

Study Session #5 — Centered on the Gospel

Wednesday, March 24th at 6:00 p.m.

- **Review**

- What we are talking about in this STUDY and the Sunday night TRAINING is the 5 C's of Leadership. These are basic, Biblical principles for Christian Leaders in the local church. And they go like this...
- THE VERY BEST LEADERS IN THE CHURCH ARE...
 - ◆ those who are Connected to Jesus
 - ◆ and are Christlike in Character
 - ◆ Caring Towards All
 - ◆ **Committed to the Work,**
 - ◆ and finally, those who are Centered on the Gospel of Jesus Christ

- **Why Now?**

- I've been thinking about a training like this for some time because we as a staff recognize that while we can lead well and we may have lots of servants in the church, there are more capable leaders in our church that could do some wonderful ministry and we want to enlist them, equip them, encourage them, and help them evaluate their leadership as they go.
- Here are two really big areas that will need capable leaders: a newly formed OUTreach team and a newly formed INreach team...
 - ◆ The OUTreach Team
 - ◆ The INreach Team
 - ◆ Adult Small Group Leader — Cast vision for the importance of SG's and the need for a singular leader over them, perhaps working with a small team of leaders.

- **Leadership Centered on Self, Tasks, or Others**

- Your leadership will be centered on something. If we are not watchful, we will find ourselves leading for SELF, TASKS, or OTHERS...

- ◆ Leadership Centered on SELF
 - ◆ Leading for self is fueled by the feeling of being in charge, the recognition from others as someone important, the applause of the crowds when things go well, or perhaps some other fringe benefits.
 - ◆ *The leader who is centered on self will ask this question: What can I get out of it?*
 - ◆ **Luke 9:23, "If anyone would come after me, let him deny himself and take up his cross daily and follow me."**
 - ◆ **1 Corinthians 10:24, "Let no one seek his own good, but the good of his neighbor."**
 - ◆ **Galatians 5:24, "Those who belong to Christ Jesus have crucified the flesh with its passions and desires."**
- ◆ Leadership Centered on TASKS
 - ◆ OR your leadership might center on being productive, getting things done, accomplishing tasks and goals, etc. Productivity is good, but if it becomes central you'll be a very hard person to work with. Also, this kind of leadership is often driven by one's own thoughts and actions, not on what God wants, chasing after the feeling of finishing the job, accomplishing the goals, producing results and not focused on being faithful to glorify God and serve the good of others.
 - ◆ *The leader who is centered on tasks will ask this question: Did we do all I set out to do?*
 - ◆ **Proverbs 14:12, "There is a way that appears to be right, but in the end it leads to death."**
 - ◆ **Matthew 6:23a, "But seek first the kingdom of God and his righteousness..."**
 - ◆ **Proverbs 3:5-6, "Trust in the Lord with all your heart, and do not lean on your own understanding. In all your ways acknowledge him, and he will make straight your paths."**
- ◆ Leadership Centered on OTHERS.
 - ◆ OR it can become about those you lead, making sure they are happy, comfortable, not at all upset with you. If that's

you, you'll hold back the truth when it needs to be said or lie in order to look good or to at least not look bad.

- ◆ *The leader who is centered on others will ask this question: Is everyone happy with me?*
- ◆ **1 Thess. 2:4b, "...we speak, not to please man, but to please God..."**
 - ◆ **Galatians 1:10b, "...If I were still trying to please man, I would not be a servant of Christ."**
 - ◆ **Proverbs 29:25, "Fearing people is a dangerous trap, but trusting the LORD means safety."**
 - ◆ **John 12:43, "For they loved the glory that comes from man more than the glory that comes from God."**

- **Gospel-Centered Leadership**

- However, there is a center for Christian leadership that is both satisfying, productive, and relational. It does not ignore the need to feel like what you do is important, it does not ignore the importance of accomplish God-given goals/tasks/objectives, and it does not ignore the fact that every person is made in God's image and is, therefore, immensely valuable. It has all the upside and none of the downside of the three kinds of leadership mentioned above. This kind of leadership is GOSPEL-CENTERED LEADERSHIP. Leaders who are centered on the gospel will have both the internal and the external resources to lead effectively. How so?

- ◆ INTERNAL

- ◆ Internally, the gospel provides the leader with a true and indestructible identity. By way of Jesus, they are adopted into the family, given the same standing as His as a beloved son or daughter of the most High. By the sacrificial death of Jesus they are sinners who have been forgiven and made saints, set apart for the glorious work of God. By the resurrection of Jesus they are given an eternal hope that is *the* answer to even the worst life can offer, death itself. This identity as son/daughter, sinner turned saint, and resident of heaven can never be taken away. Even if you fail in leadership. Even when you're

criticized as a leader. Even when you're the leader and you don't know which direction is up.

