

Reluctant Leaders

Richard T. Ritenbaugh

Given 05-Oct-12; Sermon #FT12-08

How would you feel if you were suddenly thrust into the leadership of the world's greatest nation? Not only that, you also lead 58 colonies—an empire on which the sun never set, a world-straddling empire. Of course, I am speaking of Great Britain.

But, that is what happened on December 11, 1936 to Great Britain's Prince Albert, affectionately known as “Bertie” by the family. He is known to history as George VI, the father of the present Queen Elizabeth II. When he came to the throne, World War II was less than three years away, but the Nazi threat was already growing in the East; war talk was in the air; alliances were beginning to form; and it was known by just about everyone that the clouds on the horizon were bringing war.

It was clear that as George VI was coronated, his reign would be marked by war and struggle. At age 41, even though that may be considered one's prime years, he was not a young man anymore.

Many of you have probably seen the movie, *The King's Speech*, a film I recommend to anyone, except with the proviso that there is some foul language in it, which to me was unnecessary, but otherwise it was a very well-done film. Obviously the Academy thought that it was too, and gave several awards to it. But the film deals with the fact that Prince Albert had a speech defect, and quite a bad one at that. It was a very pronounced stammer that prevented him from making public speeches. Public speaking is something that a prince (and a king even more so) has to do frequently. They have many public appearances, speaking before large crowds. It can be quite stressful, and, it was the stress that caused Bertie to have his speech problems. But he and his wife found an Australian speech therapist whose name was Lionel Logue, and he believed that he could help the prince when all the doctors they went to before could not.

However, this was an unlikely friendship. Here he was, a prince of this great line of monarchs, and this other man was a colonial, an Australian, not very refined. But it was through this unlikely friendship that the king learns to control his breathing, his pace, and his fears, becoming able to give a very passable speech.

Now today we would probably say, “Come on, Bertie! Let's go!” because he spoke in a very measured cadence to make sure that he would pronounce things properly. But for the time and using the media that they had then, he could give a very good speech.

The film also spends some fair amount of time on the fact of Prince Albert's struggle to come to grips with the fact that he would be crowned King of England, because this was a real blow to him. Remember, he already had a bit of a complex where the stress got him all on edge.

Albert was not the firstborn son. He never expected to be king. He was younger than his brother David (that is what they called him within the family). He, David, was the one who took the regnal name, Edward VIII, when he came to the throne after George V died in January 1936. David (we will call Edward that for a while, because that is what they called each other, David and Bertie) had clearly been the one on whom the most attention had been lavished; he was the firstborn son, and he would be heir apparent. He had been groomed from a very early age with the future crown in mind. So, he spent a great deal of time learning what it took to be king, or at least that is what his tutors thought, and by age sixteen he had been invested as the Prince of Wales, a lot like Charles was two generations later. But Bertie was just a tag-along, the second son. He was "the spare" and grew up in David's shadow.

However, David was a renowned playboy. And he "played" throughout the 1920s and 1930s during his father, George V's reign. In fact, his private secretary for eight years, a man named Alan LaSalle, believes that, "For some hereditary or physiological reason his normal mental development stopped dead when he reached adolescence." In a sense, his private secretary said that this man was not really a man; he never grew up; he stopped somewhere around twelve, and he just wanted to play the rest of life.

He was a partier. He loved to go out drinking and staying up late at night. He had a number of affairs with married women. Of course, the most scandalous one was with the American, Mrs. Wallis Simpson, who was at the time in the process of divorcing her second husband. It was just a mess. Everybody around David knew that there was a problem in the wings. His father, George V, disappointed with David and disgusted by his affairs, was reluctant to see him inherit the crown. He really did not want David to succeed him. He says, "After I am dead the boy will ruin himself in twelve months." He was off by only one month. David, now Edward VIII, lasted less than eleven months on the throne. Then, he abdicated for love (he said).

Now when Albert learned that his brother was going to abdicate, he felt entirely unprepared. It was a blow to the gut. The movie shows him, by turns, overwhelmed, terrified, and distraught, lashing out at Logue, who had nothing to do it—he was just his speech therapist. But he was yelling at Logue for something Logue had no control over, and he was almost crazed about it. He did not know what to do. He felt entirely lost and

overwhelmed. So lost was he that the day before the abdication he went to London to see his mother, Queen Mary (remember he was 41 years old), and he wrote in his diary summing up the day's events, "When I told her what had happened, I broke down and sobbed like a child."

But he did his duty. He stood up. He shouldered the burdens of monarchy, taking the name George VI as a kind of homage to his father, George V, and to establish some sort of continuity with his father as if the reign of Edward VIII had never taken place, because the nation was in a bit of turmoil over this, that a prince or king would abdicate for love rather than do his duty as monarch of the nation.

