

First Lesson: 1 Corinthians 12: 1-11
Gospel Lesson: John 2: 1-11
Sermon Series: Leadership Effect
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- **Last year, our preaching theme was doing a yearly sermon series on the concept of what it means to be Holy;**
- By the end of the sermon series, the revelation that I shared in that journey was that Holy in Hebrew means kodesh, comes from the root word “Kadash”. In simpler terms, it means to be set apart for a specific purpose;
- It was in this revelation that fueled this idea that all of us can participate in this work of the ministry; for we all are uniquely set a part to contribute to the “kingdom” of God on Earth as is in heaven.
- This year’s sermonic theme will look at what it means to **be effective** in this work.
- To share the definition of effective to ensure that we are all on the same page; effective defined

is, to be *successful in producing a desired or intended result.*

- The root word Effect as defined in the KJV of the Bible means *Having the power to cause or produce; efficacious.*
- Therefore, I am excited for this yearly sermon series on what it means to be effective both within the Church and beyond;
- For it is in this yearly examination, the sermon series will take us through what it means to be effective as it pertains to our leadership, volunteerism/service, our faith, relationships and more.
- So today, we will start our journey on the three-week sermon series entitled the “**Leadership Effect.**”
- Over these next three weeks, I will be relying on our lectionary readings to provide three key components that will hopefully help us all to

become more effective in our leadership, both within the Church and beyond.

- For I stopped by to declare that the world right now is in desperate need of leadership and guidance as a whole.
- So I am anticipating that our scriptures over these next three weeks will breathe a word that might inspire, re-energize, prepare and direct us to be the feet and hands of this broken world.
- For as we look at our first lesson of 1 Corinthians 12: 1-11; The subject of spiritual gifts is introduced in the same verbal manner starting off with the words (**now concerning**) as that of marriage (7:1), and of idols (8:1).
- Thus from this, we can assume that the Apostle is evidently still answering questions contained in the letter from the Corinthian Christians.

- **Questions that invited** the people back then perhaps to consider their own effectiveness as it pertained to service and leadership.
- **Questions that even** has this hint of concern from the people; whether or not some of them could even be effective in this leadership; for some of them had an admitted checkered past;
- And so the reason why we know this was the case is because the apostle tells them ; *you know that when you were pagans, you were enticed and led astray to idols that could not speak....*
- However, the good news in this pericope of scripture is that even in this reality; **the answer was yes**, they could still be effective in their leadership;
- For the Word goes on to say in verse 4; *There are different kinds of gifts, but the same Spirit distributes them. 5 There are different kinds of*

service, but the same Lord. 6 There are different kinds of working, but in all of them and in everyone it is the same God at work.

- So as I bring this examination of scripture to present day, I would first off declare the same good news; that each one of us **has the potential of being not just a good leader... but a great leader;**
- Each one of us, regardless of our past, regardless of our perceived deficiencies can be an effective leader!
- Now where I am seeing the first component of what it means to be an effective leader reveal itself, is contained in our gospel this morning;
- Our gospel is one of the first miracle stories where Jesus turns water into wine.

- **So to give a little background on this story; Jewish weddings were prolonged affairs, running for a whole week and sometimes two weeks.**
- The bridegroom brought his bride to his home in a procession, and there followed games, dancing and singing, banqueting and much wine drinking.
- Songs in mutual adoration were sung by the bride and groom, symbolic rites were performed; but there seems to have been no formal pronouncement of the union, as we know it today by a minister. All of the friends and neighbors, as well as the relatives, were invited.
- Now we do not know why Jesus, His mother Mary, probably His brothers (v. 12), and His disciples were invited to the wedding.

- His brothers would be either sons of Joseph by a former marriage or younger sons of Joseph and Mary.
- The inclusion of the disciples (perhaps no more than the four mentioned earlier) seems to indicate that by this time, these men had become recognized as Jesus' followers and would be expected to be with Him wherever He went.
- At this wedding, something took place which was of far greater importance than the wedding itself, which is not described (nor are its bride and groom named).
- However Jesus was there and, as always, His presence made the difference.
- **Jesus leadership made a difference....**
- For if you were to take this passage of scripture literally, Mary the mother of Jesus presented a problem to Jesus....

- Mary informed Jesus of a wine shortage...and most importantly it was clear that she expected Jesus **to do something** about the situation.
- **And this is where I will press pause on this story and step out of the text for just a moment, to explore what important component I am seeing emerge from this interaction as it pertains to leadership.**
- For what I am seeing is one of the essential components of what most people expects from a leader arise from this text;
- This idea that a good leader is supposed to do something....
- Right or wrong, most of us expect leaders to be able to do something about the situation; whatever that situation may be...fair or not... that is what most of us expect;

- For example, most of us **expect the president and his cabinet to do something** about this Covid situation;
- Many of us **expect the pastor to do something** about the worship attendance situation;
- A good majority of us I would imagine **expect our bosses to do something** about the staff shortages;
- I'll say it again, fair or not; right or wrong...this is typically what most of us expect or have expected from leadership...to do something **and do it like yesterday....**
- However, this is not the leadership component that I am endorsing; for it is in Jesus response that frees myself who identifies as a leader and I am hoping that this will hopefully free other leaders to remove this burden off of their back, if you too have ever felt the weight as a leader...**to do something.**

