



1-7-18 Sermon Discussion Guide "To Lead is to Fail"

Context

This is the Sunday we ordain and install our church officers! We pray over and lay hands on our elders and deacons, as they covenant to serve the church in their new positions. This is also the Sunday in the church liturgical calendar where we celebrate Jesus' baptism. On this day we also remember our own baptism. Through both of these events, we see that in Baptism, God claims us and empowers us to be God's servants.

Checking In

Since the last time your group has met, how have each of you experienced God at work? What have you celebrated? What have you mourned?

Introduction

Think of a time when somebody helped you accomplish something great. Did you have parents who taught you how to accomplish hard goals? Was there a teacher who inspired to go further in your education? God uses people and events in our lives to equip us for leadership. This week we talk about leading, and the challenges we face when we fail as leaders.

Discussing the Text – Mark 1:9-13, Matthew 4:1-10, Luke 4:1-12

1. Read these two stories of the same event. What differences do you notice between the two?
2. Throughout Mark's Gospel, he frequently uses the phrase "immediately" or "at once." What is the significance of this phrase in Mark 1:12. Why do you think Mark so closely connects Jesus' baptism with his temptation?
3. Describe how Jesus is being tempted in Matthew 4. What are the three ways he's being tested?
4. What does Jesus do to resist the temptation in each instance?
5. Why do you think all three versions of the story tell the details differently? Is there any significance that Matthew and Luke change the order of events?

So what?

1. If both Matthew and Mark connect Jesus' baptism with these temptations, what do you think the Gospel writers are trying to tell us about our own trials and temptations?
2. Do you see a connection with trying to lead people and being tempted? If yes, what do you see?
3. How could you follow Jesus' example of resisting temptation? Can you think of other leaders in the Bible who gave in when they were tempted? How did God use them anyway?
4. Read Mark 10:42-45. What does this tell you about leading others? Is it something only people who are high up, or something that anybody can do?
5. How does remembering our baptism give us reassurance when we fail? Read Mark 1:11. Do you think these words are for you, too?
6. Who is God calling you to lead by serving? What temptations do you fear as you lead? Are there portions of the Bible you can draw from that would help you when tempted like Jesus did?

Prayer

Share something you are thankful for and/or something for which you need support. Have the group thank God for claiming them in their baptism, and ask God to empower them this week as they lead others.