So he, Albert, did his duty. He swiftly settled the question surrounding his brother's status, and thereby averted a major constitutional crisis. What he did was settle the population, and got them behind him. He quickly took charge and did his duty. The British are big on doing one's duty—stiff upper lip, and all.

But, it was during World War II that his real leadership ability came to the fore. He did not have to do anything heroic, or even strenuous. In fact all he really did was to be there in London during the blitz when the Third Reich bombed Britain from July to October 1940. So for four months—July, August, September, and October—they stayed in London. They slept in Windsor Castle which is on the outskirts of London, but they stayed in London throughout the war going into Buckingham Palace, and spending their days there in London with the people. They even suffered a near miss themselves when bombs exploded in a courtyard of Buckingham Palace in September 1940.

And believe it or not, despite being king and queen, George and Elizabeth lived on rationed food and water. They insisted on having the same rations as the general populace.

Throughout the war the king and queen provided morale-boosting visits throughout the United Kingdom. They visited bombed sites; they comforted those who lost family members and friends in these bombing raids; they visited munitions factories to pump up morale and get war munitions off line; and in the King's case, he traveled overseas putting his life on the line to go to France, to go to Italy, and I believe he went to North Africa as well during this time to boost morale among the troops.

But their high public profile and apparently unflagging determination and courage made them symbols of national resistance. And in 1945 during the victory in Europe Day celebrations the people focused on the King. They shouted, "We want the King!" during those celebrations that day. So, he came out on the balcony with his wife and his

daughters and got the crowd really into it, and they considered him to be the reason why they had made it through the war, maybe even more than Churchill, because they saw the king and queen as the symbols of their country, of their people.

George (maybe I should continue to call him Bertie) wrote to his brother David, the former Edward VIII, that after David's abdication he had reluctantly assumed "a rocking throne," and tried to "make it steady again." Though reluctant, George VI succeeded as a leader by reestablishing the popularity and esteem of the royal family after David dragged it through the mud. Despite never wanting the job, he is now considered among England's most successful and beloved modern monarchs. He did not want it, would have traded anything not to have it, he surely did not want to go through all the work that it took to overcome his problems, and he did not really want to do all the sacrificing that he did. But you know, he shouldered the task, and he successfully carried the nation across the finish line and through the war.

Now this is not just a nice story about a man who did well given all these obstacles he had to overcome. It is something for us to think about.

Have you ever considered yourself in this life as a reluctant heir to a throne? We all know Revelation 5:10. We are going to break into the middle of a song being sung to Christ Himself. And the singers say:

Revelation 5:10 And [You] have made us kings and priests to our God; and we shall reign on the earth."

How much better or more simply could we say this? We have been called; we have been made heirs to a throne, and to a priesthood, and we shall reign on the earth. That is very definite.

We have not been born into royalty; we do not consider ourselves even to be worthy of royalty; most of us believe that we are definitely unprepared for any kind of leadership position of that kind. Most of us come from lower middle class families.

Of course, we live in the greatest nation on the face of the earth, so in a sense we have grown up amidst prosperity, but we are still just average Joes even though we have a lot of things. We do not have pretensions to high society, glamour, or power. Most of us are pretty content with a house, a car, a growing family, and a few other things that might come along. But you know, that is about as far as our ambitions usually reach. We are very contented, just average people.

But that is not the case with us. We have been called to royalty; called to be kings and priests. So the question has to be asked, "Are you like Prince Albert, though reluctant, willing to shoulder the burdens of leadership to which you were called?"

Revelation 14:1-5 Then I looked, and behold, a Lamb standing on Mount Zion, and with Him one hundred and forty-four thousand, having His Father's name written on their foreheads. And I heard a voice from heaven, like the voice of many waters, and like the voice of loud thunder. And I heard the sound of harpists playing their harps. They sang as it were a new song [Revelation 5:9] before the throne, before the four living creatures, and the elders; and no one could learn that song except the hundred and forty-four thousand who were redeemed from the earth. These are the ones who were not defiled with women, for they are virgins. These are the ones who follow the Lamb wherever He goes. These were redeemed from among men, being firstfruits to God and to the Lamb. And in their mouth was found no deceit [guile], for they are without fault before the throne of God.

Now let us go forward to Revelation 20. These will be basic prophetic verses on the Millennium, and as we just saw on the hundred and forty-four thousand, these are those who reigned with Christ during that time.

