

Old Testament Sermon Outline No: 9

Subject: The Jethro Principle

How to manage people

Textual context: Deuteronomy 18

Introduction

Moses the leader of the Children of Israel. Having become the champion of the people and knowing the call of God on his life he felt it his duty to give his wise counsel to all who needed it. He therefore sat from morning to evening judging people.

1. Moses the chief and only judge

Moses is now spending the whole of his time doing things that others were capable of doing. This is often the story of successful pastors who feel keenly the call of God on their lives yet believe only they have the gifts and skills to do things. It is difficult for subordinates to bring balance in this situation.

2. Moses makes his case

Jethro, Moses father in law, received a visit. He spends a day looking at the work Moses is doing. It must have been a great shock to hear Jethro's verdict on his working.

Jethro asks just one question. "What is this thing that you are doing for the people? Why do you alone sit, and all the people stand before you from morning until evening?" The reply is typical today of a senior leader. "Because the people come to me to inquire of God. When they have a difficulty, they come to me, and I judge between one and another; and I make known the statutes of God and His laws."

Sounds very spiritual and right. Yet look at the situation. There are one million people at least and one person has the mind of the Lord for each individual! Possibly a little extreme thinking or nobody can do without me syndrome.

3. Jethro's Analysis

Jethro's reply was to the point. He ignores the idea that Moses seeks God for each problem. The senior leader always puts his work in spiritual terms. Makes it more difficult to challenge what he or she is doing.

Jethro says, "The thing that you do is not good. Both you and these people who are with you will surely wear yourselves out. For this thing is too much for you; you are not able to perform it by yourself"

We can only guess that his leaders cried out Hallelujah but with a low voice.

In sometimes needs an outsider to point out to a leader that he is doing work others and easily do given the chance.

A writer on management once said that with a person obtaining high office, if he had not surrounded himself with people of equal or higher ability he has failed.

4. Jethro's Solution

First of all he requires Moses to listen while he gives him counsel. He adds a spiritual context by saying 'and God be with you.'

- (a) Stand before God only on the difficult problems
- (b) Delegate the problems in order of magnitude to people who can adequately deal with them.

5. Selection of subordinates

Selection based upon character. They are to fear God, be men of truth, and hate covetousness (so they would be difficult to bribe),

6. Deployment of Staff

Depending upon ability there should be appointed rulers of thousands, rulers of hundreds, rulers of fifties and rulers of ten.

7. Function of Rulers

They are to judge people at all times. Only bringing to Moses the difficult problems that cannot solved up the line.

8. Jethro's suggested results

"If you do this thing, and God so commands you, then you will be able to endure, and this entire people will also go to their place in peace."

9. Moses response.

He accepted the advice and he may have saved his life and kept his strength and ability to solve major problems.

Conclusion

Modern management often uses the Jethro Principle in managing their own organisation. So this tried and proved principle has lasted thousands of years. This proves that if non-Christians apply Bible principles to their own private lives or businesses, God will bless his own principles.