

Jacob Hanson

05-19-2019

Sermon Title: "Leadership After the Resurrection"

Prelude

TFWS #2153 "I'm Gonna Live So God Can Use Me"

UMH #512 "Stand By Me"

Responsive Reading: UMH #858 Psalm 146 1-10

Greeting

Sharing of Blessings and Concerns

Prayer of Confession: UMH #892 (Amended)

Children's Message: (Done by Stacey Pappas) Possible Title: "Being a leader"

Nicene Creed UMH #880

Matthew 20:20-28 (Those who wish to lead must serve in the church)

John 21:15-25 (Peter is told to love Jesus's sheep, He and John are proclaimed as being pillars of the church)

Acts 5:27-42 (Standing strong in the midst of persecution)

Sermon: "Leadership After the Resurrection"

Lord's Prayer

Sermon Song: TFWS #2152 "Change My Heart, O God"

Offering

Doxology: "Praise God, from Whom All Blessings Flow" UMH #95

UMH #672 "God Be with You till We Meet Again"

Sending Prayer

Benediction

Announcements/Dismissal

Postlude

Questions:

- 1) There are many different ways in which people "lead" in our world. How is Jesus's calling into leadership different from those?
- 2) Peter is asked by Christ to "Feed My sheep." What is Jesus asking Peter to do?
- 3) Each of us who are called by Christ into His kingdom are asked to lead and serve in different ways. How is the Lord calling you into leadership and service?

Memory Verse: John 21:25 "And there are also many other things which Jesus did, which if they were written in detail, I suppose that even the world itself would not contain the books that would be written."

Weekly Challenge: In whatever ways God has called you to lead, learn to lead with a servant's heart this week. Make it so that everyone who comes into contact with you know that you are the Lord's by your actions.

Pastor Jacob Hanson  
"Leadership After the Resurrection"  
05/19/2019

## **Opening Prayer**

Good Morning, welcome here to the combined service between Kasson and Pleasant Corners United Methodist Churches. I am Pastor Jacob Hanson, and it is a joy to be here with you today! A special thank you and welcome to our Pleasant Corners members for being willing to come and share service here at Kasson, your flexibility is most certainly appreciated. If you are visiting or arriving for the first time in a while, a special welcome to you as well. We are currently in the midst of talking about the resurrected Christ in our churches. Throughout the month of May, following our celebration of Jesus's resurrection on Easter Sunday in April, we are looking at what it is that Jesus does after coming out of the tomb. We have looked at some of the proof for us to hold the resurrection as true, we have looked at how Jesus proved Himself alive to His disciples, and last week we examined the Great Commission Jesus has given us to go and reach the world. Today's topic fits in line with all of these points we have already covered. Today we are looking at Church Leadership after the resurrection.

When we talk about leadership in the early church, there are a few names that immediately come to mind. Many of us will likely gravitate towards the twelve disciples and the Apostle Paul as comprising the early church leadership... and we are right in thinking so. For us today our readings are loosely focused upon three of the disciples as early church leaders, and its those fellows that will be our examples. John, James, and Peter are the three disciples we are going to look at. These three give us great examples to follow in leadership.

Our first scripture reading for today came from the Gospel of Matthew, chapter 20 verses 20-28. This comes from before Jesus's resurrection, but it lays the foundation for the disciples in how to lead... and also comes with a bit of prophecy mixed in. In this reading James and John, two brothers who had been following Jesus, came with their mother and asked to "Sit at the right and left hands of Jesus when He comes into His kingdom." The reason they are asking this is easily understandable... they want to be made great. In those days, just as it is today, the people closest to the boss at the conference table are usually the ones next in line with the most power. James and John, in asking to be at Jesus's right and left hand, think they are going to be Jesus's top guys when Jesus becomes a traditional king in Jerusalem. (We covered this another week, but the short version is that the Jews thought the Messiah would come and establish a physical rather than a spiritual kingdom.) Jesus, when He is asked this question, replies in a very curious way in verse 22: "You do not know what you are asking. Are you able to drink the cup that I am about to drink?" Indeed, these two disciples as well as the other ten (not including Judas Iscariot, but definitely including his replacement) will drink the same cup

that Jesus drinks. What Jesus is referring to here is a life of leading through serving, and also martyrdom.

