

Lead, Follow, or.....Else!

Read a book on vacation called: Letters to Pastors” by Ron Walters.

In letter #33, Public Consensus vs. Personal Conviction, Walters referred to a previously published article in Preaching Magazine written by O.S. Hawkins. In the article, Hawkins raised two questions that Jesus asked his disciples:

Matthew 16:13-20 ¹³When Jesus came into the coasts of Caesarea Philippi, he asked his disciples, saying, **Whom do men say that I the Son of man am?** ¹⁴And they said, Some say that thou art John the Baptist: some, Elias; and others, Jeremias, or one of the prophets. ¹⁵He saith unto them, But **whom say ye that I am?** ¹⁶And Simon Peter answered and said, Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God. ¹⁷And Jesus answered and said unto him, Blessed art thou, Simon Barjona: for flesh and blood hath not revealed it unto thee, but my Father which is in heaven. ¹⁸And I say also unto thee, That thou art Peter, and upon this rock I will build my church; and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it. ¹⁹And I will give unto thee the keys of the kingdom of heaven: and whatsoever thou shalt bind on earth shall be bound in heaven: and whatsoever thou shalt loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven. ²⁰Then charged he his disciples that they should tell no man that he was Jesus the Christ.

In his article, Hawkins said he believes this is a valid question for church leaders today by highlighting two distinct styles of leadership:

Leaders who lead by public consensus, i.e. taking a congregation where they want to go and leaders who lead by personal conviction, i.e. taking a congregation when they need to go.

It’s the difference between leading people or following them.

Now the path of least resistance says follow the people, i.e. give them what they want. However, that is not always the easy path.

Aaron followed the people

Exodus 32:1-10 ¹And when the people saw that Moses delayed to come down out of the mount, the people gathered themselves together unto Aaron, and said unto him, Up, make us gods, which shall go before us; for as for this Moses, the man that brought us up out of the land of Egypt, we wot not what is become of him. ²And Aaron said unto them, Break off the golden earrings, which are in the ears of your wives, of your sons, and of your daughters, and bring them unto me. ³And all the people brake off the golden earrings which were in their ears, and brought them unto Aaron. ⁴And he received them at their hand, and fashioned it with a graving tool, after he had made it a molten calf: and they said, These be thy gods, O Israel, which brought thee up out of the land of Egypt. ⁵And

when Aaron saw it, he built an altar before it; and Aaron made proclamation, and said, To morrow is a feast to the LORD. ⁶And they rose up early on the morrow, and offered burnt offerings, and brought peace offerings; and the people sat down to eat and to drink, and rose up to play. ⁷And the LORD said unto Moses, Go, get thee down; for thy people, which thou broughtest out of the land of Egypt, have corrupted themselves: ⁸They have turned aside quickly out of the way which I commanded them: they have made them a molten calf, and have worshipped it, and have sacrificed thereunto, and said, These be thy gods, O Israel, which have brought thee up out of the land of Egypt. ⁹And the LORD said unto Moses, I have seen this people, and, behold, it is a stiffnecked [impudent, obstinate, stubborn] people: ¹⁰Now therefore let me alone, that my wrath may wax hot against them, and that I may consume them: and I will make of thee a great nation.

Peter was intimidated by the little girl

Matthew 16:16 ¹⁶And Simon Peter answered and said, Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God.

Matthew 26:69-75 ⁶⁹Now Peter sat without in the palace: and a damsel came unto him, saying, Thou also wast with Jesus of Galilee. ⁷⁰But he denied before them all, saying, I know not what thou sayest. ⁷¹And when he was gone out into the porch, another maid saw him, and said unto them that were there, This fellow was also with Jesus of Nazareth. ⁷²And again he denied with an oath, I do not know the man. ⁷³And after a while came unto him they that stood by, and said to Peter, Surely thou also art one of them; for thy speech bewrayeth thee. ⁷⁴Then began he to curse and to swear, saying, I know not the man. And immediately the cock crew. ⁷⁵And Peter remembered the word of Jesus, which said unto him, Before the cock crow, thou shalt deny me thrice. And he went out, and wept bitterly.

