

<b>Topic</b>	<b>The Gospel and Authentic Leadership</b>
<b>Reference</b>	1 Corinthians 4
<b>Date</b>	10 March 2019
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In my generation, we cry for authenticity. We are sick and tired of fake leaders, people who are hypocrites. We have served under bosses that just basically are so motivated by wrong things and people that have two faces. When we find a good leader, we tend to want to grab them and hold on to them. They say, people leave jobs not because of the pay or environment, but usually they leave jobs because they don't have a good boss.

So what's happening in this church and what's happening at this time is that you've heard over the past few weeks what the Corinthians church is like and what their problems are. So, I think if you have read 1-Corinthians their primary problem was boasting. People in that church were saying, I follow Apollos, some say I follow Paul and some say I follow Jesus. It was not so much to just say, oh! I follow someone but it was a boast. They were boasting about everything, even about having incest. They have come to the point where they boast so much that in a church it is okay and even something we can wear proudly.

What has become of the church? A church is probably somewhere 70 years or 100 years after Jesus's resurrection in our history, they have come to a point where we boast no just about "Oh! I am a good Christian, I tithe". We come to the point that even boast that we have incestuous relationships.

**What has caused this? Why do we boast about such things?**

My thinking is that we have this American Idol Church Syndrome. It has become a performance driven culture. We look for superstar or megastar pastors or leaders. In fact, of course all the scandals that are going around is all because they are megastars. Wherever they go they have a following. The big deal now today is that if you are a great leader, you have many likes on Instagram or Facebook, but that's how it goes nowadays. If you have more likes, you are more authentic, you are more real as a leader. Your word carries weight. We put all the quotes of people up there when we preach every week, is because those people have more weight than us, unfortunately or fortunately.

The next problem is the idolizing of leaders, which is not a sin anymore. I can be a fan of a certain pastor, I can be fan of certain preaching, I can be a fan of expository style, I can be a fan of leaders for how good looking they are and that's not a sin anymore. That was the same thing with the Corinthian church. They were having this fan club. Some of them were Christ fans. When Christ becomes an idol, is that possible and that is what is happening. So they were boasting about who we follow. Today, we also do that. We vote on whose preaching is better. It didn't matter at that time in the early church who was preaching, then we evolve to a culture that now it matters who is preaching. People come to hear certain preachers in a church.

We think we have a say about what kind of leadership matters or what we want, but Paul was going to tell us something totally different altogether. Paul was going to correct the Corinthian church on this boasting and he would go on a spree for this chapter to the next chapter telling the Corinthians church, I have had enough of your boasting and in fact I just marvel at how gentle he is in saying it.

Paul was saying in the chapter before in verse 21,

21 So let no one boast in men. For all things are yours, 22 whether Paul or Apollos or Cephas or the world or life or death or the present or the future—all are yours, 23 and you are Christ's, and Christ is God's.

Authentic leadership first and foremost is the calling of the father. We do not choose our pastors in some ways. The thing is Paul was saying that God selects leaders. We need to stop putting leaders on pedestals. The servant of Christ first and foremost has to be chosen by God not us and I think it is a really different culture with today's culture, because we are democratic society and all those kind of things. We choose our leaders. Today, there is an acceptance that whoever is called, is called to be a leader, whereas the Bible calls us to be servants.

1 This is how one should regard us, as servants of Christ and stewards of the mysteries of God.

I remember in my teen years people use to tell me that God has called you to be a great leader, you will be the one bringing this change or that, but nobody ever told me that God has called you to serve. Why is it that pastoral leadership or eldership in the church or some kind of leadership that you are called to being a boss where you are is no longer a calling to serve, but a calling to lead. What has that paradigm shift happened, so much so that we didn't even realized that the

Bible's way of leading is not through leadership, but by servanthood. Paul is saying, look although you know that you don't live that way. You boast about who you follow.

