

Elders Wanted!

Scripture: Ephesians 3:20-21 *“Now to Him who is able to do far more abundantly beyond all that we ask or think, according to the power that works within us, 21 to Him be the glory in the church and in Christ Jesus to all generations forever and ever. Amen.*

Introduction:

How many of you have read the classified section of the news paper looking for jobs. Most of us have and we have a number this morning who are looking for jobs.

But, what if you saw this add in the news paper?

WANTED:

- ELDERS TO HELP SHEPHERD GOD’S CHURCH
- WE ARE LOVING FAMILY
- NEED SPIRITUAL GUIDANCE
- RETIREMENT PLAN IS GREAT
- WE ARE DESPERATE....PLEASE COME SOON

The truth is that our brotherhood is finding it harder and harder to find Elders. I’m not sure exactly what that means. However, a few things are fairly sure.

First, some men just haven’t got ready yet. They simply haven’t reached the appointed hour for their service.

Then, I guess it has always been true that some men who are able are just not willing. This is not necessarily wrong because an effective Elder serves from desire not from obligation. But I have to wonder why men are not desiring to step up and serve the Lord.

We have all seen many men throughout the years, who God himself has groomed to serve as an Elder, hide behind the pews of life not willing to use the talents that God has giving them. Afraid I guess to step up and serve God.

Church, our brotherhood is headed for trouble and is already there to a large extent. We have an urgent need in our brotherhood for godly men to stand forward. We have so much spiritual work here in our assembly and work out in the streets of our city and only 3 Shepherds.

- **Cedarloo Church of Christ**

Reading: Exodus 18:1-12

This is the setting for our story today:

-At Sinai Jethro comes to Moses

Now Jethro, the priest of Midian, Moses' father-in-law, heard of all that God had done for Moses and for Israel His people, how the LORD had brought Israel out of Egypt. 2 Jethro, Moses' father-in-law, took Moses' wife Zipporah, after he had sent her away, 3 and her two sons, of whom one was named Gershom, for Moses said, "I have been a sojourner in a foreign land." 4 The other was named Eliezer, for he said, " The God of my father was my help, and delivered me from the sword of Pharaoh." 5 Then Jethro, Moses' father-in-law, came with his sons and his wife to Moses in the wilderness where he was camped, at the mount of God. 6 He sent word to Moses, "I, your father-in-law Jethro, am coming to you with your wife and her two sons with her." 7 Then Moses went out to meet his father-in-law, and he bowed down and kissed him; and they asked each other of their welfare and went into the tent. 8 Moses told his father-in-law all that the LORD had done to Pharaoh and to the Egyptians for Israel's sake, all the hardship that had befallen them on the journey, and how the LORD had delivered them. 9 Jethro rejoiced over all the goodness which the LORD had done to Israel, in delivering them from the hand of the Egyptians. 10 So Jethro said, " Blessed be the LORD who delivered you from the hand of the Egyptians and from the hand of Pharaoh, and who delivered the people from under the hand of the Egyptians. 11 "Now I know that the LORD is greater than all the gods; indeed, it was proven when they dealt proudly against the people." 12 Then Jethro, Moses' father-in-law, took a burnt offering and sacrifices for God, and Aaron came with all the elders of Israel to eat a meal with Moses' father-in-law before God.

-Israel had been freed from slavery
-lead out of Egypt by God Almighty

-A celebration was at hand
-Big block party

-God had claimed these people for his own
-& God had began to shape them
-Molding them into his own nation.

TS But molding people turns out to be rather difficult!

Lesson:

I. Complexity of the Israelite People (Exodus Chapters 1-17)

DID THEIR PAST SHAPE WHO THEY HAD BECOME?

- A. They had been given a promise through Abraham Gen. 12:3 & 22:18
 - Great nation
 - Land
 - Blessing

- B. In Exodus 1 they ended up enslaved in Egypt 430 years
 - Is it possible that their attitudes may have included anger and bitterness?

- C. Let's think about what shaped them while in Egypt: (Exodus chapters 1-17)
 - Purposefully afflicted
 - Forced to make bricks ...hard labor
 - Subjected to population control
 - (Shiporah and Puah) instructed to kill sons
 - Latter all sons were thrown into Nile
 - Grief and heart ach to lose a child
 - Beaten by Egyptian masters
 - Fought with each other
 - Made to make bricks without a supply of straw
 - impossible to meet quota
 - Mad at Moses for their problems
 - Lack of understanding in God
 - & Lack of faith
 - Became discouraged
 - Bible uses term (shortness of spirit) Ex 6:9
 - Lived through plagues of Egypt
 - Some did effect them Ex 8:22
 - Death all around them during last plague
 - God begins to give them orders
 - Lead out of Egypt with only what they could carry
 - Homeless
 - Afraid of Pharaoh at Red Sea
 - Couldn't see big picture
 - Were not very faithful
 - Grumblers
 - No water
 - No food
 - * Should have stayed in Egypt
 - Thought God was not with them if things were not going well.

