
A Time to Build: *a blueprint for visionary leadership*

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Sermon Study Guide - Part 3 of 7 - "Leaders Take Risks" - 9/29/19

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Welcome to The Story!

A Time to Build is a 7-week series about vision and leadership. Leadership is *influence with people*, and the big idea behind this series is that every follower of Jesus is called to be a leader. As we follow him, **Jesus leads us to influence others to follow him as well** (Matthew 28:19).

So if you're following Jesus, surprise - you're a leader!

Let's be honest: As you think about the people you are leading, and where you've been leading them, what are one or two ways you have regularly failed to lead them well?

Reflecting before Rebuilding

Last week we learned how Nehemiah took time to survey the ruins of Jerusalem's past destruction **before** he told anyone about God's vision to rebuild the city. Why is it so important for leaders to **reflect on their present reality** before casting a hopeful vision for the future?

Nehemiah 2:17

17 Then I said to them, "You see the trouble we are in: Jerusalem lies in ruins, and its gates have been burned with fire. Come, let us rebuild the wall of Jerusalem, and we will no longer be in disgrace." 18 I also told them about the gracious hand of my God on me and what the king had said to me.

They replied, "Let us start rebuilding." So they began this good work.

At such an exciting moment in Jerusalem's history, and in his own life, why would Nehemiah begin his first big speech to the people by saying, "You see the trouble we are in..."?

Leaders see a situation _____,
 not as we _____,
 and not as we _____.

When leading ourselves and others well, why is it important not to sugarcoat the truth of our circumstances?

In verse 18, Nehemiah finally gave the people some hope, but when he could have claimed the honor for himself, he gave credit to others. Who did he point to as the source of Jerusalem's new hope, and why does that matter?

Matthew 19:22-26

22 When the young man heard this, he went away sad, because he had great wealth. 23 Then Jesus said to his disciples, "Truly I tell you, it is hard for someone who is rich to enter the kingdom of heaven. 24 Again I tell you, it is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle than for someone who is rich to enter the kingdom of God."

25 When the disciples heard this, they were greatly astonished and asked, "Who then can be saved?" 26 Jesus looked at them and said, "With man this is impossible, but with God all things are possible."

Why do you think Jesus was so concerned about rich people not entering the kingdom of heaven? What is it about wealth that prevents us from entering God's kingdom?

After sounding the alarms about wealth, Jesus went on to indicate that rich people have a chance after all (v.26). Even though his ultimate message was hopeful, Jesus got very real about the dangers of wealth *before* saying there's hope. Why?

The Leader's Burden

Some of us are leaders, but we aren't leading. We're neglecting our duty to lead, especially when it's unpleasant, uncomfortable, and inconvenient. Discomfort and inconvenience are to be expected when we're leading ourselves and others well. For Jesus, leadership took the form of a cross. And for us, it can often feel the same way. **What, specifically, holds you back from pushing yourself toward your leadership potential?**

Like Nehemiah, take stock of your situation, get real with yourself and ask God: *what habits and disciplines do I need to pursue to become the leader you made me to be?*