

MOSES & LEADERSHIP
THE POWER TO CONFRONT
Exodus 7

Teaching for Peace Church
February 8, 2009

PURPOSE – To teach people in the art of confrontation and how the meaning of the Cross influences such leadership work.

MAIN IDEA – In his leadership responsibilities, Moses must confront Pharaoh – which he does with the power of the Cross with him.

I. INTRODUCTION

Let's open our Bibles to Exodus 6:28.

1. We continue our evening teaching on Leadership – reflected upon through the story of Moses – a man with a HUGE leadership task – leading God's people out of slavery in Egypt through the wilderness and into the Promised Land.

(i) Moses, like you, is uniquely PREPARED for this work.

You are God's workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God has prepared in advance for you to do (Eph. 2:10)

- Moses is nursed by his mom, nurtured first in the Hebrew faith
- Then educated / trained in the palace
- Then brought into the wilderness – to learn DEPENDENCE upon God

(ii) 40 years later, Moses is given God's VISION & CALL for his work.

- He feels God's heart for His people
- He sees a PREFERRED FUTURE to which he is to lead them
- He hears his personal call in this task

Leadership can be defined as “influencing others toward God's preferred future”.

(iii) But having seen this preferred future, Moses has to face some personal objections:

= “Who am I? ... Who are you? ... I don’t have the gifts ... the people won’t listen ... I can’t do it – send someone else!”

... and to each objection, the Lord assures his presence & power, the gifts needed and the community complementary to Moses to accomplish the vision.

(iv) That community in particular is his brother, Aaron. So together they embark on the leadership task God has given. They go to the elders of Israel & are encouraged ... then go to Pharaoh & MEET RESISTANCE. Angered, Pharaoh decides to increase the work burden of the Israelites. Then they turn on Moses & Aaron.

- So Moses is faced with another quality needed in the work of leadership - PERSEVERANCE ... gained through prayer.

= waiting upon God, making sure your desires are ground in His kingdom purposes, drawing upon His promises ... and getting back on your feet again.

2. That brings us to this evening’s lesson – ch. 6:28 – CONFRONTATION

(i) You know that in the work of leadership, confrontation is a necessary part of it.

Read chapter 6:28-7:3

3. Let me pause there.

For his work of leadership, God calls Moses to CONFRONT Pharaoh!

= Confront him with His will... Let my people go – slavery in unjust.

(i) As parents leading children, we know that there’s often need to confront

- As teachers leading students (perhaps one has cheated)
- As Elders leading a congregation

- As Christians one to another – life together will require times of confrontation

“Go to your brother”, Jesus says (Mt. 18), show him his fault” (Mt. 5 – If you sense someone has something against you, leave your gift at the altar.”

= Nathan to Daniel, Christ to Peter (Galilee), Paul to Peter (Galatians),

In many situations – home, church, workplace – we face times when we must confront others.

Before we think upon the rest of this chapter, I’d like to draw from your experience:

WHAT HAVE YOU LEARNED ABOUT HOW TO CONFRONT?

Principles? Experiences? Successes?

II. HOW TO CONFRONT (Flipchart / Outline)

PRAYER – i.e. – Moses & God (6:28-7:3)

LOVE – Eph. 4:15 (bulletin)
(i.e. – Gabby)

GET BEYOND ANGER – (James 1:20) – the anger of man does not accomplish the purposes of God – *For man's anger does no bring about the righteous life that God desires.*

- Go in HUMILITY

REMEMBER WHOSE THE ENEMY – not that person – but sin / Satan / division / distance

FOCUS ON BEHAVIOR – the sin, not the sinner

That deed is wrong vs. you are wrong

USE “I” STATEMENTS vs. “You”

I.e. – This is what I seen

BE SPECIFIC / AVOID GENERALIZATIONS

Didn't understand this point vs. your teaching is lousy

- Give examples

ATTEMPT TO GET ALL THE INFORMATION YOU CAN BEFOREHAND – get facts straight

GO DIRECT – be private (Mt. 18) ... only go to higher authorities when not resolved
(i.e. Carl)

GIVE VISION – this is what I'm after in our relationship / church / life together ...

COMMUNICATE THOSE VALUES – vs. person feeling that you only care to make them the person who you think they should be

CONESSION / FORGIVENESS – speak words

REBUILDING RELATIONSHIP – do it soon afterward

CONFRONT TO RESTORE RELATIONSHIP – David Augsburger

How to Care & Confront at the Same Time:

CONFRONTING

I feel deeply about the issue at stake.
 I want to clearly express my view.
 I want respect for my view.
 I want you to trust me with your honest feelings.
 I want you to keep working with me until we've reached
 a new understanding.
 I want your unpressured, clear, honest view of our
 differences.
 I want your caring-confronting response

CARING

I care about our relationship.
 I want to hear your view.
 I want to respect your insights
 I trust you to be able to handle my
 honest feelings.
 I promise to stay with discussions until
 we've reached an understanding.
 I will not trick, pressure, manipulate, or
 distort the differences between us.
 I give you my loving, honest respect.

BULLETIN – PROVERBS

Focus a lot of being a person who will RECEIVE confrontation:

Prov. 12:1, 25:12, 9:8, 19:25, 13:18

BUSINESS ARTICLES

Be careful about the SANDWICH approach (too pat)
 praise / correction / praise

Have an exit strategy

Susan Scott:

1. Name the issue.
2. Select a specific example
3. Describe your emotions
4. Clarify what's at stake
5. Identify your contribution to the problem
6. Indicate your wish to resolve the issue.
7. Invite response.

