

March 22, 2021

Read 1 Kings 12

Key verse: 1 Kings 12:7

They answered him, 'If you will be a servant to this people today and serve them, and speak good words to them when you answer them, then they will be your servants forever.'

Kingship 101

We wear many hats in life. As children we are cared for by parents and guardians, family and teachers. As we grow up we learn to care for others, and it's usually around this time that we learn the difference between followers and leaders. A good leader is one who cares for others - when a child campaigns to be Class President in school he or she understands that there are expectations, that you intend to do something good for the student body. That is the expectation of a leader and the litmus test of a good leader continues to be that person's commitment to the needs of the people over which they have authority.

But the lure of personal power and wealth can blind us to the needs of others. This is the situation that we read about in 1 Kings 12: King Solomon has forced the people of Israel into labor for him, and when Solomon dies his son Rehoboam faces a crisis: either "lighten up" and tend to the needs of his exhausted people, or "crack the whip" and force them back to work for him. And Rehoboam's decision to "crack the whip" leads the people to revolt; the kingdom is split into northern and southern territories.

It is all too easy for anyone in a position of power to forget that the power they hold is given to them by others. Too often those in power use all their power to remain in power through deception, violence, or threat of violence.

Christians are leaders and followers: ON the one hand we have been empowered and commissioned by God to bring the good news of God's kingdom of love, peace, and justice to a world that stumbles in darkness. On the other hand we serve the One who serves us justly and lovingly. May we serve others in the way our Lord serves us.

Prayer: God of power and majesty, we praise for the way you lead us, not by threatening us but rather by inspiring us. Teach us to lead others into your kingdom in the same way that you have led us. Amen.