking, yeah, I'd like to be in complete control. In fact, I would like everybody to talk to me nicely and say, oh, you're the sweetest, most wonderful leader we've ever had.

And here's what Jesus says. Look at the passage. It shall not be so with you. It shall not be so with you.

Well, what a blow to their crass immaturity. Here they were kind of bickering about the matter of who was going to be the most important.

And Jesus says, hey, let me stop just for a moment and help you guys understand that this is the way pagan, unbelieving, Gentiles think. And it's not going to be that way with you.

[18:47] Those who lead in the family of God are to be known for their servants' hearts. You look there in the passage and it says this, rather let the greatest among you become the youngest than the leader as one who serves.

For who is the greater, one who reclines at the table or one who serves? It is not the one who reclines at the table, but I am among you as one who serves.

And so when God's people think about the matter of biblical leadership, I think it's important for us to recognize that the characteristic of biblical leadership is first and foremost a servant's heart. They're the ones that should be counted on to be up front on projects. They're the ones who should be counted on to be willing to serve the needs of other people. They're the ones who should be counted on to be quiet and charitable in the midst of the turmoil of life.

Show me a humble, godly servant of the bride and I will show you a man that God has been at work in for a long time to prepare him for that task.

[19:55] Do you realize that men do not become leaders in the bride of Christ just as an overnight process? Everybody smiles and says, I got that one. Yeah. It takes time to develop a servant's heart. And by the way, the best way to test a servant's heart is actually watch and see how a person what?

What? Serves. How a person serves. I am very blessed to stop and recognize that in our fellowship one of the things that has been such a rich encouragement to this congregation is the testimony of servanthood of all those who have served historically in this fellowship as pastors and deacons. It's a blessing. It's a blessing. Not one to be taken lightly but one to be regarded carefully as a recognition of a congregation that prayerfully expect leadership to actually be what God expects them to be.

I want you to recognize the significance of godly leadership also is the value of their godly example. Biblical leadership in any and every role is dependent on godly exemplarship.

There's no better illustration of the sharp contrast between the world's expectations of leadership and what you see in the body of Christ.

[21:13] Regardless of what is going on the expectation of the word of God is that those who lead in the congregation are models of the character that God is looking for in godly men and those who serve.

So I want you to think with me here that God recognizes there is no alternative plan for leadership apart from godly character. There's no alternative plan. God's intention is this is that those who lead be examples to the flock in all things.

It's very interesting here when you think about the issue of godly character in relationship to leadership to see how often this characteristic stands out as front and center.

I recited the passage in Exodus chapter 18 verse 21 where you remember Jethro gave advice he said listen here's what you are to look for here's what you are to look for and he spelled out the characteristic that you will find very similar to the ones I want you to look at a passage and put your finger on it in Acts chapter 6 verse 3 we find a similar expectation to what we found back in Exodus let's look at it Acts chapter 6 verse 3 here are the character qualifications for those that are to be leaders in the body of Christ therefore brothers pick out from among you seven men of good repute what does that mean what's good repute mean it means good example good testimony they're men who have been tried and who have been found to be men of sterling character by the way how is character proven there's a saying smooth seas do not make good sailors do you know what that means it means that you figure out the character of a man under adversity and in difficulty you find out whether a man is willing to be a servant when there is a call to help move and fewer people show up than you would like

I love going to moves when there's so many people that we're all standing around getting one little bag or box a piece but when I show up at 67 and I find out that I'm one of the main lifters it's like heaven help me how many of you understand what I mean by main lifters okay how many of you realize that when you go to unload a van or a truck or whatever else there are things that I think

should be left to younger men hollow out there guys you know but you find out what the servant's heart is by the willingness and readiness to do it under adversity in Acts chapter 3 it says here you look for men of good repute good reputation you look for men full of the spirit and how do we know that a man is full of the spirit is that a an unsolvable mystery what's the answer hello it is telling us here that you as God's people are to look for these qualifications what are the characteristics of a person who is full of the spirit hello can anybody help me here the fruit of the spirit how do you know what an apple tree is you look underneath the apple tree in apple season and what should you find you should find apples love joy peace long suffering patience goodness etc so an individual who is full of the spirit in truth is not a dour sour grumpy am I doing well with this surly person have you ever been around people that are just kind of in a profound funk most of the time is that person full of the spirit what's the answer no no now

