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Message: Leading Like Jesus in Crisis (Era)

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Introduction:

We are living in a distressing time in modern human history. Events in recent months are extraordinary both in magnitude and impact. They have humbled humanity, nations and governments are struggling to get back on their feet. One of such upsetting events is Covid-19 – the global pandemic that took us all by surprise. It has not only shaken the table, but has rattled the global village like nothing else in nearly one hundred years. What a time to be alive to play leadership roles – be it secular, political, economic and especially spiritual. What a period to provide Jesus kind of leadership for a nervous world.

However, it is not only Covid-19 pandemic with its health and economic chaos that has tilted our apple's cart. We have also witnessed, within months, incredible social disorder; induced racial ranting and debates; public protests/religiously motivated crisis and politically orchestrated media conflicts.

Brothers, We Are in Crisis

As the world wades through these mega crises the Church seems to have come under a rare examination. During these months of chaos and confusion the world went shopping for essential service providers. Like a global conspiracy, the Church didn't make it to the list of essential humanity service providers! The leadership we offer doesn't set a higher standard over the world's! We aren't needed the most, so they left out in the cold, shivering.

This season, like similar times in human history calls for true leaders to provide direction, guidance, and hope. It calls for leaders who will interpret the compass, stir the ship and calm our nerves. This kind of leaders, though not immune from what the led are suffering must nonetheless lead well, while the crisis lasts. It is a new normal, a season that requires a Jesus kind of leadership. Leadership that thrives, like Jesus', right in the midst of the storm!

Types of crisis common to leaders.

As an African adage says, *the toughest measure of leadership skill is the ability of the leader to successfully resolve crisis*. It goes to say that those who lead well in crisis are real leaders. For leaders, secular or spiritual, crisis always lurks around the corner. Let me highlight two kinds of crises that leaders are exposed to, no matter their status or level of leadership responsibilities.

1. Personal crisis – this includes personal moral failure, fear and a sense of failure, inner struggles, and discouragement.
2. Public crisis – ranging from protests, pandemic, prejudice, oppositions, assaults, and societal/spiritual plight.

Jesus Model of leadership in crisis

Let's attempt to answer some probing questions: ***How did Jesus provide leadership and direction in a God-honoring way when he was in the midst of crisis? How did He lead when he was stressed out by the public crises that brought His leadership and person under intense physical, emotional, and psychological aggression? Did He press leadership pause button till the crises were over?***

- When He heard that John was arrested, He withdrew into Galilee... Matt 4:12
- His jailed cousin sought a proof of His messiahship: "Are you the one..." Matt 11:3,7
- When He heard of John's death, he empathized and moved on. Matt 14:13

- Hunted by the enemy of the truth and invited to play to the gallery. John 7:1-6
- Ridiculed before His team, publicly smeared, his legitimacy queried. Mark 6:1-6
- There was a Mob attempt to make Him king, He recalibrated. (John6:15
- Labeled demoniac and the public protest, subject of arrest. John 7:32-53

To Lead like-Jesus one must have a chief aim and that is – to glorify God in all the earth! (John 17:4)
How do we apply his leadership in those crises to our own crisis time?

Rather than asking what would Jesus do maybe we should answer, what did Jesus do?

1. Jesus committed to **strategic doing** – never losing His **main essence**
2. Jesus escaped from the **dark side of distraction** – **focus** on the essential
3. Jesus **stayed healthy** while the crisis lasts – never run dry of **emotional strength**
4. Jesus never complicated things – simplicity in the face of complexity
5. Jesus empathized with the crisis-ridden world – he was not isolationist

Leading like Jesus in crisis is like building a ship while already on the high sea. To not sink requires delicate balance

- Skill and knowledge – Facebook or face mask: you can't pick the cheery by zoom.
- Listening and hearing – online or offline, zoom or zip: as sorrowful, yet always rejoicing.
- Delight and despair – count it all joy: known yet unknown, poor making many rich.
- Concern and Confusion – having nothing yet possessing everything.

We must note that whereas each crisis has expiry date, yet crisis will never end, so long as humans are on the earth. And we will always seek leadership to address them. Providing Christ-like leadership while managing these crises is a huge spiritual undertaking. Only God can make this happen as we yield to the working of His Spirit to make us more like Jesus, and less of the Asian Guru, the African Chief, the American CEO or the Latino Activist.

Ten Tips to stay fresh while leading like Jesus in Crisis Time

Pray & supplicate before God to seek His purpose, will and direction (pursue a richer PQT);
Recognize, Discern, investigate, cross-check and follow God's voice and word in crisis time
Identify and prioritize your roles, goals, objectives and results to discover and follow.
Reorient yourself to the new realities for change of direction or courageously re-focus;
Internalize and own the new revelations as life-line through the crisis, as you look up to God
Use your Time well to do something, per time in line with your desired results, plans
Mobilize others (mobilize resources, capacity, learn, collaborate, partner and network);
Stay in your call to pursue and finish the "**musts**" of your life and calling well and strong;
Leadership in crisis is part of a journey_from God's perspective, crises are short lived

God is calling us to a leadership ministry in the hour of crisis. The ultimate is the glory of God, the immediate is the triumphalist feeling of being on top of the game. Let me restate my lifetime position on this: **"Do not sacrifice the ultimate at the altar of the immediate!" ##**

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Breakout Group Discussion Questions

1. How is the crisis of confidence that Jesus went through in Mark 6:1-6 similar to what the world thinks of the church today? And how do we do something when we can't do anything!
2. How has strategic doing been helpful in your moment of crisis?
3. If leading like Jesus is similar to building a ship while the voyage has started, what lessons have we learned from individual encounters in our leadership journey.
4. Of the ten tips for stay fresh, which two do you consider none negotiable and why?