

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 9: Living out the Truth

Welcome to the **programme Tools for Wise Leadership**. We have so far discussed various important aspects of the leadership style of Jesus, the greatest leader who ever lived on this earth.

We saw in the last programme that Jesus was characterized by generosity. He had a self-giving spirit – an attitude of giving without expecting a return. He was an abundant life giver.

Today we focus on truthfulness as an important characteristic of Jesus' leadership style. He said: "I am the way, the truth and the life." He not only spoke truth, he also lived truth. To speak the truth is to say things that correspond with reality as it is. To live the truth is to live a life without pretence. How many people do you know who pretend to be what they are not? Some pretend to be very rich when they are very poor. They borrow clothes and cars to give girls an impression of how rich they are. It is only when a girl is hooked up and marries the man that she discovers that the appearance of riches was a lie.

Others pretend to be educated when they are not. A story is told of a professor's driver who accompanied the professor to many lectures. He memorized many things the professor said in his lectures. One day he challenged the professor to let him put on the professor's garb and deliver the lecture. The professor was to put on the driver's uniform and sit in the audience. After the pretending "professor" had finished delivering what sounded like a learned lecture, someone in the audience asked a question which the pretender had no clue how to answer. But the clever pretender said, "Young man, your question is very easy. In fact it's so easy I am not even going to bother answering it myself. I will let my driver answer it for you."

The story illustrates how some people can live a lie. So you can lie with actions just as you can lie with words. Not so with Jesus. With Jesus, what you see is and what you hear is what you get.

Why was truth of such a high value for Jesus? Firstly it is because truth was part of his identity, and he could not betray that identity by either telling a lie, or living a lie. By contrast the Devil is a liar by nature. As Jesus said in John 8, "When the Devil is telling lies, he is speaking his native language." While some people speak English, or Shona or Ndebele, the devils speaks lies, or "Chinhema" or "amanga". Jesus' language is truth, and the Devil's language is lies.

We too, by virtue of our new birth can exercise the truthful nature of Jesus. We are told in 2. Corinthians 5:17, "Therefore, if anyone *is* in Christ, *he is* a new creation; old things have passed away; behold, all things have become new." If you are in Christ you have been infused with a new nature that progressively becomes more and more like that of Jesus Christ. You can become a leader whom others can trust because your word will always be your honour. One major problem in our world today is that of leaders who cannot be trusted by their followers because they don't say what they mean. They make promises which they don't even have the intention to keep. But that doesn't have to be the case with you as a Christian leader. You are a new creation, a brand new man. Hence you can acquire the character of trustworthiness. Whenever you lie you are denying your true identity as the child of God, and you are speaking a foreign language which does not belong to your new nature.

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So we are saying Jesus speaks and lives truth firstly because that is his very nature. Secondly Jesus was “full of truth” because truth is enlightening. TRUTH is pictured as LIGHT. And Jesus was the light that enlightens every person. Without the light we could not see God. We might have known Him as the Creator and lawgiver. But only through Christ do we know God as Father. Without light we also fear what we do not need to fear. When I was young there were times when I needed to go looking for lost cattle at night. Sometimes I would see an innocent shrub at night that looked like someone who was about to cut me down with an axe. Or I would see a string on the road and think it was a snake. You see without the light we fear what we do not need to fear.

Without Jesus giving us light we unnecessarily fear death, for example. But when Jesus gives us his light of truth death becomes just a way into eternal life of joy. You see how truth is enlightening!

As leaders that should be our motive as well. Our words should be like the opening of curtains to let in light so that others may see where they are walking and may see the true reality around them. We should be different from people whose words add to the fog of confusion in people’s minds. They speak to hide the truth rather than to reveal it. One of the reasons why they do not want others to see is that their cupboards are full of skeletons. They have done many things which if others get to know would paint them in a very bad light. And so they use lies to hide their past deeds. One of the important reasons why I personally try to walk in the light is that I know that if I start stealing money or engage in other forms of corruption I will then have to live a life of lies to hide my bad deeds. And then the lies start to create a prison for the liar. A bad deed must be covered up by a lie. And then the lie also needs another lie to cover it. Before long you have so many lies to cover up that you begin to fear that you will forget which lie covered which other lie. You start to lose your peace of mind as you fear being discovered and discredited. What a way to live. The answer is to be like Jesus who walked in the light of truth. Yes, truth is enlightening.

There is a third reason why Jesus was always full of truth. It is because truth is liberating. Jesus said: “But you shall know the Truth, and the Truth shall set you free.” Truth liberated the Samaritan woman. When she was helped to acknowledge the truth about her situation she became liberated from a life of purposelessness, loneliness and misery. She actually became the first missionary to the Samaritans when she went into their town to proclaim: “Come see a man who told me everything I ever did!” Truth also liberated David when Nathan confronted him with the double sin of adultery and murder. Instead of continuing to be entangled in layers of lies he then was able to write Ps 51 – the Psalm of confession. And he remained a man after God’s heart when he confessed his sinfulness.

Hey, truth is a big issue for leadership so we are going to have to continue our discussion on truth in the next programme. Today we have learnt that Jesus was a great leader because he was a man of truth. He was a man of truth firstly because truth represented his very nature. Secondly Jesus knew that truth is enlightening. It enables people to see the true nature of reality. Thirdly, Jesus knew that truth is liberating. Indeed “You shall know the truth, and the truth shall set you free.”

Please tune in to the next program where we will discuss other critical aspects of truth for leadership. Meanwhile I urge you to practice tools for wise leadership. And, may the Lord bless you.

Discussion Questions

The *Leadership Style of Jesus* helps us to understand how Jesus was leading. Please use the three discussion questions explore how the *Tools for Wise Leadership* can be applied in your context:

Study Question 1: for Personal reflection

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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?

Here are the questions for the **Talk 9 -Living out the Truth**

Study Question 1: Personal reflection

How does your Christian leadership reflect the Truth that is Jesus?

Study Question 2: Group Discussion

What are some of the consequences that you have seen in action of a life of lies?

Study Question 3: Applying the topic

Consider the way Jesus spoke to people, how can you ensure that when you speak to those you lead that you speak the truth?

Please participate in the conversation on www.facebook.com/ToolsforWiseLeadership with other leaders.

We look forward to hearing from your thought via SMS or Whatsapp to +27 60 362 4163.

You can also share your feedback via leadership@twr.org

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