

## Give Us a Man 2-6-00 Wayside Chapel

### Prayer

50 years ago, this same time of year, Wayside Chapel called my father to be a guest speaker. He was attending Grand Canyon College in Prescott. I wasn't born yet, my older sisters were just seven and three years old. Some guests came with them who also had a child. On the way down Mingus Mountain the guests daughter lost her breakfast on the back of my father's suit jacket. Well, they tried to clean it off in the snow and even put scented talc on it. In case any of you were here then and were still wandering about that Pastor's coat, now you finally know the whole story. I thank the Lord I had an easier time coming this morning than he did half a century ago. I don't believe in coincidences but I do believe in Godincidences.

You are seeking a new pastor. I want to warn you in all honest sincerity for your sakes that many a preacher who is thinking a congregation may employ him, will present what he believes to be his very best message. The term in the ministry is his 'sugar stick'. It saddens my heart to think that happens and I pray you will never meet such a pastor. It took me some time to have confirmed by the Lord what I want to share with you this morning. That is because it's something I want to share. I need extra confirmation if I want to preach it, because I don't want you to hear my best, or what I want to say - but rather the burden of the Lord. And that is what I seek to present to you this morning.

Numbers 27:16 –18

1Tim 2:5

In our passage in Numbers, Moses knows his time is limited, and he wants a successor. But Moses also knows the successor must be called of God. It was a formidable task that lay before the successor. For one thing, who could follow a man like Moses? He led them out of Egypt, dealt with their murmuring and rebellion, received the law during two back-to-back 40-day fasts. To the Jewish people there has never been a man the equal of Moses. And the man who followed him had to lead the people into the Promised Land.

Moses life of intercession for the Children of God is exemplary. And this passage is one of the great examples of his prayer life. He recognized God to be the God of the spirits of all mankind, not just the Children of Israel. He prayed that God would appoint A MAN over the community... How do we do it today? Do we truly ask for God's appointment? Do we seek to install someone we like, who appeals to us, or someone with charisma, or someone who is a great pulpiteer? Or do we seek the appointment of God as Moses did? Moses was appointed by God and he knew his successor must be appointed not by man but by God! That is the first point I would like you to note. Moses was seeking God's choice not his own.

Now notice the things Moses prayed for in the man GOD would appoint. He prayed for a man to go out and come in before them. I don't believe Moses is asking for a man to merely be in view as he goes in and out of the camp. I believe that he is asking for someone to go to the Tent of Meeting and hear God's heart for the people, to intercede for them as Moses had and was currently interceding. Numbers 17:4 God told Moses to take the rods to the front of the Tent of Meeting, "where I regularly meet with you." It appears from this passage that Moses regularly met with God there. He was asking for someone who would do the same. He was asking for a man with heart to pray for the people.

The prayer goes on to request, "one who will lead them out and bring them in, so the Lord's people will not be like sheep without a shepherd". Here Moses draws on the Shepherd analogy for the qualities of the man to be appointed. Let us sum up the three things Moses is requesting. 1 A man to be the head 2 that will intercede for them 3 that will be a Shepherd to them.

Verse 18 So the Lord said to Moses, "Take Joshua son of Nun, a man in whom is the spirit and lay your hand on him." God answered the prayer of Moses by choosing a man, Joshua or in Hebrew Yeshua, son of Nun. But as with many of prophecies and prayers there is this immediate fulfillment and the ultimate fulfillment. For we are reading from the Law, and 'the Law is only a shadow of the good things that are coming,' wrote the author of Hebrews 10:1. Yeshua means the salvation of Jehovah, in Greek it is Iesus, in English we say Jesus – the salvation of Jehovah.

Oh, Moses was surely pleased that God should answer his prayer. But now in the heavenlies, Moses is thrilled to see the ultimate answer to his prayer. Let us look again at what this great intercessor prayed. 1 A man to be the head. Eph 1:22, 5:23, Col 1:18. Jesus is the head of the church, his body. 2 A man that will intercede for them 1 Tim 2:5, Heb 7:25 3 that will Shepherd them. Jn 10:4 "When he has brought out all his own, he goes on ahead of them, and his sheep follow him because they know his voice." 14 "I am the good shepherd; I know my sheep and my sheep know me." Yeshua! Jesus our head, our intercessor, our Great Shepherd. In Deut 18:15 Moses prophesied about a prophet to come like himself. From among your own brothers – a man. And Jesus was all God and all man. 'You must listen to him,' he said. His sheep know his voice.

God has a man for Wayside Chapel, the man Christ Jesus. May He alone be the head! May this church never be called Rev. Jones' church. It is the church of Jesus Christ. May this church never have a head other than Jesus or it will cease to be His church.

