

UNIVERSITY OF CAPE COAST

**GREATNESS IN MATTHEW 20:20-34: IMPLICATIONS FOR
LEADERSHIP IN CHRISTIAN COMMUNITIES**

CEPHAS KWAME ADEHENU

2013

UNIVERSITY OF CAPE COAST

GREATNESS IN MATTHEW 20:20-34: IMPLICATIONS FOR
LEADERSHIP IN CHRISTIAN COMMUNITIES

BY

CEPHAS KWAME ADEHENU

Thesis presented to the Department of Religion and Human Values of the
Faculty of Arts, University of Cape Coast, in partial fulfillment of the
requirement for the award of Master of Philosophy Degree in Religion and
Human Values

AUGUST 2013

DECLARATION

Candidate's Declaration

I hereby declare that this thesis is the result of my own original work and that no part of it has been presented for another degree in this university or elsewhere.

Candidate's Signature: Date

Name: CEPHAS KWAME ADEHENU

Supervisor's Declaration

We hereby declare that the preparation and the presentation of the thesis were supervised in accordance with guidelines on supervision of thesis laid down by the University of Cape Coast.

Principal Supervisor's Signature:..... Date:

Name: Rev. Prof. Eric Bortey Anum

Co-Supervisor's Signature: Date:

Name: Rev. Dr. Paul Appiah-Sekyere

ABSTRACT

This study examined Matthew 20:20-34. The visit of the mother of Zebedee's children and her two sons to Jesus in search for the greatest position (the right and left seat) in Christ's kingdom set the tone for the research. Their request for the highest position prompted Jesus to question their commitment to what they were asking for. The response of the two to his question and the reaction of the other ten disciples after hearing of the visit of the two sons of Zebedee, gave Jesus the opportunity to teach them some lessons on greatness. The exegetical method was employed in this study and the narrative critical reading was employed to study the text.

The research came out with some findings. Firstly, that sacrifice and commitment alone are not enough for qualifying one for the greatest position in the kingdom. Secondly, the concept of servants and slaves put forward as a metaphor for leaders preferred by Christ to other leadership styles practiced in Jesus' context. Jesus' lesson to his disciples who wanted to attain greatness in leadership was that they should not emulate the example that is short of what he explained in this text.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I am greatly indebted to Rev. Prof. Eric Bortey Anum, my principal supervisor, for his enormous effort in helping me to finish this thesis. My heartfelt appreciation also goes to all my lecturers who tutored and encouraged me in my research.

I am also grateful to all my course mates and most especially to the late Rev. Joseph Aryee who encouraged and motivated me to apply for the course and even paid my hostel fees for the first year and not forgetting my other course mate Sister Rachel Atorkey. She attended to my emergency calls and was always ready to offer me the needed assistance. Rev Nelson Adayi also deserves my profound gratitude for the financial support in my study.

My sincere thanks also go to my entire family and most especially to my wife for the support and assistance she gave throughout my study and thesis writing. The House of Prayer Assemblies of God Church in Ho, Volta Region cannot be left out. They had been the backbone and support to me in all my studies here in University of Cape Coast. I finally extend my heartfelt gratitude to all and sundry who in their own small ways contributed to my completion of the thesis.

DEDICATION

To my family

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Contents	Page
DECLARATION	ii
ABSTRACT	iii
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS	iv
DEDICATION	v
TABLE OF CONTENTS	vi

CHAPTER

ONE INTRODUCTION

Background to the Study	1
Statement of the Problem	3
Purpose of the Study	3
Significance of the Study	4
The Objective of the Study	4
Limitations	5
Delimitations	5
Research Methodology	5
Research Instrument	11
Literature Review	11
Organization of Chapters	21
Summary of Chapter One	21
Reflection	23

TWO THE GOSPEL OF MATTHEW

Introduction	24
The Text of Matthew	25

Survey of the Gospel of Matthew	27
Themes in the Gospel of Matthew	28
Summary of Chapter Two	33
Reflection	35

THREE EXEGESIS OF MATTHEW 20:20-34

Introduction	38
Background to the Story	38
Biblical Exegesis of Matthew 20:20-34	43
First Plot	44
Second Plot	49
Third Plot	55
Fourth Plot	58
Summary of Chapter	61
Reflection	63

FOUR ISSUES RAISED IN MATTHEW 20:20-34

Introduction	65
Concept of Knowing One's Limits and Boundaries	66
Inadequacy of Sacrifice and Commitment Alone in Qualifying for Leadership	68
Concept of Servant and Slave used as Metaphor for Leadership	70
Putting Others First Preferred to Self-Centeredness in Seeking for Greatness	76
Summary of Chapter Four	80
Reflection	82

FIVE IMPLICATIONS FOR LEADERSHIP IN CHRISTIAN COMMUNITIES

Introduction	84
The Leader and the Community	86
Servant Leadership	88
Forging New Trends for Leadership	92
Summary	94
Reflection	96

SIX SUMMARRY, CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Introduction	99
Summary of Chapters 1-5	99
Findings	108
Conclusion	111
Recommendations	113
Reference	115

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

This work looks at Matthew 20:20-34 as a narrative. Richard N. Soule, quoting Aristotle, defined narrative as “the relating of an event in which there is a buildup (desis) and a release (lysis) of tension”, or “a plot with a beginning, a middle, and an end” (Soule, 1981). The purpose of this work is to discover some leadership principles in the visit of the mother of Zebedee’s children to Jesus in search for the position in the kingdom (buildup of the story), how that visit culminated into leadership wrangling among the disciples as they all desired for the greatest position and the leadership principles Jesus taught his disciples which resolved the misunderstanding among his disciples on who actually should be regarded as the greatest in his kingdom (release of tension). The study used narrative criticism, a text centered approach, in the interpretation of the text.

Background to the Study

The story of the two sons of Zebedee in Matthew 20:20-34 who were trying to use the influence of their mother to obtain greatest leadership positions could be accurately identified as a leadership struggle for a position. Cozer (1956) observed that leadership struggle is a struggle over values and claims to scarce status, power, and resources in which the aims of the opponents are to neutralize, injure, or eliminate their rivals. It is the researcher’s view that internal wrangling and leadership struggles as

to who is the greatest are capable of destroying the effectiveness of any organization if it is not handled carefully. For example, the story in Matthew 20:20-34 narrates that the other ten disciples were indignant with the sons of Zebedee when they were struggling for the greatest position. As result, Jesus had to intervene to help them focus on the right leadership principles and responsibilities that make someone greatest in his kingdom. The teaching of Jesus on who should be deemed great gave the disciples some lessons on how Christ expects leadership to be viewed by all leaders.

Furthermore, based on the theme of this thesis “Greatness in Matthew 20:20-34; Implication for leadership in Christian communities,” the writer would want to consider the fact that Matthew has in mind church leaders while writing his gospel. To buttress this fact, Robert Horton Gundry (1967), in his book “The Use of the Old Testament in St. Matthew’s Gospel” suggested that K. Stendhall (1954), proposed in his book “The School of St. Matthew and its use of the Old Testament” that the Gospel originated from a Matthean school, which was designed for teachers and church leaders. According to this theory, it has been observed that Matthew produced the gospel according to Matthew in the form of a manual for teaching and administration within the church.

If so, it could therefore be deduced that the author of the gospel according to Matthew seeks in most of his writings to instruct leaders. For instance in Matthew 20:20-34, where the disciples with Jesus were divided on who should be the greatest, the author wrote to teach who actually could be regarded as the greatest according to Jesus’ leadership principles.

William G. Thompson (1970) observed that the community to which Matthew wrote his Gospel was divided; therefore Matthew's purpose was to give advice to a divided community on leadership issues.

The Matthew 20:20-34 story has been studied and analyzed by many scholars but the researcher is of the view that reading this story as a narrative while focusing on greatness as leadership issue may bring a divergent view on how many other scholars consider the text.

Statement of the Problem

Almost all human institutions are confronted with leadership difficulties. Churches and all religious institutions also have their fair share of issues that have to do with leadership problems. "Conflict theory posits that social groups or classes compete with each other in order to obtain resources that the society deems important" (McCafferty, 2011). In this research, the researcher is of the view that internal wrangling among groups or classes competing with each other for leadership position must be guided and guarded by good leadership principles.

Therefore internal wrangling among groups or classes competing with each other for the greatest leadership position is the problem this research is about. To address this, the researcher employed narrative criticism to tease out from Matthew 20:20-34 certain principles of leadership that can be used in dealing with this problem.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of the study was to read Matthew 20:20-34 using narrative criticism. Implications for Christian communities on greatness

were drawn out. The lessons drawn from how Jesus looked at greatness in leadership would be made available in the form of suggestions to churches and corporate bodies that may need them.

Significance of the Study

Many scholarly works like that of Gundry (1967), Harris (1999) and many more on Matthew 20:20-34 look at it from the historic perspective. However, this research looks at the text from the narrative perspective. It considered the entire text as a story while the individual characters mentioned in the story had specific roles to play. Looking at the text this way could be another way of reading the text.

Furthermore, this study would add to existing knowledge on leadership and may also serve as a reference for further research.

The Objective of the Study

The objective of this study includes:

1. To find out how greatness is perceived in the Gospel of Matthew and his community.
2. To exegete Matthew 20:20-34 using narrative criticism.
3. To evaluate the issues that come out of the exegesis of Matthew 20:20-34
4. To find out the implications of the text for leaders in Christian communities.

Limitations

The main difficulty the researcher encountered in this research was how to get available information from the university library. The departmental library and other libraries consulted also had limited resources.

Secondly, after the researcher gained access to the resources, it has been observed that most of the texts used were ten years old or even printed earlier except for resources which were accessed on the internet.

Delimitations

The research was limited in respect to the text chosen for the study. The researcher was limited to Matthew 20:20-34 though there were other texts which equally deal with leadership problems. Though Matthew 20:20-28 seemed to be the accepted periscope, the researcher decided to use Matthew 20:20-34 because versus 29-34 were used as illustration of what transpired in the earlier versus.

The researcher intended the study to be applicable to all leaders and church organizations in Christian communities; however he was limited to using exegesis and did not interview any corporate leader or church leader for the research.

Research Methodology

The research used narrative criticism to exegete Matthew 20: 20-34. This method has been selected because the study requires that the researcher employs the application of literary critical method to the study of the text selected. The exegesis in this work utilizes narrative-critical

reading of Matthew 20:20-34 because it has the advantage of dealing with the text as a self-contained unit, avoiding the fragmentation often produced by other methodologies.

Alter (1981) explains that literary analysis of the Bible involves the manifold varieties of minutely discriminating attention to the artful usage of language to the shifting play of ideas, conventions, tone, sound, imagery, syntax, narrative viewpoint and compositional units. These manifold varieties will be employed by the researcher to exegete the text.

Exegesis implies understanding the biblical text in its final form. From the scholarly point of view, the final form of the text generally is the complete literary form –the text as we have it at the moment. In this state of the text, a reader reads it without necessary reference to its literary origins and development. Stamps (1997) explained that narratological criticism is a critical approach to the New Testament which is concerned with the final form of the text.

According to Alter, (1981) one of the proponents of narrative criticism of the Bible described the Bible as “prose fiction”. He stated in his book *The Art of Biblical Narrative* that the Religious vision of the Bible is given depth and subtlety precisely by being conveyed through the most sophisticated resource of prose fiction. Therefore in the opinion of Alter (1981), the Bible can also be read as fiction because it contains narrations like all other fiction books. He also indicated that:

“The stories in the Bible are not strictly speaking historiography, but rather the imaginative reenactment of history by a gifted writer who organizes his materials along certain thematic biases and accordingly to his own

remarkable intuition of the psychology of the characters. He feels entirely free ... to invent interior monologue for his characters, to ascribe feeling, intention, or motive to them when he chooses; to supply verbatim dialogue for occasion when no one but the actors themselves could had knowledge of exactly what was said” (Alter 1981, 35).

To undertake the analysis before doing the thorough narrative criticism of the text, Jean Louis Ska (1990) recommends that three steps are to be considered in the process. They are; translation of the text into literal and literary form, delimitation of the text and provision of summary. According to Alter’s (1981) work, synopses grouped under the following general rubrics are used to guide the researcher in the narrative critical reading of the text: characters and type-scenes, words, actions, dialogue and narration.

1. Characters and Type-Scenes

- a. Biblical type-scenes occur at crucial junctures in the lives of the heroes, from conception and birth to betrothal to deathbed. Not every type-scene will occur for every major hero, though often the absence of a particular type-scene may itself be significant (Alter, 1981).
- b. A particular narrative event occurs when the narrative tempo slows down enough for us to discriminate a particular scene, to have the illusion of the scene’s “presence” as it unfolds, to be able to imagine the interaction of personages or sometimes personages and groups, together with the freight of motivations, ulterior aims, characteristics traits, political, social, or religious constraints, moral

and theological meanings borne by their speech, gestures and acts (Alter, 1981).

- c. The biblical writers are less concerned with actions in themselves than with how the individual character responds to actions or produce them. Direct speech is made the chief instrument for revealing the varied and at times nuanced relations of the personages to the actions to which they are implicated (Alter, 1981).
- d. In biblical narrative, it is almost always the characters rather than the narrators who introduce figurative language. In any given narrative event, and especially, at the beginning of any new story, the point at which dialogue first emerge will be worthy of special attention, and in most instances, the initial words spoken by a personage will be revelatory, perhaps more in manner than in matter, constituting an important moment in the exposition of character (Alter, 1981)
- e. Bible writers tell their tales: beginning with narration, they move into dialogue, drawing back momentarily or at length to narrate again but always entering on the sharply salient verbal intercourse of the character who acts upon one another, discover themselves and affirm or expose their relation to God through the force of language (Alter, 1981).

2. Words

- a. Concerning the use of words in a narrative, the repetition of single words or brief phrases often exhibit frequency, a saliency, and a thematic significance (Alter, 1981)
- b. The one most prominent device involve the repetition of single words in the use of *Leitwort*, the thematic key-word, as a way of enunciating and developing the moral, historical, psychological, or theological meaning of a story (Alter, 1981).
- c. When a relational epithet is attached to a character, or conversely, when a relational identity is stated without the character's proper name, the narrator is generally telling us something substantive without recourse to explicit commentary (Alter, 1981).

3. Actions

- a. Recurrence, parallels, analogy are the hallmarks of reported action in the biblical tale. In the Bible, analogies often play an especially critical role because the writers tend to avoid more explicit modes of conveying evaluation of particular characters and acts (Alter, 1981).
- b. When we can detect two versions of a single event, it is safe to assume that the writer has utilized a montage of sources, and the question we might ask is: "why he should have done this and in what ways do the two narrative perspectives complement or complicate each other?" (Alter, 1981).

4. Dialogue

- a. When a narrative event in the Bible seems important, the writer will render it mainly through dialogue, so the transitions from narration to dialogue provide in themselves some implicit measure of what is deemed essential, what is conceived to be ancillary or secondary to the main action (Alter, 1981).

5. Narration

- a. The reticence of the biblical narrator, his refusal to comment on or explain what he reports, is purposively selective. Why, we should ask ourselves, is a motive or feeling attributed to one character and not to another? Why is one character's attitude toward another stated flatly in one instance, and entirely withheld from us in a third? (Alter 1981).
- b. We should direct special attention to those moments when the illusion of unmediated action is manifestly shattered. Why at a particular juncture does a narrator break the time-frame of his story to insert a piece of expository information in the pluperfect tense, or jump forward to the time of his contemporary audience and explains that in those days it was the custom in Israel to perform such and such practice? Why does he pause to make a summarizing statement about the condition of a character? Why at certain points is the regular rapid tempo of narration slowed down to take in details of a kind for which in general no time is allowed? (Alter, 1981).

Secondly, exegesis is said to be the “drawing out of” a text what it means (Osborne, 1991). In this study the researcher used narrative criticism, text centered approach to retell the story in Matthew 20:20-28 which culminated into what is called a narrative research.

Research Instrument

The research drew on the Greek text as a tool. The researcher carefully translated the text (Matthew 20:20-34) from Greek to English. The translation aided the researcher to do close reading of the text. It also facilitated the entire exegetical process while having in mind Stuart’s definition of exegesis in the Anchor Bible Dictionary (1992) which states that, “exegesis is the process of a careful analytical study of the biblical passages undertaken in order to produce useful interpretations of these passages.” This systematic and interrelated approach to the text indicates that no single text or passage could be treated in isolation in the narrative.

Literature Review

The literature review was geared towards investigating how scholars interpreted Mathew 20:20-34 in respect to seeking to be the greatest as a leadership issue. The review of literature on the text considered the following issues. First, the circumstances that led to the story in Mathew 20:20-34; second, the issue of the desire for greatness-good or bad; third, comparing Matthew 20:20-34 to Mark 10:35-45; furthermore, the meaning of the words δῆκονος and δουλος in Matthew 20:26; finally, Jesus’ views on greatness.

1) Circumstances that led to the story in Mathew 20:20-34

Scholars like Richard (1987) and Omoteye (2004) observed that the question the disciples asked on who was the greatest in the kingdom (Matthew 18:1) stimulated a series of answers from the Lord. The disciples were surprised at Jesus' answer. Instead of answering the question, he spoke to them about becoming little children. Then in Matthew 19:28 he said that at the renewal of all things in his kingdom those who have followed him will sit on twelve thrones judging the twelve tribes of Israel. The two brothers gathered from the Lord's statement that there will twelve thrones and knowing these throne could be for the twelve of them made them desire the sits that will be closest to the Master-sitting at his right and left.

As mentioned above, The Bible Knowledge Commentary (1978) also stated that Jesus' discussion about "the renewal of all things" (19:28) prompted John and James to ask their mother to, come and see Jesus on their behalf. The mother of James and John brought them to Jesus and requested that her two sons must be granted a place of favor in the kingdom (Matthew 20:20). The researcher therefore shares the view that the words of Jesus in Matthew 19:28 encouraged John and James to ask their mother to come and see Jesus on their behalf, so that they would sit at his right and his left hand side in his kingdom. According to the IVP Bible Background Commentary (1993), it was regarded in both the Jewish and Roman circles that the indirect intercession of a motherly woman was often more effective than a man's direct petition for himself, however this does not work in the

case of the Zebedee brothers (Keener, 1999). Keener is absolutely right in that the mothers of Zebedee's two sons could not use her famine attributes to win the favor of Jesus.

Jesus's words could be signaled as the very reason why the two brothers did what transpired in Matthew 20:20-28. For the fact that there will be twelve thrones in the coming kingdom, they sought to sit on the thrones that are closest to the King.

2) The Desire for Greatness in Leadership

Sanders claims that (1994), the word ambition (desire for greatness) is said to have come from a Latin word "campaigning for promotion" which suggests social visibility and approval, popularity, peer recognition, the exercise of authority over others. Understanding this word, in my opinion give us the hint on the attitude of the two brothers in our text. By their desire for the position of greatness they were ambitious or campaigning for promotion which in my opinion is natural because it is alright for every person to desire for higher position.

However, Engstrom (1976) opined that for centuries Christian mystics and others have written and spoken disparagingly of ambition (desire for greatness), in the ordinary sense of the word, thinking it to be sinful. Havey (2010) contrasting what Engstrom said observed that "Without the desire for greatness people become lazy. If you undermine ambition, you rob people of their desire and will to do something great with their lives"

The researcher is therefore of the view that the desire for greatness in leadership by itself is not bad. The Bible said in 1 Timothy 3:1 that, “If anyone sets his heart on being an overseer, he desires a noble task (NIV). But the problem probably with John and James in our text was that they did not go about it in the right manner because their desire for greatness was more self-centered than people centered.

3) Comparing Matthew 20:20-34 to Mark 10:35-45

Harris (1999) observed that in Mark, the sons of Zebedee-James and John directly asked Jesus for position of honor. In his opinion, they did this presumably to satisfy their personal ambitions. However in Mathew, it was their mother who made the request on their behalf though Jesus had already promised his followers a share in his heavenly rule (Matthew 19:27-91). According to Harris (1999), the prediction that the two sons of Zebedee will follow their master to a martyr’s death indicates that Matthew wrote his epistle after both apostles had died (Harris, 1999).