Revelation 20:4-6 And I saw thrones, and they sat on them, and judgment was committed to them. Then I saw the souls of those who had been beheaded for their witness to Jesus and for the word of God, who had not worshiped the beast or his image, and had not received his mark on their foreheads or on their hands. And they lived and reigned with Christ for a thousand years. (But the rest of the dead did not live again until the thousand years were finished.) [This means there is another to come later.] This is the first resurrection [for those who are to become kings and priests who will reign with Christ]. Blessed and holy is he who has part in the first resurrection. Over such the second death has no power, but they shall be priests of God and of Christ, and shall reign with Him a thousand years.

It keeps getting repeated that this first group, this initial one hundred and forty-four thousand, the firstfruits of God, the ones who have been martyred, the ones who have taken all the guff from the Beast, but who have not submitted to him; the ones who have put it all on the line during this time, this life now, are the ones that are going to be raised in this resurrection.

They are going to follow Christ wherever He goes for all eternity. They will be His body. They are always going to be with Him. Then, because of that, they are going to be kings and priests because what is Jesus Christ? He is a King, and He is the High Priest. They are going to be identified with Him so closely that they have the exact same, call them, properties that He does. They will be like they are He, and He is they.

What I am saying here in putting these two passages together from chapters 14 and 20 is that these are describing the same people. The one hundred forty-four thousand are the redeemed, they are the firstfruits of God, they follow the Lamb wherever He goes, and most of all, what I wanted us to get out of this is that they are members of His *ruling* Family.

So, to boil it all down, we have three distinct descriptions of the same group. One is they are immortal spirit beings; the second is that they are kings; and the third is that they are priests, and they reign, they have these responsibilities throughout the Millennium, throughout the thousand years. It is very much the same language that is used back in Revelation 5:10 of being kings and priests to God and reigning on the earth. So that is what we are being set up for, being prepared for. Those are the jobs that we are being prepared to fill.

Please turn to Matthew 25. I want to look at the Parable of the Talents, the Parable the Minas. I want you to see this in parable form is a verification of our position after Jesus returns.

Matthew 25:19 "After a long time the lord of those servants came and settled accounts with them.

So, this is a symbolic metaphorical description of Christ's return, coming back to judge.

Matthew 25:20-23 "So he who had received five talents came and brought five other talents, saying, 'Lord, you delivered to me five talents; look, I have gained five more talents besides them.' "His lord said to him, 'Well done, good and faithful servant; you were faithful over a few things, I will make you ruler over many things. Enter into the joy of your lord.' He also who had received two talents came and said, 'Lord, you delivered to me two talents; look, I have gained two more talents besides them.' His lord said to him, 'Well done, good and faithful servant; you have been faithful over a few things, I will make you ruler over many things. Enter into the joy of your lord.'

So far in this parable they both were able to double what they had been given, and He says that he would make them ruler over many things. He does not necessarily say what exactly they will be rulers over, but it is going to be a lot more than they had when they were human.

Luke 19:15-19 "And so it was that when he returned, having received the kingdom, he then commanded these servants, to whom he had given the money, to be called to him, that he might know how much every man had gained by trading. Then came the first, saying, 'Master, your mina has earned ten minas.' [This was really good work.] And he said to him, 'Well done, good servant; because you were faithful in a very little, have authority over ten cities.' [He is given a great reward for so little.] And the second came, saying, 'Master, your mina has earned five minas.' "Likewise he said to him, 'You also be over five cities.'

So we see that when He judges us for our works He judges us fairly, He gives us commensurate with what we have grown and overcome, and produce as fruit. So He gives some ten cities, while others receive five cities, but it is not just, "Okay, now you have these cities, you can go out and play." This is not what He means. He has given rulership over those cities; He has given responsibility over those cities. What we see in these parables, then, is that Jesus Christ comes back and judges the spiritual growth of His servants and rewards their faith and fruitfulness with authority and rulership. He gives them leadership over people.

So, once we have proven character, and we show that proven character by what we produce, and the power of God to supplement it (I am talking in the Millennium) we are qualified, then, to lead, guide, direct, and rule over human beings who frankly will need our guidance and help to overcome their sins, and live godly lives.

Notice in this parable Jesus Christ, the ruler, or the master of those servants, displays no uncertainty or hesitation at all with these two servants—the one who got five cities, the one who got ten cities. He, Jesus Christ, confidently gives authority to His chosen brethren.

He is not like George V, saying "he's going to ruin himself within twelve months." He says, "No! Look what you've done! You did this with just mere scraps! And you made so much of them! That's a great job. I'm just so thrilled to have you with Me, I want to see what you can do with ten cities, or with five cities." So, He is very confident at that time

giving His brothers and sisters the authority, the places of rulership, those positions in His Kingdom. He says, "I won't have to worry about those ten cities; I won't have to worry about those five cities" because those people will have shown through their lives, through their growth, through their fruits, their proven character, and their ability to rule, their ability to lead.

