

This is how you ought to honour Christian Leaders

Series on Church Leadership

Reading of the Scripture and Pray

1 Corinthians 4:1-5

“This, then, is how you ought to regard us: as servants of Christ and as those entrusted with the mysteries God has revealed. ² Now it is required that those who have been given a trust must prove faithful. 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.¹”

Introduction

They've been a lot of books on leadership, unfortunately even the one's we call Christians books on leadership follow “secular” methodology and put Jesus name on it. Leadership has been about the one-man show, a man with a vision or a goal that we all follow, it about that person. Loluhlobo lokuba umholi bazalwane lungenile nasemabandleni, in our days we have abo -man of God or prophet of God, who claim to have a vision from God, therefore, wonke umuntu kumele alandele lapho. Amabandla akhona are big buildings abhelwe “sbanibane's ministries;” looks are important in such models of leadership, expensive suits and expensive cars ukubonisa ukuthi ngempele they are favoured by God. Ngenxa ye- influence of such models we then turn to judge our leaders, on how successful in their ministries based on these

¹ Anon, 2011. [The New International Version](#), Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan.

models; uma umuntu enebandla elincane, ethembekile kuNkulunkulu ngoshumayela ivangeli leqiniso, bekhonzela emkhukhwini or e garaji siyibukela phansi leyonto as into yabantu abahluphekile. Akasbheke ukuthi Pawuli usisiza kanjani ukuthi singabahlonipha kanjani abaphathi bethu.

Leaders are servants and managers (v.1-2)

First thing that Paul reminds the Corinthians with is that they are collectively servants of Christ, they don't belong to themselves but belong to Christ. Whatever that they do it has been assigned to them by Jesus, He (Jesus) is at the centre of all that they do, njengomuntu omele izwe lakubo ezweni elingelona lakubo (an ambassador), uyazikhohlwa ukuthi yena ungubani, konke akwenzayo ukumela izwe lakhe, ukwenza kahle kwakhe kudunyiswa izwe lakubo kanti futhi nokwenza kabi kwakhe kunyelisa (disappoints) izwe akaphuma kulo.

The second thing is that they are trustees using NIV's language but I like the word managers because we are mostly familiar with; ama-managers njengoba sazi bazalwane yilabo bantu abanikwe izinsiza (resources) ukuthi bathathe izinqumo ezinhle nezizo khulisa ibhizinisi futhi zibeke igama lenkampane ezingeni eliphuzulu. Paul is saying this is who they are, the other picture that Paul has here is that of people paddling together in a boat, they are no competition among themselves but are together working towards the same course and are equal. The difference here between the manager that I've explained from above is that Paul and others are managers of the mysteries of God, that is the gospel, which is now revealed but was a mystery to the OT community until Jesus came. How are they the managers of the gospel? Well by preaching and teaching the gospel not their wisdom, good presentation or their vision as you will remember Paul reminding the Corinthians that he came to preach Christ crucified nothing else.

Paul adds faithfulness from the qualities that he just mentioned in verse two **“Now it is required that those who have been given a trust must prove faithful”** the manager is ought to be faithful to the CEO in how he/she is using the company's resources. Paul challenge how the Corinthians have been influenced by their society in evaluating their leaders, Corinthians leaders were evaluated by how well they spoke, wisdom, presentation and so forth;

Paul says here Christian leaders are to be evaluated by how faithful they've been to their master and his gospel. Christian leaders are servants like Jesus who came to serve by dying on the cross, therefore, Christian leaders are to be marked by service in all that they do; Christian leaders are managers who have been placed by Jesus to preach and teach his gospel, they are not CEO's but simply subordinate of Christ, their task is not to come up with another message but simply preach and teach the message that they have been given, they ought to preach Christ crucified and not empty the power of the cross by adding their worldly wisdom and out to be true representatives of their master Jesus. They ought to be faithful, not to their audience or culture or themselves but their Master and his message.

It the Lord's judgement that matters (v.3-5)

In v.3-5, and as we have seen in Ch.1-3, it seems like the Corinthian church has been judging Paul in particular on his leadership model, that his not the charismatic leader like the rest of the other leaders, that he is not good looking either as these were some of the criteria that the people of Corinth were using in evaluating their leaders which might have been one of the reasons for the factions in Corinth. In verse three Paul says **"I care very little if I am judged by you or by any human court; indeed, I do not even judge myself"** here he might sound rude but that not what he is doing at all as we hear him saying in verse four **"My conscience is clear, but that does not make me innocent. It is the Lord who judges me,"** Paul embodies how it looks like in practice to be a servant of Christ and manager of the gospel who is faithful, Paul helps Corinthians to see that the judgement that one needs to pay attention into it not what people say or societies view on you but what God say because at the end it is God who will have a final say on your life; therefore, by judging each other one assumes the judgement seat to be God himself. This view of God of being the final judge has made Paul to stand against the culture of Corinth and its view about leadership and willing to be mocked for being faithful to Christ his master and his message, to be none like the respected leaders of Corinth but to imitate Jesus who was sidelined and not seeking the glory from people but the one that God the Father will give him. Paul warns the Corinthians in verse five to wait for the Lords right time to judge because his judgement is

way better than the human judgement and their rewards for it will reveal even the motives of the heart and rewards accordingly **“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.²”**

Leaders are to be faithful to Jesus and not be people pleasers and seekers of people’s praise, knowing that their praise for being faithful will come from God, as He will be saying “well done my good and faithful servant.”

Christian Leadership is not a one-man show, it not about the looks nor academics on how many books you’ve written, it not about the car you drive or how popular you are. But Christian leadership it is about being a servant of Christ, a manager of the gospel and being faithful to God about the resources that He has entrusted you with to glorify him on how you utilize those resources for his Glory. I guess in the end it is about one man and that is Jesus, He is ought to be the centre and the object of all that is done in ministry.

Reflection question

- Being a good manager/trustee/steward doesn’t only help us to have a good perspective on Christian leadership but also their task; Being a manager do apply to us as well. Are you a good manager of God’s resources in your life? Is God being glorified in your managing skills?
- It is a terrifying thought to know that God knows all that is in our heart and that one day He will judge not only how we have lived our lives but also our motives. Are you ready for this day? would you take a moment and look into your heart and then think about this “Jesus at the cross has paid it all, one day you will stand incomplete in front of the throne but confident not in yourself but only in Jesus who has paid it all at the cross.”

² Anon, 2011. [The New International Version](#), Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan.