

# “Abusive Leaders and Faithful Shepherds” -- The Call of Samuel // 1 Samuel 3 // *The Life of David* #2<sup>1</sup>

## Announcements

## Introduction

1 Samuel 3, if you have your Bibles: One of the things I love to do on the Fourth of July is watch patriotic movies, and one of the best ones of recent was *The Greyhound*, starring Tom Hanks. The movie is based on the events now known as the “Battle for the Atlantic,” told originally in the 1955 novel, *The Good Shepherd*. The characters in the movie and book are fictional, but they depict the actions of several brave commanders whose heroism in that battle saved the day.

In the movie, one of the commanders, Capt Krause, is charged with escorting a handful of Allied ships across the Atlantic ocean. Day and night, they’re hounded by German submarines, sometimes getting so close to them that their boats could nearly touch them. Even when they *aren’t* under direct attack, the terror of anticipation hangs over all of them. They are the first wall of defense, who the enemy submarines have to sink to get at the convoy. Through it all, Capt Krause and these other commanders won’t leave the men. Even if it means they die in the Atlantic, they have to see the convoy safely ...

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<sup>1</sup> Works Consulted: Tim Chester, *1 Samuel For You: For reading, for feeding, for leading (God’s Word for You)*, The Good Book Company, September 15, 2014; Jeremy Yong, “When Leaders Sin Against God,” a sermon preached at First Baptist Church of Hacienda Heights in Los Angeles, California on March the 29th, 2017; John Sailhammer. *NIV Compact Bible Commentary* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1994); Joby Martin, “Speak, For Your Servant Hears,” sermon preached at The Church of Eleven22 on May 12, 2019.

We all long for a leader like that, a protector. Someone who puts his people’s interests above his own; someone faithful to the end. And that’s at play here in 1 Samuel 3... It’s showing the kind of leader Israel needs.

The book of 1 Samuel opens with Israel seeking a king. God was supposed to have been their King--their protector, their provider--but they didn’t trust God and they wanted an earthly king. And so, God, in the opening chapters of 1 Samuel, sets up a contrast between the King they want and the kind of King they need.

In the story of Hannah, God showed them that a King could never be their primary source of identity, security and happiness. Hannah sought those things in a son; Israel sought them in a king; we seek it through money, status, good looks, a great body, a healthy family or many other things. But real identity, security and happiness are found in God alone.

Today, the focus is the kind of Shepherd God wants to provide for his people. What you’re going to see is the difference in a good Shepherd and a bad one.

**3 Now the boy Samuel was ministering to the Lord in the presence of Eli.** (who was the high priest at this time)

Remember Samuel was Hannah’s son, given to her in answer to prayer. She had dedicated him to the Temple by means of a Nazarite vow, which meant basically that she gave him up for adoption to the Temple. He grows up there, at the Temple, under the direction of Eli, the high priest.

**(Now) And the word of the Lord was rare in those days; there was no frequent vision. 2 At that time Eli, whose eyesight had begun to grow dim so that he could not see, was lying down in his own place.**

**This is a dark time in Israel.** *The Word of the Lord was rare, and there were not many visions.*<sup>2</sup> Immediately after saying that, the writer points out that Eli's eyes were becoming dim, which is a metaphor for Israel's spiritual sight. Just like Eli can scarcely see physically, Israel can scarcely see spiritually.

One cause of this was the decadent state of spiritual leadership in Israel. Look back at 2:22:

2:22 Now Eli was very old, and he kept hearing all that his sons were doing to all Israel, and how they lay with the women who were serving at the entrance to the tent of meeting.

Eli's sons, who served underneath Eli, were sleeping with the female volunteers at the Temple. Not only that, if you go back to vs 13, we see that Eli's sons were manipulating the offering and using it to enrich themselves.

And so, God says to Eli in vs. 29 (of chap 2) "Why then do you scorn my sacrifices and my offerings that I commanded for my dwelling, and honor your sons above me by fattening yourselves on the choicest parts of every offering of my people Israel?" For as long as there has been ministry, there have been leaders who abused those positions for monetary and sexual benefit. And just as grievous to God as the deeds themselves is Eli's silence in the face of them.

And so, God said to Eli: vs. 31 of chapter 2: "I will cut off your house... and (then, v. 35) I will raise up for myself a faithful priest, who shall do according to what is in my heart and in my mind."

In the face of all this degradation, God is going to raise up a new leader, a faithful leader, a selfless leader.

**Which brings us back to chapter 3. It was a spiritually dark time in Israel,** but 3:3 The lamp of God had not yet gone out (which means God's presence had not totally left, there was still a glimmer of hope), and Samuel was lying down in the temple of the Lord, where the ark of God was. (The Ark of the Covenant was a gold box with a couple of carved angels on the top--you know, you've seen (pic) *Indiana Jones and the Raiders of the Lost Ark* --this golden box was the resting place of the presence of God, and on top of the lid the high priest would offer a sacrifice once a year on the Day of Atonement for the sins of the people.

