



# LEAD COURAGEOUSLY -YOU ARE CHOSEN-

## CHECK-IN

**How are you? Where have you seen God working in your life in the last week? And... as we're wrapping up summer, what was your best moment from the last 3 months? Did you take a monumental vacation or celebrate a special day? Maybe you had long-lost family or friends visit? Perhaps your highlight was lazily lounging by the pool all summer? No judgment here. Ready, share!**

## OPENING PRAYER

**Encouraging God, give us the courage to show others how to love and serve, and to lead the next generation to do the same.**

## INTRODUCTION

You've had a full day. Exhausted from solving all the problems of the world, you find a quiet bench under an old oak, and take a seat. The call to *love boldly* felt like a great place to start, and seeing the innate worth of the people around you has given you a new perspective on loving like

Jesus did. Then, the opportunity to put that perspective into action made it all real. Helping the young mother in the park, feeling the joy of making someone's day a little better, then seeing the contagious joy spring up in her, was worth the effort. Love boldly. Serve joyfully. It's so simple! But then, as you look around the park and see folks who don't know this secret, the third of Jesus's commands from your vision statement pops into your mind. You can't keep this to yourself. Others need to know about the life change that comes with being a follower of Jesus Christ. And if you can teach others this way of living, they can teach others, too. You begin to see the importance of Jesus's third command. You need to lead others to do what Jesus has asked of you.

**Setup Question: Who in your life has been the epitome of a leader? What characteristics or behaviors stood out, making them someone you wanted to follow? What was the outcome of their leadership that led to their success?**

## SETUP

Two down, one to go! We've covered a lot of ground, too much to recap fully. So, if you've missed anything to this point, make sure to go back and catch up on any weeks you've missed. The hope is, by this point, you've gotten a clearer picture of the characteristics that define a follower of Christ. So, for the 8<sup>th</sup> time, let's review the vision statement given to us by the United Methodist Council of Bishops we've been using to help us understand them...

**The United Methodist Church forms disciples of Jesus Christ who,  
empowered by the Holy Spirit,**

**LOVE BOLDLY, SERVE JOYFULLY**

## AND LEAD COURAGEOUSLY

**in local communities and worldwide connections.**

We began with *loving boldly*, and our vision statement begins with loving boldly, because Jesus began with loving boldly. And loving in the radical, revolutionary way that he did calls us to sacrifice, to build relationships, to love God with our entire being, and even to love ourselves. This type of love will make the world take notice. And how do we put it into practice? We take on the humble attitude of Christ and *serve joyfully*. That's characteristic #2. When we use our gifts to help others, it builds joy within us, and that contagious joy is caught and shared by others. Today, we begin our study of the third characteristic, which might be the most difficult, and yet the most important of all three.

**Question 1: Let's recap! How have you been doing with *loving boldly* and *serving joyfully*? Has this series helped you be more aware of how you're living out your faith as a follower of Christ? Where are you still struggling?**

## SCRIPTURE

On the night before Jesus would be arrested and crucified, he gave his followers a recap of the last three years of teaching. (If you want the ChatGPT summary of Jesus's teaching, go read chapters 13 through 17 of John's version of Jesus's life.) This is where we've gotten all of the commands that we've studied to this point. His command to serve comes at the beginning of the night. His command to love comes from, well, the whole night. But near the end of the night, Jesus sneaks in a command

that, if you aren't paying attention, you could read right past. He's talking (again) about joy and loving each other, and then says this...

**Read John, chapter 15, verses 14 through 16.**

I appointed you to go and produce lasting fruit. Love boldly. Serve joyfully. And now, go and produce fruit. What does this mean? Are we all supposed to go plant orchards and make pies? (Could be a good ministry money maker.) What is Jesus talking about? Well, that's what we'll spend the next three weeks talking about?

**Question 2: Put yourself in the disciples shoes. Jesus has been talking all night. You've had your feet washed. He's predicted that someone would betray him. He's been hinting at his own death. And now, he's suggesting he's no longer your teacher, and is calling you to take on the ministry, to "produce fruit." How would you have felt? What about these words hits home? What do they mean to you now?**

## REFLECTION

If you read through this chapter, you can read right past this verse. In fact, this command may have been completely lost on the disciples. There's important stuff before it. There's important stuff after it. It could have easily been lost in the shuffle. However, there are two things in it that make it one of the most difficult, and yet the most important things Jesus says the entire night.

First, depending on which version you read, there's a word or phrase that changes the game. The Good News Translation puts verse 16 this way... Jesus says, "I...appointed you go and bear much fruit, the kind of fruit that

endures.” If all Jesus said was, “go and love boldly, serve joyfully, then you can be done,” it would be easy, right? But Jesus drops this phrase in there, and the whole mission changes. To produce “fruit that will endure,” you have to *lead others*. It’s as if Jesus is telling his followers, and us, “You can’t just do the fun stuff and be done. If this movement is going to last, if future generations are going to learn about me and become followers of mine, you have to lead others to go and do what I’ve taught you.” Not only do we have a call to *love* like Jesus did, not only do we have a call to *serve* like Jesus did, we have a call to *lead* like Jesus did.

**Question 3: Take a moment to consider the areas in your life where you are already a leader. Do you have a managerial role at work? Are you a parent? Do you have a teaching, coaching, or mentoring role with young people? Do you volunteer in the community or with a church? (Don’t be too humble here, you lead more than you think.) Now, consider what gifts God has given you that you utilize to lead in that role. Share with the group.**

We know the disciples eventually understood this command, because we’re sitting here today. They became leaders and taught other leaders, and those leaders led others, and those leaders then led more folks, and so on and so on, until we get to the people who led you here to this very moment today. And now it’s up to us. It’s our turn to lead. If we don’t, the movement Christ began 2000 years ago dies with us. “But, I’m not a leader. I like to do my thing, and let someone else lead.” Well, that’s where the second part of this Scripture comes into play. Jesus says, “You didn’t choose me. I *chose* you.” (John 15:16 NLT) Looks like we’re stuck. Jesus has *chosen you* to lead others, to produce fruit that will endure, and

if it's going to last, you have to show others how to love and serve as Jesus did.

**Question 3: Consider your answers to the previous questions: who you admire as a leader, what Christ has called you to, and the areas in your life where you already lead. Where might Jesus be calling you to step up and pass on what he has called you to do? Can you identify a specific person or two that you might be called to invest your time in? What will you do this week to lead in a way that could produce lasting fruit?**

## CLOSING

If you are a follower of Christ, you have been chosen to lead others... it's non-optional. We'll get into the specifics of *how* in the coming weeks. But for now, your challenge is to consider the areas in which you are already a leader, and then ask yourself, "what is the specific fruit I am called to produce? What role, what purpose, what gifting has God given me that I am supposed to pass on? And who am I supposed to pass it on to?"

Where are you called to lead? You have been chosen. You are a leader. So go and love, and when you do, love boldly. Go and service, and when you do, serve joyfully. But as you do these things, consider how you will produce fruit that will endure.

**Take some time to share prayer requests or celebrations  
and close in prayer.**