



## A STUDY ON FEATURES OF SERVANT LEADERSHIP

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### ABSTRACT

What is Servant leadership? This term, created from the fusion of the two words servant and leader, at first glance, does not seem to match each other but is used as the true leader of our age. The original meaning of the Hebrew abad for service is that a person works for God or other person(s) for a fixed period of time or for a lifetime. The word service means 'to worship (God)' and 'to serve (for others) at the same time. This word has a very important meaning because it means that worshipping God and serving people are not different things. Those who do not love visible people cannot love invisible God. In other words, loving God is naturally directed toward our neighbors. Since all men are honorable creatures in the image of God, true Christian leadership must stand on the ground of loving God and loving neighbors. This study points out that the term 'service' often appears in the stories of Moses, the greatest leaders in the Old Testament and also in the stories of Jesus and his disciples, the models of service in the New Testament. And it will present the role of a servant leader in modern society and the modern church.

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## INTRODUCTION

Moses is by far the greatest leader in the Old Testament. He was not afraid to die in front of God and Pharaoh for his people Israel. He said that he would suffer for the people instead. He declared laws that was like the life of Israel in the Old Testament and led the people for forty years. But he did not insist on going into Canaan while looking at the land across the river. He chose to remain alone in the land of Moab according to the will of God. That is why he is considered the best leader in the Old Testament. In addition, Jesus is presented as a model of service in the New Testament. Each of the Gospels in the New Testament describes the purpose of Jesus' coming to the world a little differently in each of the Gospels, but among them Matthew and Mark say that Jesus' purpose is to serve. The crucifixion is the culmination of Jesus' leadership, and his disciples acted His disciples acted as leaders by modeling him. The purpose of this paper is to analyze the Christian leadership to apply it to the modern church and society through their leadership.

## Importance of Identity

There is a long gap of about four hundred years between Genesis and Exodus. Joseph's family, which began with only seventy, flourished and increased greatly in Egypt (Ex. 1:7). But unfortunately, the Israelites become slaves of the Egyptians. Pharaoh put the Israelites into forced labor in the construction business. When the happy ending of Genesis leads to Exodus, it turns into a miserable reality. This is because the Egyptian dynasty has changed. It means that the Hyksos dynasty, where Joseph was the prime minister, collapsed and a new dynasty was formed in Egypt. The prime minister's family could no longer be treated as a loyal family. Politically and historically, the dynasty has simply changed, but the Bible interprets it religiously (Ex. 1:8). The growth process of Moses is not explained in detail in the Bible. At first, His mother brought the baby to the Hebrew community and raised it, but after a while he grew up, and the name of the princess of Egypt was given to him and raised in the royal court (Ex. 2:10). In Egyptian, Moses means a son (Dozeman, 2009). Because it is an Egyptian name, not a Hebrew name, no other person named Moses in the Bible appears. Perhaps Moses would have received regular Egyptian education, such as royal descendants and high-ranking people. Moses learned

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all sorts of knowledge and functions in the court, but at the same time, in his mind was his identity, 'I am a Hebrew.' This is evident in the callings of Moses and the Hebrews as brothers (Ex. 2:11-12). One day, when Moses became an adult at the age of forty, he went out and saw his brothers, the Hebrews, suffering from forced labor, and he saw an Egyptian beating a Hebrew. It is worth noting that the Bible text says Moses' 'brother' to the Hebrew man. He grew up in the royal palace of Egypt, but apparently had a Hebrew identity. Good leadership starts with the leader confirming his own identity. Although he fell to the Hebrews, who had no law protection in the prince of Egypt, Moses found his identity in his brothers and his community.

### **Moses, Leader of Exodus**

In the meantime, the suffering of Israel, which had groaned under the abuse of the Egyptians, continued and now the time of the Exodus began. It began in Midian when God met Moses, an old shepherd. When Moses was about eighty years old, Moses, like any other day, led a flock and ate it, and came to the mountain called Horeb (=Sinai), which is on the west side of the Midian wilderness, and is called to be the leader of Israel at that time. But then Moses had lost his youthful passion. He was already far away from the brothers who were suffering in Egypt and he could not help them anymore. God called Moses when there was no longer an item of self-confidence. Why? It is because that the great history of the exodus was not something that could be done by man's power. God's plan for the salvation of the house of Israel, which was under the influence of Egypt, has already begun. But the work is blocked from the beginning by the barrier. The barrier was Moses himself. God's plan to use Himself was not good for Moses himself. Even though many years passed, Egypt was the land that had forsaken Moses, and Moses himself had forsaken the people. The Egyptians who ruled there were trying to kill him, and the abused Hebrew people were a people who refused him.