Freed (2001) also observed that the request of Zebedee’s two sons had two answers from the Lord (Mark 10:38-40 and 10:41-45). Firstly, they were to understand that the desire for greatness is tantamount to drinking the cup of suffering (Mark 10:38-40). Secondly, whoever want to be great must be the servant and the slave among them (Mark 10:41-45). He went on further to claim that the actual answer to the request of the two sons can be found in Mark 10:40; the sitting on the place of greatness (right or left) is not his responsibility but the prerogative of his father above. He

detected that Matthew's account of the story of the Zebedee's sons was taken from Mark (Freed, 2001).

Brown (1997) saw the Matthew story as a build-up on the third prediction of the passion (Matthew 20:17-19). In his opinion, the prediction leads into the misunderstanding represented by request for the place in the kingdom as stated in Matthew 20:20-28. Therefore in order to avoid dishonoring the apostles, Matthew decided to shift the request from the sons in Mark to their mother. He also added that, the twelve had been already promised thrones of judgment when the Son of Man sits in glory. Evidently, this is not the same as sitting at the right and left in the kingdom (Brown, 1997).

The researcher therefore would want to state that though Fred (2001) was emphatic that the story of Zebedee's sons in Matthew was taken from Mark there was some difference in the story. Though Matthew and Mark according to Harris (1999) seemed to present the story differently on who actually approached Jesus, Brown (1997) put the matter to rest by explaining that Matthew intentionally used the mother of Zebedee's two sons so as to avoid dishonoring the two Apostles.

Secondly, the writer concurs with Harris and Brown that the desire of Zebedee's two sons as stated by Mark and Matthew brought tension into the camp of the disciples. The emotions displayed by the other ten were as result of the embedded desire in all of them to ascend to the greatest position in Christ's kingdom.

4) **The meaning of the words διάκονος and δούλος**

The words διάκονος (servant) and δούλος (slave) used in verses 26 and 27 respectively paint the picture which contrasts the world's view on greatness. To Jesus a true leader is the one who abandons power and authority in order to serve others. He chooses to minister to others. He does not coerce his people but by the power of his example and love motivates others to make the right decision. In carrying out his duty, the servant does not magnify his own importance but emphasizes the importance of others. Therefore the way to be the first (πρῶτος) is to be the servant (δούλος), the bond-slave Jesus asserted.

According to Thayer's Greek Lexicon, the word διάκονος (*diakonos*) is a word of uncertain origin probably a compound word which came from two words διά (*dia*) and κονις (*konis*). The word διά (*dia*) is a preposition denoting a channel of an act, and κονις (*konis*) also means "raising dust by hastening" or "to raise up dust by moving in a hurry, and therefore the compound of διά (*dia*) and κονις (*konis*) which is διάκονος (*diakonos*) means to minister." In other words it also means, "to kick up dust, as one running an errand."

Alexander Buttmann (1873) thinks it comes from the obsolete δίακω (*diako*) an equivalent of διηκω (*dieko*) which means one who executes the command of another, especially of a master, the person could be a sergeant, an attendant or a minister.

John Collins (1990) in his book "Diakonia Re-Interpreting the Ancient Sources" says that the word διάκονος (*diakonos*) might mean "go-

between”, or at any rate not have connotations of menial service. The word is also the root of the English terms “diaconate” and “deacon.” The word universally is used as a servant of a king and in the scripture it is used figuratively of those who advance others interests even at the sacrifice of their own. The word also signifies “to be a servant, attendant, to serve, wait upon, and minister.”

James Monroe Barnett (1996) states in his book “Diakonate: A Full and Equal Order” that the word δῆκονος (*diakonos*) literally means a servant and in particular a waiter. He added that the literal meaning of “waiter” should not mislead one to assume the diaconate, either in its origin or as it emerged in the early church as an office simply of menial service or even limited to the work of mercy and charity.

George Janvier and Bitrus Thaba (2005) also said in their book “Understanding Leadership-An African Christian Model” that every servant leader must understand that his position is not meant to be used for political power play, an authoritarian attitude, a cultic control, nor a flashy public relations and platform personality. Instead the position is a humble acceptance of a servant’s position before God in order to carry out the service of God.

I agree with the above scholars that the word δῆκονος (*diakonos*) means service. Whereas Buttman (1873) describes it as “one who executes the command of others” Collins (1990) indicates that a δῆκονος (*diakonos*) is “a go-between” or “an attendant.” Therefore a leader is supposed to serve or minister to those he leads as emphasized by Janvier

and Thaba (2005) above. A διάκονος (*diakonos*) must lead the way by showing his subordinates how to work through his examples. He shows how to do what needs to be done instead of telling his followers. He exemplifies in person instead of only giving commands. Unlike the people of the world who misunderstood the title of a minister to be someone who is untouchable and lording it over others, the word διάκονος (*diakonos*) should be understood to mean minister or servant. And if you are appointed to be a minister, you are appointed to serve the people who appointed you not to lord it over them.

The second word to be considered is ἄδουλοζ (*doulos*). The Enhanced Strong's Lexicon explains that the word ἄδουλοζ (*doulos*) is translated as a "servant," "bondman," and a man of servile condition. Metaphorically it means one who gives himself up to another's will. It is normally used in the New Testament for those whose service is used by Christ in extending and advancing his cause among men. A ἄδουλοζ (*doulos*) is the one who is devoted to another to the disregard of one's own interests. According to Thayer's Greek Lexicon, the word ἄδουλοζ (*doulos*) is derived from δεω (*deo*) which means "to tie," "bind," "fasten," "impel," "compel" and/or δαλω (*dalo*), which means "to ensnare," "capture," "serving," and "subject to." It also means one who gives himself up to others dominion. The researcher therefore is of the view that, the ἄδουλοζ (*doulos*) of Christ are those whose service is used by Christ in extending and advancing his cause among men.

One important thing about slaves that distinguishes them from servants is that; a servant could be hired and fired but a slave was owned by the master. Taylor Jay (2004), reveals in the “Discovery Journal” that the distinctive feature of δούλος (*doulos*) is that it refers to the subordinate and responsible nature of one’s service in exclusive relation to one’s Lord. It also emphasizes the obligatory character of the service for God and to one’s neighbor that is the duty of the community of those who have been set free by the Lord Jesus Christ.

Gathering from the scholarly presentations above, we can deduce that δούλος (*doulos*-slave) and its opposite κύριος (*kurios*-lord) are two words that describe both sides of a relationship. If there is a slave, there is lord and if there is a master there is a slave. To put it more blatantly, you don’t call yourself a master if you don’t have a slave and you are not a slave if you don’t have a master. Therefore a slave is someone whose life belongs totally to his master. The slave takes absolute ownership, absolute control, absolute subjection, absolute obedience, absolute loyalty and absolute dependence. The relationship between the slave and his master is such that the slave had nothing, willed nothing and received nothing but what the master authorized, desired and provided.

Furthermore the Bible says in Matthew 20:27 that whoever wants to be first must be your slave. Therefore the writer is of the opinion that Servants and slaves were two of the lowest positions in Jewish society and it would be difficult to expect that anyone would serve them and obey them. However, Jesus explicitly describes Christian leadership in such

stark and humbling terms, and as result, he reverses their status in the community of disciples to indicate prominence and greatness come by being the least and the lowest.

5) **Jesus' View on Greatness**

When Jesus heard the reaction of the ten against the two, *The Expositors Bible Commentary* observed that Christ calls them together and draws contrast between greatness among the Gentiles and greatness among heirs of the kingdom (Gæbelein, 1984). Notes on the New Testament by Albert Barnes (1956) on the other hand suggest that “he called all the apostles to him, and stated the principles on which they were to act” (p. 206). Commentary on Matthew by John Broadus (1990) stated that it was a sorrowful task for the loving savior to repress the ambition and asperities of the two disciples (John and James), therefore he called the disciples unto himself and refers to the fact that seeking high places of authority and dominion belongs to worldly kingdoms and it must not be so among them (Broadus, 1990). Robert Mounce (1991) also observed that although gentile rulers lord it over their subjects that is not the way it should be among them, because the secret of greatness is not the ability to tyrannize others but the willingness to become their servant (Mounce, 1991).

The researcher is of the view that the submissions of Gæbelein, (1984) and Barnes (1956) was right in that it was when Jesus sensed the misunderstanding of his disciples on who should be the greatest that he called them to himself and taught them. Although I did not agree with what John Broadus (1990) stated that Jesus was “repressing the ambition and

asperities of the two disciples (John and James),” it is obvious that Jesus was teaching them the right way. He explained to them that their ambitions (desire for greatness) were like the ambitions (desire for greatness) of the rulers of the Gentiles or the godless nations of the world. For it is the desire for worldly greatness, that causes people to dominate others. This wrong desire is almost all the time the origin of conflicts among colleagues and leaders. Then he finally taught them that, developing the attitude of humility and service is the best way to achieve true greatness in his kingdom.

Organization of Chapters

Chapter one covered background to the study, statement of the problem, purpose of study, limitation and delimitation of study, significance of study, and review of relevant literature. Chapter two looked at the entire gospel according to Matthew in which the background and its relation to the topic was considered. In chapter three, the exegesis of the selected text (Matthew 20:20-34) was done using narrative criticism as a tool. Chapter four considered the issues derived from the exegesis in chapter three. While chapter five considered the implications for leadership in Christian communities while chapter six summarized the study, offered some suggestions, and concluded the study

Summary

All human institutions including churches and religious institutions are not immune to conflicts. They have their fair share of this social problem.

In this research, the researcher tried to discover the lessons Jesus taught his disciples after the two sons of Zebedee and their mother in Matthew 20:20-28 visited Jesus with the aim of soliciting for the two most prominent positions in his kingdom.

The Matthew 20:20-28 story has been studied and analyzed by many scholars, but the researcher is of the view that reading this story as a narrative and by focusing on wanting to be the greatest among colleagues as a leadership problem in the story may bring a divergent view on how other scholars consider the text.

The purpose of the study was to read Matthew 20:20-28 using narrative criticism. The lessons drawn from how Jesus compared the way the people of the world looked at greatness, and how godly leaders should consider greatness are made available in the form of suggestions to churches and corporate bodies.

The research used biblical exegesis as methodology. These methods have been selected because the study requires that the researcher discovers biblical lessons based on exegesis that can be recommended to leaders and the contemporary Christian communities.

The literature review was geared towards investigating how scholars interpreted Mathew 20:20-34 in respect of greatness in leadership. The review of literature on the text considered (1) the circumstances that led to the story in Mathew 20:20-34; (2) the issue of leadership ambitions (desire to be great)-good or bad; (3) Comparing Matthew 20:20-34 to Mark 10:35-

45 (4) the meaning of the word δουλός and διακονος in Matthew 20:24; and (5) Jesus' View on Greatness.

Reflection

Who should wield the most power and authority in an organization? Is it the supervisor or the manager? In the local church who should be the highest decision making body? Is it the pastors or the elders? These are seldom asked questions which needed an attention.

For example, on June 25, 2003 there was a news item carried by Ghana News Agency on the Ghana Web on how the leadership of the Christ Apostolic Church, Ghana refused to hand over after new executives were elected to office. This unfortunate incident generated into conflict (Ghanaweb). The researcher is of the opinion that the above story, a leadership misunderstanding came about as a result one group assuming it should be considered the greatest. While the second group refused to succumb to the leadership of the other.

Similarly in our text, the two brothers and their mother who desired the greatest (to sit at the right and left of Christ) honor created misunderstanding in the camp for Jesus to deal with. Jesus seizing the opportunity taught the disciples a profound lesson on leadership. The lessons taught by Christ in Matthew 20:20-32 is what this study is all about.

CHAPTER TWO

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MATTHEW

Introduction

The gospel according to Matthew was a message before it became a book. The Greek term εὐαγγέλιον is the word used by the early church for the Gospel or the good news of the saving act of God in Jesus Christ. The books called “Gospels” are in the New Testament canon because they mediate saving message and because the rest of the canonical books are the norm for its continuing proclamation and interpretation.

The gospel according to Matthew is strategically placed first in the New Testament probably because of how his account seemed to be strongly tied to its antecedent revelation, the Old Testament. The gospel according to Matthew could be projected primarily as the Gospel for the Jew in the way it portrayed Jesus as the Messiah. However, the Gospel’s relevance to the gentiles and the present day church also could not be overemphasized.

It has been observed by some scholars that although New Testament books including the Gospels were arranged in a variety of orders in the early manuscripts, Matthew was always first and also the most quoted by the church fathers. This is so probably because Matthew was carefully structured to facilitate memory. Besides, Matthew began his gospel with a genealogy-this though distancing and forbidding many modern readers-

served the ancient reader as a bridge connecting the Gospel with the story of salvation in the Old Testament.

It has been observed by Carson and Moo (2005) that, Matthew's gospel is foundational not only as one looks backward to the Old Testament scriptures but also as one looks forward to what the church became. If this observation is true, then it implies that the gospel according to Matthew could also be considered as a seed plot on which the church can deduce vital lessons for its future. Stretching this truth further, it could be inferred that one of the vital lessons the gospel according to Matthew could present is the lesson on church leadership.

The Text of Matthew

Scholars like Hengel (1985), and Plummer (1909) vary on the authorship of the gospel according to Matthew which is traditionally ascribed to Matthew Levi, a tax collector or publican, whom Jesus called to be one of his disciples (Matthew 9:9-13). Scholars like Carson (2005) and Hagner (1995) are also of the view that nowhere in the gospel is the writer called Matthew. However, Carson and Moo (2005) stated that, though it is frequently asserted that the gospel commonly designated as Matthew's gospel is anonymous like the other three canonical gospels, there are no evidences that these gospels ever circulated without an appropriate designation *κατα μαθθαιον* "according to Matthew".

Fiensy (1994) observed that, the text of the gospel according to Matthew as we have it today has been reconstructed because the original manuscript, like all New Testament documents, has been lost. However he

reiterated that, text critics have been able to establish the best text (closest to the original) with great, but not absolute, degree of certainty.

There are scholarly viewpoints that Matthew used Mark as a major source and a collection of sayings of Jesus called “Q”. However the opinion of great majority of scholars continued to be that Matthew used “Q” in slightly different form from the version used by Luke and Mark as his major source along with materials peculiar to his own stream of tradition called “M”. As stated above, “M” may have contained collections of Scripture quotations particularly relevant to Matthean theology. Although a few of these materials could have been written down prior to Matthew, most, if not all, were handed down orally for a generation or more prior to Matthew.

The text as it comes to us is believed to have been written for Matthew’s own community to instruct them in their own faith and to clarify it over against misunderstandings, not as evangelistic or apologetic writing directed to outsiders (Fiensy, 1994).

Matthew, like all New Testament texts, should first be allowed to speak to the people of its own time in their conceptual framework, addressing their concerns; then also speaking to our concerns today. In fact all of Matthew is to be taken seriously as the church’s scripture because the text as a whole mediates the church’s message of the meaning of the Christ-event.

Survey of the Gospel according to Matthew

A general survey of the gospel according to Matthew reveals some important features. For example it could be observed that Matthew's Gospel includes many references to the Hebrew Scriptures and most especially from the prophetic texts. It refers to many Old Testament characters like Moses, Elijah, David, Isaiah and many more. In actual fact Matthew's Gospel has over sixty quotations from the Hebrew Scriptures. It almost all the time presents Jesus' words and actions as fulfilling prophecy.

The scripture quotations from the Hebrew Scriptures are sometimes introduced by what scholars call "fulfillment formula." For example Dawes (2010) stated that Matthew's Gospel continually looks back in order to look forward. He also submits that reading the Matthean Gospel with an Old Testament background will see the writer revealing how events in Jesus' life have πληρωθη (fulfill) a statement in the Old Testament.

Matthew presents Jesus as the fulfillment of Israel's prophetic hope. He fulfils Old Testament in his birth (1:22-23), birthplace (2:5-6), return from Egypt (2:15) and residence in Nazareth (2:23); as one for whom the messianic forerunner was sent (3:1-3); in the primary location of his ministry (4:14-16), his healing ministry (8:17), his role as God's servant (12:17-21), his teaching in parables (13:34-35), his triumphal entry into Jerusalem (21:4-5) and his arrest (26:56).

The gospel according to Matthew also presents five discourses and five major narratives in chapters 5 to 25. The five major discourses are: First, Sermon on the Mount (Chs.5-7); second, instruction for itinerant

evangelists of the kingdom (Ch.10); third, parables about the kingdom (Ch. 13); fourth, the character of true disciples (Chs.18); and fifth, the Olivet discourse about the end of the age (Chs.24-25). The five major narratives in this gospel are: first, Jesus performs mighty deeds and miracles, which testify about the reality of the kingdom (Chs.8-9); second, Jesus further demonstrates the presence of the kingdom (Chs.11-12); third, proclamation of the kingdom provokes various crises (Chs.14-17); fourth, Jesus journeys to Jerusalem and spends his last week there (19:1-26:46); fifth, Jesus' arrest, trial, crucifixion and raising from the dead (26:47-28:20). The last three verses of the gospel according to Matthew record Jesus' "Great Commission".

Themes in Matthew

It is somewhat difficult to lay hand on Matthew's dominant theme. Carson and Moo (2005) observed that Matthew's dominant themes are several, complex and sometimes disputed. The challenge is even more if one recognizes the fact that the Gospel, unlike an Epistle, is committed to describing what happened during the ministry of the historical Jesus.

Stanton (1993) also contributing to the argument that Matthew has many dominant themes in his Gospel has this to say:

"The evangelist writes with several strategies in mind. He intends to set out the story and significance of Jesus as a 'foundation document' for his readers: his primary aims are Christological and catechetical. In some passages he responds to criticisms and jibes which he knows are the stock in trade of his readers' Jewish opponents. In other passages he tries to account for the parting of the ways: he does this partly by laying the blame squarely on the Jewish leaders, partly by explaining the reasons for Israel's

continuing and almost total rejection of her Messiah, and partly by defending the emergence of the 'new people' as a distinct religious entity over against Judaism.”

One can deduce from the foregoing statement that the author of the gospel according to Matthew does not have one over-riding purpose or theme that provides the key to his gospel. There are many themes that could be cited as the author's motivation. For example, Fiensy (1994) suggested that Matthew's purposes were: First, to produce a church manual of conduct for church leaders, second, to produce a catechism for those about to be baptized, and finally, to appeal to the Jews to accept Jesus as the Christ.

There are specific theological themes in the gospel according to Matthew. As mentioned above Matthew's dominant themes are several. This challenge increases when we recognize that, Matthew unlike the epistle writers, is committed to describing what happened during the ministry of the historical Jesus while nevertheless addressing issues that are of theological importance. Below are some theological themes that were gleaned from the gospel according to Matthew.

For example, one of the outstanding themes in Matthew is Christology. The gospel according to Matthew combines a number of Christological emphases. For example, Jesus is for Matthew both "Son of God" (3:17; 4:1-11) and "Son of David" (1:1-17). As the "Son of God" he has unique relation with God, God revealing himself through his son, and Jesus proving his sonship through his obedience and example. The title "Son of David" is used exclusively in relation to miracles. The title "Son of

David” identifies Jesus as the healing and the miracle-working Messiah of Israel.

Another theme in the gospel according to Matthew is Ecclesiology. Mathew’s Gospel is concerned with Christian community and discipleship. It is the only gospel where the actual word *ἐκκλησία* “church” occurs (16:18; 18:17). In Matthew, the church is presumed to be different from Judaism. Though in the formative days of the Matthean community, they were probably attached to the Jewish community, Wim Weren (2005) observed that they slowly detached themselves from this social framework and came into contact with a broad multi-cultural network of Christian communities. This community comprised of both Jews and Gentiles. This group became known as the *ἐκκλησία* (church) in contrast to the *συναγωγή* (Synagogue) the domain dominated by the Pharisees.

The next observable theme in the gospel according to Matthew is eschatology. Jesus in his Mount Olivet discourse addressed his disciples after they asked him “What will be the signs of your coming and the end of the age?” (24:3). In response to the above question, Jesus gave them: (i) general signs of the course of the age leading up to the last days (24:4-14); (ii) special sign to indicate the final days of the age-the tribulation (24:15-28); (iii) spectacular signs to occur at his triumphant coming with power and great glory (24:29-31). Even though Matthew’s eschatology is not conclusive on the theme, it gave hints on the happenings in the last days of human history.

The gospel according to Matthew also touched on other theological themes such as pneumatology, soteriology and many more. Besides theological themes, the Gospel also has other important themes of which leadership is one.

Most scholars opined that Matthew's Gospel was preoccupied with the issues of church leadership. Wijngaards (1981) for example argued that, to understand the fact that leadership is dominant in the Gospel according to Matthew we have to switch our attention to Antioch, the city in which the Gospel in all likelihood was given its final edition. In his view, the reason for which the gospel of Matthew was preoccupied with church leadership was that in the second half of the first century, at the time Matthew's Gospel was being finalized, the Christian community in Antioch was sorely tested by "false prophets", people who claimed to be Christian while deviating from Christian beliefs and practices. As result, Matthew had to address leadership issues in the church. Some leadership principles addressed in Matthew are as follows:

Matthew projected Jesus to have taught with authority (7:29; 9:6; 28:18) and this authority has been passed on to the leaders of the church (10:1; 18:18; 28:18-20). This leadership type that Jesus used indicates he has all the power to solve every problem and he is in absolute control.

Jesus modeled servant leadership and taught leaders to do the same (20:25; 23:11). Even though Jesus is all powerful and has all authority, he demonstrated servanthood in his leadership. A servant leader could be said to be someone who leads by meeting the needs of those he leads. He is the

one who shares power, put the needs of others first, and helps people develop and perform as highly as possible.

In many ways, the entire life and ministry of Jesus was about setting priorities and living them and he urges others to do likewise (6:33;8:22). Prioritization is the essential skill one needs to make the very best of one's own effort and those he leads. Getting one's priorities right is a skill needed by leaders who want to chalk great success in their leadership roles.

Jesus taught us to put "being" before "doing." A good leader must live the life before he leads others (12:35). A leader's actions must back his words. The leader who practices "Do as I say, not as I do" philosophy sees the loss of enthusiasm and goodwill among his followers. Jesus on the other hand was presented by Matthew as a leader who led with integrity and by his example.

Leadership is not an easy task and therefore demands total commitment (16:24) and Jesus knowing of the challenges in leadership warns his followers of difficult times (8:20; 10:17; 24:9).

Leaders go through various challenges in the discharge of their responsibility. Matthew presented Jesus as a leader who was committed to the task and also disciplined in his vocation and calling (14:23). He urges his followers to do the same.

Jesus handled tough issues and did not easily give up (26:44-46). Leaders are to develop tenacity in the process of having their vision transformed into reality. Jesus is presented by Matthew as the ultimate and the best example for us to see what true tenacity is (16:1-4; 21:12-16; 26:1-

2). He refused to let go, he held fast and did not resign or quit. He urged his disciples also to persist, he said “He that endures to the end shall be saved” (10:22). Tenacity is a leadership quality that must not be underestimated by those who aspire to be successful leaders.

A leader must be visionary. Jesus is not only visionary but also transvisionary. He successfully transferred his vision on to his disciples (4:19; 28:19-20). Jesus as good visionary leader demonstrated in Matthew’s Gospel that he has a positive picture of the future and has given his followers a clear sense of direction as to how to get there.

At the end of the gospel according to Matthew, Jesus instructs “Go therefore and make disciples of all nations...” (28:19-20). A leader is said not to be successful until he has a successor. Jesus in three years raised up twelve disciples who took over from him after he departed. Shane Warren (2013) observed that laboring for years, pouring your life into people who may not prove to be great leaders, requires a great deal of commitment and persistence. Matthew did show how Jesus poured his life into his disciples and sent them to do the same (28:19-20).

Summary

It has been observed that, Matthew’s gospel is foundational not only as one looks backward to the Old Testament scriptures but also as one looks forward to what the church became. This observation implies that the gospel according to Matthew could also be considered as a seed plot on which the church can deduce vital lessons for its future. Stretching this

truth further, it could be inferred that one of the vital lessons the gospel according to Matthew could present is the lesson on church leadership.

The text of the gospel according to Matthew as it comes to us is believed to have been written for Matthew's own community to instruct them in their own faith and to clarify it over against misunderstandings, not as evangelistic or apologetic writing directed to outsiders.

Matthew, like all New Testament texts, should first be allowed to speak to the people of its own time in their conceptual framework, addressing their concerns; then also speaking to our concerns today. In fact all of Matthew is to be taken seriously as the church's scripture because the text as a whole mediates the church's message of the meaning of the Christ-event.

It is somewhat difficult to lay hand on Matthew's dominant theme. This challenge increases when we recognize that, Matthew unlike the epistle writers is committed to describing what happened during the ministry of the historical Jesus while nevertheless addressing issues that are of theological importance. Below are some theological themes that were gleaned from the gospel according to Matthew.

For example, one of the outstanding themes in Matthew is Christology. Matthew's Gospel combines a number of Christological emphases. For example, Jesus is for Matthew both "Son of God" (3:17; 4:1-11) and "Son of David" (1:1-17). Another theme in the gospel according to Matthew is Ecclesiology. Mathew's Gospel is concern with Christian community and discipleship. It is the only gospel where the

actual word εκκλησια “church” occurs (16:18; 18:17). The next observable theme in the gospel according to Matthew is eschatology. This theme came to the fore when Jesus in his Mount Olivet discourse addressed his disciples after they asked him “What will be the signs of your coming and the end of the age?” (24:3).

Besides the theological themes, the Gospel also has other important themes of which leadership is one. Most scholars opined that Matthew’s Gospel was preoccupied with the issues of church leadership. The next chapters in this thesis are dedicated to proof that the gospel according to Matthew has lessons for church leaders and one of such lessons is greatness as a leadership issue.

Reflection

It is most appropriate to consider the Gospel according to Matthew and its relevance to the theme of this thesis. It is also appropriate because this study was based on narrative critical reading of the text. For example, “The New Interpreter’s Bible Commentary” (1995), states that the Gospel of Matthew similar to all other New Testament Gospels, was composed as a literary work to interpret the theological meaning of a concrete historical event to a people in a particular historical situation.”

The historical event as mentioned above in my opinion should be relevant to the purpose for which the author wrote the gospel. For example, Fiensy (1994) stated in one among many other suggestions that the purpose of writing the Gospel of Matthew was to produce church manual of conduct for church leaders. This presupposes that there was a historical

leadership situation that demanded a literary work to address it. Therefore looking at the Gospel of Matthew as a literary (narrative) work in this study is extremely important. Theoretically, one could think of Matthew as biography, history, fiction, lectionary or any other genre. One thing is very obvious in whatever manner the genre of Matthew can be defined, in my opinion, it can be taken to be a narrative as it meets the two basic characteristics of a narrative which were enumerated by Beardslee (1970), the presence of a story and a story teller.

Though many scholars think narrative criticism can only be effectively used in analyzing other forms of literature which in their opinion is clearly narratives, Robert Alter (1981) has a contrary view. He suggested that the Bible is a “prose fiction” and can also be read as a fiction because it contains narrations just as other literary works. Therefore considering the Bible as a” prose fiction” he was suggesting that a thorough analysis of the text in which the Gospel of Matthew has been told would qualify it to be a narrative. Osborne (1991) also observed that, “the major premise of narrative criticism is that, biblical narrative is ‘art’ or ‘poetry’ ”. It is obvious that, after one analyzes the language of the narrator in Matthew carefully it would not be difficult to conclude and accept the views of Alter and Osborne that Matthew is a narrative.

The New Interpreter’s Bible Commentary (1995) also suggested that the Gospel of Matthew could be considered as an original form of narrative devised by the early church to communicate its faith in Jesus. The commentary observed further that Matthew is a narrative in that it is a story

with the perspectives and tools of literary criticism. Secondly, he continued that because Matthew adapted and modified Mark without fundamental change in genre, it resembles Mark in all ways. In their opinion, the narrative just as Mark is a community narrative. By that they imply that the story comes from the community tradition and it was intended for reading (aloud) in community worship and study times. It is also permeated by themes such as Christology, ecclesiology and many more of which leadership is one of them.

In our next chapter we would be doing exegesis on Matthew 20:20-32. The method to be employed is the narrative criticism of the text.

CHAPTER THREE

EXEGESIS OF MATTHEW 20:20-34

Introduction

In the preceding chapter, we considered the gospel according to Matthew. It was observed that the gospel according to Matthew could be considered as a seed plot on which the church can deduce vital lessons for its future. Stretching this truth further, it is inferred that one of the vital lessons the gospel according to Matthew could present is the lesson on church leadership.

This chapter concentrates on narrative-critical exegesis of Matthew 20:20-34 with the aim of drawing some lessons from it. Among others, the implication of the exegesis with regard to leadership in contemporary times is also explored.

Background to the Story

The disciples of Jesus were convinced that he was the Messiah. They came to him and asked a question about the kingdom of heaven after he told them of his death and resurrection in Matthew 16:21-28. In Matthew 18:1 they asked, “τις αρα μειζων εστιν εν τη βασιλεια των ουπανων;” (“Who is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven?”) This question of the disciples about who was the greatest in the kingdom is believed to be the core issue of the intended ambition of all the twelve

disciples to becoming great leaders in the kingdom of heaven. Explaining this Gæbelein (1984), observed that this question followed when Jesus had again spoken of his suffering and death. Though the disciples were grieved (Matthew 17:23), their grief was short lived and they busied themselves with arguing about who would be the greatest leader in the kingdom. Meanwhile, Jesus had already said that there will be distinction in the kingdom (Matthew 5:19), and even more, recently three of them have been specially favored on the mount of transfiguration (Matthew 17:1-3), while Peter had been repeatedly singled out (Matthew 14:28-29; 15:15; 16:16-18; 22:23; 17:4, 24-27). Perhaps the fact that the three were the closest to Jesus and the fact that Peter was becoming more prominent in the team sparked off James, John, and their mother in seeking for the highest leadership position in the coming kingdom of Christ.

Barnes (1956) also explained that the disciples asked the question (Matthew 18:1) because they were supposedly expecting him to establish his Messianic kingdom. This expectation was borne out of the general opinion of the disciples that he was about to set up a temporal kingdom of great splendor, and they wished to know who the leaders will be. For example, they were interested in knowing who among them would have the principal offices and the positions of honor. This question about “who is the greatest?” had been a frequent subject of inquiry and controversy among them. For example in the synoptic gospels, Mark 9:34 informs us that they had a dispute on the subject on the way and they were silent when

Jesus asked them about what they were arguing about when they came to Capernaum.

³³ They came to Capernaum. When he was in the house, he asked them, “What were you arguing about on the road?”

³⁴ But they kept quiet because on the way they had argued about who was the greatest. Mark 9:33-34 (NIV)

In Luke 9:47 also we were told that Jesus perceived the thought of their hearts when they were arguing on the same subject.

⁴⁶ An argument started among the disciples as to which of them would be the greatest. ⁴⁷ Jesus, knowing their thoughts, took a little child and had him stand beside him. Luke 9:46-47 (NIV)

Therefore in Matthew 18:1, out of their desperation they approached Jesus and referred the matter to him for his opinion. At that time the disciples came to Jesus and asked, “Who is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven?” Matthew 18:1 (NIV) Gæbelein (1984, p. 396) synchronized the synoptic gospels on the subject and said:

“Mark (9:33-38) says that the disciples were disputing along the way, and when challenged they felt silent. Luke (9:46-48) says Jesus discerned their thoughts. It is not difficult or unnatural to suppose that Jesus detected their rivalry (Luke), challenged them, and thereby silenced them (Mark), and that they blurted out their question (Matthew). Alternatively Matthew uses this brief question to summarize what was truly on their minds.”

Scholars like Richard (1987) and Omoteye (2004) also observe that the question of the disciples about, who was the greatest in the kingdom (Matthew 18:1), stimulated a series of answers from the Lord. The disciples were surprised at Jesus’ answer, because instead of answering the

question he spoke to them about becoming like little children. Christ in his response to their question in Matthew 18:4 said, ὅστις οὖν ταπεινώσει ἑαυτὸν ὡς τὸ παιδίον τοῦτο, οὗτός ἐστιν ὁ μείζων ἐν τῇ βασιλείᾳ τῶν οὐρανῶν. (“Whoever humbles himself like this child, he is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven.”) This answer at the time was not understood by the disciples, but later when explained meant a lot to them. The researcher would come back to what Jesus’ answer to his disciples meant in his view and understanding of the relationship between “the greatest” and “the least” with regard to leadership in this thesis.

The following demarcation of text borrowed from Brown (1996) put the entire narrative in perspective. It tells of the actual period of Jesus ministry the entire story took place.

Chapter 1:1-2:23: Introduction: Origin and infancy of Jesus
the Messiah

Chapter 3:1-7:29 Part One: Proclamation of the Kingdom

Chapter 8:1-10:42 Part Two: Ministry and Mission in Galilee

Chapter 11:1-13:52 Part Three: Questioning of the Opposition
to Jesus

Chapter 13:53-18:35 Part Four: Christology and Ecclesiology

Chapter 19:1-25:46 Part Five: Journey to and Ministry in
Jerusalem

Chapter 26:1-28:20 Climax: Passion, Death, and Resurrection

The entire story of our text took place during the fifth part of Jesus’ ministry, as shown above, which was his last journey to Jerusalem

(Matthew 19:1-25:46). It was just after he had revealed his intention to found his church and had given instruction about the attitudes that must characterize it (chapter 18). Then he now went up to Jerusalem where his prediction about his death and resurrection was made for the third and final time.

The text we are dealing with in this paper took place during Jesus' last visit to Jerusalem. The narrative of what happened on the road to Jerusalem begins with an example of Jesus' standard for the kingdom. The question about divorce (19:1-12), then the passage about the rejection of the children by the disciples (19:13-15), the rich young man and his aftermath (19:16-30)-in the response of the failure of the young man in sacrificing all to follow Jesus in 19:28, he incorporated the exalted future of the twelve disciples to sit on twelve thrones judging the twelve tribes of Israel.

During this period their hope to become rulers with Christ was given some boost. Then 20:1-16 narrated the parable of the workers in the vineyard which highlighted God's sovereignty and graciousness that is not earned. Then amidst these reflections on ultimate reward, the third and final prediction of the passion was made (20:17-19). That prediction led to the misunderstanding represented by the request for the places in the kingdom (20:20-28) which is the main story of this study. The continuing journey to Jerusalem brought Jesus to Jericho where the healing of the two blind men took place (20:29-34). This concludes my pericope for this study.

However Jesus continued his journey and entered Jerusalem (21:1-9) which was followed by the cleansing of the temple later and the cursing of the fig tree.

Biblical Exegesis of Matthew 20:20-34.

The Greek text used for the exegesis was the Nestle-Aland Greek New Testament the 27th edition. Below is a translation of the above text into English. The researcher in the translation below used the right words that will best bring out the meaning of the text to suit the purpose of this work. The entire text (Matthew 20:20-34) translated read as follows:

²⁰Then the mother of the sons of Zebedee came towards him with her sons, kneeling down and worshipping before him asked him for a favor. ²¹And he said to her, "What do you want?" she said to him, command that this my two sons may sit, one at your right hand and the other one at your left, in your kingdom. ²² But Jesus answered, "You do not know what you are asking. Are you able to drink the cup which I am about to drink?" They said to him, "We are able". ²³ He said to them, "You indeed will drink my cup, but who to sit on my right and on my left is not mine to grant, but it is for those for whom it has been prepared for by my father." ²⁴ And when the ten heard it, they were displeased and furious at the two brothers. ²⁵ But Jesus called them together to himself and said, "You know that the rulers of the Gentile nations lord it over them, and their great men exercise authority over them. ²⁶ It shall not be so among you; but whoever wants to become great among you must be your servant²⁷ and whoever would be first among you must be your slave; ²⁸ even as the son of man does not come to be served but to serve and to give his own soul as a ransom for many. ²⁹ As Jesus and his disciples were departing from Jericho, a large crowd followed him. ³⁰ And behold there were two blind men sitting by the roadside, and when they heard that Jesus was passing by, they cried shouting saying, "Have mercy on us, Lord, the Son of David!" ³¹ The crowd sternly rebuked them to be quiet, but they cried out the more saying, "Have mercy on us, Lord, son of David!" ³² So Jesus stood still and called them and said, "What do you want me to do for you?" ³³ They said to him, "Lord let our eyes be

opened.”³⁴ So Jesus had compassion on them and touched their eyes. Immediately they received their sight and followed him.

The narrative of the story in Matthew 20:20-34 could be divided into four major plots as follows:

First Plot (Matthew 20:20-21)

²⁰ Τότε προσῆλθεν αὐτῷ ἡ μήτηρ τῶν υἱῶν Ζεβεδαίου μετὰ τῶν υἱῶν αὐτῆς προσκυνοῦσα καὶ αἰτοῦσά τι ἀπ’ αὐτοῦ. ²¹ ὁ δὲ εἶπεν αὐτῇ, Τί θέλεις; λέγει αὐτῷ, Εἰπέ ἵνα καθίσωσιν οὗτοι οἱ δύο υἱοί μου εἷς ἐκ δεξιῶν σου καὶ εἷς ἐξ εὐωνύμων σου ἐν τῇ βασιλείᾳ σου.

²⁰Then the mother of the sons of Zebedee came towards him with her sons, worshipping before him asked him of a favor.²¹And he said to her, “What do you want?” she said to him, command that this my two sons may sit, one at your right hand the other one at your left, in your kingdom.

Verse 20 begins with the statement *Τότε προσῆλθεν αὐτῷ ἡ μήτηρ τῶν υἱῶν Ζεβεδαίου ...* “Then the mother of the sons of Zebedee came toward him...”The narrator by this statement is introducing the two protagonist of the story and is also signifying that the plot was adding to previous statements made in the preceding narration. The statement “Then the mother of the sons of Zebedee...” indicates that the protagonists were introduced as the sons of Zebedee and their mother (an accomplice) known as the mother of the sons of Zebedee. This introduction seemed to suggest that Zebedee the husband of the woman in the story probably had passed on and was the reason why the description of the woman was given in relation to her children as “the mother of the sons of Zebedee.” The

traditional view also has it that the true name of the woman was Salome and she was also the sister of Mary the mother of Jesus. (<http://bible.cc/matthew/20-20.htm>). The narrator failed to introduce the two protagonists by their names, meanwhile in the parallel text in the Gospel of Mark, their names were given as John and James. The narrator here probably left out the names because the two characters represent any person who equally has an ambition of attaining prominent leadership position.

The Greek word *τότε* translated “Then...” suggests there is continuity from the previous plots to the present one. The word also seemed to imply that it was an inopportune time for the disciples to have made such a request just after the pointed prediction of the death of Christ through his crucifixion.

The determination of the two young men (the unnamed characters in Mathew) to ascend to place of honor and the zeal of their mother cannot be overemphasized. In their bid to circumvent the other ten disciples, the two sons of Zebedee employed the services of their mother – most probably a relative of Mary the mother of Jesus (<http://bible.cc/matthew/20-20.htm>).