- For as I jump back into the gospel, what we might discover from Jesus leadership strategy is that he too is rejecting this idea that **he has to do something**;
- For Jesus took some time to ponder if this was the time for him to perform a miracle?
- Jesus appeared to have thought so at first, or at least His mother's remark caused Him to think of the responsibility.
- But the major leadership move that I am drawn to is Jesus response to his mother;
- Jesus hesitated and then responded to his mother, **Mine hour is not yet come.**
- Now as a mom, I need to disclose that I wish my kids would respond to me like that if I asked them to do something...
- That would never fly in my house whatsoever...
- However, if we take the mother/son dynamic out of this equation and place on our leadership

hats for a moment, Jesus is teaching us a powerful teaching moment as it pertains to leadership;

- This idea that a good leader doesn't do; a good leader teaches others how to do!
- And we can see this in Jesus next move within this text that the John highlights for us;
- For you see, the way this gospel of John is written as a whole, it gives the strong impression throughout his Gospel, that Jesus was living by a divine timetable.
- His reply to Mary was a reminder that, although the time had come for Him to reveal His power, and although she had sensed that a crucial hour had arrived, Jesus directions on specific occasions must come from His Heavenly Father/Creator and not from His earthly mother.

- So in a nutshell, Jesus who could have been tempted to respond to Mary's urgent need right then and there **instead waited.....**
- **Jesus waited** for the guidance from God before he chose to do anything about the wine shortage situation;
- And the result, once God gave Jesus the go ahead to so call do something about the wine shortage; then this is when Jesus decided to do something...we are witnessing Jesus empower others to do!
- You see, Jesus did not take the onus on just himself to do something about the wine shortage situation...
- No no, on the contrary, he informed the people through his actions that this was a full participatory effort...
- Verse 5 tells us ***His mother said to the servants, "Do whatever he tells you."***

6 Nearby stood six stone water jars, the kind used by the Jews for ceremonial washing, each holding from twenty to thirty gallons.[b]

7 Jesus then said to the servants, “Fill the jars with water”; so they filled them to the brim.

8 Then he told them, “Now draw some out and take it to the master of the banquet.”

They did so, 9 and the master of the banquet tasted the water that had been turned into wine.

He did not realize where it had come from, though the servants who had drawn the water knew. Then he called the bridegroom aside

10 and said, “Everyone brings out the choice wine first and then the cheaper wine after the guests have had too much to drink; but you have saved the best till now.”

- And so once again, the first component of effective leadership that we learn from both our first lesson and gospel this morning is that effective leaders don't do something; they empower others to do.
- And so as I think about one great leader, whom we are acknowledging and celebrating this weekend is the Reverend Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. who we all know was a successful leader of the African American civil rights movement in the United States.
- Dr. King embodied this very leadership principle that I have been naming, for Dr. King was able to lead African Americans in a nonviolent way to the advancement of civil rights.
- He was powerful and he used his power to influence the believers of this movement.

- Once again though, the key to his leadership was not that he did this all on his own;
- In fact I could make a most likely undisputed case that Dr. King could not have done any of his efforts **on his own**;
- On the contrary, he relied on the people to tap into this dream as I capture some of the sentiments of his revolutionary speech; *I have a Dream;*”
- A dream that would one day rectify a reality that ***100 years later, the Negro still is not free.***
- ***One hundred years later, the life of the Negro is still sadly crippled by the manacles of segregation and the chains of discrimination.***
- ***One hundred years later, the Negro lives on a lonely island of poverty in the midst of a vast ocean of material prosperity. One hundred***

years later the Negro is still languished in the corners of American society and finds himself in exile in his own land.

- You see Church family, Dr. King could have never rectified this shameful situation on his own;
- For as Marcia Chatelain, an associate professor of history and African American studies at Georgetown University named in an article that I came across; "***There would be no King holiday, no civil rights movement, no opportunity to be reflective of how far we've come if it wasn't for scores of women,***"
- And the reason why she specified women was because the article was particularly highlighting that women needed to be named in these efforts for the advancement of the Civil Rights Movement because as she stated; "For every name we know,

there are scores of names we don't know because of sexism.”

- Therefore, I would be remiss if I did not name that obviously it was a collective effort of people diverse in gender, faith and race; that were energized with this beloved community that Dr. King painted for the people;
- **A beloved community** where all of God's children would be able to sing with new meaning: ***My country, 'tis of thee, sweet land of liberty, of thee I sing. Land where my fathers died, land of the pilgrims' pride, from every mountainside, let freedom ring.***
- **A beloved community** where we will not rest until freedom rings ***from every village and every hamlet, from every state and every city, we will be able to speed up that day when all of God's***

children, Black men and white men, Jews and Gentiles, Protestants and Catholics, will be able to join hands and sing in the words of the old Negro spiritual: Free at last. Free at last. Thank God almighty, we are free at last.

- A beloved community that has not been fulfilled just yet;
- However if we can just keep planting this seed that every one is capable of leadership in their own way;
- If we can keep instilling the messages of 1 Corinthians 12; *that There are different kinds of gifts, but the same Spirit distributes them.*
- If we can keep empowering others that **5** There are different kinds of service, but the same Lord.

- If we can keep encourages one another that *There are different kinds of working, but in all of them and in everyone it is the same God at work.*
- This is how we turn water into wine....
- This is how the beloved community becomes transformed;
- Let the Church say Amen and Hallelujah!