So Moses excused God's calling five times (Ex. 3-4). In the end, however, Moses was succumbed to God's persistent persuasion. Moses told Him to send 'some one else to do it' (Ex. 4:13), Moses was the 'some one' (Wang, 2015). The Exodus, the most representative salvation event of the Old Testament, began with the events at the foot of the mountain. Moses, who accompanied his brother Aaron in the court of Egypt to bring out the Israelites who were being abused by slavery, boldly proclaimed in front of the king of Egypt, 'Send my people' (Ex. 7:16; 9:1; 9:13; 10:3). Moses' request to send his own people contains the purpose of the Exodus 'to serve God'. He is crying that the people of Israel must go out to become a community that serves God. Slavery in Egypt After 430 years of long vacancy, Moses says that Israel must restore service. God wants to receive their service (=worship) again, which was forgotten under the tyranny in Egypt. For such a long time God waited for the worship to be restored by Israel, and the birth of Moses and the Exodus community was also the first step to walk again for the true service to God. Exodus 14 contains the culmination of the Exodus, a crossing of the Red Sea. Moses and Miriam sang praising the God who saved Israel (Cf. Childs, 2004). But crossing the Red Sea did not mean that all the difficulties had disappeared. It was because there was an endless wilderness road that was as difficult to cross as the Red Sea. The Sinai wilderness, where they must pass, is a terrain of desert, water is extremely precious, and

temperatures are above 40°C in the summer, making it the worst land for human survival. The people who had to go through this worst land endlessly complained of grumbling against God and Moses. A true leader is likely to shine in this difficult situation. The Old Testament acknowledges Moses as Israel's greatest leader because he is the leader of the exodus community, the root experience of Israel. He has been a leader for 40 years in an environment of double suffering (wilderness and complaining people) leading to the promised land. The representative titles of Moses in the Old Testament is 'man of God', 'servant of God' and 'servant of YHWH'. This can be said to be Moses' own identity. The servant has something that the master has entrusted him to do. Among many adversities, it was Sense of Mission and Passion that sustained Moses' life as a servant of God, bearing his identity, and bearing the work God had entrusted to him. Followers who follow a leader always follow the leader's passion. Successful leaders are people who work with passion without exception. But there was a time when such a passionate leader, Moses, was exhausted and fell to petition to die (Num. 11:15). This prayer of Moses shows the suffering of the great difficulties and heavy burdens of leaders. The driving force that overcame these frustrations and raised Moses back was the power of Moses' faith. The power appears well in the prayer he has given. He fasted and prayed while he spent forty days at the summit of Mount Sinai to receive the Ten Commandments from God (Ex. 34:28). Moses' leadership was a thoroughly praying leadership. His praying leadership is prominent in the golden calf case. While Moses was receiving the Ten Commandments on Mount Sinai, the Israelites who were under the mountains made a golden calf instead of God, which caused Israel to be cursed by God. At this time, Moses gives a prayer to God for his people (Ex. 32:32).

Early on, he was a man who had fled Egypt because he had killed the Egyptians and was afraid of the death to be retaliated. However, the forty years of leadership in the wilderness have changed Moses. In other words, the scene of the history of 'Exodus' turned Moses, who was a dying figure, into a leader of a great nation. Moses, who was afraid of death, ran away and now prays to God for his people's fault, not his fault. He seeks instead to accept the punishment of followers, his people. It was the best intercessory prayer he could show as a leader. Strangely, God did not allow Moses to enter the land of Canaan. Moses died alone in the land of Moab, obeying the sobering word of God (Deut. 34). This scene, in which Moses did not give in to his greed, shows the greatest determination he can make as a leader. He was certainly sufficient to be called the leader of the people, the most excellent prophet, along with the Exodus, which is the root experience of the Israelites.

