**He Leadeth Me**

*The Leadership of Jesus*

**Introduction**

1. Much of who and what God requires us to be in our relationships requires the skills of leadership – husbands, fathers, mothers, older men, older women, friends, elders, teachers, etc.
2. What kind of leaders are we to be? What kind of leaders do we need? – “It isn't ‘leadership’ so much as ‘follow-ship’ that the church needs. Jesus claimed to be the leader, when He declared Himself ‘the good shepherd,’ ‘the way,’ ‘the light of the world’ to be followed; and announced to His disciples, ‘if any man would come after me, let him deny himself... and follow me.’ It is not a leader, therefore that we need, for we have one, a divine one; but the need is for the disposition to follow where He leads.” (Leadership – Human and Divine, Hailey, Homer, The Bible Banner, Vo. IV No. III)
3. Paul was a great leader and he said, ***“Imitate me, just as I also imitate Christ.”* (1 Corinthians 11:1**)
4. The leadership of Jesus should be studied, understood, valued, and imitated. We lead by following Him.
5. Personal Piety
6. Leadership is not something spontaneous or forced – **cf. Matthew 4:19** – ***“I will make you”*** – The disciples would become leaders, but they could not lead at the start.
7. Luke’s record of Christ’s early life and ministry bears time markers of a competent historian:
   1. Jesus’ birth – **Luke 2:1-3** – census carried out in Judea around 5 BC
   2. John’s ministry, ushering in the Messiah – **Luke 3:1-2** – AD 26
   3. **Jesus’ ministry did not begin until He was around the age of 30.**
   4. Luke gives early record of Jesus before His ministry – **Luke 2:40, 49, 52** – He grew wisdom, God’s grace, going about His Father’s business, and favor with God and man.
      1. **Luke 2:46-47** – not only giving answers, but asking for them, and listening to them.
   5. **The leadership of Jesus observed in His ministry was a product of personal growth in piety and faith.**
8. Even Jesus’ leadership was dependent:
   1. Study of God’s word – **John 7:14-18** – the crowd’s amazement stemmed from the evidence of His education and skill with God’s word despite not being a part of the rabbinical schools.
      1. Jesus had devoted His life to much study and meditation in order to be ready to lead others in the way of His Father
      2. **(vv. 16-18)** – Jesus’ words do not imply new revelation originating from Him, but masterful exposition of the OT which His audience could study to see themselves.
      3. His devotion to personal growth led to His ability displayed in His ministry – **Matthew 22:15, 23, 29, 41-46** – Pharisees, Sadducees, Lawyers tried to trap Him with difficult spiritual questions, and Jesus sought to lead them to an important truth. (Does not happen without Jesus’ devotion to God’s word.)
   2. Prayer – **Matthew 14:23** (after feeding of 5,000); **Luke 6:12-13** (before choosing 12 apostles); **Luke 9:28** (after speaking of His death, and before His transfiguration); **Luke 22:39-41** (the night of His betrayal) – He was constant in prayer to His Father.
   3. Devotion to His Father’s will – **John 4:34; 5:19, 41-44; 9:4-5; 17:4; 19:11** – the success of Jesus’ ministry and the development of the apostles for their ministry does not happen without Jesus’ devotion to personal piety.
9. Confirmed Character
10. Jesus’ call for us to follow Him is not unwarranted or presumptuous. It is substantiated by the confirmation of His own character – **Matthew 17:1-5** – well-pleasing to God (lifetime, ministry), Hear Him.
    1. **Hebrews 2:10; 12:2** – *archēgos* – a chief leader, pioneer – *archē* (beginning, first), *agō* (to lead) – “strictly one who goes first on the path; hence leader, prince, pioneer” (ALGNT)
       1. **Salvation** (**2:10)** – He entered flesh, suffered, endured, died, and conquered death so that we could follow to eternal life. (**vv. 17-18** – merciful and faithful, aids us)
       2. **Faith** (**12:2**) – He lived a full life of faith to a victorious end, laying a path for us to follow.
    2. **Hebrews 7:26-28** – He is supremely qualified because of how He conducted Himself throughout His life.
11. It was God’s will that, prior to His ministry, Jesus would be tested:
    1. **Matthew 3:15** – Jesus’ baptism ***“to fulfill all righteousness”*** – i.e. it was the righteous thing for Him to do as a Jew according to God’s will proclaimed through John.
       1. **(v. 17)** – after His baptism – well-pleasing to God.
    2. **Matthew 4:1** – led by the Spirit.