Peter was swayed by the crowd instead of leading the crowd.

We are in the world but we are not supposed to be of the world. Our standards are much higher than the world's.

2 Corinthians 6:16-18 ¹⁶And what agreement hath the temple of God with idols? for ye are the temple of the living God; as God hath said, I will dwell in them, and walk in them; and I will be their God, and they shall be my people. ¹⁷Wherefore come out from among them, and **be ye separate**, saith the Lord, and touch not the unclean thing; and I will receive you. ¹⁸And will be a Father unto you, and ye shall be my sons and daughters, saith the Lord Almighty.

We are supposed to look and act differently than the world.

1 Peter 2:9-10 ⁹But ye are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, an holy nation, a **peculiar people**; that ye should shew forth the praises of him who hath called you out of darkness into his marvellous light; ¹⁰Which in time past were not a people, but are now the people of God: which had not obtained mercy, but now have obtained mercy.

Romans 12:2 And be not conformed to this world: but **be ye transformed** by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect, will of God.

Consequences

Luke 6:22 Blessed are ye, when men shall hate you, and when they shall separate you from their company, and shall reproach you, and cast out your name as evil, for the Son of man's sake.

The alternative is to hide our faith like the rich young ruler. However, if you proclaim the gospel, despite the cost to you, you may encounter someone like the woman at the well.

John 4:3-42 ³He [**Jesus**] left Judaea, and departed again into Galilee. ⁴And he must needs go through Samaria. ⁵Then cometh he to a city of Samaria, which is called Sychar, near to the parcel of ground that Jacob gave to his son Joseph. ⁶Now Jacob's well was there. Jesus therefore, being wearied with his journey, sat thus on the well: and it was about the sixth hour. ⁷There cometh a woman of Samaria to draw water: Jesus saith unto her, Give me to drink. ⁸(For his disciples were gone away unto the city to buy meat.) ⁹Then saith the woman of Samaria unto him, How is it that thou, being a Jew, askest drink of me, which am a woman of Samaria? for the Jews have no dealings with the Samaritans. ¹⁰Jesus answered and said unto her, If thou knewest the gift of God, and who it is that saith to thee, Give me to drink; thou wouldest have asked of him, and he would have given thee living water. ¹¹The woman saith unto him, Sir, thou hast nothing to draw with, and the well is deep: from whence then hast thou that living water? ¹²Art thou greater than **our father Jacob**, which gave us the well, and drank thereof himself, and his children, and his cattle? ¹³Jesus answered and said unto her, Whosoever drinketh of this water shall thirst again: ¹⁴But whosoever drinketh of the water that I shall give him shall never thirst; but the water that I shall give him shall be in him a well of water springing up into everlasting life. ¹⁵The woman saith unto him, Sir, give me this water, that I thirst not, neither come hither to draw. ¹⁶Jesus saith unto her, Go, call thy husband, and come hither. ¹⁷The woman answered and said, I have no husband. Jesus said unto her, Thou hast well said, I have no husband: ¹⁸For thou hast had five husbands; and he whom thou now hast is not thy husband: in that saidst thou truly. ¹⁹The woman saith unto him, Sir, I perceive that thou art a prophet.

²⁵The woman saith unto him, I know that Messias cometh, which is called Christ: when he is come, he will tell us all things. ²⁶Jesus saith unto her, I that speak unto thee am he

²⁸The woman then left her waterpot, and went her way into the city, and saith to the men,
²⁹Come, see a man, which told me all things that ever I did: is not this the Christ? ³⁰Then they went out of the city, and came unto him.

³⁹And many of the Samaritans of that city believed on him for the saying of the woman, which testified, He told me all that ever I did. ⁴⁰So when the Samaritans were come unto him, they besought him that he would tarry with them: and he abode there two days.

⁴¹And many more believed because of his own word; ⁴²And said unto the woman, Now we believe, not because of thy saying: for we have heard him ourselves, and know that this is indeed the Christ, the Saviour of the world.

Are you willing to pay the price of sharing the gospel? Are you willing to possibly lose “friends” because you loved them enough to share the gospel? Are you willing to persecuted for your faith? Are you willing to the world’s outcast?