We have covered this several times this month, but it bears mentioning again. All of the disciples following the resurrection of Jesus will go to their graves proclaiming that He is God in human flesh, that He is the Messiah, that He did rise from the dead and ascend from before them. For no discernable human gain, all of them will die. If the resurrection is a myth, if Jesus really did just simply die, if they were the ones who hid Jesus's body and proclaimed all this stuff (as many believe), then all of these men died for nothing. They all held onto this lie to their deaths, knowing it to be a lie... or it is in fact the truth. These guys do indeed drink from the same cup as Christ, they endure persecution and terror and death for being Christians. Many people will come to know Jesus's saving grace through their work, but it will cost them on this side of eternity. Their expected leadership ends up standing in stark contrast to the life they end up leading. As Christ says in verses 27-28, "and whoever wishes to be first among you shall be your slave; just as the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give His life as a ransom for many." James and John will certainly come to understand this, and we should understand this today as well, but don't forget that it is worth it if Christ really does live and die and rise again.

Our second reading from John 21:15-25 builds upon our first. This is the very end of the Gospel of John, and it is here that we see a change in John and Peter, one that will affect their leadership. In this scripture, Jesus starts out by asking Peter three different times if Peter loved Him. Each time Peter responds that he does love Jesus, and then Jesus responds with a charge for Peter. The first time Jesus calls Peter to "feed my lambs," the second time to "tend my sheep," and the third time to "feed my sheep." After calling Peter to do these three things, Jesus then proclaims to Peter how he was going to die... for the very faith that he holds to. This is generally looked at as a Pastoral calling by Jesus to Peter, one he will hold to until his death. (From church history what we have heard is that he was crucified upside down for his faith.)

But our focus this morning is not as much on the sacrifices of Peter and John and James, but rather on their leadership. "Feed my lambs" is in reference to helping people grow in their faith. A baby lamb, like a baby most other things, is pretty vulnerable on its own. It needs food, water, protection, and shelter provided to it by its mother. Baby Christians, folks who are just starting in their walk with Christ, need guidance and help as well. They need someone to answer questions, to provide guidance in how a Christian walks and talks, and they need some help in understanding scripture. Putting it bluntly, "Feed my lambs" means "help them grow up." Peter is being called to do this for Christ's spiritual children, those new in the faith. "Tend my sheep" is a related calling. Sheep need a shepherd to keep them safe, to keep them from doing something harmful to themselves. Pastorally, Peter is being called to watch over his flock, his congregations, to keep them from doing something harmful to themselves or from being harmed by outsiders. Part of being a Christian leader is not only to be that gentle guide,

but also to stand in the way of danger, to protect others. Finally, Peter is called to “Feed my sheep.” It is a similar command to the first, except that baby lambs and adult sheep eat different food. Baby lambs like baby humans need milk. It is easy to digest, it helps them grow, etc. But adult sheep like adult humans move on to real food. So what is this food? Peter is being called to “feed” his congregants with what we know as the bread of life... the word of God. If you remember way back to my “its not about the bread!” sermon, you might remember that we as Christians survive on the Word of the Lord. We need it to sustain ourselves in this life. To neglect scripture for a Christian is like starving yourself for food. You can probably get by for a while, but eventually you die. To put all this into an understandable piece, Christian leaders in our churches today are called to help grow up new Christians (Sunday School, Confirmation, walking with people who have just become Christians through the basics, and protect God’s people from evil teachings/destructive habits/sin, and to feed adult Christians with the Word of the Lord. (Think adult Bible Studies, Small Groups, and good sermons... things that get folks into the Bible and closer to the Lord for themselves.) Doing all of these things is what Christ has called for from His leaders. It is a noble and good calling... but it comes with a price in our world. For Peter and James it would mean their deaths. For John it would mean being exiled to a barren island called Patmos. For many it comes with some kind of suffering for the Word of the Lord, but it is worth it because it is true and because it leads to eternal life.