... "What can we do about this?"

III. EXODUS 7 – The Staff & Plagues

1. Now let's return to our Exodus 7 passage because from it I want to give you a POWER to carry for the leadership responsibility of confrontation.

Moses & Aaron must confront Pharaoh. It is God's will that His people no longer live under the injustice of slavery. Sending them to this task, God does not leave them powerless.

HE GIVES THEM THE POWER OF THE STAFF ... their SACRED PIECE OF WOOD (Cross)

2. **Read Exodus 7:2-24**

3. The STAFF is the POWER that God gives Moses & Aaron to confront Pharaoh.

- This is the staff that first becomes a SNAKE ... the cursed snake

= but also a display of God's presence & power which consumes all other pretense to power. Moses' staff swallows all others – his is the ultimate display of power.

(i) Through the staff, God's judgments are then UNLEASHED.

Blood

Natural Disasters – frogs, gnats, flies, livestock, boils, hail, locusts, darkness

A. All of these natural disasters being preliminary to the ULTIMATE act of judgment – the one that will FREE God's people – the DEATH OF THE FIRSTBORN SON.

(ii) As Christians, we understand this staff – this sacred piece of wood – to be a TYPE of the Cross.

A. That Cross was turned to a SNAKE when Satan had his way with Jesus. The Beloved beaten, pierced, spat upon & mocked – what a revelation of evil!

“Cursed is everyone hung on a tree” – Gal. 3:13

(iii) But in God's design, that Cross too BORE HIS JUDGMENTS against sin. That's the salvation-meaning of the Cross.

“God made Him who knew no sin to become sin for us ... In his body, he bore the wrath of God against sin.”

A. Those judgments included natural disasters – earth quaked; darkness covered the skies.

It was a judgment in which blood flowed – from Jesus' side

It was a judgment that ultimately involved the death of THE first-born son.

These judgments of God unleashed at the Cross freed his people!

The STAFF in Moses' hands anticipates this judgment & deliverance.

4. With that same staff (we'll see), Moses PARTS the waters of the RED SEA.

- He divides death & leads his people through it (that's what those waters represent)

- With that staff, He INTERCEDES when the Israelites are at war against the Amalekites.

The Staff is the Cross of Jesus. It is the judgment of God on earth. It is our salvation when we hold it in faith!

It is our peace with God. It is our sole means of intercession!

I PRAY YOU HAVE A FIRM HOLD ON IT!

- For your salvation ... and for your those times you're called to confront others.

IV. THE INFLUENCE OF THE CROSS IN CONFRONTATION

For with the power of the Cross in hand, here are 5 ways I think it influences our ministry of confrontation in the work of leadership:

1. CONVICTION - There is right & wrong. There is sin & judgment.

The Cross of Jesus Christ is God's ultimate revelation of that. Yes, the Exodus plagues too revealed God's hatred of sin. So too did the Exile & destruction of Jerusalem & its holy temple (another prefigurement of the Cross).

But the CROSS is the clearest statement that God hates sin.

(i) That means that we can't just let things go when we know they're wrong.

Wrong is wrong. If we don't help to correct it, one day it will be judged.

So the Cross gives us CONVICTION for this ministry.

Sin & separation matter – it's why Jesus died.

2. RECONCILIATION – That’s the salvation-meaning of the Cross.

Paradoxically, the judgments of God – visited upon the First-born Son – became for us a means whereby we may be RECONCILED with God.

That vision of reconciliation calls us to be PEACE-MAKERS in this world.

Yes, we hate sin ... but how we long to be united with the sinner.

(i) This means we don’t simply remain at a distance from others – if there’s something that needs to be talked about, we will make the effort – because of the effort God made in Jesus to be reconciled to us.

3. HUMILITY – Those judgments Jesus suffered were for MY SIN.

- In any encounter with other people, holding the staff / cross means that I will enter that engagement with HUMILITY.

- I too am a sinner saved by grace. Perhaps there’ve been things I’ve done wrong.

(i) Holding the cross means having humility through the entire approach & effort of confrontation.

God’s anger against sin has been spent in Jesus for my salvation.

I’ll let my anger go and forgive where necessary ... and enter such encounters with the right humility of heart.

4. PRAYER – confronting with that staff in my hand, I’m always mindful that I’m not alone. God is with me.

I’m praying for God’s wisdom beforehand, during and after confrontation.

The Cross is my confidence that God will hear my prayers and be with me in power as I go to correct another person and/or restore a broken relationship.

5. LOVE – This covers most all the areas.

But that Cross is, above all, the expression of the love of God for me.

He reached down all the way through suffering & death to care for me and my estrangement from Him.

What wondrous love is this, O my soul, O my soul.

(i) If I carry such love in my hand, how can I not make every effort in confronting children, students, co-workers, fellow-believers to communicate how much I love them?

V. CONCLUSION

Like Moses & Aaron approaching Pharaoh, when you must confront another person do remember to first TAKE YOUR STAFF / the Cross in hand.

It is God's power ... to accomplish God's work ... in God's way.

The apostle Paul refers to this power in Colossians 1:28 when he writes,

"Him we proclaim, ADMONISHING and teaching everyone with all wisdom, so that we may present everyone perfect / mature in Christ. To this end I labor, struggling with all his energy, which so powerfully works in me."

That is the energy of the Cross. AMEN.