[25:07] I do want you to realize that God has not made all of us to be equally expressive hello everybody out there just smile at me because I want you to hear this we have Jared sitting over here where's Jared oh he's in the nursery right now that's right how many of you noticed that Jared is a fairly mellow bass player is it a guitar I don't know what instrument it is Seth it's just like it's one of those things Jared is a very mellow person how many of you noticed that Mary is probably on the other side of the spectrum okay the real test is if you put Jared watching the OSU Michigan football game along with Mary in the same room you'd want to find out that Jared on a touchdown was like yeah that's okay Mary of course doing cartwheels you know is like yeah am I right Matthew okay God makes us to be different in our expression but the issue is this is that you can tell when a person is spirit filled because their life displays the characteristics of the power of the spirit of God third thing it says here in this passage is that full of wisdom now when it says full of wisdom it is talking about wisdom that is from above and that is wisdom related to the word of God okay at the end of the day wisdom comes from God and so individuals that you look for to be leaders are men who know the word and are dependent upon it let me have you look at another passage in relationship to this issue of godly character and turn if you will over to 1st Timothy chapter 3 1st Timothy chapter 3 we're recognizing that God has no plan for leadership apart from godly character 1st Timothy chapter 3 beginning there in verse 1 it says the saying is trustworthy if any man aspires to the office of overseer he desires a noble task therefore let the overseer he must be above reproach he's an individual whose reputation is not sullied by recurring misbehaviors he's a man of one wife he's sober minded self controlled respectable hospitable able to teach not drunkard not violent but gentle not quarrelsome not a lover of money and as you work your way through both the passage in relationship to the overseer the elder the pastor and to the deacon one of the things that you find is that the issue of godly character stands front and center final passage in relationship to this matter of character is over in

Hebrews chapter 13 verse 7 Hebrews chapter 13 verse 7 remember your leaders put your finger on it remember your leaders those who spoke to you the word of god consider the outcome of their way of life and imitate their faith remember your leaders pay attention is what god is saying here pay attention to your leaders their role in particular is speaking the word of god to you and modeling a life that displays the character of christ so as you think about the matter of choosing leadership for the coming year I want to encourage you to remember that what you're looking for is men that are examples of biblical character there's something else that I want you to see and I'm going to make a comparison here in particular between the role of pastor and between the role of a deacon and so go if you will there to 1st Timothy chapter 3 1st Timothy chapter 3 we're going to be looking at the similarities of godly leadership we understand the significance of godly leadership but what are the similarities that we are looking for you look there in verse 8 and it says deacon likewise must be dignified not double-tongued etc a little word likewise tells us a great deal that I want us to focus on

briefly this morning the word argues for viewing pastors and deacons as similar or viewing overseers bishops or elders whichever word you're going to use in this case and deacons as being similar some have made a great deal of distinction between pastors and deacons between the various offices and while there are distinctions in terms of role and responsibility there's not distinction in relationship to character and it's not my intent this morning to carry on the ongoing argument about the differences in government in congregations

I am persuaded that the scripture cannot be relied upon to argue persuasively one side or the other of the issue I do believe that the non-negotiable is character in leadership and that is the undeniable argument from the passage in Exodus all the way to the end now notice too here that the issue of similarity is not about tasks but about character and what we find emphasized in the second part of 1st Timothy chapter 3 is the characteristics of those who are going to lead as deacons being relatively similar to the characteristics of those that are going to lead as pastors you look there and make a quick comparison between chapter 3 verse 2 through 7 and then the passage that we find carrying on from 8 through 12 deacons likewise must be dignified not double tongued not addicted to much wine not greedy for dishonest gain they must hold the mystery of the faith with a clear conscience let them first be tested then let them serve as deacons if they prove themselves blameless their wives likewise must be dignified not slanders sober minded faithful in all things and so when we look at this

I want you to understand that this matter of similarity between pastors and deacons is important to understand from a scriptural premise and one of the things that you can see in our fellowship is that those who serve as pastors and those who serve as deacons for all practical purposes have the same character qualifications and have a history of doing so before you as God's people when you choose a deacon you're choosing a man who is one who has demonstrated a servant's heart and godly character now the underlying purpose in this clear expectation of character being similar is the fact that godly leadership is expected to be a reflection of our Lord Jesus Christ our chief shepherd and so he is the one who at the end of the day godly leaders are following and he is the one that godly leaders are pointing to does that make sense why is it important in God's people's lives that those who lead are men of character and good reputation why fundamentally because of who they lead for and who they represent does that make sense they lead on behalf of Christ the flock does not belong to a man it belongs to the