If He has confidence in us at that point, we then should have no qualms about taking our throne. I do not think any of us are going to be saying, "Well, Jesus I don't think I deserve that much." Rather, they will say, "Thank you, Lord! I'm happy to serve."

Please turn to I Corinthians 1. I want you to pull out of here the general principle that God follows in calling people into His Family:

I Corinthians 1:26-31 For you see your calling, brethren, that not many wise according to the flesh, not many mighty, not many noble, are called. But God has chosen the foolish things of the world to put to shame the wise, and God has chosen the weak things of the world to put to shame the things which are mighty; and the base things of the world and the things which are despised God has chosen, and the things which are not, to bring to nothing the things that are, that no flesh should glory in His presence. But of Him you are in Christ Jesus, who became for us wisdom from God—and righteousness and sanctification and redemption—that, as it is written, "He who glories, let him glory in the LORD."

The general principle we get out of this is that He purposefully chooses the foolish, the weak, and the base. He does it because of a very significant general principle of human nature. Yes, He does it to confound the wise and the mighty and the noble, but really, I think more of a reason that He does it is because the cream of the crud, as we used to call ourselves, are the best soil in which to plant the seed.

Think of it in terms of soil. It is workable. That is why He called these particular people. It is workable soil. It is easily turned, and it is rich with potential. That is what the Parable of the Sower is all about in Matthew 13:1-9. It is very clear there. Jesus shows us that the seed that falls on the good ground that is ready to produce—on that soil, the sower is able to raise a crop. He says some of them a hundred-fold, some sixty, some thirty.

He cannot raise a crop on stony soil, or on any of the other ones. He cannot do it because it is not workable. There are things that happened to it that caused that soil not to be productive. But the good soil in terms of people—the foolish, the weak, and the

base of the world—have something that He can work with.

Please turn to Matthew 13. This is what I just quoted as part of the explanation of the parable.

Matthew 13:23 "But he who received seed on the good ground is he who hears the word and understands it, who indeed bears fruit and produces: some a hundredfold, some sixty, some thirty."

You see, the good soil—the foolish, the weak, the base of the world—is not full of himself, does not think too highly of his own opinion, does not depend on his own strength or pedigree. Such a foolish, weak, base person will be receptive to God's Word, and understand it, and believe it, and use it to bear fruit that pleases God. Those who are uncalled, as we saw there in I Corinthians 1, who may be one of these noble and proud and such, are going to look at us—the weak and the base—and be amazed at the growth in us. They do not see the potential. But, Jesus does.

And so, these people will be utterly confounded, mystified, and perplexed as to how this could happen. "These people don't come from good families! These people don't have education. They've never been in the circles of power. They don't know how things work. They don't know how to network." They do not know how to do all the things that these people—the elite of society—who rule us, generally, have come up with to continue their power, make money, and all these other things.

We are ignorant of those sorts of things. We look on life so naïvely, and so black-and-white sometimes. But these people are going to look at us and say, "How in the world?" And they will be right, because it had nothing to do with this world. This will irk them to no small degree that such lowly people are chosen to rule over them.

But the most wondrous element in all of this is that these lowly people will be highly qualified to rule!

We are getting the absolute best education in how to be kings and priests. Talk about a finishing school—the church of God and the rigors that Jesus Christ puts us through in making His brothers and sisters fit for rulership is the best university, the best finishing school that there ever was.

Turn back to I Corinthians again. This picks up where we left off. Remember back in chapter 1 Paul had talked about the different people that were saying, "I am of Paul, I

am of Apollos, I am of Cephas, I am of Christ,” and then he goes and talks a bit about the message of the cross, and how it appears foolish to the Jews and to the Greeks. He goes into the section starting in verse 26 about the people of God are weak and foolish and base. And then he comes to his own example, here. He says that he himself is like that too.

I Corinthians 2:1-5 And I, brethren, when I came to you, did not come with excellence of speech or of wisdom declaring to you the testimony of God. For I determined not to know anything among you except Jesus Christ and Him crucified. I was with you in weakness, in fear, and in much trembling. And my speech and my preaching were not with persuasive words of human wisdom, but in demonstration of the Spirit and of power, that your faith should not be in the wisdom of men but in the power of God.

So, here we have the apostle Paul giving his own example to the Corinthian church of his activity among them; the way he presented himself to them. Now, II Corinthians 10:10 says that he was not a dominating presence in person. People would read his letters and say, “Wow, this guy must be ten feet tall, and his brain must be too huge for his ten gallon hat,” and he just comes across as such a strong man, but in his presence you see him face-to-face they said, “His speech is contemptible; he’s this runty little guy, and he kind of squints. There’s nothing to commend him.”