-WOULD IT BE SAFE TO SAY THAT SUCH ARE SOME OF US

D. The type of difficulties Elders deal with today are just as complex

1. Stress, worry and anxiety
2. Financial problems. (Root cause?)
3. Focused on Selfish desires
4. Anger
 - Mad at each other
5. Insecurity
6. Loneliness
7. Relationship problems
 - Marriage
 - Children
 - Family
8. Bitterness
9. Sick
 - James 5:14
10. Preachers
 - Direction of truth as church needs
 - Guidance
 - Spending time with family?
11. Sexual sins
 - Adultery
 - Fornication
 - Puberty
12. Hypocrisy
13. Complacency
 - 1/2 hearted members
14. Hidden Sin in Camp
15. Commitment issues
16. Hurt
17. Problems of the Past
 - Mad at each other
18. Reaching Lost
 - Out of duty members also
19. Liberalism/ Radical
20. Abuse
21. Lack of faith
22. Immaturity
23. Singles
24. Gossips
25. Addiction
 - Booze
 - Drugs
 - Porn
26. Elderly folks
28. Forgiveness
 - Others
 - & Self
29. Burn Out
30. Stealing

CONT.

27. Mental challenges

31. Jealousy, Envy & Strife
(Exodus 18:13-17)

II. Moses Had More Work than He Could Manage

13 It came about the next day that Moses sat to judge the people, and the people stood about Moses from the morning until the evening. 14 Now when Moses' father-in-law saw all that he was doing for the people, he said, "What is this thing that you are doing for the people? Why do you alone sit as judge and all the people stand about you from morning until evening?" 15 Moses said to his father-in-law, "Because the people come to me to inquire of God. 16 "When they have a dispute, it comes to me, and I judge between a man and his neighbor and make known the statutes of God and His laws." 17 Moses' father-in-law said to him, "The thing that you are doing is not good.

-Moses was trying to do it all.

-He needed help

A. Our shepherd's job is enormous and their responsibilities include:

1. Spiritual truth
2. Prayer...seeking God's way
3. Waiting on God
4. Focus
5. Bible study
6. Training
 - Future church leaders
 - All of us regular folks
 - Themselves (Keeping their skills up)
7. Vision
8. Guarding flock
9. Growth and maturity in God
10. Encouraging
11. Discipline
 - Helping folks get back on the right path
12. Rightly dividing the truth
 - Acts 15:6 Jerusalem conference
13. Distribution of funds.
 - Acts 11:30
14. Arbitration
15. Getting folks involved
16. Counseling
 - Marriage
 - Personal
 - Children
 - Grief
17. Confidentiality
18. Making sure no-one falls through the cracks
19. Keeping humble before God

- 20. Their own families
 - Including themselves
- 21. Church Balance
- 22. Examples
- 23. Patient and Loving
- 24. Advice
- 25. Mentoring

III. The Suffering because of Overload (Exodus 18:18)

. 18 " You will surely wear out, both yourself and these people who are with you, for the task is too heavy for you; you cannot do it alone.

- Moses will wear out.
 - Physically
 - Emotionally
 - Burn Out
 - I wonder what effect this had on Moses' family?
- The Israelites will wear out too.
 - Why?
 - Surely get tired of long lines
 - And weary of being neglected because of such a large work load.
 - The Sheep get weary when the shepherds are overworked.

IV. The Solution is to ask for help (Exodus 18:19-23)

19 "Now listen to me: I will give you counsel, and God be with you. You be the people's representative before God, and you bring the disputes to God, 20 then teach them the statutes and the laws, and make known to them the way in which they are to walk and the work they are to do. 21 "Furthermore, you shall select out of all the people able men who fear God, men of truth, those who hate dishonest gain; and you shall place these over them as leaders of thousands, of hundreds, of fifties and of tens. 22 "Let them judge the people at all times; and let it be that every major dispute they will bring to you, but every minor dispute they themselves will judge. So it will be easier for you, and they will bear the burden with you. 23 "If you do this thing and God so commands you, then you will be able to endure, and all these people also will go to their place in peace."

- Get Help the job is to big for you
- Our job here is really to big for only 3 Elders

V. God had groomed Moses over a life time of successes and failures to be ready for this season

-Think of all God put Moses through to get him ready to lead God's people

*And God has also groomed some of you who sit here today.

Conclusion:

-IS THIS US TODAY?

-We are leaving so many things on the table

-Not because we want to but because we need extra help

-We need to be Prayerful about this everyday throughout the entire process

-Let us make God the focus point of our Elder call out.

-Let's keep his glory in mind.

-Let us search our hearts carefully

-Giving fullness of thought to our decisions

-Recognizing the importance of the Lord's work here.

-Church let's make an investment of prayer to God as we consider our selections:

-Ask for Guidance and Wisdom

-Ask God to open the hearts of men who should be, and need to be leading

-Ask God to close the doors on any man who would harm the church.

*Please pray for your current Elders and preacher daily....God can and will do mighty things for his glory through us if we are ever before Him.