Furthermore in verse 20, the narrator introduced us to the scene in Jesus’ privacy. The visit of the woman and his sons to Jesus took place at the time when probably all the other disciples were absent or most probably not close to the master. The scripture says:

²⁰ Τότε προσῆλθεν αὐτῷ ἡ μήτηρ τῶν υἱῶν Ζεβεδαίου μετὰ τῶν υἱῶν αὐτῆς προσκυνοῦσα καὶ αἰτοῦσά τι ἀπ' αὐτοῦ.

²⁰Then the mother of the sons of Zebedee came towards him (Jesus) with her sons, (worshipping) kneeling down before him asked something (favor) of him.

The text says “Then the mother of the sons of Zebedee came towards him (Jesus) with her sons...” (Vs. 20a) The word (προσῆλθεν) used by the narrator means “went toward or came toward”. The word “προσῆλθεν” which is a third person singular aorist active indicative also suggests how “Mrs. Zebedee” was active when she was in the process of visiting Jesus. She came towards Jesus with vim and vigor. The narrator with these words dramatized the visit by adding that, the woman approached Jesus “kneeling down (worshipping) before him” – a sure sign of reverence and respect. Her paying homage to Jesus presupposes that she was a well cultured woman who knew how to approach “men of caliber” in society. However her kneeling in worship also most likely depicts her intention which was “to ask something of him.” Could it be that her kneeling was to win the favor of the master? May be yes and maybe not, however it could be alleged in this instance that her action attracted the master’s attention. Therefore the master asked her “What do you want?” (Vs. 21a) The narrator depicted the woman (the accomplice of the protagonists) taking three important actions in succession in verse 20. These are worth mentioning. She came toward (προσῆλθεν), knelt down / worshiped (προσκυνοῦσα), and asked (αἰτοῦσά) the master something. The three words are all active verbs and the narrator proceeded in his

narration using the active voice with such rapidity. There was a gap created by the narrator when he did not disclose the exact favor the woman had come to ask of the Lord at the end of verse 20. The suspense created was put to rest when Jesus interrogated the woman on the exact purpose of her visit in verse 21.

In verse 21, Jesus responded to the woman's actions with a question. In fact, her kneeling and worshipping at his feet attracted his attention. The Bible says:

²¹ ὁ δὲ εἶπεν αὐτῇ, Τί θέλεις; λέγει αὐτῷ, Εἰπέ ἵνα καθίσωσιν οὗτοι οἱ δύο υἱοὶ μου εἷς ἐκ δεξιῶν σου καὶ εἷς ἐξ εὐωνύμων σου ἐν τῇ βασιλείᾳ σου.

²¹And he said to her, "What do you want?" she said to him, command that this my two sons may sit, one at your right hand and the other one at your left, in your kingdom.

In the narration we read that Jesus interrogated her and said to her, "What do you want? By this question the narrator introduced a dialogue between Jesus and the woman. Dialogues generally slow down narrations and allow the reader to follow details. The Master's question prompted the woman to vent out her ambition. She did not hesitate at all in answering the question. She declared that "say (command/grant) that this my two sons may sit, one at your right hand and (other) one at your left, in your kingdom (Vs.21). The word *εἶπε* (say) is in the imperative. Hence the appropriate translation could be command or grant. The woman by this expression was probably suggesting that the situation is urgent and Jesus must command or grant that his two sons get great positions which would

enable them sit in the place of authority, close to him if his kingdom takes off.

Gæbelein (1984) indicated that the “right hand” and the “left hand” suggest proximity to the King’s person and so also share in his prestige and power and such positions increase as the Kings kingdom expands. The twelve disciples were all promised places of leadership in the kingdom (19:28). Meanwhile the woman and his two sons desired the most prominent position - one sitting on the right and the other sitting on the left in the kingdom. Barnes (1956) also observed that the woman and her two sons here in the text did not refer to the kingdom of heaven in their request, but only to the kingdom which they supposed he was about to set up on earth. Actually what the sons of Zebedee wanted and what their mother asked for on their behalf was that they might share in the authority and pre-eminence of Jesus Christ when the kingdom on this earth is fully established. This earthly kingdom was something they were thinking was close at hand. Their ambitions and aspirations was that when it comes they would be at the place of prominence in the leadership of the kingdom.

The imperative *εἶπὲ* (command/grant) used by the woman could also be the result of her recognition of the fact that Jesus is a man of authority and can do whatever he wanted to do. It could also suggest that the woman was commanding Jesus to do what she desired based on their family relationship. If she is truly the sister of Mary the mother of Jesus, then she was thinking she could influence Jesus by suggesting he considers his own nephews for prominent positions in the kingdom (Mounce, 1991).

This attitude of the woman was not accepted by Jesus in the narration. In fact Jesus was quick in reminding her that “for someone to sit at his right hand or at his left hand was not his to decide” (20:23b).

Second Plot (20:22-24)

²² ἀποκριθεὶς δὲ ὁ Ἰησοῦς εἶπεν, Οὐκ οἴδατε τί αἰτεῖσθε. δύνασθε πιεῖν τὸ ποτήριον ὃ ἐγὼ μέλλω πίνειν; λέγουσιν αὐτῷ, Δυνάμεθα.²³ λέγει αὐτοῖς, Τὸ μὲν ποτήριόν μου πίεσθε, τὸ δὲ καθίσει ἐκ δεξιῶν μου καὶ ἐξ εὐωνύμων οὐκ ἔστιν ἐμὸν [τοῦτο] δοῦναι, ἀλλ’ οἷς ἠτοιμάσται ὑπὸ τοῦ πατρὸς μου.²⁴ Καὶ ἀκούσαντες οἱ δέκα ἠγανάκτησαν περὶ τῶν δύο ἀδελφῶν.

²² But Jesus answered, “You do not know what you are asking. Are you able to drink the cup which I am about to drink?” They said to him, “We are able”. ²³ He said to them, “You indeed will drink my cup, but who to sit on my right and on my left is not mine to grant, but it is for those for whom it has been prepared for by my father.” ²⁴ And when the ten heard it, they were displeased and furious at the two brothers.

In verse 22, the narrator continued the dialogue between Jesus and the woman. The text says:

²² ἀποκριθεὶς δὲ ὁ Ἰησοῦς εἶπεν, Οὐκ οἴδατε τί αἰτεῖσθε. δύνασθε πιεῖν τὸ ποτήριον ὃ ἐγὼ μέλλω πίνειν; λέγουσιν αὐτῷ, Δυνάμεθα

²² But Jesus answered, “You do not know what you are asking. Are you able to drink the cup which I am about to drink?” They said to him, “We are able”.

By the statement “You do not know what you are asking, are you able to drink the cup which I am about to drink?” (Vs. 22a) Jesus was actually probing how committed they were to seeking such positions. The word *αἰτεῖσθε* is an indirect middle voice, which could be translated as “ask for yourselves”. This request is by all standards a self-imposed request

because they were extremely committed and ever willing to pay any price for it.

Jesus perceived from their attitude and request that they were ignorant about the challenges of their request. The woman and her two sons who were also standing with Jesus at the time demanding for a place of honor in the kingdom did not know that their request if granted involved great sacrifice. Thus it would entail drinking the cup. The cup is an Old Testament imagery that refers to judgment or retribution (Psalm 75:8; Isaiah 51:17-18; Jeremiah 25:15-28). In this story, according to Barnes (1956), it represents God extending to his son a cup filled with a bitter mixture, one causing deep suffering. This same cup was the one referred to here when Jesus asked the two brothers who were at the time standing with their mother, “Can you drink the cup I am about to drink?”

Amazingly the two sons responded in the affirmative and said to him, Δυνάμεθα “We are able”. This is an amazing proof of their commitment and self-confidence. This response as mentioned above proceeded out from their determination because though they did not know the gravity of the suffering Jesus was about to go through, they were ever ready to take the risk.

It was obvious that the disciples’ response, “We are able,” also indicated that they were very confident in their own strength and ability. It presupposes they were declaring that, “We are able to go through any difficulty or challenge to get the positions that we want for ourselves

In verse 23, the narrator continues the dialogue between Jesus and the two sons of Zebedee who were with their mother at the time. The text says:

²³ λέγει αὐτοῖς, Τὸ μὲν ποτήριόν μου πίεσθε, τὸ δὲ καθίσει
ἐκ δεξιῶν μου καὶ ἐξ ἐναντιῶν οὐκ ἔστιν ἐμὸν [τοῦτο]
δοῦναι, ἀλλ' οἷς ἡτοιμάσται ὑπὸ τοῦ πατρὸς μου.

²³ He said to them, “You indeed will drink my cup, but who to sit on my right and on my left is not mine to grant give, but it is for those for whom it has been prepared for by my father.”

In the dialogue Jesus was buttressing the fact that their request could not be fulfilled even if they were willing to drink the cup of suffering he was about to drink. By this statement, Jesus was not rebuking them for their presumption, but rather affirming that it is possible they will follow his example and partake in his afflictions and sufferings. However when it comes to rewards, he is not the one responsible. It is the sole responsibility of the father and he cannot preempt it.

This scene ended with the narrator leaving us in suspense. The narrator did not tell us exactly how the woman and his two sons responded or reacted to these final words of Jesus. There was an obvious gap. According to Keegan (1985), gaps are important elements in every narrative that the implied reader must deal with. In his opinion, gaps are the things left unsaid by the narrator. In verse 23 of our narration the gap created by the narrator set the reader thinking as to what exactly happened to the woman and his two sons. The probable action or reaction of the woman and his two sons were that, they might have left the presence of

Jesus disappointed and shameful or probably also moody and angry. Or better still, they could also go back to the other team members with a clearer understanding of Jesus' perception of leading roles in the kingdom.

The scene in verse 24 took place at the camp of the disciples where Jesus was probably not present. The narrator in this scene introduced a new group of characters into the narration-the other ten disciples. He went on further to explain what transpired between the disciples after the two visited Jesus with their mother. The text for our consideration states that:

*²⁴ Καὶ ἀκούσαντες οἱ δέκα ἠγανάκτησαν περὶ τῶν
δύο ἀδελφῶν.*

²⁴ And when the ten heard it, they were displeased and infuriated at the two brothers.

The episode took place after the two sons of Zebedee had returned into camp. The next major challenge probably the two brothers were confronted with was how to meet the other team members after their disappointment. It is obvious the other ten had heard of their visit to Jesus. The text says, "And when the ten heard it..." (Vs.24a). The word "it" in the sentence refers to the request made by the two sons of Zebedee and their mother and it does not refer to what Jesus said. It was obvious from the text that the other ten heard that the two sons of Zebedee visited Jesus with their mother. However the narrator was silent on how the news came to the other ten disciples. Here again the narrator used a gap to create suspense. According to Jean Louis Ska (1990), Gaps are technically called paralipsis and they are mostly used by authors to create effects of surprise,

expectation, and suspense. By not letting the reader know who told them or how they came by the information, the reader has no alternative but to conjecture. It is possible that their demeanor after their disappointment betrayed them, or out of frustration they decided to share their experience with the other ten, or better still it is possible that Jesus told them about it.

The narrator here was also using psychological dimension on how biblical narrators provide “inside” information. He was acting “omniscient” in this verse and for that matter knowing the feelings and thoughts of the characters (Osborne, 1991). Though the narrator did not give the details of how the information got to the other ten, he assumed to know what transpired and related in his narration that the ten heard about it and they knew what happened. The narrator continued and said “And when the ten heard it...” (Vs.24a). As soon as they heard the news of what the two brothers did, “...they were indignant (ἠγανάκτησαν, displeased / incensed / infuriated / furious) at the two brothers” (Vs.24b).

The anger and displeasure of the ten disciples were ignited as soon as they heard of what the two had done. Their anger and indignation at the two brothers were probably indicative of their own aspirations. The reaction of the other ten disciples was a projection of their own ambition in their feelings against the two, for the two probably asked what was in the heart of each of the disciples (Augsburger, 1982). Each one in his own pride thought he deserved the best place just as much as each of the two brothers (James and John). Each one was just as self-centered, as well as self-seeking. It appears they were furious because they thought James and

John were trying “to pull the fast one on them”. The two sons of Zebedee wanted to be the greatest in the kingdom (18:1). Therefore, they took the challenge and initiated the move to become the great leaders they desired to become.

However to the other ten this attempt of the two seeing Jesus with their mother was not right. In their opinion it was an attempt by the two brothers to gain advantage over them using selfish scheming. They were sorely displeased because of the desire of the two brothers to be exalted above them-the ten other disciples. Gæbalein (1984) observes that:

“The indignation of the ten (v.24) doubtless sprang less from humility than jealousy plus the fear that they might lose out. If these verses scarcely support egalitarianism-choice positions, after all, will be allotted-they demonstrate that interest in egalitarianism may mask a jealousy whose deepest wellsprings are not concern for justice but ‘enlightened self-interest’.” (Pg. 432)

Though the visit to Jesus by the two brothers and their mother was probably borne out of desperation, the situation was even worsened by the response of the ten. Their response to the two brothers was also probably borne out of jealousy and position seeking. And as result of that they became indignant and the situation demanded Jesus’ attention.

Third Plot (20:25-27)

²⁵ ὁ δὲ Ἰησοῦς προσκαλεσάμενος αὐτοὺς εἶπεν, Οἴδατε ὅτι οἱ ἄρχοντες τῶν ἐθνῶν κατακυριεύουσιν αὐτῶν καὶ οἱ μεγάλοι κατεξουσιάζουσιν αὐτῶν.²⁶ οὐχ οὕτως ἔσται ἐν ὑμῖν, ἀλλ' ὅς ἐάν θέλῃ ἐν ὑμῖν μέγας γενέσθαι ἔσται ὑμῶν διάκονος,²⁷ καὶ ὅς ἂν θέλῃ ἐν ὑμῖν εἶναι πρῶτος ἔσται ὑμῶν δοῦλος·

²⁵ But Jesus called them together to himself and said, “You know that the rulers of the Gentile nations lord it over them, and their great men exercise authority over them. ²⁶ It shall not be so among you; but whoever wants to become great among you must be your servant ²⁷and whoever would be first among you must be your slave;

The narrator continued his narration by using what Osborne (1991) called the psychological dimension of biblical narrators in which the narrator is said to be omniscient. The narrator presented Jesus as knowing what transpired and has come in to help resolve the conflict. Verse 25 reads:

²⁵ ὁ δὲ Ἰησοῦς προσκαλεσάμενος αὐτοὺς εἶπεν, Οἴδατε ὅτι οἱ ἄρχοντες τῶν ἐθνῶν κατακυριεύουσιν αὐτῶν καὶ οἱ μεγάλοι κατεξουσιάζουσιν αὐτῶν.

²⁵ But Jesus called them together to himself and said, “You know that the rulers of the Gentile nations lord it over them, and their great men exercise authority over them.

Jesus probably sensing the attitude of resentment, disagreement and jealousy in the camp summoned all the twelve disciples to himself. Therefore our narration suggests that, when Jesus called them to himself he spoke to them.

Verse 25a states that, “But Jesus called them (together) to himself and said...” The narrator indicates that when Jesus called his disciples to himself he spoke to them. His speech was to help them draw the dichotomy between worldly and Jesus’ leadership principles. He began by enumerating some of the characteristics of the worldly leaders. He said to them in verse 25b that, “...You know that the rulers of the Gentiles (nations) lord it over them, and their great men exercise authority over them.” He explained to them that, it is the characteristic of worldly leaders to dominate others, demand proper honor and to play tyrant over those less fortunate than they. In the process of maintaining their superiority, sometimes they even apply power by violent oppression.

In verse 26, the narrator stated that Jesus admonished his disciples not to follow the examples of the worldly leaders. The text says:

²⁶ οὐχ οὕτως ἔσται ἐν ὑμῖν, ἀλλ’ ὅς ἐάν θέλῃ ἐν ὑμῖν μέγας γενέσθαι ἔσται ὑμῶν διάκονος,

²⁶ It shall not be so among you; but whoever wants to become great among you must be your servant

The disciples were told by Jesus that they should not emulate the examples of the worldly leaders because the worldly method of leadership could have adverse effect on the membership. Barnes (1956) observed that the worldly leaders raise their favorites to positions of trust and power, by so doing they give authority to some over others. Although the worldly leaders lord it over their subjects, this is not how Christ perceives leadership roles to be.

Christ in verse 26 states that, “whoever wants to become great must be the servant (διάκονος)”. The word (διάκονος) means a servant, one especially who serves at a table. The word is believed to have come from two words διά – a primary preposition denoting the channel of an act, and κονις (dust), which is to raise a dust by one’s hurry, and so to minister. It is synonymous to the word “minister”. To be truly great from Christ’s perspective one has to become a servant for the enrichment of others that is, the willingness to serve those you have been given oversight.

Furthermore in verse 27, the narrator continued by saying: *καὶ ὃς ἂν θέλῃ ἐν ὑμῖν εἶναι πρῶτος ἔσται ὑμῶν δοῦλος*. “and whoever would be first among you must be your slave”. Jesus not wanting the full force of his message to be lost, repeats right here in verse 27 that “whoever would want to be the greatest must become a bond-slave (δοῦλος). Jesus resorts to teaching them to understand the principles by which his kingdom works in contrast to the kingdom of this world. It is unacceptable in the world for a slave to be given leadership over his or her master. However in Jesus’ leadership principles, anyone who seeks to be the first among his colleagues must be the willing slave of all.

The narrator in verses 25 to 27 repeats a theme, in which the idea of a direct contrast is drawn between characteristics of worldly leadership and Christian leadership styles. For example in verse 25 we read that, the characteristics of worldly leadership are “lording it over others”, and “exercising authority over others”. Whereas in verses 26 to 27, we read that the characteristics of what Christ is putting across are being “Servants” and

“Slaves”. The thrust of the matter in this narration was to paint the picture that, in everyday life, servants and slaves regard themselves as less worthy than others. As result of this, it is not too difficult for leaders with such inclination to serve placing others’ needs before their own. Therefore a leader who assumes the position of a servant or a slave would be highly rated by Christ.

Fourth Plot (20:28-34)

²⁸ ὡςπερ ὁ υἱὸς τοῦ ἀνθρώπου οὐκ ἤλθεν διακονηθῆναι ἀλλὰ διακονῆσαι καὶ δοῦναι τὴν ψυχὴν αὐτοῦ λύτρον ἀντὶ πολλῶν. ²⁹ Καὶ ἐκπορευομένων αὐτῶν ἀπὸ Ἰεριχῶ ἠκολούθησεν αὐτῷ ὄχλος πολὺς. ³⁰ καὶ ἰδοὺ δύο τυφλοὶ καθήμενοι παρὰ τὴν ὁδὸν ἀκούσαντες ὅτι Ἰησοῦς παράγει, ἔκραξαν λέγοντες, Ἐλέησον ἡμᾶς, [κύριε,] υἱὸς Δαβὶδ. ³¹ ὁ δὲ ὄχλος ἐπετίμησεν αὐτοῖς ἵνα σιωπήσωσιν· οἱ δὲ μεῖζον ἔκραξαν λέγοντες, Ἐλέησον ἡμᾶς, κύριε, υἱὸς Δαβὶδ. ³² καὶ στὰς ὁ Ἰησοῦς ἐφώνησεν αὐτοὺς καὶ εἶπεν, Τί θέλετε ποιήσω ὑμῖν; ³³ λέγουσιν αὐτῷ, Κύριε, ἵνα ἀνοιγῶσιν οἱ ὀφθαλμοὶ ἡμῶν. ³⁴ σπλαγχνισθεὶς δὲ ὁ Ἰησοῦς ἤψατο τῶν ὀμμάτων αὐτῶν, καὶ εὐθέως ἀνέβλεψαν καὶ ἠκολούθησαν αὐτῷ.

²⁸ even as the son of man does not come to be served but to serve and to give his life [soul] as a ransom for many. ²⁹ As Jesus and his disciples were departing from Jericho, a large crowd followed him. ³⁰ And behold [there were] two blind men sitting by the roadside, and when they heard that Jesus was passing by, they cried out and shouted saying, “Have mercy on us, Lord, the Son of David!” ³¹ The crowd sternly rebuked them to be quiet, but they shouted and cried out the more saying, “Have mercy on us, Lord, son of David!” ³² So Jesus stood still and called them and said, “What do you want me to do for you?” ³³ They said to him, “Lord let our eyes be opened.” ³⁴ So Jesus had compassion on them and touched their eyes. Immediately they received their sight and followed him.