The Bible says that we are here to serve. Jesus came not to be served but to serve. This is very important. Authentic leadership is about servanthood. The mark of leadership is not our degrees. The mark of a leader is not how good he is, how qualified or how he preach, it says very clearly that it has to be faithfulness.

### **Ephesians 2:8-10 (NIV)**

<sup>8</sup>For it is by grace you have been saved, through faith—and this is not from yourselves, it is the gift of God— <sup>9</sup>not by works, so that **no one can boast**. <sup>10</sup>For we are God's handiwork, created in Christ Jesus to do good works, which God prepared in advance for us to do.

### **Galatians 2:16 (NIV)**

<sup>16</sup>know that a person is not justified by the works of the law, but by faith in Jesus Christ. So we, too, have put our faith in Christ Jesus that we may be justified by faith in Christ and not by the works of the law, because by the works of the law no one will be justified.

The difference between a mark of a servant is not about how much faith they have or how much they demonstrate, but how much God's faithfulness is demonstrated in their lives. So the NET bible puts a more accurate version of this that says

### **Galatians 2:16 (NET Bible)**

<sup>16</sup>yet we know that no one is justified by the works of the law but by the **faithfulness of Jesus Christ**. And we have come to believe in Christ Jesus, so that we may be justified by the **faithfulness of Christ** and not by the works of the law, because by the works of the law no one will be justified.

None of us by our own works can stand before the father and say, we have been faithful to our calling. We all want to hear the word, though good and faithful servant, but in the end when he sees us he does not see our own faithfulness but he sees Christ's faithfulness all the way. So, then I ask the question, if it is Christ's faithfulness that is the mark of our servant leadership then what then qualifies us. The only thing that qualifies us is God.

We think what qualifies a leader today is how much credentials they have, how much works they produce, but the faithfulness of Christ in the lives is the thing that matters.

No leader is given the trust on the basis of his faithfulness. It is given on the basis of the faithfulness of Christ. The Corinthian church by their boasting moved away from the true essence of the gospel of Jesus Christ who is our faithfulness. Our response in faith and obedience also matters as Paul says because we have been given the trust.

It is a response, we are all learning to respond. We don't respond well all the time, which is the truth. The gospel actually talks about this,

3 I care very little if I am judged by you or by any human court; indeed, I do not even judge myself. 4 My conscience is clear, but that does not make me innocent. It is the Lord who judges me. 5 Therefore judge nothing before the appointed time; wait until the Lord comes. He will bring to light what is hidden in darkness and will expose the motives of the heart. At that time each will receive their praise from God.

For a lot of us in ministry we think that the praise of man matters, what matters is the praise of God not the praise of Man. Authentic leaders do not work to get approved by men. They will do whatever it takes to get the praise of God, or to praise God in their lives. Now that can come in many shapes and many sizes. Do our lives sing the praise of God? We are called to serve Malaysia. When we go out and serve Malaysians, do they praise you. We are serving others even as we drive our cars. We are leading others to Christ when we drive our cars, but it is totally opposite in my case. What happens to the praise of God in every facets of our lives. All of us are called to be leaders, we are a chosen generation, called according to his purposes to do good. But when we drive, all of us are guilty of this same thing the Corinthian church has went through. We forget that we have to serve.

### Authentic Leadership is Also Centered on Christ:

If we boast we go beyond the gospel of Christ (v6)

What makes you different is that you do not boast. If we continue with this puff up attitude of ours, we are no longer carriers of the gospel of Jesus Christ. Our lifestyles show that there is something wrong with the Christ we are presenting.

We are all recipient of the same grace through Christ (v7-8)

We are all equal and recipient of the same grace, but the point he was making about we are all recipient of the same grace is not to say, to not judge or not, but the real point is this, we are all equal before God, but leaders are called to serve. If you are recipient of the same gospel of Jesus Christ, the gospel that Jesus showed that we must follow, that we must serve the world. He came to serve the world. He didn't come to save those people that are nice. He saved those that were probably the most unlikeable in society. We are called to that same grace. The same grace has been given us, the same grace should be given through us but how many times have we walked the streets and bypass people. How many times we especially the Chinese have helped the others in changing their tires. The same grace that is given to us by Christ, we don't give it to others. What is that we are so fearful of about showing grace.

