

“Leadership to Equip People for Ministry”

Portions contributed by [Bruce Lee](#).

Job 42:1-6, 10-17

Mark 10:46-52

A young man, who had worked for years on the railroad, wanted a job as the lead signalman for a train company. For his interview the track foreman asked..., "What would you do if you realized that two trains were heading toward each other on the same track?"

The young man said, "That's easy. I would push the switch button and switch tracks for one of the trains."

The foreman asked, "What if the switch button did not work?"

The young man said, "Then I would jump down out of the switchbox and use the manual lever to change one of the tracks."

The foreman asked, "What if the manual lever broke?"

The young man said, "Then I'd would call the next signal box and let them know what was happening."

The foreman continued on, "What if the phone was busy?"

The young man said, "Well, in that case, I would rush across the track to the emergency phone and call."

Then, the foreman asked, "What would you do if the emergency phone had been vandalized?"

The young man said, "Well..., then I would run into town..., and get my uncle."

The foreman was a little puzzled by his answer, so he asked, "Why would you go get your uncle?"

The young man answered, "That's simple. It's because, my uncle has never seen a train crash before."

Today, we are staying on track with our 40 Days of Community, were we look at the five purposes described in Rick Warrens book, of the same name. The five purposes are; fellowship, discipleship, ministry, worship, and evangelism.

We have already discussed evangelism, fellowship, and discipleship, so today, we will be discussing what it means to serve in ministry. Or better yet, how to equip leaders for ministry.

Where do people turn...when they feel like their life is headed toward a crash? I'll tell you where they turn...they either turn to the things of the world, or they turn to the church and the things of God...it is always one of those two directions.

So, what do people do...when life feels like two trains are headed directly toward each other, and...there...is...really...nothing...they can do...to stop it from happening?

I recently read someone's description of the mission of the church. I tend to like it, and will probably add it to my vocabulary. The term they used for the mission and purpose of the church is the "Five Ships"

Worship..., Membership..., Discipleship..., Leadership..., and Partnership

Today we are going to talk about Leadership. I want you to listen to me very carefully on to today's message, for it will probably be the most important sermon I have preached so far in 2020.

In Mark 10:46-52, Jesus gave us an example of a man who must have felt hopeless, like there was no way out...like life was unfair and had dealt him a crashing blow...But Jesus came along and turned his life around.

In this passage we can see how one person's life can be miraculously changed by an encounter with Jesus.

Encountering Jesus is always the beginning point of a fresh start. The man in this story was named Bartimaeus. Now, Bartimaeus had very little going for him. Mark tells us that Bartimaeus was begging on the side of road just at the edge of the city of Jericho. He may have very well been homeless.

There did not seem to be any chance that things were going to get much better for Bartimaeus. There did not seem to be any way for him to break out of the cycle of poverty, and hunger, and dependence upon someone else..., even dependence upon total strangers to take care of him. For Bartimaeus was blind.

I can only imagine what it would be like to be totally blind. Because, even when I close my eyes I can see a glow of light...or at least a glimmer of light.

The nearest I ever came to understanding what total blindness was like...was after walking out to my tree stand one cloudy and snowy morning. The clouds were dropping a light snow that morning and very dark, not allowing any light from the moon nor the stars.

Well, after getting into my stand and getting myself all situated, I turned off my flashlight. Even after my eye's adjusted, the darkness was so thick; I couldn't even see my own hand when I put it up only inches away from my face. How do I know that it was only inches when I couldn't see it? Well, I clipped my nose when I started waving it back and forth.

It was absolute darkness, with no glow or glimmer of light...at all!

You combined that with the utter helplessness of not knowing your way back out of the woods if my flashlight happened to quit working.

The thoughts of having to walk my way back to my car blindly...not knowing whether your next step would take you nose to bark with a tree...that you might fall over a downed log...or, you make a wrong turn and instead of going toward your car...you go deeper into the woods.

Some other things that I imagine now are; what if I was never able to see the sun rise again, or able to see the sun set, a star shine, or the moon. To not see a smiling face in the crowd...a family members face...or even someone familiar to me.

The Gospel of Mark leads us to believe that Bartimaeus had been blind for some time. We also know that Bartimaeus was poor. There was no way he could work...and in those days there was no kind of government relief. In fact "**Many rebuked him and told him to be quiet.**" **Mark 10:48**

So you see, the crowd had Bartimaeus stereotyped. In their eyes, he would never be anything more than just a blind beggar. In their eyes, he would never be anything but a burden.

Blind Bartimaeus had become totally dependent upon others. Blind Bartimaeus had to be led around...Blind Bartimaeus had to be led by someone to the well for a drink of water...Blind Bartimaeus had to be led by someone to the shade during the heat of the day.

Blind Bartimeaus had to be led by someone to the roadside to beg...Blind Bartimeaus had to be led back to the place where he slept...All that Blind Bartimaeus could do...was to stumble through life blindly, or be led by someone else down the road.

