

St. Matthew AME Church
Bible Study
Spiritual Leadership Part 4

- I. God uses Moses as His instrument to cause Pharaoh to let the children of Israel out of slavery in Egypt.
 - A. After ten plaques culminating with the death of his son Pharaoh frees the children of Israel.
 - B. Moses organizes them and they begin their journey after 400 years to the land of promise.

- II. Shortly after the children of Israel leave Egypt, Pharaoh changes his mind and leads the Egyptian army to pursue them and bring them back to Egypt. Pharaoh and his army quickly come upon them. (Exodus 14:5-9)
 - A. As the Egyptians draw near, the Israelites raise their eyes and catch sight of them and become greatly afraid. (14:10) They cannot see their way out of their predicament at the Red Sea and lose their faith. Even though they are saved from Egyptian slavery through the actions of God and Moses, all they can now envision is dying in the desert at the hands of the very Egyptians from whose clutches their God released them.
 - 1. As a result, they challenge Moses. (14:11-12) They prefer to be persecuted and die of their suffering in Egypt, than die in the desert.
 - 2. They begin to doubt Moses and his authority and intentions and desire to return to Egypt.
 - B. Opposition and complaints against Moses are nonstop. Every time something goes wrong for the Israelites in the desert they blame Moses.
 - 1. In the people's mind it is Moses not God who led them out of Egypt. Even after crossing the Red Sea and singing the jubilant song of praise that follows, the people's anger is again directed at Moses.
 - C. One of the bitter lessons of leadership is that people are fickle. They are slow to be supportive and will not readily follow, but if it just looks like there is a problem, people will turn against you. They are slow to give credit and thanks, but quick to question and cast blame.
 - 1. This is why it is imperative that spiritual leaders have fire, heart and courage.
 - 2. Fire to keep us passionate, motivated and influence others.
 - 3. Heart to help us with our own psyche, attitude and mindset
 - 4. Courage to help us not be afraid, intimidated or weak.

- III. Moses responds to the people's opposition and complaints by addressing all their concerns and ends up directing them to hold their peace.
 - A. When they cry out to God, Moses urges them to be silent.
 - B. Although God has guaranteed Moses that the divine will triumph over Pharaoh, Moses himself experiences doubt. Facing the Red Sea with the enemy in pursuit, Moses does not seem to know what to do and he himself cries out to God.
 - 1. And the Lord says to Moses, "why are you crying out to me?"
 - C. There are times when even the greatest leaders are lost and begin to doubt their own ability. No matter how much power Moses is able to wield in Egypt, confronted by the people when they behold Pharaoh's army in pursuit, he begins to cry out to God.

1. God responds to Moses and tells him that he (Moses) has the ability to act. God then directs him to raise his rod and extend his arm over the waters of the Red Sea.

Moses as Leader, Responds to Their Fears and Doubt

- IV. Despite his anger against the people because of their lack of belief in God's power and trust in his leadership, Moses is not dispirited. He is still able to understand their doubts, given the predicament they are facing, and he responds to them. He tells them, "don't fear, stand firm and see God's deliverance." (14:13)
 - A. Moses acknowledges their fears, but encourages them to "see" their situation differently. One of the evidences of an effective leader is to encourage people to see their situation differently. This is critically important.
 1. Fear is the result of a way of seeing, of perspective.
 2. Moses like every great leader had to subordinate his own feelings of disappointment, hurt and rejection by his followers in order to fulfill his role as leader.

Requirements of Spiritual Leader to Act

- V. Spiritual Leader Must Believe in what he is leading people to do
 - A. Moses believed with his entire being that God would intervene on behalf of the Israelites to destroy the Egyptians and enable the people to cross the Red Sea.
 1. Like Moses we must believe that God will do what He says.
- VI. Spiritual leader must act if the people are to be saved.
 - A. God directed Moses to act (14:16)
 - B. Leadership requires action – every leader must learn that he/she possesses the power to act.
- VII. The leader must make the people feel that they are participants in what you are doing, in spite of their complaining.
 - A. Leader must not become bitter with the people you are leading – some people will make this very hard- give them over to God
 - B. Some people will never change- will always be a pain
 1. The Israelites never changed during Moses leadership- why didn't God forget about or destroy them
 2. God always acts for the meritorious few
 3. God always keeps faith with those of earlier generations – promise to Abraham