God gave it all so that we could inherit it all. Now that we inherit this gospel, we think this gospel is for us and then we look for leaders that teach us these things. We have come to a point where we do not want what the gospel really speaks about. The grace of the gospel is not talking about just equality, it is that we are all lower, we have to lower ourselves the way Jesus did to serve the world. If there is anything that we should be putting on display of our leaders, it would be their suffering.

9For I think that God has exhibited us apostles as last of all, like men sentenced to death, because we have become a spectacle to the world, to angels, and to men.

When you become a leader you are spectacle not just to people and man and things around, you are spectacle to the whole universe.

10We are fools for Christ's sake, but you are wise in Christ. We are weak, but you are strong. You are held in honor, but we in disrepute. 11To the present hour we hunger and thirst, we are poorly dressed and buffeted and homeless, 12and we labor, working with our own hands. When reviled, we bless; when persecuted, we endure; 13when slandered, we entreat. We have become, and are still, like the scum of the world, the refuse of all things.

Paul took the curses that people throw at him, he calls it a blessing. If there is anything that we should put on display is the fact that Christ gave us the ability to suffer and turn the other cheek. What has become of the church that we boast of who our pastor is because of how handsome he is, how rich he has become, how he can buy vocationally handle everything. What happens to those that serve faithfully in small churches, in places that you and I will never bother

to go. Are they not leaders? Are they not authentic leaders? Are they even better leaders than we are? Perhaps they are and we have much to learn, but if you want to be a leader you have to not only lower yourselves, you have to choose to be put on display for your suffering, not for what you have, not what you can do.

So Paul was saying, while you are boasting Corinthians, if there is anything that you should boast about is not the wrong things. If you are supposed to be anything, you are supposed to be the scum of the earth, the garbage of the world. Authentic gospel leadership is scary. Leaders are to be fools for Christ. So often we want to share in the glory of Christ in worship, but so often we do not want to share in the suffering he leads us into. Authentic leadership is powered by the Holy Spirit. We can't do it by our own strength. We need the Holy Spirit to help us. Stephen went through the worst suffering of his life and still stood there and look like an angel, why, because he was full of the Holy Spirit. So we learn that through the gift of the spirit the church leads others to the gospel of Jesus Christ. It is not you that will save other, it is not alpha course that will save other people, it is the Holy Spirit. If we stop taking the glory from the Holy Spirit and stop taking the work of the Holy Spirit but avail ourselves to serve his work then the gospel of Jesus Christ will move forward.

The gifts are not there for boasting. Israel was called to lead the world to the knowledge of God's story, the gospel, by serving the world as the firstborn. They were not asked to be The People, they were called to serve the world, yet they choose their own leaders, which became their idols. It goes until today; the church is called to be the firstborn to be able to serve the world and yet we are choosing leaders of our own. The church is called to lead the world to the knowledge of God's story by serving the world. What if we truly have a church that is empowered to lead our nation by serving this nation the way Jesus served the world.

We are not called to have a good future in this country or another country. Paul is saying mark yourself as a servant, don't give up being a servant. Serve these people, although they don't want to be served. Because that is what Jesus will do. God is calling a new generation of leaders who will choose to serve instead of lead. God has called us for Malaysia, we are not born here by chance. Most of us are called for this country.

The power of the gospel is not about the ability to lead but the ability to serve. For the kingdom of God is not about a matter of talk but the power of the Holy Spirit to do what is right and that was Paul's idea. You want to do, do what is right. Paul is saying that the power that we should seek in leadership is the

power to serve others like Jesus did. Let the new generation that will come after us remember us as leaders who gave their all to serve.