

LESSON 8



PETER, JAMES, AND JOHN

Scripture Texts: Mark 9:2; 10:35-45; Acts 4:13-22

In this lesson we study about the high cost of leadership. Peter, James, and John paid heavily for their special places in leadership.

MEMORY VERSE: *"For we cannot but speak the things which we have seen and heard."*

Acts 4:20

Some Followers Feel Left Out

Places of leadership within the church belong only to those who are willing to pay the price of preparation for Christian service. Some people frequently ask themselves and the pastor, "Why do I never get called upon to do any of the special assignments in the church activities?" They have the feeling of being left out, of being unappreciated, or they think that the church is playing favorites. No doubt some of this feeling may have filtrated the minds of the remaining disciples when Jesus took Peter, James, and John to the Mount of Transfiguration and the Garden of Gethsemane and left them behind.

All of us like to be in the inner circle, pillars in the church. There is always a small clique that can be found on the sidelines, never volunteering for any work, but ready and willing to criticize.

Pillars in the Church

Jesus took Peter, James, and John with Him more frequently because He recognized in them greater capacities of loyalty, leadership, and devotion. They spent time alone with Christ in prayer, and their service was invaluable to the church. God has always limited His revelation of truth to man's capacity to receive it. The prophetic revelation of Christ was given according to this principle. This same principle holds true in Christian discipleship.

In the church today, as we prove our ability to bear responsibility, God reveals Himself and His purposes more fully to us. Thus, becoming pillars brings with it increased responsibilities. People who attempt many things, as Peter did, will make mistakes, as he did.

Greater Responsibility

Special privileges bring increased responsibility to serve others and to pay the price that leadership demands. The more we know, the more we owe. The church is what it is today because in every generation God has had a few people who have dared to bear faithful witness to His truth regardless of the consequences. God will have a tested and tried following. In many instances Christians have been severely persecuted, but the witness has not been stopped. God's people are continuing to overcome by "the blood of the Lamb and the word of their testimony."

Ours is a great heritage; let us pass it on to future generations. Shall the Christian witness die out in this generation? Come what may, the answer is no, a thousand times no!

Just a Thought

**"Whenever you are robbed by worry,
it is always an inside job."**

This lesson is adapted from a lesson by Mary Lehmann.
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