Jesus introduced the next section and said in verse 28 that:

²⁸ ὥσπερ ὁ υἱὸς τοῦ ἀνθρώπου οὐκ ἦλθεν διακονηθῆναι ἀλλὰ διακονῆσαι καὶ δοῦναι τὴν ψυχὴν αὐτοῦ λύτρον ἀντὶ πολλῶν.

²⁸even as the son of man does not come to be served but to serve and to give his soul as a ransom for many.

The narrator in this verse indicates that Jesus continued to explain to his disciples that, he himself though the Messiah did not come to enthrone himself in an earthly kingdom, with higher and lower officials to wait on him. But instead has come to serve and to give his life for many. The ultimate act of service that Jesus offered was the giving of his life as a ransom (λύτρον) for many. The word ransom (λύτρον) means literally a price paid for the redemption of captives of war or slaves (Barnes, 1956). The payment Jesus made involves going to the cross and to die the most disgraceful death for humankind. He exemplified true leadership by accepting this lowly position simply because he wants to serve and save humankind.

Verses 29 to 34 is an illustration of the story told from 20:20 28-the main pericope of the text. We read that:

²⁹ Καὶ ἐκπορευομένων αὐτῶν ἀπὸ Ἰεριχώ κολούθησεν αὐτῷ ὄχλος πολὺς.

²⁹ As Jesus and his disciples were departing from Jericho, a large crowd followed him.

The narrator continued his narration by shifting the scene from a boardroom discussion to a public setting. He pictured Jesus as the leader with his immediate team members (disciples) leading the way out from Jericho and the multitude follows.

Then in verse 30-31 we read that:

³⁰ καὶ ἰδοὺ δύο τυφλοὶ καθήμενοι παρὰ τὴν ὁδὸν ἀκούσαντες ὅτι Ἰησοῦς παράγει, ἔκραξαν λέγοντες, Ἐλέησον ἡμᾶς, [κύριε,] υἱὸς Δαβὶδ. ³¹ ὁ δὲ ὄχλος ἐπετίμησεν αὐτοῖς ἵνα σιωπήσωσιν· οἱ δὲ μείζον ἔκραξαν λέγοντες, Ἐλέησον ἡμᾶς, κύριε, υἱὸς Δαβὶδ.

³⁰ And behold [there were] two blind men sitting by the roadside, and when they heard that Jesus was passing by, they cried out and shouted saying, “Have mercy on us, Lord, the Son of David!” ³¹ The crowd sternly rebuked them to be quiet, but they shouted and cried out the more saying, “Have mercy on us, Lord, son of David!”

The narrator continued to tell of how Jesus was entreated by two blind men, who heard Jesus was passing by, to heal them. They cried out saying “Have mercy on us, Lord, the Son of David.” This indicates the blind men acknowledged the lordship of Jesus Christ and accepted his royalty by calling him “the Son of David”. While they shouted and cried out for help, those following Jesus decided to rebuke them to be silent. They would not allow Jesus to be interrupted by common blind men. But unfortunately their efforts at stopping them yielded no result, the text says “they shouted the more.” In their desperation to stop the two blind men from embarrassing, the Son of David, they saw Jesus stop and to their most

amazement beckoned them to come. Jesus by this very act is illustrating how we should put others first. This is how the story was narrated:

³² καὶ σταῖς ὁ Ἰησοῦς ἐφώνησεν αὐτοὺς καὶ εἶπεν, Τί θέλετε ποιήσω ὑμῖν; ³³ λέγουσιν αὐτῷ, Κύριε, ἵνα ἀνοιγῶσιν οἱ ὀφθαλμοὶ ἡμῶν. ³⁴ σπλαγχνισθεὶς δὲ ὁ Ἰησοῦς ἥψατο τῶν ὀμμάτων αὐτῶν, καὶ εὐθέως ἀνέβλεψαν καὶ ἠκολούθησαν αὐτῷ.

³² So Jesus stood still and called them and said, “What do you want me to do for you?” ³³ They said to him, “Lord let our eyes be opened.” ³⁴ So Jesus had compassion on them and touched their eyes. Immediately they received their sight and followed him.

The narrator introduced a dialogue between the blind men and the Lord Jesus. Jesus led the dialogue by asking question. He asked “What do you want me to do for you?” it was obvious that they answered by saying that they want their eyes to be opened (vs.33).

In this scene we see Jesus exemplifying or illustrating another good principle when he called them to himself and met their needs. The Bible says, he had compassion on them and touched them.

Summary

This chapter concentrates on narrative-critical exegesis of Matthew 20:20-34 which has revealed Jesus’ teaching on greatness. This came as a result of the discussion between Jesus and his disciples, with James and John as the main characters.

The desire of James and John to become the greatest among the disciples was probably borne out from what the narrator stated in Mathew

19:28 that each of the twelve disciples would be sitting on twelve thrones to rule the twelve tribes of Israel with the Lord when he comes in his kingdom. In their desire to be the greatest, their mother brought them to Jesus with the request. The text continued that:

²¹ὁ δὲ εἶπεν αὐτῇ, Τί θέλεις; λέγει αὐτῷ, Εἰπέ ἵνα καθίσωσιν οὗτοι οἱ δύο υἱοί μου εἷς ἐκ δεξιῶν σου καὶ εἷς ἐξ εὐωνύμων σου ἐν τῇ βασιλείᾳ σου.

²¹And he said to her, “What do you want?” she said to him, say command that this my two sons may sit, one at your right hand and the other one at your left, in your kingdom.

She requested that two of her sons would sit one at the right and the second on the left-hand side when he shall establish his kingdom. However Jesus questioned their commitment and said: are you able to drink the cup I am about to drink. The two brothers responded in the affirmative. But Jesus made them know that, though they would be able to drink the cup he was about to drink, he is not in the position to make them sit at his right and left-hand side. That decision is strictly the prerogative of his heavenly father.

This very act of the two brothers, we were told, made the other ten indignant. As the result of this Jesus had to call the twelve together and said:

²⁵ὁ δὲ Ἰησοῦς προσκαλεσάμενος αὐτοὺς εἶπεν, Οἴδατε ὅτι οἱ ἄρχοντες τῶν ἐθνῶν κατακυριεύουσιν αὐτῶν καὶ οἱ μεγάλοι κατεξουσιάζουσιν αὐτῶν. ²⁶οὐχ οὕτως ἔσται ἐν ὑμῖν, ἀλλ’ ὃς ἐὰν θέλῃ ἐν ὑμῖν μέγας γενέσθαι ἔσται ὑμῶν διάκονος, ²⁷καὶ ὃς ἂν θέλῃ ἐν ὑμῖν εἶναι πρῶτος ἔσται ὑμῶν δοῦλος.

²⁵ But Jesus called them [together] to himself and said, “You know that the rulers of the Gentiles [nations] lord it over them, and their great men exercise authority over them. ²⁶ It shall not be so among you; but whoever wants to become great among you must be your servant ²⁷and whoever would be first among you must be your slave;

Jesus in his address to his disciples explained to them that, one becoming great in the kingdom is not the same as the way people of the world go about their greatness. The people of the world assume so much power and authority that they lord it over their subordinates and exercise undue authority over them. However in the kingdom of God, the greatest is supposed to be a servant and the one wanting to be first among them must be their slave.

To explain this further he made them to understand that, this is the very reason why he came not to be served but to serve and give his own life as a ransom for many (Verse 28). His life is a full demonstration of greatness. In the subsequent verses he demonstrated what greatness was by showing compassion to the blind men who called for mercy. He healed them to confirm that greatness demands working the works of the lord.

Reflection

The lessons in Matthew 20:20-28 are extremely important to the contemporary Christian community church leaders today. There are many lessons one can learn from the text. Among all others, the lessons learnt in the text, if adhered to, would enable leaders know their limits, and understand that sacrifices alone are not required in making people qualify

for leadership position. It would also inspire leaders to serve faithfully and to be others centered.

For example we learnt from the text that, when the two young men and their mother approached Jesus and requested for the greatest position (to sit at the right and the left hand side) in his kingdom, he made them to understand that he was not in the position to give them what they were requesting for. The granting of the position was the prerogative of his father alone. Jesus has a limit and can't go beyond that. Leaders therefore must take cue from this example that everybody has a limit.

Furthermore, some vital lessons learnt include the fact that, though the two young men were ready to sacrifice and were even willing to drink the same cup Christ was about to drink, these acts of sacrifice could not qualify them to be the greatest in the kingdom. Actually the lesson deduced is that, sacrifices and commitments alone could not qualify any person for positions of prominence in the kingdom of God.

The leaders of the gentiles, we were told, led through lording it over their subjects but Christ told his disciples not to follow their examples, instead anyone who wants to be the greatest should be the servant of all and anyone willing to be the first among his people should be the slave of all. The text also taught us that self-centeredness (vs. 20-24), lording it over people, and bullying them (vs. 25) are not God's acceptable way of leadership. Instead good leaders are those who serve as servants (vs. 26), slaves (vs. 27), and are willing to sacrifice (vs. 28) their all for the people they serve.

CHAPTER FOUR

ISSUES RAISED IN MATTHEW 20:20-34

Introduction

In this chapter, the following listed issues which were mentioned in the previous chapter among others would be dilated on in detail. Firstly, when Jesus said “he is not the one to give the position but the father” gives us the indication that one must understand or know his limit. Secondly, we would be considering the fact that sacrifice and commitment alone are not enough for qualifying one for the greatest position in the kingdom. The third issue would be the concept of servant and slave put forward as metaphor for leaders preferred by Jesus, which by indication, implied that the least position is preferred to greatest. Finally, the issue of “otherness” or the other-centeredness put forward in the healing of the blind in contrast to self-centeredness of the two brothers and their mother were also looked at. In summary the issues raised sought to do complete re-interpretation of the concepts of the greatest and least in this narrative.

Though Matthew 20:20-34 remains the main text on which the entire chapter was based, many scholars were also consulted. I hope their scholarly contributions to this work would make it interesting reading although the work still remains a student’s contribution to the topic.

1. Concept of Knowing One's Limits and Boundaries

The mother of the sons of Zebedee, we were told, came to Jesus with a request on behalf of her two sons. Her absolute desire was that her two sons would ascend to the greatest position in the kingdom. This was how the dialogue between her and Jesus was recorded:

²¹ὁ δὲ εἶπεν αὐτῇ, Τί θέλεις; λέγει αὐτῷ, Εἰπέ ἵνα καθίσωσιν οὗτοι οἱ δύο υἱοί μου εἰς ἐκ δεξιῶν σου καὶ εἰς ἐξ εὐωνύμων σου ἐν τῇ βασιλείᾳ σου.

²¹And he said to her, "What do you want?" she said to him, say [grant/command] that this my two sons may sit, one at your right hand and [other] one at your left, in your kingdom

It is possible to deduce from the woman's request that, what she and her two sons wanted was that they might share in the authority and pre-eminence of Jesus Christ when the kingdom on this earth is fully established. The Jewish Encyclopedia explained that in the Jewish culture for example, etiquette commands that the most prominent and powerful person sit or walk in the center, the next in rank at his right hand, and the third in rank on the left (Er. 54b).

The mother of Zebedee probably had this in mind when she demanded that her two sons may sit at the right and left of Jesus. She actually recognizes Jesus to be a man of power and it was this that prompted her to kneel down before him while putting across her request. She acted in that manner because she acknowledged the fact that because of his great authority he is the only one that can promote her two sons to

positions of power and prestige. But unfortunately she was disappointed when Jesus said to them that:

²³ λέγει αὐτοῖς, Τὸ μὲν ποτήριόν μου πίεσθε, τὸ δὲ καθίσει
ἐκ δεξιῶν μου καὶ ἐξ εὐωνύμων οὐκ ἔστιν ἐμὸν [τοῦτο]
δοῦναι, ἀλλ' οἷς ἠτοιμάσται ὑπὸ τοῦ πατρὸς μου.

²³ He said to them, “You [indeed] will drink my cup, but [who] to sit on my right and on my left is not mine to [grant] give, but it is for those for whom it has been prepared for by my father.”

Jesus in the above statement drew a very important lesson which is the issue we have to pay attention to. It is the fact that Jesus gives us the indication that one must understand or know his limit. As a matter of fact any one desiring a position of greatness must do things right and follow the right procedure. Therefore he can't pre-empt what God the father himself has foreordained.

The woman and the two sons are to know that every person has a limit in his jurisdiction. We have to be careful not to put unrealistic expectations on people. He himself has a limit and it is important that they also know their limit. Their request probably was going beyond what they should be asking for. Besides the positions they requested for were the preserve of his father alone. Whoever would sit at his right and left-hand side was not his responsibility to determine.

If one is able to recognize his strengths and limitations, he or she can achieve great things. Great people are able to accurately assess themselves and are not in self-denial about their limitations. Such people

are always open to feedback and set up systems to ensure they have accurate information about themselves and their leadership effectiveness. They also look for ways to enhance their leadership because they are in a continuous learning state about themselves. Leaders must understand that they are limited and cannot lead people longer than they are willing to follow or faster than they are willing to go. It is obvious that as a leader you are limited and cannot lead people beyond your leadership skills or above your level of trust. You cannot lead people past the level of your commitment and you cannot lead people without your willingness to serve.

2. Inadequacy of Sacrifice and Commitment Alone in Qualifying One for Leadership

The presumption that through sacrifice and commitment alone come the reward of prominence and respect has been dealt a deadly blow in this text by Christ. The text revealed that sacrifice and commitment alone are not enough for qualifying one for the greatest position. This fact came to the limelight when Jesus sought to know how committed the two young men were to their request. This is what the text says:

²² ἀποκριθεὶς δὲ ὁ Ἰησοῦς εἶπεν, οὐκ οἴδατε τί αἰτεῖσθε. δύνασθε πιεῖν τὸ ποτήριον ὃ ἐγὼ μέλλω πίνειν λέγουσιν αὐτῷ, Δυνάμεθα. ²³ λέγει αὐτοῖς, Τὸ μὲν ποτήριόν μου πίεσθε, τὸ δὲ καθίσει ἐκ δεξιῶν μου καὶ ἐξ εὐωνύμων οὐκ ἔστιν ἐμὸν τοῦτο δοῦναι, ἀλλ' οἷς ἠτοίμασται ὑπὸ τοῦ πατρὸς μου. ²⁴ Καὶ ἀκούσαντες οἱ δέκα ἠγανάκτησαν περὶ τῶν δύο ἀδελφῶν.

²² But Jesus answered, "You do not know what you are asking. Are you able to drink the cup which I am about to drink?" They said to him, "We are able". ²³ He said to them, "You [indeed] will drink my cup, but [who] to sit on

my right and on my left is not mine to [grant] give, but it is for those for whom it has been prepared for by my father.”

²⁴ And when the ten heard it, they were indignant [displeased / incensed / infuriated / furious] at the two brothers.

Jesus’ probing question “Are you able to drink the cup which I am about to drink?” revealed how committed and dedicated the two sons of Zebedee were. They responded “We are able.” Some scholars assumed they did not really understand the implications of what they were alluding to. Actually the cup is Old Testament imagery; it represents God extending to his son a cup filled with bitter mixture, one causing deep suffering (Barnes, 1956). However if the cup Christ was referring to was well understood by the two brothers and they are well aware of the implications of what they said, then indeed they were determined and ready to endure any pain in achieving greatness.

Their answer, if they really understood what they were accepting, indicates they were very confident and trusted their own strength and ability to accomplish their goal. It presupposes as mentioned elsewhere in this paper that, they were declaring that “We are capable to go through any difficulty or challenge to get the greatest position we wanted for ourselves.

Nevertheless in response to their seemingly commitment and dedication, Jesus responded and said to them that their request could not be fulfilled even if they are willing to drink the cup of suffering he was about to drink. Their commitment, dedication and sacrifice may not go unnoticed; however, it does not merit greatness. Greatness is not bestowed because of

commitment or dedication, it is divinely initiated and graciously bestowed on whoever the father has prepared it for.

This issue, as a matter of fact, makes us understand that greatness may not be achieved by personal efforts and maneuvers. The two brothers in the story were probably disappointed or better still had come to a better comprehension of God's way of dealing with his people. God is sovereign and chooses whoever he wills for a given position or assignment and as such cannot be predicted by anybody.

3. Concepts of Servant and Slave used as Metaphors for Leadership

In Matthew 20:20-34, the concept of servant and slave was used as metaphors for leaders preferred by Jesus to the worldly system. While the New Testament may elsewhere never have linked the words "servant" and leadership, Jesus here in Mathew 20:20-34 certainly did teach and model servant leadership. His message was clear: The essence of true leadership is to be a servant. It is a selfless commitment to serve those you lead no matter the cost. Jesus said to his disciples:

²⁶ οὐχ οὕτως ἔσται ἐν ὑμῖν, ἀλλ' ὃς ἐὰν θέλῃ ἐν ὑμῖν μέγας γενέσθαι ἔσται ὑμῶν διάκονος, ²⁷ καὶ ὃς ἂν θέλῃ ἐν ὑμῖν εἶναι πρῶτος ἔσται ὑμῶν δοῦλος.

²⁶ It shall not be so among you; but whoever wants to become great among you must be your servant ²⁷ and whoever would be first among you must be your slave;

The words διάκονος (servant) and δοῦλος (slave) used in verses 26 and 27 respectively paint the picture of servant leadership which contrasts the world's view on greatness. To Jesus a true leader is the one who abandons power and authority in order to serve others. Such a one is among but not over others. He chooses to minister to others. He does not coerce his people but by the power of his example and love motivates others to make the right decision. In carrying out his duty the servant does not magnify his own importance, but emphasize the importance of others. Therefore the way to be the first (πρῶτος) is to be the servant (δοῦλος), the bond-slave Jesus asserted.

Therefore by his statement “ἀλλ’ ὃς ἐὰν θέλῃ ἐν ὑμῖν μέγας γενέσθαι ἔσται ὑμῶν διάκονος” (but whoever wants to become great among you must be your servant), Jesus was drawing attention to the fact that leadership goes with service. A leader is supposed to serve or minister to those he leads. He must lead the way by showing his subordinates how to work through his examples. He shows how to do what needs to be done instead of telling his followers. He exemplifies instead of only giving commands. Unlike the secular people who misunderstand the title of a minister to be someone who is untouchable and lords it over others, the Christian understand the word minister to mean a servant. And if appointed as a minister, it is the opportunity to serve the people who appointed you but not to lord it over them.

One's service to the people gives him or her exposure. It gives the individual influence over those he or she serves. Then in effect the servant leader is becoming great through his or her service. Jesus said he who wants to be great should become the servant (verse 26). For example the master of the house looks up to the servants for his food. Therefore, to some extent, the master of the house's life is under the servant's control. Service gives the servant access and control over whom he or she serves. Service also gives one more experience and skills.

When a servant leader succeeds in doing these things mentioned above, the end result is normally a relationship of mutual motivation that makes the followers moral agents. Servant leadership also raises the level of human conduct and ethical aspirations of both the leader and the led. Every true servant leader has concern for the people he was called to lead as well as for the task to be accomplished.

The godly leader's position is a humble acceptance of a servant's position before God in order to carry out the service of God. Therefore any leader who serves his subordinates sincerely, and does not lift himself above the people he is leading or lords it over them would be respected, cherished and loved. He would in no doubt become the greatest among his colleagues and friends who do not do the same.