       1. **Mark 1:12** – ***“Immediately”*** (directly connected to the events of His baptism); ***“drove”*** (*ekballō*, used for casting out demons)
    3. Overcame the temptation – **Matthew 4:4, 7, 10** – wielding God’s word with precision, manifesting dependence on God, faith, focus, trust, contentment, stewardship, and fidelity.
    4. From this proceeds His ministry of light – **Matthew 4:12-17** – ***“Light has dawned”*** – **cf. John 1:4-5; 1 John 1:5** – the darkness had not and would not overcome Him.
12. He does not lead us through places He has not trod, but calls us to walk in His steps – **1 John 2:6**
    1. Contrast with Jewish rulers – **Matthew 23:1-4** – hypocrites (**vv. 13, 14, 15, 23, 25, 27, 29**).
    2. Effective leadership comes from genuine faith.
13. Steadfast Stewardship
14. **Leadership in spiritual matters is built on the understanding of stewardship. We are merely entrusted with what belongs to God.**
15. Jesus was the ultimate steward – **Luke 4:16-21** – Jesus quotes **Isaiah 61:1-2** in the synagogue in Nazareth and applies it to Himself.
    1. ***“He has anointed Me”*** – *chriō* – “setting a pers. apart for special service under divine direction “ (BDAG), “appointing someone to a position of responsibility, function, or privilege” (ALGNT) – He is a servant of the Lord – at His disposal, doing His will, His work, representing His interests.
    2. Preach the gospel – and then the effects produced by such.
    3. Went down to Capernaum, preached, healed – **Luke 4:42-44** – must, purpose, I have been sent – His was a ministry, a stewardship – He was entrusted by His Father to do His bidding.
16. Jesus explained that what was His was the Father’s – **John 7:16-18; 16:13-15** – He is sent, what He speaks belongs to the Father, seeks His Father’s glory, His is the Father’s.
17. In leadership to His disciples, Jesus considered Himself God’s steward – **John 17:6-8, 12**
    1. ***“You have given Me”*** – ***“They were Yours”*** – the disciples were a demonstration of **John 7:16-18**
       1. They were ***“Israelites indeed” (John 1:47***) – belonging to God.
       2. Jesus’ doctrine was from God, and therefore they believed Him – thus were given Him from God.
    2. **(v. 12)** – He guarded them and kept them safe from the evils of the world. (**cf. John 15:2-3** – He had spoken the word to them and kept them clean)
    3. **These were not His to do with what He wanted but were entrusted to Him for safe keeping.**
18. Even the church is entrusted to Christ as a steward – **Daniel 7:13-14** – ascended to the ancient of Days to receive a kingdom.
    1. Brings glory to God through Christ – **Ephesians 1:22-23; 4:14-21 (**Christ in us to God’s glory)
    2. This will be delivered back to the Father – **1 Corinthians 15:24-28**
19. Empowering Example
20. **Those who seek to lead by word only will fail. Not only does lacking deed lead to lacking trust, but it also fails to inspire true confidence in following what one is being directed in.**
21. Jesus’ call for self-denial and cross bearing came after He expounded upon the Divine plan of His suffering – **Mark 8:31-34** – He does not call us to do those things which He has not done.
    1. His willing sacrifice compels us to be a living sacrifice – **Romans 12:1; 2 Corinthians 5:14-15**
    2. It is not merely suffering for Christ, but suffering with Him – **Romans 8:17; Philippians 3:10**
    3. It is right for Him to call us to this suffering, and it is reasonable for us to endure it because He who calls us has been through hit Himself – **1 Peter 2:18-25** – suffer for doing good, Christ did, He is your leader (Shepherd, Overseer)
22. The authority of Christ is enough to demand action from us, but Christ excels “enough,” and empowers us to act according to God’s will through His example of doing so Himself – **Philippians 2:3-16**
    1. **(vv. 3-4)** – call to serve each other in humility and sacrifice.
    2. **(vv. 12-16)** – call to serve God, working out our salvation without complaining (implicit difficulties in the midst of the crooked and perverse generation).
    3. **(vv. 5-11)** – not only show the example of Christ in humility and self-sacrifice of the good of others, but also the fact that it was done in obedience to God to the greatest degree (**cf. Revelation 2:10**).
       1. Who is Christ to call us to such humility and service?
       2. Who is Christ to call us to even die for God?
23. He is the supreme example, and looking to Him prevents weariness and discouragement in the grueling race we run – **Hebrews 12:1-4**
24. His example grants confidence through His success – **Hebrews 4:14-16 (NOTE: not praying for forgiveness, but help); 1 John 2:1**
25. Christs leadership is excellent, as it does not simply tell, but shows – **John 13:12-17, 34-35**
    1. **(v. 12)** – what had He done?