As we seek the New Testament pattern we never find a man as the head of any church. All New Testament churches were led by elders. At the end of Paul's first missionary journey, he appointed a council of elders for each newly founded church. Acts 14:23 "And when they had appointed elders (plural) for them in every church (singular), having prayed with fasting, they commended them to the Lord in whom they had believed." When Paul passed near Ephesus (Acts 20) on a hurried trip he called for the elders not a pastor for a farewell exhortation. In this same chapter he refers to the elders as bishops or overseers. The Apostle tells Timothy and Titus to appoint elders – plural – in every city and at that time all believers in a city made up the church of that city.

Peter recognized that each church was led and taught by a group of elders. In 1 Peter 5:1 he exhorts the elders to pastor (or shepherd) the flock. Throughout the New Testament we never see a church led by a single man but by a team of equals that can hold each other accountable, share the burden of watching after the flock, and equip the congregation – the other ministers – for service.

There was never any confusion as to whose church it was. It was Christ who was and is the head. These undershepherds served the flock together. One may be more gifted in speaking but certainly all could and should at times should speak. In Acts 16:13 the Greek

implies the whole team spoke, even though Lydia was particularly moved by Paul's message.

How did we get from elders to one pastor? It is a long history but it began early in the second century. In some places in Europe there were still churches founded by the Apostles that were led by a group of equal elders as late as the thirteenth century. At the time of the Reformation we realized every believer is a priest. Yet we still hung on to one man over the congregation. There were movements that used many lay pastors successfully, among the best known are the Methodist and Baptist though it did not continue. It is in fact easier to pay a man to do the work of all the ministries. In fact, the New Testament never separates clergy and laity, for all were ministers with different gifts. The NT refers to the same group of people when it uses the terms kleros and laos from which we derive clergy and laity. When we ignore the New Testament standard we put a burden on man that very few can bear. We witness that fact. Fortunately Ken Wells was such a man that was not tempted by the power or crushed by the pressure. But he is a rare Christlike gem. Those men that met the qualifications of elders clearly stated in Titus and Timothy were to take their place in the body, being examples to the flock, watching over them, teaching them truth – equipping **them** to minister. These were men above reproach, apt to teach, not greedy for money, men whose walk exemplifies the fruits of the Spirit.

I am asking Wayside Chapel to be a church where Christ is the head and you are all brothers. Mt 23:8-10 prohibits any head but Jesus. The elders oversee the flock but they are not above the flock. You are a church with elders, now, see that is all God meant it to be. Keep your elder qualifications those that Paul wrote to Timothy and Titus. Expect them as a team to guide you because their life fruit shows they are in submission to the head.

Let me bring it home. The men called to be elders must meet the qualifications set down in Scripture. They cannot be voted in by popularity or friendship. When truly godly men gather and pray about issues, they come to know the mind of the Lord. From what I understand, Wayne and Calvin acted as elders in this last few months. They obeyed the Great Shepherd and watched out for the sheep. If an elder goes on to be with the Lord and there is true Biblical eldership – not just a management board, the church will go forward with little change for just one of the group has graduated first. God may raise up another from within the congregation to take his place or He may raise up several. You know that new elder is called because he is already living it without a title. The head remains unchanged.

God answered Moses prayer in giving us a man over us – the man Christ Jesus, and all of you are brothers. If you should choose to call a Pastor, recognize that he is a pastor among pastors that God has already among you. Recognize that all the pastors – which means shepherds – are equals and Christ as the head. Never call the church by speaking of the Pastor's name, Rev. So and so's church. Unless you want a jealous Savior, for you are his bride and HE will not share you even with a Pastor, the pastor is a part of the bride. When you talk of Wayside talk of what the Lord Jesus is doing and his presence, not of a pastor who serves Him. Honor the elders, yes, even obey when they are acting as Christ's agents, but never exalt them or any one as head but Christ alone. Speak of Jesus. For God has given Wayside Chapel a man, the man Christ Jesus. Communion

Numbers 27:15-18 NASB Then Moses spoke to the LORD, saying, 16 May the LORD, the God of the spirits of all flesh, appoint a man over the congregation, 17 who will go out and come in before them, and who will lead them out and bring them in, that the congregation of the LORD may not be like sheep without a shepherd. 18 So the LORD said to Moses, Take Joshua the son of Nun, a man in whom is the Spirit, and lay your hand on him.

1 Tim 2:5 For there is one God, and one mediator also between God and men, the man Christ Jesus.

Eph 1:22,23 NASB And He put all things in subjection under His feet, and gave Him as head over all things to the church, which is his body, the fullness of Him who fills all in all.

5:23 For the husband is the head of the wife, as Christ also is the head of the church, He himself being the Savior of the body.

Col 1:18 He is also head of the body, the church; and He is the beginning , the first-born from the dead; so that He Himself might come to have first place in everything.

Heb 7:25 Hence, also, He is able to save forever those who draw near to God through Him, since He always lives to make intercession for them.

Mat 23:8-10 But do not be called Rabbi; for One is your Teacher, and you are all brothers.  
9 And do not call anyone on earth your father; for One is your Father, He who is in heaven.  
10 And do not be called leaders; for One is your Leader, that is, Christ.