Lord Jesus Christ who redeemed it with his own blood and those who serve as leaders in the fellowship are responsible to be sensitive to that which honors the one who redeemed the congregation he is the one that we're looking to and he is the one that we serve and he is the one that we're bonded to together and so when you look for leaders you're looking for individuals that display the heart of Christ I want you to understand as a result of that that pastors and deacons are to provide a similar model of servanthood of humility and godliness what you find in a pastor is something that you should find in a deacon let me take you back if I can for a moment back to Hebrews chapter 13 verse 7 I love the flow of the passage here Hebrews 13 is the author coming to the very end of his book and one of the things that characterizes the ends of epistles and scriptural books is that they want to wrap it up and give you a good summary and stick something in your mind in relationship to that the matter of biblical leadership comes out we mark what it says there in verse 7 it says remember your leaders those who spoke to you the word of God consider the outcome of their way of life and imitate their faith and so when it says consider it's giving us a command that you as God's people are to refresh your memory it's been good for me the last several weeks to remind myself of those who have served in this congregation as deacons and the model that they have set for me personally

[34:26] I remember them sitting at the board and making decisions and helping as we work through some very difficult things I couldn't help but remember Bill Driscoll I couldn't help but remember Hal Burchett I couldn't help but remember Tom Parsons I remember some of their counsel together when we were working things through in relationship to closing the school and when we were working things through in relationship to some of the changes that we've made in our fellowship whether it's small group or music ministry and they were men that provided godly counsel and stability in the flow of those things I think of my dad who served as a deacon in fact one of the harder things that I had to do was say to dad I think it's time to let somebody else take up the torch and what a desire

I remember as he got older and older he would go to every he'd ask me on a Friday is there a move coming on Saturday he wanted to go with me and he was in his 80s and it got to the point where

I had to he would always say so what can I carry and I'd get him to stand over the side when he was about 85 and I'd pick up one of these teeny little boxes and I'd go over and say will you take this in and then I had to be careful that he didn't get knocked over in the process get the box in there why was he doing that why was!

he doing that he wasn't doing that to receive a reward from people who said thank you he was doing it because he was a lifetime debtor to Jesus now listen to me carefully a man who does not serve under that sense of divine obligation is missing something we serve because of what he has done for us he's made us debtors to the cross and that should make us joyful in our service we find here remember your leaders those who spoke to you the word of God consider the outcome of their way of life how do you want to end up huh how do you want to end up as I get older and I get closer to the finish line I think more often of how I want to end up and I am so very thankful that

I have models out in front of me who set the standard and made it clear what godly leadership and servanthood look like consider the outcome of their way of life what was their trajectory how did things end in a day in which individuals take pleasure in self gratification I remember hearing of an individual that was going to retire and they were going to spend the next three years driving around the country in a motor home kind of indulging themselves in state parks and whatever whatever whatever and I thought well you know not going to be for me do you know how I want to end up I want to end up as a bride as a!

servant to the bride of for the testimony of others who have had the same ambition and the same affection and it is my pleasure to be in a congregation in which that is playing out now mark what it says and imitate their faith you know what that means imitate it means to follow that example be the same way you know to put it in simple terms love Christ serve like them so when we think this morning about choosing biblical leadership I want you to understand that God's intention first of all is that those who serve among God's people are individuals who have shown the work of [38:34] Christ in growing to be more like Jesus isn't that right secondly God's people are to value that and pray for that encourage that and then choose that to be their leaders so when we gather together to attend to the issue of choosing biblical leadership one of the things that we want to do is to say to the Lord thank you for the ones you provided and thank you for the ones you will provide and we will pray for them and support them and seek their well being as they serve as servants to the bride of Christ!

Let me our Father God this morning as we think in very practical terms about the value that you have placed on biblical leadership we're thankful first and foremost that Jesus Christ is the principal example to us who did not come to be ministered unto but to minister and to give his life a ransom for many and so this morning as we think about leadership we want to be a people that value first of all above all others the Lord Jesus Christ as our savior our example the one who we want to be like and let our lives and the passion of our souls be reflective of that ambition from day to day we pray father also for those who are here today that do not know Christ that even today as they are sitting under the teaching of the word of

God thinking them to realize the emptiness the darkness of their soul has no solution apart from broken repentance willing confession of sin and a readiness to trust in Jesus as their savior we ask this in Jesus name amen we ask that you stand