The second word Christ used in our text is that leaders should be "δουλοῦντες". The word "δουλος" is translated as a servant, bondman, and a man of servile condition. Metaphorically it means one who gives himself up to

another's will. It is normally used in the New Testament for those whose service is used by Christ in extending and advancing his cause among men. A “δουλοῦ” is the one who is devoted to another to the disregard of one's own interests. In Matthew 20:27 Jesus says:

²⁷ καὶ ὃς ἂν θέλῃ ἐν ὑμῖν εἶναι πρῶτος ἔσται ὑμῶν δοῦλος·

²⁷and whoever would be first among you must be your slave;

Jesus by this statement continued to show his twelve disciples the difference between worldly leadership and godly leadership. Whereas the worldly people lord it over their subjects and exercise authority over them, in the godly leadership the way up includes being a slave. Therefore in verse 27, he sought to be teaching his disciples and most especially the two sons of Zebedee who wanted the most prominent place that, whoever wants to be first must be a slave.

One important thing about slaves that distinguishes them from a servant is that; a servant could be hired and fired but a slave was owned by the master. In verse 27, Jesus seemed to be saying that one becomes the slave of those he leads and in other words those you lead are your masters and they owned you. Jesus elsewhere said that: “No man can be a slave of two masters.” So, exclusive ownership by one master, complete, constant availability and obedience to that one master, and singular devotion in this case to the people you were called to serve is what is required of the servant leader. Jesus by the above statement is also saying that greatness in ministry would not be attained through striving after position and power

from society's perspective. In contrast, leadership that is considered great in God's eyes will be achieved only in humble service to others.

Jay (2004), reveals in the "Discovery Journal" that the distinctive feature of δούλος is that it refers to the subordinate and responsible nature of one's service in exclusive relation to one's Lord. It also emphasizes the obligatory character of the service for God and to one's neighbor. This is duty to the community of those who have been set free by the Lord Jesus Christ. We can consequently infer from Jesus' statement in verse 27 that he was talking to believers who believed in him, and as a result have submitted to his lordship.

If Jesus is indeed the Lord of his people, then godly leaders are his slaves. As a slave, the leader has complete dependence on Jesus his master for everything. You are required to be completely and constantly available and obedient to him, your only master. You had one reason to live and that was to please the master. Because you are a slave to the master, you must also be aware that your discipline and reward would come at the discretion of your master.

Furthermore, it is important to note that κύριος (lord) and δούλος (servant) are two words that describe both sides of a relationship. If there is a slave, there is lord and if there is a master there is a servant. To put it more blatantly, one don't call oneself a master if one don't have a servant and you are not a slave if you don't have a master. Therefore a slave is someone whose life belongs totally to his master. He takes absolute ownership and absolute control of the servant. The slave also is in absolute

subjection, and absolute obedience to his master. The servant demonstrates absolute loyalty and absolute dependence on his lord. The relationship between the slave and his master is such that he had nothing, willed nothing and received nothing but what the master authorized, desired and provided.

A diligent slave who submits to his master and obeys his commandment would surely become the first among his colleagues. His work or leadership skills shall be distinguished from the others who will depend on their own efforts and capabilities. The text says whoever want to be first must be your slave. Servants and slaves were two of the lowest positions in Jewish society and it would be difficult to expect that anyone would serve them and obey them. However Jesus explicitly describes leadership in such stark and humbling terms, and as a result, he reverses their status in the community of disciples to indicate prominence and greatness come by being the least and the lowest. Paul the Apostle is an example in scripture of a man who understood being the least, less than the least, and even the worst of all (1 Corinthians 15:9; Ephesians 3:8; 1 Timothy 1:15). He is fond of introducing himself in almost all his epistles as a bondservant of Christ. However, scripture testifies to the fact that though he accepted the lowliest position among his colleagues, he is heralded for being one of the best apostles even if not the best in history.

4. Putting others first preferred to self-centeredness in seeking for greatness.

One other issue among others that stands out in our text is “Otherness” or putting others first Jesus illustrated in contrast to self-centeredness displayed by the two brothers and their mother. The first lesson of otherness Jesus taught was clearly stated in verse 28. It states:

²⁸ ὥσπερ ὁ υἱὸς τοῦ ἀνθρώπου οὐκ ἦλθεν διακονηθῆναι ἀλλὰ διακονῆσαι καὶ δοῦναι τὴν ψυχὴν αὐτοῦ λύτρον ἀντὶ πολλῶν.

²⁸even as the son of man does not come to be served but to serve and to give his life [soul] as a ransom for many.

Jesus modeled the example of otherness as the way of true leadership. Actually, Jesus who is known to be the Lord should have been served by all. Yet, he did not only live as a servant but he also gave his life as a “λύτρον” (ransom).

The word “λύτρον” ransom is derived from the French word “*rancon*”, and the Latin word “*redemptio*”. The word “λύτρον” ransom is also defined as the means or the instrument by which release or deliverance is made possible. Jesus said he came “to give his life as a ransom for many” or “to die as a means of liberating many” (Verse 28). “To liberate many” may be expressed in many ways as “to cause people to go free” or, in a more idiomatic manner, “to untie” or “to unchain many”. To give further explanation, it is worth mentioning that the debt is represented not as cancelled but as fully paid for. It also pictures the fact that, the slave or the captive is not liberated by a mere gratuitous favor, but a ransom price

has been paid, in consideration of which he is set free. This implies that the original owner receives back his alienated and lost possession because he has bought it back “with a price.”

Here in this verse was the first clue as to what the death of Christ would accomplish. He had told them on number of occasions he would die, but had not indicated anywhere else the reason for his death. Now it was clear that his death would be to provide a “ransom” (λύτρον, payment) “for” (ἀντὶ, “in place of”) many. Jesus was the perfect sacrifice whose substitutionary death paid the price for sin. Here Jesus’ otherness was put forward in his willingness to give his life for many.

Another great demonstration of otherness by Christ was when he healed the blind men. The text reads as follows:

²⁹ Καὶ ἐκπορευομένων αὐτῶν ἀπὸ Ἰεριχῶ ἠκολούθησεν αὐτῷ ὄχλος πολὺς. ³⁰ καὶ ἰδοὺ δύο τυφλοὶ καθήμενοι παρὰ τὴν ὁδὸν ἀκούσαντες ὅτι Ἰησοῦς παράγει, ἔκραξαν λέγοντες, Ἐλέησον ἡμᾶς, [κύριε,] υἱὸς Δαβὶδ. ³¹ ὁ δὲ ὄχλος ἐπετίμησεν αὐτοῖς ἵνα σιωπήσωσιν· οἱ δὲ μεῖζον ἔκραξαν λέγοντες, Ἐλέησον ἡμᾶς, κύριε, υἱὸς Δαβὶδ.

²⁹As they [Jesus and his disciples] were departing [leaving] Jericho, a large crowd followed him. ³⁰ And behold [there were] two blind men sitting by the way [roadside], and when they heard that Jesus was passing [going] by, they cried out [shouted] saying, “Have mercy on us, Lord, the Son of David!” ³¹ The crowd [sternly] rebuked them to be quiet, but they shouted [cried out] the more saying, “Have mercy on us, Lord, son of David!”

We learnt that when Jesus was on his way to Jerusalem he passed through Jericho. There were two blind men sitting by the road who heard of Jesus. They entreated Jesus to heal them. They cried out saying “Have

mercy on us, Lord, the Son of David!” While they shouted and cried out for help, those following Jesus decided to rebuke them to be silent. They would not allow Jesus to be interrupted by common and unholy blind men. But unfortunately their efforts at stopping them yielded no result, it was recorded that “they shouted the more.” In their desperation to stop the two blind men from embarrassing, the Son of David, they saw Jesus stop and to their most amazement beckoned them to come. This is how the story was narrated:

³² καὶ στὰς ὁ Ἰησοῦς ἐφώνησεν αὐτοὺς καὶ εἶπεν, Τί θέλετε ποιήσω ὑμῖν; ³³ λέγουσιν αὐτῷ, Κύριε, ἵνα ἀνοιγῶσιν οἱ ὀφθαλμοὶ ἡμῶν. ³⁴ σπλαγχνισθεὶς δὲ ὁ Ἰησοῦς ἤψατο τῶν ὀμμάτων αὐτῶν, καὶ εὐθέως ἀνέβλεψαν καὶ ἠκολούθησαν αὐτῷ.

³² So Jesus stood still and called them and said, “What do you want me to do for you?” ³³ They said to him, “Lord let our eyes be opened.” ³⁴ So Jesus had compassion on them and touched their eyes. Immediately they received their sight and followed him.

There issued a dialogue between the blind men and the Lord Jesus. Jesus asked them “What do you want me to do for you?” It was obvious that they answered by saying that they wanted their eyes to be opened (vs.33).

In this scene we see Jesus exemplifying “otherness” or the issue of other centeredness. While others felt the blind men were a bother and probably disturbing public peace, Jesus stopped and called them to himself and met their needs. The text says, he had compassion on them and touched them. This single act of Christ brings to the fore what we call

other centeredness, unlike the two brothers and their mother who were self-centered.

We were told that the request of the mother of the two sons was that her two sons may be granted places of favor in His kingdom. Jesus we were told asked her, “Τί θέλεις;” (what do you want?) literally translated “what is your wish or desire?” Her answer confirmed her wish or desire. She said to Jesus,

“Εἶπὲ ἵνα καθίσωσιν οὗτοι οἱ δύο υἱοὶ μου εἷς ἐκ δεξιῶν σου καὶ εἷς ἐξ εὐωνύμων σου ἐν τῇ βασιλείᾳ σου.”

“(Say [grant/command] that these my two sons may sit, one at your right hand and [other] one at your left, in your kingdom.)”

The emphasis is on “δύο υἱοὶ μου” (my two sons). The word “μου” is a pronoun personal genitive singular from “εγώ” which means “I myself” in the English language. We may therefore deduce that the request of the woman was based on personal ego or selfish motives.

Furthermore when Jesus probed to know how committed they were to their request, the text reads:

²² ἀποκριθεὶς δὲ ὁ Ἰησοῦς εἶπεν, Οὐκ οἴδατε τί αἰτεῖσθε. δύνασθε πιεῖν τὸ ποτήριον ὃ ἐγὼ μέλλω πίνειν; λέγουσιν αὐτῷ, Δυνάμεθα.

²² But Jesus answered, “You do not know what you are asking. Are you able to drink the cup which I am about to drink?” They said to him, “We are able”.

When Jesus said “Οὐκ οἴδατε τί αἰτεῖσθε” (You do not know what you are asking), He was actually saying “You do not know what you are

asking for yourselves). The word *αἰτεῖσθε* is an indirect middle voice, which could be translated as “ask for yourselves”. It is obvious from Jesus’ statement that the request of the two brothers and their mother was selfish. They were only conscious of what they would gain for themselves when they ascend to the high office of leadership and most especially sitting at the right and left of Christ in his kingdom.

Jesus’ probing question *δύνασθε πιεῖν τὸ ποτήριον ὃ ἐγὼ μέλλω πίνειν*; “Can you drink the cup I am about to drink?” was answered in the affirmative. They said *Δυνάμεθα*. “We are able”. This is an amazing proof of their self-confidence. They were self-centered, thinking only about their own welfare, seeking the most prominent position and desiring to be great through their own strength and ability. Contrarily, Jesus did not want to be served but was willing to serve others. He was willing to give his life as a ransom for others (Verse 28).

Summary

Chapter four dilated on the issues raised in the exegesis of Matthew 20:20-34. In the chapter, the following listed issues among others were dilated on. First, when Jesus said “he is not the one to give the position but the father” gives us the indication that one must understand or know his limit. Jesus sought to teach the two sons of Zebedee and their mother that there is a limit to every person’s field of operations. He as the Son of God had a limit when it came to who would sit at his right or left in his kingdom. Therefore it is a good lesson for them to also know that there is a limit to how far they can go in their requests.

The second issue that was considered is the fact that, sacrifice and commitment alone are not enough for qualifying one for the greatest position. Though the two sons of Zebedee were ever ready to pay the price and willing to drink the cup of suffering, Jesus made it plain to them that their sacrifice, commitment or dedication could not change God's position on who sits at his right or left in the kingdom. The lesson therefore to learn is that, one sacrifice and acts of commitment cannot change God's preordained will. God is sovereign and whatever pleases him he does.

The concept of servant and slave put forward as metaphor for leaders preferred by Jesus was also given some attention. This third issue is so dominant in the text so much that Jesus after enumerating the way the worldly people carried out their leadership emphatically stated "It shall not be so among you." In his opinion the way of the worldly is "lording it over" others and "exercising authority over them" but instead "whoever wants to become great must be the servant, and whoever would want to be the first among you must be your slave." The thrust of the matter in this narration was to paint the picture that, in everyday life, servants and slaves regard themselves as less worthy than others. As a result of this, it is not too difficult for leaders with such inclination to serve placing the needs of others' before their own. Therefore a leader who assumes the position of a servant or a slave would be highly rated by Christ.

Finally, the issue of "otherness" or the other-centeredness also took center stage. It was first and foremost revealed when Jesus put forward in his teaching that he did not come to be served but to serve others and above

all give his life as a ransom for many. His preoccupation is others, not himself. He is not self-centered but other-centered. Secondly his healing of the blind revealed how he was willing to think of people in adverse situations, show them compassion and meet their needs. This very lesson draws a sharp contrast between the self-centeredness of the two brothers and their mother on one hand and Jesus the person who is other-centered on the other. The two young men wanted to ascend to the greatest position in the kingdom, while Christ came not to be served but to serve others. In summary the issues that were raised sought to do complete re-interpretation of the concepts of the greatest and least in this narrative.

Reflections

It has come to light in the text that there were some issues that Jesus addressed in the narrative. It is also worth noting that the issues raised were diverse. However it would not be out of place to mention here that they all but have one aim and it is in summary that the issues that were raised sought to do a complete re-interpretation of the concepts of the greatest and least in this narrative.

The lessons drawn from this chapter revealed that when Jesus called his disciples to himself, he carefully drew a fine line between what the world identifies as greatness and what he regards as greatness. In his view true greatness is not in position seeking or through personal efforts. The key to greatness is that, positions cannot be acquired through one's commitment or dedication. God is sovereign and would promote those he

ordained to be promoted to greatness. Besides it is very important to understand the fact that man is limited and God is sovereign.

Leaders are called to serve. The more you serve the more great you become in the presence of God and other colleagues. Jesus our ultimate example demonstrated that people-centeredness is paramount in becoming great. He did not come to be served but to serve and to give his life as ransom for many. To be great is to serve others and to be the least is to be served by others. Greatness is learning from Christ and becoming like him in leadership.

CHAPTER FIVE
IMPLICATIONS OF MATTHEW 20:20-34 FOR
LEADERSHIP IN CHRISTIAN COMMUNITIES

Introduction

Leadership style, in my opinion, is the manner an individual leader provides direction or approaches his/her leadership responsibility whiles implementing leadership plans and motivating the people he/she is leading to do the right thing. Robert Orr (2001) also defines leadership styles as “the pattern of behavior that is exhibited over time in leadership situations.” He opined that, the leader’s attitude, attributes and behavior would greatly influence his/her style. However, he was emphatic on the fact that the effectiveness and efficiency of leadership is not really dependent on the particular leadership style one uses, but was greatly dependent on whether or not this style is appropriate to the task, individual, team, or situation.

There are different leadership styles in contemporary study of management and leadership but it seems they are not always effective at all times. It is therefore the responsibility of the leader to choose that which he deemed appropriate at a given time and in a particular situation. However, in this study it seems there is the need to seek best practices that are selfless and not selfish.

In the previous chapter we looked at some of the leadership concerns that the exegesis of Matthew 20:20-34 brought to light. The story of the sons of Zebedee when carefully analyzed told of how any person or group of people would desire for a leadership position. People in their desire to become great would use all the possible means at their disposal to influence the decision of the king maker(s) or those responsible for appointing leaders.

Leadership positions are sometimes keenly contested for. Most of the people who contend for these positions sometimes are ignorant of what leadership actually entails. In the case of the sons of Zebedee, in their campaign for leadership, they tried to use the influence of their mother. This act of the two brothers brought a sharp disagreement into the camp of the disciples. The other ten disciples were said to be indignant (ἠγανάκτησαν, displeased / incensed / infuriated / furious).

Though campaigning for position is normally characterized by acrimony and sharp disagreements mostly amongst politicians, Jesus did not expect the same to happen amongst his disciples and for that matter the church. Therefore he called them together and gave them some lessons on leadership.

This chapter focuses on the implications of the various issues on leadership deduced from Matthew 20:20-34 which include some vital lessons Jesus taught his disciples on leadership.

1. The leader and the community

According to McLaughlin (2001), there is a profound interconnectedness between the leader and the whole community, and a true leader according to our text is the one who has a vision to serve the good of the entire community. They take responsibility for the well-being and improvement of their community. In other words, they do not serve one part of society and leave the other even if there were good reasons for doing so. They recognize that there is some truth on both sides and in most of the situations with regard to issues that polarize our society today. Good leaders search for solutions that transcend the usual confrontational approaches and instead address the causal level of problems. They find a higher synthesis of the best of both sides of an issue and address the systemic root causes of problems to create real breakthroughs. According to our text, Jesus as a good leader addressed the confusion that came up among the disciples first through consensus building. Then he drew their attention to the root cause which he detected to be misunderstanding of true leadership principles. He explained that a true leader is the one that ministers to those he/she is called to lead.

Laurie Beth Jones (1996) in her book “Jesus, CEO-Using Ancient Wisdom for Leadership” stated about Jesus in the preface to her book that “one person trained twelve human beings who went on to so influence the world that time itself is now recorded as being before (B.C) or after (A.D) his existence.” In her opinion Jesus as a leader worked with a staff that was totally human and not divine... a staff that in spite of illiteracy,

questionable backgrounds, fractious feelings, and momentarily cowardice went on to accomplish the tasks he trained them to do. Jones believed that much can be learned from Jesus' leadership style today as it was about 2000 years ago. He was in touch with his community in its entirety and also formed the twelve into another community which he worked with. Jesus also realized that there was room for more community leaders therefore he spent time to invest in his disciples and after teaching them, he sent them forth to go train more leaders. The fact is that, one or two leaders cannot solve all the complex problems that our communities face. With more community leaders, our communities would do better.

So in Matthew 20:20-34, we saw Jesus as a leader whose clear purpose was "to give his life as a ransom for many" (Matthew 20:28). Therefore he was determined to influence his disciples in becoming selfless in serving others. He demonstrated the fact that a leader is recognized by their capacity for serving and caring for others in his community. As a leader he saw ahead of his disciples and made every effort to clearly register his displeasure on the dissension amongst them. Jesus impartially communicated his views on the right types of leadership principles that can lead them towards his destination and enable them achieve his main vision to the world in totality. He clearly does not want them to over step the boundaries set for leadership by God the Father which is manifested in the patient embracement of servant leadership.

2. Servant Leadership

Servant leadership has been discussed as one of the major features that can be deduced from our text. The concept of servant leadership is timeless though it is believed that the term “Servant leadership” was first used by Robert K. Greenleaf in an essay published in 1970. Servant leadership can be found in many religious texts, though the philosophy itself transcends any particular religious tradition. In the Christian tradition for instance, the following passage from Matthew is often quoted in discussions of servant leadership:

²⁵ But Jesus called them [together] to himself and said, “You know that the rulers of the Gentiles [nations] lord it over them, and their great men exercise authority over them. ²⁶ It shall not be so among you; but whoever wants to become great among you must be your servant ²⁷and whoever would be first among you must be your slave; ²⁸even as the son of man does not come to be served but to serve and to give his life [soul] as a ransom for many. (Matthew 20:20-28)

In this passage, Jesus addresses the issue of how leaders hold on to power which demands the right to command others. Jesus set up two models or examples of leaders from the text. The one model was provided by the secular rulers of Jesus’ day, the emperor or king or governor for example, who “exercises authority over” others. There are many characteristics of this leadership, some made explicit in the text and others implicit in the example chosen. For example in secular leadership, there are instances where a distinctive relationship exists between the leader and the led. There is no mutual relationship between the leader and his subjects except what we may call a servant - master relationship.

