

Tools for Wise Leadership

A programme of TWR-Africa, produced by TWR-Zimbabwe, presented by Rev Dr Roy Musasiwa

Series 10: The Leadership Style of Jesus

Talk 2: The Need for Leadership to be Confirmed

Welcome to the programme **Tools for Wise Leadership**. We are pursuing the theme of the leadership style of Jesus. Having dealt with the issue of Jesus' authority in the last programme, today we focus on the need for one's leadership to be confirmed. You cannot lead with credibility unless your ministry is confirmed. The moment you say you are a leader you will need to prove that claim. You will need the backing of others who will say, "Yes, this person *is* a leader." That is one of the important lessons we learn from Jesus.

John's gospel shows that Jesus offered repeated confirmation of His claims. Michael Youssef points out at least six different confirmations of Christ's ministry as found in the Gospel of John.

The first witness was God the Father. The Father gave his stamp of approval of Jesus' ministry. And he did it publicly right after Jesus was baptized by John. We are told in Matthew 3:16-17 that when Jesus had been baptized the heavens were opened to Him, and He saw the Spirit of God descending like a dove and alighting upon Him. And suddenly a voice *came* from heaven, saying, "This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased." This same confirmation by the Father came on the mountain where Jesus was transfigured. On this occasion again God's voice said, "This is my beloved Son; listen to him."

Jesus was therefore not a self-proclaimed leader. What a contrast with others who seem to boast of their special ministries which they say began when God woke them up in the middle of the night and spoke to them. Jesus did not have to tell the world by himself that he had the right to be the leader. God the Father concurred, several times.

The second witness was John the Baptist. He confirmed Jesus' credentials when he met him near Bethany. In John 1:29-33 we are told that John the Baptist saw Jesus coming towards him and said: "Look! There is the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world! He is the one I was talking about when I said, 'Soon a man is coming who is far greater than I am, for he existed long before I did.'"

When you listen to this sort of testimony from John the Baptist there can be no doubt that Jesus had the right credentials to be a leader.

The third witness was the Holy Spirit who gave His blessing at Jesus' baptism by descending on Jesus. The presence of the Holy Spirit gave Jesus the authority with which He spoke and performed miracles.

But that is not all. **The fourth witness is Scripture.** The Old Testament confirmed the ministry of Jesus. Prophecy foretold his coming, His ministry, and His death. In John 5:39-40 Jesus told the leaders who argued with him, "You search the Scriptures because in them you think you have eternal life; and these are the very Scriptures that testify of Me."

And what about the witness of miracles? That is the fifth witness of who Jesus really was. Jesus ministry confirmed itself through the miracles he performed. John's gospel refers to them as "signs" – bearing witness to His purpose and power. He did not perform these signs as acts of showmanship. We know that because he performed some of His most outstanding miracles away

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from the crowds, often telling those He was healing not to tell others. This confirms what Jesus meant when he said, "I do not receive honour from men."

We can talk about the sixth witness as being the Disciples themselves. Having travelled with him, heard his teachings and saw his works, Peter testified that Jesus had the words of eternal life and John ended his Gospel by writing, "This is the disciple who testifies of these things, and wrote these things; and we know that his testimony is true."

Well that was Jesus. His ministry was confirmed at the beginning, as it went along and even as it came to its climax with his resurrection. Jesus' ministry teaches us a lesson which says that the call to leadership must be confirmed. There were wrong kinds of confirmation that Jesus resisted and that many leaders today are failing to resist. These temptations correspond with the three temptations that Jesus faced according to Henri Nouwen.

The first temptation was to turn stone into bread. This was a temptation to do miracles for self-benefit. This is kind of miracle that could have made Jesus self-sufficient and self-reliant. Today's cyber-Christianity is once again emphasizing miracles, not out of love but out of the desire for leaders to feed themselves. They create the bread of power, popularity and privileges. For Jesus miraculous signs were not for the benefit of self but of others. They were a sign of God's kingdom love.

The second temptation of leadership today is to be spectacular. Some leaders want to authenticate their leadership through a celebrity mentality. The devil said to Jesus "why don't you just fall from the parapet of the temple and the angel will catch you as you fall." This was a temptation to put on a show. Jesus refused to be a stunt man. He did not come to impress anyone. The goal of leadership is not to become a celebrity or to maintain an image, but to obey God. Yet today many leaders want to be legends without a legacy to leave behind.

The third temptation is to be powerful. Satan said to Jesus, "Just bow to me in worship and all these kingdoms will be yours." A very disturbing phenomenon today is that many Christian leaders are succumbing to this temptation of bowing to Satan in return for spiritual power. They indulge in the occult and then gain power from the occult which they then use in the name of Christ. Jesus refused this method of being confirmed.

As we talk about the need to be confirmed, we need to emphasize that charisma or giftedness is not an adequate basis of confirmation as a Christian leader. There are many charismatic leaders who led their followers into error because they relied on their power and charisma rather than a confirmation from God.

People who claim to be leaders must therefore have confirmation of the authenticity of their leadership just as Jesus' leadership was confirmed. Most denominations therefore require a process of confirmation for those who would be leaders. It is unfortunate that some people will not submit themselves to the process of confirmation of their leadership and they seek a short-cut by proclaiming themselves leaders without submitting to the authority of their denominations. We need to be careful of such self-proclaimed leaders who have no confirmation of their leadership.

Spiritual leaders are even to be "confirmed" in a sense by those outside the church as well. Paul says to Timothy that leader-to-be "must have a good reputation among those who are outside lest he fall into reproach and the snare of the devil" (1. Timothy 3:7).

The rule of confirmation applies to any kind of leadership. In business, church, home and other settings, people must earn the right to lead. You don't just walk in and announce that you have

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come to take over a company etc. Yet some people try to go “straight to the top” in and out of church. Jesus received confirmation before he could lead. So must we.

This is a wise tool of leadership for you to practice. And until we meet in the next programme, be blessed.

Discussion Questions

We trust you are learning much about the Leadership Style of Jesus. We offer you three discussion questions to dig deeper in the episodes of *Tools for Wise Leadership*:

Study Question 1: for Personal reflection

What does this episode mean to you personally as a leader?

Study Question 2: for Group Discussion

What does this topic mean you as a group of leaders?

Study Question 3: for applying the topic

What can you apply from this topic in your role as a leader?

Do you have some friends or colleagues you could bring together for a discussion session with these topics? Or would you want to take a few minutes of silence to reflect on these questions by yourself? Here are the questions for the **Talk 2 - The Need for Leadership to be Confirmed**:

Study Question 1: Personal reflection

In what way has God confirmed your leadership?

Study Question 2: Group Discussion

What measures can the Church put in place to ensure that a leader is one led by God and not led by self-desire?

Study Question 3: Applying the topic

What can you do today to demonstrate you are a leader for your people and not a leader for yourself?

Could you share your insight on www.facebook.com/ToolsforWiseLeadership with other leaders? You are welcome to write your personal questions to us via SMS or Whatsapp to +27 60 362 4163. Please be so kind to share your feedback about what you discover through leadership@twr.org You can listen to the various episodes of Tools for Wise Leadership on www.twr360.org/programs/116/tools-for-wise-leadership on the web and on the mobile app of **TWR360** for Android or iOS devices.

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