

The Prince of Peace Who is the Suffering Servant

The prophet Isaiah spoke many times of Jesus' coming. In one place Isaiah says the Son of God "will be called Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace," and in another we are told, "He was despised and rejected by men, a man of sorrows, and familiar with suffering. Like one from whom men hide their faces he was despised, and we esteemed him not." If life was at times hard for Jesus (despite his glory as God the Son), we should not be surprised that following Jesus can also be hard for us. The Bible tells us our responsibility is to persevere at all times by relying on God.

For those who serve as leaders in God's church, the responsibility is even greater. Leaders must follow Jesus and set an example for others as they do so. This week, we'll consider what it means to lead and to follow. You may be surprised to find yourself starting to consider yourself a leader in ways that you have not considered before. Let's study what it means to follow Christ and to lead as he leads us.

Monday – Leaders Who Follow

"If anyone would come after me, he must deny himself and take up his cross and follow me. For whoever wants to save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for me will find it." Jesus, Matthew 16:24-25

1. Please read 1 Peter 5:1-4. Which words or phrases jump out at you? Why?
2. Compare the progression in the way Jesus uses the phrase "greater things" in John 1:43-51, 5:19-23 and 14:5-14. What does this tell you about the need to be a good follower before you can be a good leader?

Making it Personal: When we are walking closely with Jesus we can do greater things than when we are not. What are some examples in your own life? How is God calling you to walk more closely with him today?

Tuesday – Glorious Suffering

"I live in a high and holy place, but also with him who is contrite and lowly in spirit." Isaiah 57:15

1. Please read 1 Peter 5:1. Since Paul had not met Jesus before the crucifixion, what do you think he meant by being a witness to Christ's sufferings?
2. In Revelation 5:1-14, the Lamb is Jesus. How does that passage depict his suffering? His glory?

Text Insight: The number seven is a symbol for completeness. The horns symbolize strength while the eyes symbolize knowledge and presence. The Lamb is thus shown as all powerful and all knowing everywhere.

3. Where is the Lamb located in Revelation 7:17? How do you think his suffering allows him to comfort those who have also suffered?

Making it Personal: Where do you go to find comfort? Why? How can you seek your comfort in Christ?

Wednesday – Willing to Serve

"I am the Lord's servant," Mary answered. "May it be to me as you have said." Luke 1:38

1. Please read 1 Peter 5:2. What should be motivating those who serve God as leaders in his Church? How was that attitude demonstrated by Mary when she was told of her calling to be the mother of Jesus (see above)?
2. How would you describe the growth in the Lord that Simon the Sorcerer experienced in Acts 8:4-25? How might his past experiences have led to his mistakes regarding the ability to serve God?

Prayer Focus: Pray for those who serve in the church as leaders – whether as a pastor, teacher, music leader, ministry coordinator, or whatever – that they would do so with the willingness that God desires.

Thursday – Examples to All

"In everything set them an example by doing what is good." Titus 2:7

1. Please read 1 Peter 5:3. How might a church leader "lord it over" those in the church? In what ways have you seen church leaders set good examples?
2. In Mark 9:33-35, what had been occupying the conversation as Jesus' friends followed him? How did Jesus redirect their priorities? What does his instruction mean in your life?

Digging Deeper: Read Matthew 19:16 through 20:16, paying attention to the various actions Jesus mentioned. Where should your focus be as you serve God, whether in leadership or otherwise?

Friday – Hail to the Chief

"I am the good shepherd; I know my sheep and my sheep know me." Jesus, John 10:14

1. Please read 1 Peter 5:4. What types of rewards are given out in our society? Can any of them be said to be the type that would never fade away? Why?
2. What common themes do you see about crowns in 2 Timothy 4:7-8, James 1:12, and Revelation 2:10, 3:10-12 and 4:4?
3. Now look at Revelation 4:9-11. What did people do with the crowns God gave them as rewards? Why? What does this tell you about the purpose of the blessings you receive from God?

Making it Personal: How can you use the good things God gives in order to glorify him as you serve others?

For the Weekend: Re-read 1 Peter 5:1-4. Which concepts speak to your relationship with God right now? In what ways? Let those insights guide you as you spend an extended time in prayer.