So he was not charismatic, or handsome; he was not an eloquent speaker. He sure knew a lot, but he did not come across like one of the great orators of the church; he was not an Apollos by any means. But, he knew his stuff. His description of himself (vs. 3) depicts a wimpy, quivering, deer-in-the-headlights demeanor. “I was with you in weakness, in fear, and in much trembling,” like a puddle of jelly. Now, that might be a bit of hyperbole or perhaps this is how he felt inside, this is how he looked at himself. He saw himself as weak, and fearful, and just a quivering mass. How was he able to do all these things? But he knew it was not him, but because he had the power of God. It was not his wisdom; it was God's wisdom he was preaching.

So he said that even though he did not appear to be anything to write home about, his presence was a display and demonstration of God's power and God's Spirit. He told these people, these Corinthians who needed a lot of help, a lot of correction; they needed to see a right example, that the reason he did this was to concentrate their faith in God and His power, rather than in any strength or wisdom of Paul himself, or any other man.

Recall that the Corinthians thought a lot of themselves. They thought they knew a lot; they thought they had a lot of talent; they had all these gifts and they were all ready to pitch in and use these gifts for the church; and they were all really happy and proud that God had done so much for them.

Then Paul comes in quibbling and trembling and being someone that you would never want to look up to or even be seen with, and he is not like that at all. He shows an entirely different example. He is humble. He does not think much of himself. He defers to others, and he gives all the glory to God. That is what he said in verse 31, "He who glories, let him glory in the Lord."

So he was really a good example for these Corinthians. Please turn to I Corinthians 3. At this point in the book, he is summarizing what he has written up to here, so this is the summary statement:

I Corinthians 3:18-23 Let no one deceive himself. If anyone among you seems to be wise in this age, let him become a fool that he may become wise. For the wisdom of this world is foolishness with God. For it is written, "He catches the wise in their own craftiness"; and again, "The LORD knows the thoughts of the wise, that they are futile." Therefore let no one boast in men. For all things are yours: whether Paul or Apollos or Cephas, or the world or life or death, or things present or things to come—all are yours. And you are Christ's, and Christ is God's.

What is he saying here? He is saying that this world and its wisdom have nothing to offer—not a shred of good. Man's wisdom—all the philosophies of men, all of these thoughts that they could make things better—cannot compare to God's by any means.

And in the end, as we have heard through these sermons on Ecclesiastes, it is all vanity; it is futile; worthless; it produces nothing of eternal consequence, or eternal substance. Men, he says, are severely limited; even men in the church at this present time. I can say that personally for myself. We are severely limited. We make mistakes—lots of them. It is hard to own up to them every once in a while. Hopefully we are humble enough to do so, and say, "I messed up." Or when we are asked a question, we say, "I don't know." I can't perceive the future. I can guess, but my guess is, well, I'm getting an 'F' on guesses. I have never been right yet. I'm getting a zero.

So this is why he even mentions himself there; Apollos, Cephas (Peter). He is saying, "You really can't depend on us. You can learn from us. We try to give you the best. But

even we have are our deficiencies, and lots of them.”

You have got everything. You have already been made an heir of all things. You are Christ's, not Paul's, or Apollos', or Cephas', or John Ritenbaugh's, or Richard Ritenbaugh's, or any of us.

You are Christ's. You are Christ's body. You are His brothers and sisters. You have direct contact through Christ to the Father. That is where the wisdom comes from. He can use men, but you have that ability to go directly to Him, and learn from Him. You have the Spirit of God. You have that opening up of your mind, and Him giving you wisdom, and you are being trained by Christ and the Father all the time to soak up their wisdom. You are constantly being fed by the Spirit of God the right way. You may not do it, but you are being fed it through His Word if you are studying, if you are praying, if you are keeping those lines of communication open.

If you are taking what you have learned and putting them into practice in your life, those things are getting inculcated into your character all the time. This is the wisdom that counts—what comes through God's Spirit and gets pasted on your character or inscribed on your heart.

This is what Paul is trying to tell us, here. We have been given so much! We have been made heirs of everything. We have a huge goal ahead of us. It is a wonderful thing.

So he is telling the Corinthians (and we too can learn from it), “Stop your bickering! Stop your fighting! Stop being so proud and lofty, because that person you're bickering with, that proud and lofty look you're giving to that other person whom you're looking down upon, is also an heir of all things, and is going to be a king and a priest with you in the Kingdom. So don't trouble his relationship with God; don't make things hard on him; work on yourself; grow in wisdom and character; and be prepared for the Kingdom.”