- ◆ And the gospel gives the leader the grace-fueled internal drive to happily do his or her very best. The gospel is good news that grace is ours by faith alone, in Jesus alone. This grace is not opposed to effort; it is only opposed to earning. By our diligent leadership we do not earn God's forgiveness or our status as His children or our future, eternal home. But, because we have all these and more, we are given a joy that one can hardly fathom. That joy fills us up and fuels us to do our very best for God! Grace-fueled and joy-filled effort is attainable for the gospel-centered leader.

- ◆ ***Ephesians 1:3-8, "All praise to God, the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly realms because we are united with Christ. 4 Even before he made the world, God loved us and chose us in Christ to be holy and without fault in his eyes. 5 God decided in advance to adopt us into his own family by bringing us to himself through Jesus Christ. This is what he wanted to do, and it gave him great pleasure. 6 So we praise God for the glorious grace he has poured out on us who belong to his dear Son. 7 He is so rich in kindness and grace that he purchased our freedom with the blood of his Son and forgave our sins. 8 He has showered his kindness on us, along with all wisdom and understanding."***

- ◆ EXTERNAL

- ◆ Externally, the gospel provides a way of working with people in truth and grace, without sacrificing either. Anyone who has led anybody for any amount of time knows that people will let you down. Leaders who forget the gospel can become hard-hearted. Why can't others just follow my lead? Why can't they be consistent? Why are they such a mess? Without the gospel, these questions can drive a leader mad. But, when a leader

understands the gospel, they understand the truth that each of us are all fallen human beings, prone to wander, and yet each of us are graciously loved by our Savior, **Jesus Christ, who, "...came from the Father, full of grace and truth." (John 1:14b)**. GRACE AND TRUTH. He embodied both, and as leaders, we must be able to do the same. If we wait to lead until we've assembled a team of sinless saints, then we will never lead anyone to accomplish anything. We are imperfect leaders leading an imperfect team and we have to be honest about that. Sometimes that means truthfully pointing out the imperfections when they become serious impediments to the work and just as often it means giving lots of grace.

- ◆ Secondly, a leader's mind can become filled with all sorts of possibilities. This can both excite and burden. Look at all we *could* do! Yes, but which of all these *must* we do? It can take time to sort that out, but we can be certain of this: The gospel gives the leader direction, a north star, that provides undeniable confidence regarding God's will. It is God's will that we both share and show the good news of Jesus Christ. We share it in word and deed and we show it in our attitude and conduct. Some leaders will lean heavily on the showing side of things. They are on the frontlines of giving out the gospel through the ministries and programs of the church. Others will have a different focus, but they still have the task of living out the gospel in how they conduct their ministry within the church. Certainly this is a mixture of both in all that we do for how the inner workings of the church are conducted, led by committees and deacons and so on, will most definitely help shape the reputation of the church in the community. And ministry leaders who are organizing people to tell others about Jesus in the community will need to work together in ways that represent the gospel. While there is much to do, there is one thing we must do and that is embrace the gospel as our both our guide for how to live and our goal for what we're called to give.

- ◆ **Matthew 24:14, "this gospel of the kingdom will be**

proclaimed throughout the whole world as a testimony to all nations, and then the end will come."

- ♦ *1 Corinthians 15:1-2a,3-4, "Now I would remind you, brothers, of the gospel I preached to you, which you received, in which you stand, 2 and by which you are being saved... 3 For I delivered to you as of first importance what I also received: that Christ died for our sins in accordance with the Scriptures, 4 that he was buried, that he was raised on the third day in accordance with the Scriptures"*
- ♦ *Philippians 1:27, "Whatever happens, conduct yourselves in a manner worthy of the gospel of Christ. Then, whether I come and see you or only hear about you in my absence, I will know that you stand firm in the one Spirit, striving together as one for the faith of the gospel."*

- **Conclusion**

- To summarize, self, tasks and others provide an unstable center for our leadership, but Leaders who are centered on the gospel will have both the internal and the external resources to lead effectively, for God's glory and for the good of others.

- **Reminders**

- Join us for our final Leadership Training this Sunday at 6:00 p.m. in the CLC Fellowship Hall.
- We will recognize those who have completed this Leadership Training on Sunday, April 11th. If you have covered all five sessions, even if you've missed some of the Sunday nights, you can still receive the certificate. Just let me know you have either attended Sunday nights and/or watched all Wednesday nights.
- Speaking of, you can watch last week's Study and get notes from both Wednesday and Sunday, at www.fbckenedy.org/lead.