### **Models of Service, Jesus and his disciples**

If we can present Moses as the greatest leader in the Old Testament, Jesus is by far the best leader in the New Testament and the whole Bible. Leadership experts do not hesitate to adopt Jesus as the greatest model of leadership in history. In addition to Christianity and the Church, Jesus is presented as the best leader by general business executives and leadership theorists. Jesus makes his purpose clear to the world. It is that he came to this world to serve others (Matt. 20:27-28; Mk. 10:44-45). A person who wants to take a high place in the kingdom of God is not trying to get a place for

honor but rather to be someone who serves others (Hagner, 1995). These passages, which appear in the preaching of the passion and resurrection of Jesus, are representative paradoxical lessons of many of the words Jesus taught. How can a slave become the chief? In this lesson, we can feel the mystery that cannot be properly solved by the logic of competition which is familiar to us. Obviously, Jesus taught paradoxical truths to the disciples who competitively contend for who is higher (Lk. 22:27). In the background of this declaration of Jesus revealing himself to be a servant, there is a place of dispute among the disciples. A woman came to Jesus and asked her two sons, James and John, to have high seats, which caused the anger of the other disciples. They were all seeking honor to be able to get by following Jesus. But Jesus taught that true honor and glory come from humility and sacrificial death. As a result, this event allows us to illuminate what the nature and purpose of Christianity is. The essence of Christianity, which Jesus showed himself as an example of his own practice, is love, and the method of love is serving. The base of Christian life is Agape. Agape is love that begins with God and targets men. The fact that God loves people is the driving force for living as a Christian. This agape is a love that provokes a reaction, and a love that allows us to serve. Jesus' service also began in Agape. And his Agape climaxed in his death. He gave his life and practiced the greatest service to mankind. That is why other leaders in the New Testament stand in the position of the followers of Jesus. Just as Christ was in the position of servant to all men, a disciple who follows him must also be in the position of a servant, like Jesus, who serves others.

The word to be the salt and light in the Sermon on the Mount can also be interpreted as the position of service (Matt. 5:13-16). The ethical ideals of salt and light emphasized by Jesus have a clear difference from formal moralists in concrete practical tasks. Jesus told us that we should live in different ways than the religious moral and formalism that the Pharisees emphasize. The unusual teachings of Jesus made the Pharisees and scribes opposed, but many responded that the teachings of Jesus were new and different from the teachings of Pharisees. These lessons, which are difficult to understand at first glance, need to be viewed as a lesson in contrast to the Pharisees' view. The Pharisees, while speaking of the law of God, were obsessed with hypocrisy and missed the practice of true love. In short, it demands a great change that results in the practice of love. It should change from self-centered thinking to someone who cares about others (Moon and Lee, 2014). The teaching of Jesus to be a servant requires not only to be ended by theory or teaching, but to lead to practice. The fact that Jesus washed his disciples' feet is so important. In the days when it was customary to wash the owner's feet, Jesus' washing of his disciples' feet told us what role the true leader should have in the future (John 13:3-7, 13-15). The foot washing is a humble service probably meant to point Jesus' death (Sloyan, 1973). Above all, the extreme of Jesus' service is manifested in the crucifixion event. Jesus, who has

humanity, had to hesitate and worry before the death of the cross. But in the Garden of Gethsemane, he presented the image of a beautiful servant of absolute obedience, abandoning his will and obeying the will of God (Matt. 26:39). In the sense that serving God is to be seen as serving men, the true form of the leader is not in ruling over others and grasping all authority, but in lowering and serving others like Jesus. This is the subtle paradoxical truth of Christianity. Today, there are very few who serve in many people. So servant leaders are even more necessary. There are suffering and self-sacrifices in the life of the servant. The more the true leader is, the more he is to serve. After Jesus' crucifixion and resurrection, the disciples of Jesus continued to serve as Jesus did. Peter, who was a certified master, requests us to resent a life that glorifies God no matter what we do (1 Pet. 4:11). This attitude of service is also seen in Paul. Paul expressed himself as a servant as a sign of devotion rather than honor (Rom. 1:1, etc.) (Gunn, 1988, 7). Paul was a free man, but he was so eager to be gracious to Christ's grace that he became a servant of Jesus Christ, and was never such a slave of slavery. He urges Christian freedom and right to give up for Christ and have a servant attitude (Rom. 1:6; 1Cor. 3:23; 6:19-20). These appearances were the kind of services that Jesus' disciples and Paul wanted to show, just as Jesus, who was the teacher and first of all showing the pattern of service, worked on the earth through his ministry for the glory of God.

## Conclusion

The greatest miracle of Christianity is that people can change. The miracle happens through the leader. Christian leadership is aimed at the will of God. And leadership in seeking God's will is no different than leadership in caring for others. Worshiping God and serving people are not different things. Those who do not love visible people cannot love an invisible God. In other words, loving God is naturally directed toward our neighbors. Christian leadership is the leadership of service, which clearly shows why modern churches and Christian leaders should look more at the weak people around us.

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