Paul was dealing with a situation here not unlike what is happening in the church today with all the divisions. He is saying, “Look, we've got to get beyond the divisions, because people are separating themselves—you know, Rod and Dave; Gerry and various other ones; saying, 'I'm of this church,' and, 'I'm of that church,' and 'I'm of this other church.'” If Paul were here today, he would exclaim, “You stupid people! You are Christ's! Stop that!”

But, we all have these petty differences, and it is a shame that there cannot reach out more to the various churches. We are all divided by little differences.

I would hope that we would be an example to the rest the church, willing to fellowship with these people in these other churches, letting them know that they are brethren—we consider them so, whether they consider us the same, or not.

Because we will inherit all things, we have to learn the hidden wisdom of God, which no one else, not even this world's rulers, have access to.

I Corinthians 2:6 However, we speak wisdom among those who are mature, yet not the wisdom of this age, nor of the rulers of this age, who are coming to nothing.

See? You are not coming to nothing! But, they are! Their wisdom will come to nothing, and they are going to come to nothing. But we who are learning the wisdom of God have far greater potential.

I Corinthians 2:7 But we speak the wisdom of God in a mystery, the hidden wisdom which God ordained before the ages for our glory.

He has been planning this for a long time. He has been making sure it has been put into a form that we can understand. And, even though it is a hidden wisdom, a mystery to all those people out there, He has given us keys to unlock it. We *can* learn it, and put it into practice, because He has given us what we need—the insight we need, the ways to put the puzzle together so that we understand what is going on, and have an idea of the plan, and our part in it.

I Corinthians 2:8 which none of the rulers of this age knew; for had they known, they would not have crucified the Lord of glory.

They are so blinded to the right way—to the hidden wisdom, the mystery of God, the great wisdom and understanding that we can have—that when God Himself was standing in front of Pontius Pilate, he did not recognize Him. He did not recognize his Creator, the great God. He did not realize the character that emanated from that Man, who would not even call for the angels to save Him, because He had a job to do. He shouldered the burden of monarchy.

I Corinthians 2:9 But as it is written: “Eye has not seen, nor ear heard, nor have entered into the heart of man the things which God has prepared for

those who love Him.”

We have an astounding future. And we have no idea what is really involved. We just have a vague perception of kingship, and priesthood.

I Corinthians 2:10 But God has revealed them to us through His Spirit. For the Spirit searches all things, yes, the deep things of God.

So, we do not have a great deal of detail of what God has in store for us in His Kingdom, but because we have His Spirit in us, we know that He promises us thrones, and a priesthood in the Millennium, and He is going to give us the wisdom to do it.

What else? What is beyond all that? What are we going to do for eternity? Well, whatever it is, it will be fabulous and astounding.

The apostle John in I John 3:2 tells us that we do not know, we really do not know. But, when we see Him, we will be like Him. You hang on to that.

We are going to see Him as He is, and He is going to see us as we are.

Now, what Paul's argument does is point to the revelation of God. We have been given God's Spirit to get in line with Him.

See? Jesus is here, while we are all over the place. Some of us come from the right end of the spectrum, while some of us come from the left end of the spectrum, and some of us are just confused. We all have varying intelligence, different access to things, different levels of patience, love, faith; we are all over the place when it comes to comparisons with Jesus Christ who is just rock steady. That is one of His names—Rock.

Well, the Holy Spirit is given to each one of us. We all have access to it. We all have access to Christ, and we have access to the Father. And over time, what this does is that it takes those of us who are all over the map and starts bringing us together onto the same road that Jesus is walking down. We may be a long way off, and have to overcome a lot to get there, but what His Spirit does is that it binds us together in One.

But, it does not happen all at once. We all have the same access to the same spirit, so in that way, we are one, but it takes years of growth in God's wisdom to put us all together walking in lockstep on the same path. As a matter of fact, it will probably never

occur in this life. But, we are all working toward it, and we are all getting better, and becoming more in line with what He is doing, and where He is.

So, over time, using His Spirit, we come to know what He knows. It is not just knowledge, but righteousness. We come to have His righteousness on some things. We are certainly not going to be perfect, but using God's Spirit, we come to know the righteousness of Jesus Christ. Does it not say in I Corinthians 1:30 that Christ became for us wisdom from God, and righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption?

See, we are covered over that by His blood, and we come into Him, and He becomes for us all these things. All of that covers all of us—what He has done brings us all under that mantle. But then, over time, we learn through the spirit to know the same things about life that He knows—living life. We come to know how He thinks about goodness, and how He acts in goodness. We come to know what He thinks is joy, and how to have joy. We come to know what real peace is, and to have peace with Him, and the Father; and with each other.