And he would just sit along the side of the road...and beg...hoping for a kindhearted traveler, just to share a few coins with him. Life for Bartimaeus, seemed hopeless.

Bartimaeus was a man who was simply trying to survive from day to day...hour to hour...minute by minute. No joy...No success...No vacation from his troubles...No peace from his sorrows...No hope for his future.

No, Bartimaeus' major concern in life was simple...and that was just to survive.

But you see, that's the way life is for a lot of people who live around you in the world today. Life can be so out of control...so beyond your means...that they feel like what is the use of even trying...because no matter how hard you try...there is always going to be something that you can NOT do anything about.

Like two trains steaming full speed...out of control...straight for each other.

Being a leader in this kind of world, can be, and is, very difficult. Leadership is a great challenge, and that is the main reason a lot of people tend to shy away from it.

Knowing what to do in an emergency can save lives...reduce damage to property...protect investments...and comfort people who are going through a crisis. Leaders who know what to do when things are headed toward a crash...can sometimes do things to stop it from even happening.

The same is true in the life of the church.

The crash may be a crash in a marriage. A relationship that is broken...heartaches and children caught in the middle of a separation or divorce. I've had discussions in the past with friends...some of them who were thinking about getting a divorce.

Not all marriages can be saved, but most can. With a little help and communication...many have been.

When Christian leaders offer support to families...when Youth leaders encourage teenagers to focus on their faith...when Children's workers are leaders who hug and care for young kids in a Christ like way...then the church is fulfilling its call of duty and call from God to be in ministry.

It may be a crash or it may be a temptation. It may be a drug crash...where your son or daughter is addicted to Weed, Meth, Alcohol, or Prescription drugs. The one thing they need in life, is the leadership and ministry of the church.

It may be a financial crash...where you lost your job, or you just made the wrong choices and you are now over extended. It may be a medical crash...where the doctor says Cancer, Heart Attack, or incurable disease.

We are always hearing of friends and family who have received diagnoses of cancer, heart issue's, covid positive tests. Maybe you received a phone call, and on the other end comes the news that someone you love has been taken from you.

We can minister to these folks in several ways. Through phones calls, visits, setting up meals, or rides to doctor's appointments or testing.

It may be a personal crash. Or maybe even worse...you might even experience a spiritual derailment in your life...where temptations and sin can either take you straight toward personal destruction, or have you headed straight toward faith and victory.

AND, there is only room for one of these on the same track...as faith and temptations often collide.

Whether the result is a partial derailment, or a spiritual disaster, it often depends on the leaders in your church family. I want you to take special notice that I didn't say leader...as it takes more than one leader to make sure we are utilizing the full body of Christ in our church.

When Christians encourage one another and pray for one another...then the outcome is more likely to be repentance, forgiveness, healing and restoration.

I want you all to, "Learn this Lesson: That Every Member of the Church is Called to Ministry."

When the church is able to step in and intervene, that is when people can find a way out...When the Christians step up and act like Christ, that is when they can find hope...When the Church really is involved in ministry, that is when they can find answers.

In Christianity...ministry is an activity carried out by Christians to express or spread their faith.

Where will they find the answers? Where will they turn? How do they stop the crash?

They will either turn to reading their horoscope, or they will turn to reading their Bible...They will consult a fortune cookie, or they will ask for counsel from someone they trust and believe in, as a Christian...They will either call their psychic, or they will call their pastor or other church leaders in their church.

There is nothing like being a leader, and there is nothing like leading in ministry.

For those who may not know, I have taken myself off of Facebook for a time. Maybe I will go back, or maybe I won't. I am leaving that to God for now. But this past week, a fellow pastor shared a story that he came across on Facebook. He shared it with me, and this is what it said:

“In 2010, I saw the absolute best in people and the absolute worst. I had more than I needed and I had absolutely nothing. My faith soared to new heights and was shaken to its core. It was marked by new friendship gained and loved ones lost. I experienced great success and monumental failure. In it all, I am abundantly blessed!”

You don't have to be a Pastor to be a Minister in ministry. Let me say again...Every Member is a Minister when it comes to ministry!

Every Christian is a leader for somebody who needs your help, your encouragement, your compassion, your smile, your enthusiasm, your joy, and your hope. There is no excuse good enough when it comes to NOT serving God...

Moses first excuse was he had a stutter...His second excuse was he had a short fuse, and murdered an Egyptian in anger. Hosea's wife was a prostitute...Jacob lied...David had an adulterous affair...Abraham and Sarah were too old...Timothy was too young...Naomi was a widow...Jonah ran from God...Thomas doubted...Jeremiah was suicidal...Samson had long hair...Noah got drunk...and, Paul consented to the death of Stephen

As far as God is concerned, being His servant leader, is simply people who are willing. People who are willing, to be used, by Him, to establish and grow His kingdom. Leadership in the church, is to “Equip people with the skills they need to Lead in Ministry.”