Another significant characteristic is implied in both the phrases “lord it over them” (κατακυριεύουσιν αὐτῶν) and “exercise authority over them” (κατεξουσιάζουσιν αὐτῶν). The secular ruler has the ability to enforce his will. He has the right to sanction anyone who stands against his commands and he makes sure that his orders are carried out to the letter. A significant characteristic implicit in the two characteristics mentioned above has to do with how leadership is exercised. From his position above his subjects, he uses power and authority to enforce his will on his subjects. It is normal for the secular ruler to lead by command. He simply tells others what to do, and they do it.

However, Jesus in the text chose a servant as a counter model for his followers. While the secular ruler is above those he leads, Jesus says “Not so with you” (Matt: 20:26). Force, manipulation, demand are all ruled out in the way by which the servant leader should exercise leadership; but instead he is supposed to lead by serving. For example, the secular ruler speaks the commands, but the servant leader demonstrates by his example how to serve his/her subjects.

Greenleaf (1976) explained that a Servant-leader is first a servant. This type of leadership aspirants begin first with the natural feeling of wanting to serve. This leader is sharply different from someone who is a leader first, he who is a leader first perhaps because of the need to assuage an unusual power drive or to acquire material possessions is not willing to serve. It is good to take note that the leader-first and servant-first leaders

are two extreme types of leadership. This was the point Jesus sought to make when he called his disciples together (Matthew 20:25).

When he called them to himself, he carefully drew a fine line between what scholars call autocratic leadership and participative leadership styles. He explained to his disciples what the characteristics of the autocratic leadership style were. This (autocratic) leadership style is characterized by individual control over all decisions. Such leaders are often bossy, controlling, and dictatorial. These characteristics most of the time lead to resentment among group members. The autocratic leadership style can make subjects feel like undervalued automatons-mere cogs in a wheel who are unappreciated for their individuality and talents. There is no doubt that Jesus was not pleased with the actions of the two sons of Zebedee. Their desire to be bosses over the other ten by sitting at the right and left of Christ in the coming kingdom (Matthew 20:21) brought serious disagreement into the group (Matthew 20:24).

Because autocratic leaders make decisions most of the time without consulting the group, they often lack creative solutions to problems. It tends to decrease motivation in the group and often leads to their dependence on the so called autocratic leaders. This may ultimately hurt the performance of the group. Jesus however, in our text, proved himself to be a servant leader and who was able to solve problems as they rear their ugly heads by consultation rather than issuing commands and policies from above. A case in point is the calling of the twelve together when they were divided-ten against two- (Matthew 20:24) and he was able to build

consensus among them and also dealt with the problem immediately. Even though autocratic leaders can also be problem solvers, Jesus was pointing to a particular way of solving problems that involves all the stake holders in finding solutions to problems as an alternative leadership style.

The characteristics of autocratic leadership are in direct contradiction to that of the participatory leadership style. In the participative leadership for example, leaders are totally focused on organizing, supporting, and developing the people on their teams. They are people oriented and treat everyone on the team equally. They are friendly and approachable, they pay attention to the welfare of everyone in the group, and they make themselves available whenever team members need help or advice.

Servant leadership can be most likely associated with participative leadership style. Unlike the autocratic leader, the servant leader is to encourage, support and enable subordinates to unfold their full potential and abilities. A servant leader focuses primarily on the growth and well-being of people and the communities to which they belong. While the authoritarian leaders generally involve the accumulation and exercise of power by one who is at the top most position, servant leadership is different. The servant leader shares power. He puts the needs of others first and helps people develop and perform as highly as possible. Jesus the servant leader encourages his disciples and focuses on the well-being of his team. Therefore he taught them the basics of servant leadership. The book “Management Essentials for Christian Ministries” edited by Michael J.

Anthony and James Estep Jr. (2005), also stressed that, servant leaders lead from relationship, not position. They lead by example, not edict. It indicates further that, servant leaders lead in a spirit of humility but not through power.

While the New Testament never have linked the words “servant” and leadership together, Jesus here in Mathew 20:20-32 certainly did teach and modeled the concept. His message was clear: The essence of true leadership is servanthood-selfless commitment to serve no matter the cost.

3. Forging New Trends for leadership

Aspiring leaders need to find ways to encourage followers to think beyond preconceived notions. The disciples were introduced to a different system and style of leadership which was different from what they were conversant with. Instead of lording it over others they were to become servants.

Though campaigning for position is normally characterized with acrimony and sharp disagreements especially amongst politicians, Jesus did not expect the same to happen amongst his disciples and for that matter in the church. Therefore he called his disciples together and gave them some lessons on leadership. Jesus’ new trend of leadership is different from what was pertaining in his time and context. This type of leadership is the one that leads to positive changes in those who follow. James MacGregor Burns (1978) who initially introduced the concept of transformational leadership defines it as a process in which leaders and followers help each other to advance to a higher level of morale and motivation.

A critical look at our text reveals a type which highlights certain new trends. For instance, it emphasizes the leader's ability to give attention to the individual needs of the followers. Leaders were required to keep lines of communication open so that followers feel free to share ideas. Jesus gave attention to the sons of Zebedee when they approached him with their request (Matthew 20:20-21). Jesus as a leader also shows empathy and support, but also challenges his followers. He spoke to them on how to avoid worldly leadership styles and challenged them on how to become better leaders. Also, Jesus here generates intellectual stimulation (Bass & Avolio, 1994). This refers to the leader's capability to stimulate curiosity and creativity in their followers. It requires that the leader encourages followers to explore new ways of doing things and new opportunities to learn. Jesus demonstrated this by calling his disciples to himself and challenging them to avoid the way of the gentiles but explore new ways of leadership.

The text also gave an indication of role modeling of leadership. This in a sense referred to the leader's capacity to spread a vision that was inspiring to followers. In this regard, leaders were also able to help followers experience the same passion and motivation to fulfill this vision. This was implicit in Jesus' statement in Matthew 20:28 that his main purpose or vision was self-sacrifice for the entirety of humanity.

When Jesus told his disciples this vision, he was actually preparing them on how his vision would influence them and also impact the whole world. Jesus demonstrates that vision does not refer to a grand, over-

arching vision of the leader, but leaders need to provide followers with a vision of how they fit into the mission. Indeed, Jesus did not only tell them he will go on to give his life as a ransom for many, but also gave the disciples a vision on how they are to become better leaders after he was gone.

The development of “high potentials” to take over current leadership when their time comes to exit their position is known as succession planning. The successive leadership development is based not only on “what we know or have” but also on “what we aspire to become”. This implies that, the followers view the leader as a role model and seek to model him in order to tap their full potential. Jesus demonstrated this leadership trait when he immediately put into practice what he had been teaching his disciples.

The disciples were having what could be termed “on the job training”. He was teaching them the fact that, if they are to become truly good leaders, they will have to serve as role models, and must demonstrate the qualities they desire from followers. Jesus demonstrated one of his sterling leadership qualities which is compassion, when he healed the blind men (Matthew 20:30-34) particularly Verse 34.

Summary

In this chapter, we considered various issues on leadership deduced from Matthew 20:20-34 which include some vital lessons Jesus taught his disciples on leadership. The chapter looked at implications of the issues of greatness for leadership in Christian communities. It discussed issues

pertaining to the leader and the community, servant leadership and, forging new trends in leadership and role modeling in leadership.

Under the leader and the Community, it was mentioned that a community leader is the one who has a vision to serve the good of the entire community. Such true leaders usually take responsibility for the well-being and improvement of their community. Jesus was an example of a very true community leader. He was always in touch with his community and also spent much time to train more community workers.

Secondly, Jesus set up two models or examples of leaders from the text. The one model was provided by secular leaders of Jesus' time. It was that, the emperor or king for example "exercises authority over" others. It is the type of relationship that exists between the leader and his servant. It is what we may call a servant-master relationship. The second model is what we shall call servant leadership. It is required of the servant leader to lead by serving.

The final issue raised in this chapter was how aspiring leaders need to find ways to encourage followers to think beyond preconceived notions. They were advised to forging new trends for leadership. In this chapter we were informed on how the disciples were introduced to a different system of leadership-servant leadership-which was different from what they were conversant with.

In sum, the chapter emphasized, an inclusive, participatory and selfless approach to leadership that is geared towards service that is to be offered sacrificially with humility through role modeling.

Reflection

There are some few implications drawn from Matthew 20:20-34 which would be very appropriate for leaders in Christian communities. It is very obvious from the text that Jesus exposed his disciples to a leadership style which was foreign to his disciples at the time. The type of leadership style that was popular at the time was the type the kings and the rulers use. This type of leadership style is mainly lording it over the subjects and exercising undue authority over them. However Jesus emphatically insisted that his disciples should never emulate their examples. What he prescribed was in direct contrast. Instead of lording it over the subjects, they were to be servants and slaves.

The words δίακονος (servant) and δοῦλος (slave) used in verses 26 and 27 respectively paint the picture which contrasts the world's view on greatness. To Jesus a true leader is the one who abandons power and authority in order to serve others. Such a one is among but not over others. He chooses to minister to others. He does not coerce his people but by the power of his example and love motivates others to make the right decision. In carrying out his duty, the servant does not magnify his own importance, but emphasizes the importance of others. Therefore the way to be the first (πρῶτος) is to be the servant (δοῦλος), the bond-slave Jesus asserted.

Though scholars in our contemporary times asserted that there are many leadership styles in the study of management, they seemed to accept the fact that effectiveness and efficiency of leadership is not really dependent on the particular leadership style one uses, but it greatly depends

on whether or not the style being used is appropriate to the task, or situation.

The story of the sons of Zebedee when carefully analyzed brings to the fore many leadership principles and the most prominent amongst them was the servant leadership. For example it could be deduced from the text that good leaders search for solutions that transcend the usual adversarial approaches and address the causal level of problems. For example, Jesus as a good leader addresses the confusion that issued among the disciples first through consensus building and afterwards drew their attention to the root cause which he detected was the misunderstanding of who should be the greatest in his kingdom.

Jesus spoke to his disciples in verses 25 to 27 of our text on servant leadership. In the above mentioned verses, the idea of a direct contrast was drawn between characteristics of secular leadership and servant leadership styles. For example in verse 25 we read that, the characteristics of secular leadership were “lording it over others”, and “exercising authority over others”. Whereas in verses 26 to 27, we read that the characteristics of what Christ was putting across were being “Servants” and “Slaves”. The thrust of the matter in this narration was to paint the picture that, in everyday life, servants and slaves regard themselves as less worthy than others. As result of this, it is not too difficult for leaders with such inclination to serve placing others’ needs before their own. Therefore a leader who assumes the position of a servant or a slave would do better in leadership according to Christ.

Though servant leadership seemed to be the best accepted leadership ascribed by Christ, aspiring leaders need to find ways to encourage followers to think beyond preconceived notions. In other words they are to forge new trends for leadership. For example, the text reveals the leaders ability to attend to the individual needs of the followers. For example Jesus gave attention to the sons Zebedee when they approached him with the request to sit at his right and left hand side in the kingdom (Matthew 20:20-21). The text also gave indication of role modeling of leaders. This was implicit in Jesus' statement in Matthew 20:28 that his main purpose or vision is self-sacrifice for humanity. The text also suggested how leaders must prepare for leadership succession after they left the scene.

CHAPTER SIX

SUMMARY, CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Introduction

The previous chapter looked at the implications for leadership in the Christian communities in Matthew 20:20-34. In this chapter, the entire work is summarized; applications drawn out from the findings listed and discussed and then conclusion was made. At the tail end, some recommendations were also made.

Summary of Chapters 1-5

The first chapter was the introduction to the entire thesis which includes the objective of the study, statement of problem, significance of study, research methodology, limitation and delimitations of the study and the review of appropriate literatures. For example in the first chapter, the researcher stated in his introduction that his aim was to discover the lessons Jesus taught his disciples after the two sons of Zebedee and their mother in Matthew 20:20-28 visited Jesus with the aim of soliciting for the two most prominent positions in his kingdom. This was so because the statement of problem in this chapter identified that most Christian leaders misunderstand what greatness actually is. Their misunderstanding of how to be a Christian leader sometimes creates tension among them and the lessons Jesus taught on true greatness was the focus of the paper.

The researcher is also of the view that the Matthew 20:20-28 story has been studied and analyzed by many scholars in the past using other methods, but reading this story as a narrative and by focusing on greatness as a leadership issue in the story may bring a divergent view on how many other scholars consider the text. Therefore the purpose of the study was to do conscious reading of Matthew 20:20-28 using narrative criticism. It is the hope of the researcher that the lessons drawn from how Jesus compared the way the people of the world looked at greatness and how godly leaders should consider greatness. The study hopefully would be compiled and made available in the form of suggestions to churches and corporate bodies that may need them.

The literature review in chapter one was also geared towards investigating how scholars interpreted Mathew 20:20-34 in respect of greatness in leadership. The review of literature on the text considered (1) the circumstances that led to the story in Mathew 20:20-34; (2) the issue of leadership ambitions (desire to be great)-good or bad;(3) Comparing Matthew 20:20-34 to Mark 10:35-45 (4) the meaning of the word δουλός and διακονος in Matthew 20:24; (5) Jesus' View on Greatness as explained in Matthew 20:20-34..

In the second chapter, the researcher looked at the Background of the gospel according to Matthew. It has been observed that, the gospel according to Matthew was placed strategically first to provide a bridge from the Old Testament to the New Testament. Matthew's gospel is foundational not only as one looks backward to the Old Testament

scriptures but also as one looks forward to what the church became. This observation implies that the gospel according to Matthew could also be considered as a seed plot on which the church can deduce vital lessons for its future. Stretching this truth further, it could be inferred that one of the vital lessons the gospel according to Matthew could present is the lesson on church leadership.

There were many theological themes that could be gleaned from the gospel according to Matthew. Besides themes such as Christology, pneumatology, soteriology and many more, the gospel according to Matthew has also the theme of leadership.

The text of the gospel according to Matthew as it comes to us is believed to have been written for Matthew's own community. Its aim was to instruct them in their own faith and also to clarify some misunderstandings prevailing at the time. The book is not to be regarded as evangelistic or apologetic writing directed to outsiders. It is a communal book.

Matthew, like all New Testament texts, should first be allowed to speak to the people of its own time in their conceptual framework, addressing their concerns; then also speaking to our concerns today. In fact all of Matthew is to be taken seriously as the church's scripture because the text as a whole mediates the church's message of the meaning of the Christ-event.

It is somewhat difficult to lay hand on Matthew's dominant theme. This challenge increases when we recognize that, Matthew unlike the epistle writers is committed to describing what happened during the

ministry of the historical Jesus while nevertheless addressing issues that are of theological importance. Below are some theological themes that were gleaned from the gospel according to Matthew.

For example, one of the outstanding themes in Matthew is Christology. Matthew's Gospel combines a number of Christological emphases. For example, Jesus is for Matthew both "Son of God" (3:17; 4:1-11) and "Son of David" (1:1-17). Another theme in the gospel according to Matthew is Ecclesiology. Matthew's Gospel is concerned with Christian community and discipleship. It is the only gospel where the word *ἐκκλησία* "church" occurs (16:18; 18:17). The next observable theme in the gospel according to Matthew is eschatology. This theme came to the fore when Jesus in his Mount Olivet discourse addressed his disciples after they asked him "What will be the signs of your coming and the end of the age?" (24:3).

Besides theological themes the Gospel also has other important themes of which leadership is one. Most scholars opined that Matthew's Gospel was preoccupied with the issues of church leadership. The next chapters in this thesis are dedicated to proving that the gospel according to Matthew has lessons for church leaders and one of such lessons is greatness as a leadership issue.

The third chapter concentrated on narrative-critical exegesis of Matthew 20:20-34 which has revealed Jesus' teaching on greatness as a leadership issue. It detailed the discussion between Jesus and his disciples after James and John went with their mother to see Jesus.

The desire for greatness which James and John demonstrated in the story was probably born out from what the narrator narrated in Mathew 19:28 that, each of the twelve disciples would be sitting on twelve thrones to rule the twelve tribes of Israel with the Lord when he comes in his kingdom. In their desire to be the greatest, their mother brought them to Jesus with the request. This is how Matthew 20:21 presented the request made by their mother: “Say (grant/command) that this my two sons may sit, one at your right hand and (other) one at your left, in your kingdom.”

Her request according to the narration was that her two sons would sit one at the right and the second on the left when Jesus shall establish his kingdom. However Jesus questioned their commitment and said: “are you able to drink the cup I am about to drink?” The two brothers responded in the affirmative. But Jesus made them to understand that, though they would be able to drink the cup he was about to drink, he is not in the position to make them sit at his right and left. That decision is strictly the prerogative of his heavenly father.

This very act of the two brothers, we were told, made the other ten indignant. As the result of this Jesus called the twelve together and said in Matthew 20:25-27 that:

²⁵ ... “You know that the rulers of the Gentiles [nations] lord it over them, and their great men exercise authority over them. ²⁶ It shall not be so among you; but whoever wants to become great among you must be your servant ²⁷and whoever would be first among you must be your slave;

Jesus in the above address to his disciples explained to them that, becoming the greatest in the kingdom is not the same as the way people of the world go about greatness in their leadership principles. For example, the people of the world assume so much power and authority that they lord it over their subordinates and exercise undue authority over them. However in the kingdom of God, the greatest person is supposed to be a servant and the one wanting to be first among them must be their slave.

To explain this further he made them to understand that, this is the very reason why he came not to be served but to serve and give his own life as a ransom for many (Verse 28). His life is a full demonstration of greatness. In the subsequent verses he demonstrated what greatness was by showing compassion to the blind men who called for mercy. He healed them to confirm that greatness demands working the works of the lord.

The fourth Chapter dilated on the issues raised in the exegesis of Matthew 20:20-34. The first issue discussed was when Jesus said “he is not the one to give the position but the father” gives us the indication that one must understand or know his limit. It seems Jesus seeks to teach the two sons of Zebedee and their mother that there is a limit to every person’s field of operations. He as the son of God also has a limit when it comes to who would sit at his right or left in his kingdom. Therefore it is a good lesson for them to also know that there is limit to how far they could go in their requests for greatness.

The second issue that was considered is the fact that sacrifice and commitment alone are not enough for qualifying one for the greatest

position. Though the two sons of Zebedee were ever ready to pay the price and willing to drink the cup of suffering, Jesus made it plain to them that their sacrifice, commitment or dedication cannot change God's position on who sits at his right or left in the kingdom. The lesson therefore to learn is that, one's sacrifices and acts of commitment cannot change God's preordained will. God is sovereign and whatever pleases him he does.

The concept of servant and slave put forward as metaphor for leaders preferred by Jesus was also given some attention in chapter four. This third issue is so dominant in the text so much that Jesus after enumerating the way the worldly people carried out their leadership emphatically stated "It shall not be so among you." In his opinion the way of the worldly are "lording it over" others and "exercising authority over them" but instead "whoever wants to become great must be the servant, and whoever would want to be first among you must be your slave." The thrust of the matter in this narration was to paint the picture that, in everyday life, servants and slaves regard themselves as less worthy than others. As a result of this, it is not too difficult for leaders with such inclination to serve placing others' needs before their own. Therefore a leader who assumes the position of a servant or a slave would be highly rated by Christ.

Finally the issue of "otherness" or placing others first took center stage. It was first and foremost revealed when Jesus put forward in his teaching that he did not come to be served but to serve others and above all give his life as a ransom for many. His preoccupation is "others" not

“himself.” He is not self-centered but other-centered. Secondly his healing of the blind shows how he was willing to think of people in adverse situations, show them compassion, and meet their needs. This very lesson draws a sharp contrast between the self-centeredness of the two brothers and their mother on one hand, and Jesus the person who is other-centered. The two young men wanted to ascend to the greatest position in the kingdom, while Christ came not to be served but to serve others. In summary the issues that were raised sought to do complete re-interpretation of the concepts of the greatest and least in this narrative.