Of course, we also come to know what real godly love is, and practice it among ourselves.

Then, at the second coming, when we are raised to be spirit, and to be like Him in composition, we get beyond the knowledge—we get the power and the godly ability to go with the character that we have built over this lifetime.

And *then*, we are something!

We have been building the character. What God is actually trying to see, and build in us before we die, is that we say, "Yes, Lord! I submit. Whatever you want, Lord. I'm willing to do it. I don't understand it, but I want to do it because You have told me that it's right. This is your wisdom, and I will follow it."

Once we get to the resurrection, and He infuses us with His power, and we are given bodies like Him, with the abilities of God—Wow!

I Corinthians 2:15-16 But he who is spiritual judges all things, yet he himself is rightly judged by no one. For "who has known the mind of the LORD that he may instruct Him?" But we [now a little bit but then in full will] have the mind of Christ.

I think this is just utterly astounding. Just to think of it.

I know it is pretty basic, but it is astounding to think of, that God would take clay like this and make it into His own body, and then infuse it with the power and wisdom of God, and it be perfect. That is just astounding.

So, there will be no reason, no reason whatever, to be reluctant to take up a throne of one, or two, or five, or ten, or twenty, or a hundred cities—a whole nation! In the Kingdom of God, we will not hesitate to take up our thrones. It will be an honor to serve with Christ. We will see it as right and good. We will know that it is not only our due—our reward, what we deserve!—in a good way, because God will judge us fairly on our works. It will be what we deserve.

But, not only that, it will be also critical and necessary for the good of all mankind that we take our places over them. We must do it for the good of humanity. This is why the Millennium is such a wonderful thing.

Isaiah 30:18-21 Therefore the LORD will wait, that He may be gracious to you; and therefore He will be exalted, that He may have mercy on you. For the LORD is a God of justice; blessed are all those who wait for Him. For the people shall dwell in Zion at Jerusalem; you shall weep no more. He will be very gracious to you at the sound of your cry; when He hears it, He will answer you. And though the Lord gives you the bread of adversity and the water of affliction, yet your teachers will not be moved into a corner anymore, but your eyes shall see your teachers. Your ears shall hear a word behind you, saying, "This is the way, walk in it," whenever you turn to the right hand or whenever you turn to the left.

At that time, we will be fulfilling this prophecy. We will be those teachers that the people of Israel will turn to when they have a problem, when they need wisdom. And we will be there to give it. We will have the answers. It will not be like now where we quibble, and dither about "Oh, what shall I do? If I do this, that might happen! Or, if I do that, then this will happen! Or maybe I should do this other thing, because it's easy, and I won't have to worry about it too much. Maybe I should just wait."

We do this all the time, because we do not know, we do not have the perfect wisdom of God.

But, *then*, we will. In applying our experience with the wisdom of God, we will be able to

say, "No, you should do this. This is the right way to go. It may not be easy, but you should do this, and it'll work out just fine." And they will be able to say, "I trust you," because you are one of the God Family. Then, we will be able to help these people and lead them and direct them in the way they should go. And it will be a utopia. The people will be much more willing to comply, and submit to Jesus Christ.

But, we are going to be the teachers of humanity who guide them into walking the right, godly way to eternal life.

In a way we could say that we will be an essential part of God's gracious blessing on them. As it said in verse 18, "Therefore the LOORD will wait, that He may be gracious to you." He is waiting for us. He is waiting to bring us to fruition. And when that happens, He will have His team assembled, and things can start going. He will have His 144,000 firstfruits, His 144,000 kings and priests. The show, now, can get on the road.

We will also be bestowing blessings and graces upon these people as the Lord's body.

Obadiah 17 "But on Mount Zion there shall be deliverance, and there shall be holiness; the house of Jacob shall possess their possessions.

Obadiah 20 And the captives of this host of the children of Israel shall possess the land of the Canaanites as far as Zarephath. The captives of Jerusalem who are in Sepharad shall possess the cities of the South.

He is talking about Israel coming back into the land, again, and possessing all these places that their enemies had possessed.

Obadiah 21 Then saviors shall come to Mount Zion to judge the mountains of Esau, and the kingdom shall be the LOORD's.

So as co-heirs with Christ, and kings and priests under Him, the people will consider us saviors with Him. Jesus Christ, of course, will be the only One who died and saved them from their sins, but **our work** with the people of this time will be so tied to His work of the salvation process, that the people will look upon us as their *saviors*.