Jesus' gift to the church...was people. Just look at Ephesians 4:11, "**He is the one who gave these gifts to the church: (NOT gold...NOT silver...but people), the apostles, the prophets, the evangelists, the pastors and teachers.**" Ephesians 4:11.

So you see, the gifts that Jesus gave to the church, was people...all of you.

I have had to help Amy's dad in many projects. Now, I learned early on that I did not always have to share my know how of some particular task.

Several times..., I started to say..., that's not the way I would do it...

Several times..., I started to say..., it won't work like that...

Several times...I started to say...I would never do it that way...

BUT I DID NOT SAY A WORD...I did not grumble or complain a bit.

In these matters, Frank was clearly the leader, I was, the follower. And, in most of those situations, it only took him about 10 minutes to do a job that probably would have taken me hours, and with 5 or 6 people to help.

So, I learned a lesson from these times, with Frank (Amy's dad), as well with other times with other people, that being a good follower, is just as important as having a good leader.

The Best way to lead in ministry is to see the value and meaning in things that you CAN do.

For example: Help decorate the church for special occasions, and meals and gatherings...for this is a form of outreach. People, who come through the door, notice how nice things look and they say to themselves, "This is God's house."

Working with children and youth. Because you see, when young couples know the church cares about their children, it says we care about the entire family.

A simple thing like regular attendance can be a ministry. Do you know that when a visitor comes into this building and sees you worship here, and they have met you at either a cookout, or the grocery store, or at a

ball game, and then they see you here...then that says something. It says something about this being a great place to worship.

And so you can make a difference.

The key to ministry is “being there”...being there for each other WHEN the time comes...and the time will come, when you are the one who is in need...and one of the other members of this church, will be there for you.

No matter how good you have things right now...someday you will be on the other side...You will be the one needing to receive the ministry of this church, when you are going through a difficult time. Or, you may already remember the time that you were, and they were right there for you.

Let's say that someone has just suffered a loss in their family. This happens more than we care to admit. The, “one simple ministry of the church” is the ministry of presence...you don't have to say a word to be in the ministry of presence. Just being there when a loved one passes away, or going to the funeral...that is more than enough.

Every member of this church, should in some way, go or be part of the funeral when one of our members passes...either to visit...to just be there...to take some food...send a card...Or just make a phone call.

When we minister to people in their time of need...they will know that we have experienced the love of God in our own life...and that this is a great church to belong to.

You see, people are drawn to places when Christians are friendly...and they will say to others when they visit...“I really felt at home there.”, “I felt welcomed.”, or “I felt like I belonged.”

Then one day, a special passerby, named Jesus, came along. Jesus gave Bartimaeus something money could not buy...a gift that would change his life forever. He gave Bartimaeus someone new to follow in his life.

With the miracle of sight, also came the miracle of changing who Blind Bartimaeus would follow. No longer would Bartimaeus have to be led by someone to the well for a drink of water...No longer would Bartimaeus have to be led by someone to the shade during the heat of the day.

No longer would Bartimeaus have to be led by someone to the roadside to beg...No longer would Bartimeaus have to be led back to the place where he slept.

Now Bartimaeus could follow who he chose to follow...Now he would be able to walk beside Jesus down the road...And now Bartimaeus would become the kindhearted traveler...Now Bartimaeus would become the one who would reach into his pocket and pull out a few coins to share with the needy.

Life for Bartimaeus changed from hopeless, to giving hope to others...From no Joy, to Sharing Joy...From no Peace, to telling others about the peace that come through Jesus Christ...From a person of many sorrows with no hope for his future...To a person with an eternal future.

Bartimaeus' major concern had change from his own self...To how to care and minister to others. From simply trying to survive from day to day...To trying to help others. That's the change that sets Christian apart from other people. That's how we tell if Christ has made a difference...

When we help others, I believe, is when we are closest to really saving and helping our own self.

Today, every one of us has the opportunity to follow Jesus. To follow Jesus may start out as a first time giving your heart and life to Christ...Confessing your blindness by sin and selfishness.

To follow Jesus for others, may be a rededication of your faith...A recommitment of your life...or a kind of a fresh start for a New Year.

Then there is the place of service in the church...Where you step out from being someone who just sits back and watches while others do church ministry, To someone who is actually following Jesus down the road...doing church ministry yourself.

An encounter with the Almighty Jesus Christ...the Savior of the world...Comes with a call to duty, a call to service, a call to ministry...a call to be a leader in your church...and a call to be a leader in your community...

"And Jesus said to him, "Go your way. Your faith has healed you." And instantly the blind man could see! Then he followed Jesus down the road." Mark 10:52 (NLT) Amen!!!