Samuel slept next to the room where the Ark was, and in the presence of the candle that burned eternally with God's presence--talk about an amazing night light! I think it would be scary for a little boy to sleep by himself in a big old Temple, but that would make it better, I think. How many of you sleep with a light on? How many of you are cave sleepers? I used to like a small light on but as I've gotten older and more irritable I need total darkness.

4 Then the Lord called Samuel, and he said, "Here I am!" 5 and ran to Eli and said, "Here I am, for you called me." But he said, "I did not call; lie down again." (Parents, you know what it's like when you wake up in the middle of the night and there standing in front of you are two eyes and it totally freaks you out. Usually my kids want some water or to tell me they are scared or something, and I say what any good dad would say: "Your mom is right on the other side of the bed." Just kidding. Samuel said, "Hey, Papa Eli, you called me!" And Eli said, 'No I didn't, son. Go back to bed.' So he went and lay down.

6 And the Lord called again, "Samuel!" and Samuel arose and went to Eli and said, "Here I am, for you called me." But he said, "(Boy, what is wrong with you?) I did not call, my son; lie down again." (Translation: "Do not wake me up again; get back in bed and let me sleep.")

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<sup>2</sup> A statement that will open and close this story (3:1; 4:1)

Now Samuel did not yet know the Lord, and the word of the Lord had not yet been revealed to him. (That doesn't mean he wasn't saved yet, or that he was still an unbeliever, just that he hadn't yet become a prophet. There's a kind of 'knowing the Lord' that makes you a Christian; and a kind of 'knowing the Lord' where you hear from him and walk with him as he directs you in ministry. Some of you know the former but not the latter.)

8 And the Lord called Samuel again the third time. And he arose and went to Eli and said, "Here I am, for you called me." **Then Eli perceived that the Lord was calling the boy.** 9 Therefore Eli said to Samuel, "Go, lie down, and if he calls you, you shall say, 'Speak, Lord, for your servant hears.'" So Samuel went and lay down in his place.

10 And the Lord came and stood (a third time), calling as at other times, "Samuel! Samuel!" And Samuel said, "Speak, for your servant hears."

11 Then the Lord said to Samuel, "Behold, I am about to do a thing in Israel at which the two ears of everyone who hears it will tingle. 12 On that day I will fulfill against Eli all that I have spoken concerning his house, from beginning to end. 13 And I declare to him that I am about to punish his house forever, for the iniquity that he knew, because his sons were blaspheming God, and he did not restrain them. 14 Therefore I swear to the house of Eli that the iniquity of Eli's house shall not be atoned for by sacrifice or offering forever."

15 Samuel lay until morning; then he opened the doors of the house of the Lord. And Samuel was afraid to tell the vision to Eli. 17 But Eli said, "What was it that he told you? Do not hide it from me..." 18 So Samuel told him everything and hid nothing from him.

Specifically, Samuel prophesied to Eli that both his sons would die on the same day and that the Ark of the Covenant would be lost.

**Talk about a tough first assignment for Samuel in ministry.** My first sermon was given at my home church when I was 16 years old; everybody came up and told me what an amazing job I did and my mom and dad took me out for ice cream afterwards. Samuel's first sermon was telling his mentor first thing in the morning that both his sons would die and the presence of God would be stripped from his ministry.

- I hope you'll pray for whoever stands in this spot right here, whether it's me or anybody else. Every week I face the temptation to tell you what you want to hear rather than what you need to hear;
- to affirm the culture when you need to contradict the culture; to tell you things are ok when they are not ok.
- I like to be popular and I like to be liked. But I know what you most need here is not a popular preacher, but a faithful preacher.

18 And he (Eli) said, "It is the Lord. Let him do what seems good to him."

One positive thing you have to say about Eli: for all his failures as a leader, which are substantial, he knows you don't do yourself any favors by hiding from the word of God. He said, "Tell me exactly what God says."

Which leads me to the first of

## 5 Takeaways

### 1. Put yourself in a place where you can hear hard truth.

- If you read the Bible, or listen to it being taught, with any humility or degree of openness, at some point it's going to make you mad. If it's not, you're not reading it right--there's nobody for whom the Bible just affirms the way they naturally are. If that's what you get from the Bible, you're reading it wrong.