Remember, it says that we shall see Him as He is. We will be like Him, because we see Him as He is. This gives us an indication of how tight our integration into the body of

Reluctant Leaders by Richard T. Ritenbaugh (<http://www.cgg.org>)

Christ will be in the Millennium. We will be extensions of the great King of kings, so that the people will see Him when they see us. And, they will identify us with Him, so that there is no separation.

We will be Him—His body, His bride.

What is it between a husband and a wife, the first thing that is ever said about marriage? They will become one.

I Corinthians 13:12 is a very interesting scripture to put along with all this.

I Corinthians 13:12 For now we see in a mirror, dimly, but then face to face.
Now I know in part, but then I shall know just as I also am known.

It is like we are looking in a mirror, and it is foggy, and we really cannot see anything. It is a dim impression of ourselves. But then, the fog will be cleared, and when we look in there, we expect to see our face, but we are going to be seeing the face of Jesus Christ—face to face. We look to Him, He sees us—He looks to us—He sees Him, too.

Now, we only know a little bit. We know only a part of what is going on. But then, we will know, just as He knows us. We will know Him like He knows us. That is how closely the integration will be between us and Christ.

So, if you have ever thought that being a king is more than you can handle, simply perish the thought. Drive it out of your mind! It is doable. It is very doable! In fact, that is exactly what you are being prepared for. And if God prepares you for something, you will be ready to do it. He, as we saw in the scriptures, has been doing this—preparing us—from before the foundation of the world. He has been doing this for a very long time. It is His great work. He will do it. He will get it done.

Isaiah 61:1-2 "The Spirit of the Lord GOOD is upon Me, because the LOORD has anointed Me to preach good tidings to the poor; He has sent Me to heal the brokenhearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives, and the opening of the prison to those who are bound; to proclaim the acceptable year of the LOORD. .

. .

Jesus Christ came—this was the first part of His job. He came and brought all these things to us, taught us, started His church, and all these things. He is working toward

this next point:

Isaiah 61:2 and the day of vengeance of our God. . . .

This is the second coming of Christ. He comes in judgment and vengeance, and He does all those things I mentioned in the sermon on the first holy day. And then,

Isaiah 61:2-6 To comfort all who mourn, to console those who mourn in Zion, to give them beauty for ashes, the oil of joy for mourning, the garment of praise for the spirit of heaviness; that they may be called trees of righteousness, the planting of the LOORD, that He may be glorified. And they shall rebuild the old ruins, they shall raise up the former desolations, and they shall repair the ruined cities, the desolations of many generations. Strangers shall stand and feed your flocks, and the sons of the foreigner shall be your plowmen and your vinedressers. But you shall be named the priests of the LOORD, they [men] shall call you the servants of our God.

Isaiah 62:1-2 For Zion's sake I will not hold My peace, and for Jerusalem's sake I will not rest, until her righteousness goes forth as brightness, and her salvation as a lamp that burns. The Gentiles shall see your righteousness, and all kings your glory. You shall be called by a new name, which the mouth of the LOORD will name.

Remember, this goes with Revelation 3 where we receive a new name.

Isaiah 62:3 You shall also be a crown of glory in the hand of the LOORD, and a royal diadem in the hand of your God.

Isaiah 62:11-12 Indeed the LOORD has proclaimed to the end of the world: "Say to the daughter of Zion, 'Surely your salvation is coming; behold, His reward is with Him, and His work before Him.'" And they shall call them The Holy People, The Redeemed of the LOORD; and you shall be called Sought Out, A City Not Forsaken.

If this is the reward and responsibilities that He has envisioned for us, for all this long

time, He will make sure that we can do it; that we have all the tools, all the resources, all the know-how, and all the power to do the job.

So, there is no reason why we should draw back from this awesome future. And, do you know, just to bring this down to the here and now, if He lays a position of leadership upon you, before that wonderful day, while you are still a human being, while you are still encased in this flesh in this life, you can be sure that you can handle it. You can handle it by using what you have learned from the Word of God, and by relying upon the power of His Spirit. He never gives a gift or position or even a trial and a test that we are not able to bear and overcome. (I Corinthians 10:13). He always supplies abundantly what we need to do any job. So, you need not even be too reluctant in this life if you are given a position of leadership, because you have access to God, and His Spirit.

Let us conclude in I Corinthians 1.

I Corinthians 1:4-9 I thank my God always concerning you for the grace of God which was given to you by Christ Jesus, that you were enriched in everything by Him in all utterance and all knowledge, even as the testimony of Christ was confirmed in you, so that you come short in no gift, eagerly waiting for the revelation of our Lord Jesus Christ, who will also confirm you to the end, that you may be blameless in the day of our Lord Jesus Christ. God is faithful, by whom you were called into the fellowship of His Son, Jesus Christ our Lord.