Our final reading from the book of Acts brings everything for us into perspective. We see here a transformation for these three disciples from their initial call to look out for number one, to now having a heart for the truth. James the brother of John, one of the two guys we read about in our first reading, will be killed later in Acts 12 by Herod for proclaiming Christ. He dies in Jerusalem for the gospel like his Savior. In the portion we read from Acts 5, we see John and Peter being put on trial for sharing the gospel. They are nearly put to death, flogged, and sent away being told not to talk about Jesus anymore. Yet these two we read in verses 41-42 “departed from the presence of the council, rejoicing that they were counted worthy to suffer shame for His name. And daily in the temple, and in every house, they did not cease teaching and preaching Jesus as the Christ.” What does this have to do with leadership? Well if these guys would have given up proclaiming the name of Christ under pressure, then it would have meant that they valued their lives and their comfort over sharing the truth. They would have been poor leaders who didn’t feed the lambs, tend the sheep, and feed the sheep. Instead these men paved the way for good Christian leadership by walking the walk. Both Peter and John from what we know suffer terribly for adhering to Christ, but because they did many people have come to know the saving grace of the gospel. That, beloved congregation, is what this is all about.

But what does this have to do with us today? It is nice to know that after the resurrection that Jesus’s disciples took seriously their leadership in the early church, but what does it mean for us? Who cares about these people from 2,000 years ago? Well, these men, along with the

other disciples, set a really good example for all of us as we take up the mantle of Christian leadership.

Regardless of what you might think, you are called to be a Christian leader if you call upon Christ as your Savior. Sure, some of us are called to be ministers, or to lead Bible Studies, etc. because we have gifts and callings that are different, but all of us are leaders in some way. If you are a parent, you are called to feed Jesus's lambs... your children. If you are a volunteer in any facet of the church (which in a community church like ours are, that is many of you) then you are called to tend Jesus's sheep... keeping the church on the straight and narrow. If you are ever in contact with anyone who knows Jesus, then know that you should be helping to feed Jesus's sheep by not neglecting the truths of scripture. Also, don't neglect to feed yourselves by reading your Bible. In a very basic sense, we should not forget that we are called to be leaders by the Lord. While our lives are all very different, while we all have different gifts, while we may not be called into "official" leadership, we are all certainly called to lead as Jesus first called these men. We are not separate from this calling or charge that Jesus gives. This calling to "feed my lambs," "tend my sheep," and "feed my sheep" should be a part of your life. Even if you are just starting out in this walk, in this faith, know that Christ is calling you into some facet of leadership. This calling might be as well known as becoming a pastor, or as hidden as proclaiming the truth to your coworkers who don't know the Lord, but know that you are called, that eternal salvation for many rests upon it. As you go today, I challenge you to ask yourself who it is that Christ is calling you to lead. How are you accomplishing these charges first given to Peter that also apply to us? Don't neglect the fact that you too, are called into leadership for the glory of the gospel. Let us pray.

### **Closing Prayer**

**May Plans: Jesus After the Resurrection**

**May 5<sup>th</sup> "The Road to Emmaus"**

**Luke 24:13-35**

**May 12<sup>th</sup> "The Commissioning of the Saints"**

**Mark 16:14-20**

**Matthew 28:16-20**

**May 19<sup>th</sup> "Leadership after the Resurrection"**

**Luke 22:54-62 (Peter's Denial, example of how they all fled)**

**John 20:1-9 (The disciples hear that Jesus is raised, yet don't believe or are curious)**

**John 21:15-25 (Peter is told to love Jesus's sheep, He and John are proclaimed as being pillars of the church)**

**Acts 5:27-42 (Standing strong in the midst of persecution)**

**May 26<sup>th</sup> "The Ascension"**