    2. **(vv. 4-5)** – a striking visual of humility, service, and love.
    3. **(vv. 13-17)** – He does not simply call us to serve, but to serve AS HE ALREADY HAS.
       1. As a leader, He does not think of Himself as bigger than the work, but as a leading part of it!
    4. **(vv. 34-35)** – our call to love to such a high standard is predicated on Christ’s example. (**cf. John 15:12-13**)
26. “’I work so hard for Jesus’ I often boast and say, ‘I’ve sacrificed a lot of things to walk the narrow way; I gave up fame and fortune; I’m worth a lot to thee,’ and then I hear Him gently say to me: ‘I left the throne of glory and counted it but loss, My hands were nailed in anger upon a cruel cross; but now we’ll make the journey with your hand safe in Mine, so lift your cross and follow close to Me.’” (Follow Me, #546, Hymns for Worship)
27. Aiding Authority
28. A leader is in a position of authority, but the position is not for pride or vanity. Leadership is for the advantage of others, not self. Jesus spoke and acted with great authority, yet never did so to promote Himself, but to aid others.
29. The disciples of Jesus had to grasp the purpose of their future position – **Matthew 20:17-34**
    1. Jesus had alluded to the authority and position the apostles would be given in the regeneration – **Matthew 19:28**
    2. Jesus taught a parable about His prerogative to choose and give, and contentment and humility – **Matthew 20:1-16** – ***“But many who are first will be last, and the last first.”***
    3. Jesus spoke of the service of His death – **Matthew 20:17-19**
    4. The mother of two of Jesus’ disciples made a lofty request, showing the interest of herself and the disciples to have a position of prominence – **Matthew 20:20-23**
    5. All the apostles had ambition as these two did – **Matthew 20:24** – they disputed over this several times – who would be the greatest.
    6. Jesus corrected their mistaken view of authority – **Matthew 20:25-28**
       1. Worldly view – (**v. 25**) – those in positions of authority use it to elevate themselves, and oppress others.
          1. ***“lord it over”*** – *katakyrieuō* – *kata*, “down” (intensive), and *kurieuo*, “to be lord over, rule over, have dominion over” (VINE)
             1. **Cf. 1 Peter 5:3** – negative – Elders not to do this.
             2. **Cf. Acts 19:16** – “overpowered”
          2. ***“exercise authority”*** – *katexousiazō* – *kata,* “down,” and *exousiazō*, “to control.” (“exercise authority, perh. tyrannize τινός over someone,” BDAG)
          3. “In both verbs κατά means that from their high places these rulers and great men come "down" with power and authority on those beneath them.” (Lenski)
          4. Not for your advantage over others, not for abusive purposes.
       2. Jesus’ teaching – (**vv. 26-27**) – greatness in servitude – this was the apostolic calling, not for personal prominence, but the service of each other and others.
       3. Jesus’ example of aiding authority – (**v. 28**) – Jesus, who has all authority, used it to provide others what they needed, but could not provide themselves.
          1. **John 10:17-18** – His sacrifice was not only a show of submission, but an exercise of His authority ***(“power,”*** *exousia*).
          2. “He could have called ten thousand angels” – yet He used His authority to lay His life down and take it up again.
          3. **Matthew 20:29-34** – an illustration of the use of His authority in the service of others – blind men healed, (**v. 34** – compassion).
30. As the head of the church, Jesus acts with love for the church’s well-being – **Ephesians 5:23-27**
    1. **(vv. 23-24)** – headship and submission – ***“in everything”* (cf. Colossians 3:17)**
    2. **(vv. 25-27)** – love as head, and act to aid the one in submission, the one in His care.
       1. Sanctify, cleanse, by the word, no spot or wrinkle, holy, without blemish.
       2. This is accomplished through leadership – NOT tolerance, leniency, or indifference – but steadfast, solid, authoritative leadership. (**cf. Joshua 24:15** – what husbands are called to as head in imitation of Christ as head)
    3. He leads – as the elders would be commanded, He ***“[takes] the oversight” (1 Peter 5:2,*** KJV) ***(“the Shepherd and Overseer of your souls,” 1 Peter 2:25***).