The fifth chapter drew some implications from Matthew 20:20-34 for leadership in Christian communities. Firstly, the chapter looked at implications of the issues of greatness for leadership in Christian communities. McLaughlin (2001) observed that, there is a profound interconnectedness between the leader and the whole community, and in his opinion a true leader is the one who has a vision to serve the good of the entire community. Furthermore, he iterated that good leaders search for solutions that transcend the usual adversarial approaches and address the causal level of problems. Therefore, Jesus as a good leader addressed the confusion that issued among the disciples. First, through consensus building and later by drawing the attention of his disciples to the root cause which he detected to be the misunderstanding of what true greatness entails in his leadership principles. In discussing issues pertaining to the leader and the community, it was also observed that, Jesus as a good community leader was in touch with his community and also transformed the twelve

disciples into another community which he worked with. Jesus also demonstrated the fact that a leader is recognized by the capacity for serving others in his community. Therefore he was determined to influence his followers in becoming selfless (Matthew 20:28).

Secondly, Jesus clearly does not want his disciples to over step the boundaries set for leadership by God the Father which is manifested in his acceptance of servant leadership. In fact, one of the outstanding features from the text is servant leadership. Jesus in the text chose a servant as a counter model for his followers. While the secular ruler is above those he leads, Jesus says “Not so with you” (Matt: 20:26). Force, manipulation, demand are all ruled out in the way by which the servant leader should exercise leadership; instead he is supposed to lead by serving. For example, the secular ruler speaks the commands, but the servant leader demonstrates by his example how to serve his/her subjects. To Jesus, a true servant leader is the one who abandons power and authority in order to serve others. Such a one is among but not over others. He chooses to minister to others. He does not coerce his people but by the power of his example and love motivates others to make the right decision. In carrying out his duty the servant does not magnify his own importance, but emphasizes the importance of others.

Finally, aspiring leaders were encouraged to think beyond preconceived notions. The disciples in Matthew 20:20-34 were taught a different system and style of leadership which was contrary to what they were used to. Instead of lordship and exerting undue authority they were to

become servants and slaves. Jesus' new trend of leadership is different from what was pertaining in his time and context. Our text also highlights some new trends other than servant leadership. For example, how Jesus gave attention to the sons of Zebedee when they approached him with their request (Matthew 20:20-21) showed a trend of how leaders were required to keep lines of communication open so that followers feel free to share ideas. The text also gave an indication of role modeling of leadership. Jesus' vision and purpose was to give his life as ransom for many- that was to give himself as a sacrifice for humanity (Matthew 20:28). This objective inspired his followers and motivated them to have similar passion.

Findings

Some findings made from the text are enumerated as follows:

1. Every leader including Christ has a limit and it is important everyone discovers and knows his limit.
2. Sacrifice and commitment alone are not enough for qualifying one for the greatest position in the kingdom.
3. The concept of servant and slave put forward as a metaphor for leaders preferred by Christ to the leadership styles of the worldly leaders
4. The issue of putting others first exemplified by Christ in contrast to self-centeredness exhibited by the mother of the sons of Zebedee and her sons.

The above four findings expounded further is as follows:

1. Jesus' response to the two young men seeks to suggest that he was limited in granting them their request. In his response to them, he said that sitting on the right and the left are not his choice to make. He was not qualified to make that decision. It is the prerogative of his father alone. This answer is also suggesting to the woman and her two sons that, every person has to come to terms with the fact that, there are limitations in life. For example ambitions may backfire, desires may fail and disappointment may sometimes stare you in the face.
2. The young men were very determined and very committed to their ascension to greatness (sitting at the right and left) in the kingdom. In fact they promised Christ that they were able to sacrifice and pay every price to get there. In plain terms, they were ready to drink the same cup of suffering Christ was about to drink. Though Christ did not rebuke them on their commitment, he could not offer them the position they so much desired. This also sought to suggest that, our commitments and sacrifices may not go unnoticed by the Lord; however promotions to greatness are his sovereign will. Not every person can be the president but one person among equally qualified people would. The choice is God's to make. Therefore according to Christ's leadership principles, to ascend to the position of greatness, you should be chosen first by God.

3. The third issue which has become a dominant issue in the entire paper is the concept of servant and slave put forward as a metaphor for leaders preferred by Christ to the leadership styles of the worldly leaders. The world's greatness is characterized with domination and playing of the tyrant on their subjects. In the process of maintaining their superiority, sometimes they even apply power by violent oppression. Jesus advised his disciples not to emulate their examples. But "whoever wants to become great must be the servant and whoever would be first among you must be your slave" (Verse 26-27). Jesus herein was explaining to his disciples that the principles by which his kingdom works is in direct contrast to the principles of this world. Servants and slaves in this world regard themselves as less worthy than others and place the welfare of others before their own. Therefore in similar way people with such inclinations in the kingdom of God would also serve placing others before their own.
4. "Otherness" or "putting others first" is preferred to self-centeredness. In fact Jesus demonstrated to us that he did not come to be served but to serve and to give his life a ransom for many (Verse 28). He was willing to put others first and value them even more than his own life. He also demonstrated it by healing the blind men even when all others were trying to prevent the blind men from being attended to by Christ. This spirit of other-centeredness is in direct contrast to the self-centeredness exhibited by the mother of

Zebedee's sons and her two sons. They were concerned about their own interest. Wanting to sit at the most elevated (right and left) position in the kingdom. This attitude was not accepted by Christ and must not be emulated by all people who want to follow Christ's example.

Conclusion

This research started with the aim of doing narrative critical reading of Matthew 20:20-34. This was done to the best of my knowledge, though I would not say it is perfect. In the process of the exegesis it was discovered that attaining greatness as prescribed by the text is not the same as how the world goes about it. The world form of greatness is exhibited through lording it over others and exercising undue authority over their subjects. Attaining to such high positions comes with strives and struggles. They don't mind stepping on others in getting to the top.

However in Jesus' leadership principles, one attains greatness through being servant and also if you want to become first by being a slave. This prescription of Christ may not be accepted by the people of the world but it is the best according to the scriptures. Christ himself led the way and as result became the greatest man in history today. He attained greatness through emptying himself and took the form of a servant, humbled himself and became obedient unto death. Therefore, God exalted him and gave him a name that is above every name (Philippians 2:5-11).

Though the world celebrates greatness, Jesus taught us that the least (servants and slaves) in the kingdom are preferred to the great ones of the world. The third main objective of our research was to investigate this concept. It came out after investigation that those who have the least power create a contest for lording over others. This simply indicates why Christ attributes this type of leadership to the gentiles. It is so because their powers cannot match that of Christ. This type of leadership is rooted in the idea that power and authority flow from the top to the bottom. It is hierarchical type of leadership.

The servant and slave mode of leadership prescribed by Jesus contrasts the world's view of greatness. To Jesus, a true leader is the one who abandons power and authority in order to serve others. Such a one does not coerce his people but by the power of his example and love, he motivates others to make the right decisions. Therefore the way to be the first or the greatest is to be a bond-slave “δουλοῦ”. In Jesus' leadership principles, the least (servant / slave) is generally preferred to being great.

Putting others first is the very core of Jesus' leadership principles. Our text revealed that before one can be considered to be great, he must take the focus off himself and on to others. This concept is the very foundation of Jesus' servant leadership principles discussed in our text. As a matter of fact this stands in direct opposite to what the woman and her two sons exhibited when aspiring for the greatest (right and left) seat for their own personal aggrandizement. They thought their own efforts and sacrifice could earn them position and prestige. But this attitude is contrary

to what Jesus teaches and exemplified. He said he came not to be served or in our present day parlance to be a “boss” over his people, but he came rather to serve those he was sent to save. Jesus made us understand that, as a servant or a slave, your focus is not supposed to be on yourself but on those you serve and labor for.

Furthermore, Jesus demonstrated the concept of otherness in sacrificing his own life for others. He said, he came to this world to give his life as ransom for many (Matthew 20:28). He was willing to pay any price that would make his subjects free and totally liberated. This is the spirit of otherness. He also demonstrated it in his ministry when he went about healing and showing compassion on those who were oppressed –for example the blind men in our text.

Recommendations

Below are some recommendations:

1. Since there are limits in life, leaders and potential leaders should know and understand that all of man’s desires can never be met. Therefore it is always good to make room to accept rejection or defeat if they come.
2. Your dedication, acts of commitment and even your willingness to sacrifice may not bring you greatness. Greatness comes by God’s sovereign will not by man’s own efforts. Therefore depend more on God than on your own abilities even as you desire greatness.
3. Greatness is not achieved by lording it over others or exercising undue authority over those you lead. True greatness according to

Jesus comes through serving others. It is your service to others that gives you exposure and gives you influence over those you serve. Therefore even as you minister (serve), you are becoming great through your service.

4. One other attribute all great leaders must have is the spirit of “other-centeredness.” Putting others, especially those you lead, first in your life makes you a very good leader. Leaders and potential great leaders should do well to emulate Jesus’ example of leadership by being ready to sacrifice for those they lead.

REFERENCE

- Alter, R. (1981). *The Art of Biblical Narrative*. New York: Basic Books, Inc.
- Andrews, P. H., & Herschel, R. T. (1998). *Organizational communication: Empowerment in a Technological Society*. Delhi, India: Houghton Mifflin Company.
- Anthony, M. J., & Estep, J. Jr. Ed. (2005). *Management essentials for Christian ministries*. Nashville, Tennessee: Broadman & Holman Publishers.
- Augsburger, M. S. (1982). *The Communicator's Commentary -Matthew*. Lloyd J. Ogilvie General Ed. Waco, Texas Word Book Publishers.
- Bal, V., Cambel, M., Steed, J., & Meddings, K. (2008). The Role of Power in Effective Leadership” A CCL White Paper. [http://www.ccl.org/leadership /pdf/ research/roleOfPower.pdf](http://www.ccl.org/leadership/pdf/research/roleOfPower.pdf). accessed July 24, 2013.
- Barbie, E. (1998). *The Practice of Social Resarch*, (8th ed.). Belmont: Wadsworth Publishing Company.
- Barnes, A. (1956). *Notes on the New Testament Explanatory and Practical*. Grand Rapids, Michigan: Baker Book House.
- Barnett, J. M. (1995). *Diakonate: A full and equal order*. Harrisburg PA: Trinity Press International.
- Bass, B. M. (1985). *Leadership and performance*. New York: Free Press.

- Bass, B. M., & Avolio, B. J. (1994). *Improving organizational effectiveness through transformational leadership*. Thousand Oak, CA: Sage Publications.
- Bass, B. M. (1990). *Bass & Stogil's Handbook of Leadership*. New York: The Free Press.
- Beardslee, W. A. (1970). *Literary Criticism of the New Testament*. Philadelphia: Fortress Press.
- Bible Knowledge Commentary. "Available from Libronix Digital Library" (Scholars Edition).
- Broadus, J. A. (1990). *Commentary on Matthew*. Grand Rapids, Michigan: Kregel Classics.
- Burns, J. M. (1978). *Leadership*. New York: Harper and Row. *Cherry Kendra Lewin's Leadership Style* <http://psychology.about.com/od/leadership/a/leadstyles.htm>. accessed April 9, 2012.
- Christian Classics Ethereal Library http://www.ccel.org/ccel/calvin/_calcom32.ii.lxxvi.html. Accessed April 10, 2011.
- Clark's Commentary. <http://bible.cc/matthew/20-20.htm>. Accessed Sept 5, 2011.
- Cole, G. A. (1995). *Organizational Behavior: Theory and Practice*. Gasport, London: Ashford Colour Press.
- Collins, J. N. (1990). *Diakonia Re-Interpreting the Ancient Sources*. New York and Oxford: OUP.
- Coser, L. A. (1956). *The Functions of Social Conflict*. Glencoe: The Free Press.

- Davies, W. D. & Allison, D. C. *International Critical Commentary*, Matthew 1-7. London: T & T Clark, 2004.
- Dawes Jr., Zach. <http://zdbu.wordpress.com/2010/02/06/matthews-fulfillment-or-formula-citations/> Cited January 28, 2013.
- Dictionary of the Biblical Languages with Semantic Domain (New Testament). (1997). Available from Libronix Digital Library (Scholars Edition).
- Engstrom, T. W. (1976). *The making of Christian leadership: How to develop management and human relations skills*. Grand Rapids, Michigan: Zondervan Publishing House.
- Fiensy, D. A. (1994). *New Testament Introduction*. Joplin Mo.: College Press Publication Co.
- Freed, E. D. (2001). *The New Testament, A critical introduction*. California, Belmont: Wadsworth / Thomas Learning.
- Gæbelein, F. E. (1984). *The Expositors Bible Commentary*. Grand Rapids, Michigan: Zondervan Publishing House.
- Gill's Exposition of the Entire Bible. <http://biblecommenter.com/mark/10-41.htm>. Accessed April 10, 2011.
- Greenleaf, R. K. (1976). *Servant leadership: A journey into the nature of legitimate power and greatness*. New York, NY: Paulist Press.
- Gæbelein, F. E. (1984). *The Expositors Bible Commentary*. Grand Rapids, Michigan: Zondervan Publishing House.
- Gundry, R. H. (1967). *The use of the Old Testament in St Matthew's Gospel*. Netherland: E. J Brill.

- Hagan, P. G. (1995). Democracy as a conflictual system-The needed cultural premise in: Mike Oquaye ed. *Democracy and conflict resolution in Ghana*. Accra: Gold Type Publications.
- Harrington, S. J., & Daniel, J. ed. (1991). *The gospel according to Matthew*. The liturgical Press.
- Harris, Stephen L. (1999). *The New Testament, A student introduction Third Edition*. California, Mountain View: Mayfield Publishing Company.
- Havey, Dave. "The Glory Drive-An Interview with Dave Havey" (11/22/2010) *Leadership-journal* <http://www.christianitytoday.com/le/thepastor/soulspirit/glorydrive.html> Accessed 12/14/2010.
- International Association of Business Management Professionals (IABMP).<http://iabmp.org/the-advantages-of-visionary-leadership-in-organizations/> Accessed May 15, 2013
- Janvier, G. E. & Thaba B. (2005). *Understanding leadership an African Christian Model*. Kaduna: Baraka Press and Publishers Ltd.
- Jewish Encyclopedia. <http://www.jewishencyclopedia.com/articles/12757-right-and-left> Accessed July 25, 2013.
- Jones, L. B. (1996). *Jesus, CEO: Using ancient wisdom for visionary leadership*. Hyperion.
- Kahan, S. <http://www.fastcompany.com/1117908/visionary-leadership> Accessed May 15, 2013.
- Keegan, T. J. (1985). *Interpreting the Bible a popular introduction to Biblical Hermeneutics*. New York: Paulist Press.

Keener, Craig S. (1993). *The IVP Bible Background Commentary*. Illinois: Inter Varsity Press.

Koduah, A. "Litigations in Churches is Disheartening"
<http://news.myjoyonline.com/news/201103/62583.asp> Accessed
March 11, 2011.

Luz, U. (1990) *Commentary, Matthew 1-7*. Edinburg: T&T Clark, 1990.

Manktelow, J & Carlson A. "Leadership Styles, Using the Right One for
the Situation" [http://www.mindtools.com/pages/
article/newLDR_84.htm](http://www.mindtools.com/pages/article/newLDR_84.htm) Accessed April 9, 2012.

McCafferty, Kevin C. "Conflict Theory" [http://www.ehow.com/
facts5518763_conflict-theory.html](http://www.ehow.com/facts5518763_conflict-theory.html) Accessed April 7, 2011.

McLaughlin, Corinne. "Visionary Leadership"
www.visionarylead.org/articles/vislead.htm Accessed May 14,
2013.

Mind Tools, [http://www.mindtools.com/pages/
article/newLDR_81.htm](http://www.mindtools.com/pages/article/newLDR_81.htm)
Accessed April 1, 2011.

Mounce, R. H. (1991). *New International Biblical Commentary –Matthew*.
Peabody, Massachuset: Hendrickson Publishers.

Omoteye, R. (2004). "Charisma and Leadership Crisis: An Examination of
the Christ Apostolic church in Nigeria". *Religion Leadership and
Society: Focus on Nigeria*, eds. Ade P. Dopamu and others, 37-45.
Nigeria: Free Enterprise Publishers.

Orr, R. A. (2001). *The essentials for effective Christian leadership
development*. Linden, Alberta, Canada: Golden Cosulting Inc.

- Richard, L. O. (1987). *The Teacher's Commentary*. Canada: Victor Books. Available from Libronix Digital Library (Scholars Edition).
- Overman, A. J. *Church and community in crisis, the gospel according to St Matthew*. Valley Forge: Continuum International Pub. Group, 1996.
- Richard, L. O. (1987). *The Teacher's Commentary*. Canada: Victor Books. Available from Libronix Digital Library (Scholars Edition).
- Ritzer, G. & Barry S. (2005). *Handbook of Social Theory*. Pages displayed by permission of SAGE.
http://books.google.com.gh/books?id=OO8qQKM2nXkC&pg=PA94&lpg=PA94&dq=ritzer+conflic of+values&source=bl&ots=hPn14XY_lu&sig=jL4nBEdC2w9NeCDsCiqodj_T90&hl=en&ei=3sibTZa0Kay60QGZirXaAg&sa=X&o=book_result&ct=result&resnum=2&ved=0sQ6AEwAQ#v=onepage&q=ritzer%20conflict%20of%20values&f=false Accessed April 6, 2011.
- Ruby, Karen. <http://www.ameaningfulexistence.Com /2010/03/22/know-these-five-causes-of-conflict/> Accessed April 4, 2011.
- Rush, M. (1988). *Management: A Biblical Approach*. Illinois, Wheaton: Victor Books.
- Roberts, C. <http://yourbusiness.azcentral.com/characteristics-visionary-leadership-9056.html> Accessed May 15, 2013.
- Sanders. O. J. (1994). *Spiritual leadership*. Chicago: Moody Press.

- Ska, J. L. (1990). *Our fathers have told us: Introduction to the analysis of Hebrew narratives*. Roma, Italia: Editrice Pontificio Istituto Biblico.
- Soule, R. N. (1981). *Handbook of Biblical Criticism*. Atlanta: John Knox Press.
- Stamps, D. L. (1997). "Rhetorical and Narratological Criticism" in *Handbook to Exegesis of the New Testament*, ed. Stanley Porter. New York: Brill Leiden.
- Stanton G. N. (1992). *A gospel for a new people, studies in Matthew*. Scotland: T&T Clark Ltd.
- Stuart, D. (1992). *Anchor Bible Dictionary*.
- Taylor, J. (Fall 2004) "Servant Leadership." *Encounter: Journal for Pentecostal Ministry*, Vol. 1 No. 2.
- Tonah, S. ed. (2007). *Ethnicity, Conflicts and Consensus in Ghana*. Accra: Woeli Publishing Services.
- The New Interpreter's Bible. (Vol. 8). (1995). Nashville: Abingdon Press.
- Thompson, W. G. (1970). *Matthew's advice to a divided community*. Rome: Biblical Inst. Press.
- Versteeg, J. (1992). *Evangelie in Viervoud. Een Karakteristiek Van de vier Evangelien*. Kampem: Kok.
- Viljoen, F.P. *The Matthean Community According to the Beginning of his Gospel*. <http://www.ajol.info/index.php/actat/article/viewFile/49051/35399> Accessed October 27, 2012.

Warren, S. (2013). "The Role of Spiritual Leaders in Discipleship"
Enrichment Journal. Springfield: General Council of Assemblies of
God.

Weren, W. (2005). *Matthew and the didache: Two documents from the
same Jewish milieu?* Edited by Huub Van De Sandt.
Netherlands: Royal Van Gorcum.

Winjngaards, J. <http://www.womenpriests.org/godpels/mtpower.asp>
Accessed January 2013.