       1. There is gravity with Christ’s words – **cf. Matthew 7:28-29**
       2. There is firmness with His words – **cf. John 5:14** (lame man healed at Bethesda)
       3. Yet, as firm as He is, as rigid as He is, as much as He warns of consequences, HE DOES SO IN THE SERVICE OF LOVE!
31. His invitation is a demonstration of His authority in the action of leadership, but with the tender and compassionate aim to help the helpless – **Matthew 11:28-30**
    1. NOTE: ***“Take My yoke…learn from Me”*** – i.e. follow My lead.
    2. ***“gentle and lowly in heart”*** – “With those who are unresponsive and hostile to his message Jesus can be fierce (see ch. 23 passim), but to the “little children” to whom God has revealed the truth he is gentle and considerate, “lowly” not in the sense of being unaware of his exalted status but of not using it to browbeat those under his authority.” (NIC New Testament)
    3. **1 John 5:3** – for our good, not burdensome.
    4. **Cf. Matthew 12:18-21** – ***“declar[ing] justice,”*** not with intent to condemn and destroy, but to heal, ignite, bring victory, incite trust.
32. Considerate Communication
33. From the beginning of Jesus’ ministry to the end of His ministry He sought to communicate His Father’s will clearly to His disciples – **John 1:9, 40-41, 45** (Implied communication of prophecies with Jesus’ life), **Luke 24:25-26, 44-49** (Explanation of prior events, and future plans).
34. As the Supreme Leader, Jesus’ aim and desire is for His followers to do – His Father’s will, His will, the Spirit’s will.
    1. The prerequisite of doing, and doing adequately, is knowing.
    2. The prerequisite of knowing is communication.
35. Jesus identified His relationship with His disciples in endearing terms before going to the cross, and gave explanation of the practical implications of such a relationship – **John 15:9-17**
    1. **(vv. 9-10)** – His love for them is the same as His Father’s love for Him.
       1. He does not yet state it explicitly, but such love involves communication – giving and receiving, telling and responding.
       2. **(v. 10)** – abide in His love by keeping commands – those are communicated as an expression of love, and necessary means to continue in His love.
          1. They can do because they know, and they know because Jesus told them.
    2. **(vv. 11-12)** – His communication results in joy.
       1. They can love properly because He has told them and shown them, and they can therefore have joy.
    3. **(vv. 13-15)** – ***“as I have loved you”*** is made concrete in the foreshadowing of His imminent death on their behalf, and He equates such a relationship to friendship.
       1. He then notes a specific characteristic of friendship – **(v. 15)** – friendship, unlike mere master/servant relationships, involves disclosure.
       2. Not that they are no longer His servants – **(v. 20)**
          1. The relationship of authority and submission is still there – leading and following.
       3. His point is that, though they are in a servant master relationship, He views them as His friends – this results in His communication with them of all His Father has given Him.
    4. **(vv. 16-17)** – the effective, consistent, and considerate communication in His leadership before them would equip them sufficiently to bear fruit.
       1. He wanted them to do, but they needed to know, and He had to tell.
36. This importance of communication in the relationship of leading and following was demonstrated throughout Jesus’ ministry:
    1. Between He and His Father – **John 5:19-20** – it is His responsibility to carry out the Father’s will, but the Father’s love was necessary to communicate all things. (**cf. John 15:9**)
    2. Between He and the Jews (attempted but rejected) – **John 8:30-33** – He had warned of unbelief and dying in sins and sought to disclose the way to freedom from sins to those who were believing on some level.
       1. He sought to be their friends here, leading them through disclosure, but they refused.
    3. Between He and His Disciples – **John 13:7, 12-17** – His actions were not understood, but He took them with intent to explain them, and He explained them that they would do them.
       1. His leadership would have been ineffective if He kept this from them.
       2. He would not have led them to such love without explaining it more fully, especially in the sending of the Spirit.
37. Jesus did not come to lead men in the light by keeping them in the dark – **Luke 8:16-18** – His teaching was to give light, the eternal will was to be revealed fully, and whoever wanted to know would be given.
    1. **Luke 8:9, 11** – He explained the parable when asked.
    2. **Matthew 7:7-8** – He encouraged to ask, seek, and knock and He would give.
38. A leader who conceals knowledge about that in which he seeks to leads hinders himself and those he seeks to lead. Jesus, the Supreme Leader, was eager to communicate to others what they were to be doing, and why it was important.

**Conclusion**

1. Jesus is our Lord, and His leadership is supremely effective, and makes following a blessing.
2. The leadership of Jesus should not only result in our willing submission, and close follow, but in our imitation of His leadership.
3. The right way to lead is the way of Jesus.