- Now, let me be clear: sometimes I make people mad when I preach because I'm a bonehead and I say things that are immature, unwise or insensitive, and I've had to learn how to say 'I'm sorry' a lot over the years. I'm not talking about those times. **I'm talking about those times where I am actually being faithful to the Scriptures and it makes you mad.** I will often say to people when they light me up about something, "Are you mad because you see I'm not interpreting the Bible properly, or do you just not like what it says?"
  - Sometimes people will say, "Well, I don't think the Bible is as clear as you are saying it is." And I say, **There is a difference in the Bible being unclear and it being unpopular.**
  - Sometimes the ambiguity is not in the Bible, it's in your life. It's like Mark Twain said, *"It's not the parts of the Bible I don't understand that bother me; it's the parts that I do understand."*
  - Unsurprisingly, the places people today find the Bible most "unclear" are the places it is least popular in our culture--*God's design for sex and family; his complementary design for gender; the dangers of both Christian nationalism or socialism; our duties toward the poor; our duty to surrender our cultural preferences to pursue diversity in the church; our responsibility to put God first in our finances; to make his kingdom the top priority in our family schedules*--the Bible is not unclear on these things. **There is a difference in the Bible being unclear and it being unpopular.** Don't confuse the two.
  - Put yourself in a place where the Word of God is preached without partiality and without respect to your feelings. If those who are preaching the Word of God do not step on your toes every once in a while, either you're not listening or they're not really preaching. And pray for your teachers to have both clarity and courage, to be able to separate their opinions from God's word, and to be bold to tell you what God says regardless of how unfashionable.
2. **God seeks surrendered vessels, not gifted ones**
- Every Jewish reader would recognize that Samuel was second string when it came to ministry.
  - Remember, there were two ways to become a priest in Israel:
    - One, be born to the tribe of Levi, that was the priestly class; that was the preferred way.
    - The other way was to take a Nazarite vow, where you renounced membership in your tribe and got adopted into the tribe of Levi. That was the second string way, and that was how Samuel entered the ministry.
  - Samuel wasn't from the right family; he didn't have the right pedigree. Vv. 18-19 tell us Samuel's mom came up once a year to bring him clothes, which means he wasn't even supported by Temple dollars like the other young boys entering the priesthood. IOW, he's not on scholarship; he's basically an unpaid intern.
  - And yet, he's the one God chooses to make the premier prophet and priest in Israel. Why? **Because God seeks surrendered vessels, not gifted ones.**
  - Samuel's response when God speaks is *"Speak, Lord, your servant hears,"* a totally different response from Eli's sons or Eli himself.
  - *"Speak, Lord, your servant hears."* Let me translate that for you: "My answer is yes before I even know the question." That's what God seeks in his servants.
  - There's a phrase we sometimes use around TSC--we say, **"Put your yes on the altar."** --Maybe you've heard that phrase and wondered what it really means. It comes from a story that the interim pastor before me--Dr. Keith Eitel--used to tell about a young girl who was in a church service as a missionary explained what God was doing overseas and challenged people in the church to be willing to say yes to God if he called them to join them over there. Well, at the invitation time at the end of the service--that part of a Baptist service when some people come down to the front and pray--the little girl went forward and knelt down at the altar. On the way home, the dad asked the little girl if she believed God was calling her overseas, and she said, "No, I don't know that yet. But I wanted to put my 'yes' on the altar so that whenever

God does call me to something, he'll already know what my answer is."

- **That's what Samuel does.** "Speak, Lord, your servant hears. My 'yes' is on the altar before I even know the question."
- So many people--church people, sincere Christians, expect to follow God with conditions. They want God to give them suggestions about what to do and what to say, but they reserve the right to veto or ignore or tweak certain things God says.
  - I sometimes compare it to the brake pedal my Driver's Ed instructor had in his car on his side. I don't know if they still do this, but **when I took Driver's Ed**, the car I was in had a brake pedal (PIC) on the instructor's side, so that if I did something he didn't like--rolled through a stop sign, followed too closely behind someone in traffic--he could slam on the break. And my guy was SO DRAMATIC about it--but he let me know: you don't get final say in this car. I had control most of the time, but he could VETO my choice any time he wanted. He **hadn't fully surrendered the car to me. That was probably wise on his part.**
  - **For a lot of church people, they follow Jesus until he says:**
    - I'm calling you to serve overseas--they slam on the pedal.
    - I'm calling one of your kids overseas--slam
    - I want you to end this dating relationship--slam
    - I'm calling you to tithe--slam
    - I'm calling you to have this really difficult conversation--slam
    - I want you to forgive--slam
    - Here's what I want you to believe about sex and family--slam
    - I'm calling you to sacrifice this--slam
  - **To follow Jesus means we take out the brake pedal.** We relinquish our veto power.
- **Is this your posture toward God?**

- I'll say what you want me to say (like Samuel). I'll go where you want me to go. I'll do what you want me to do. No limits, terms or conditions.
- **I'm always amazed at how many people feel the freedom to edit what God says or tweak what he says to make it more agreeable to them.**
- People often feel like I grew up with the convictions I have now, but that's not true. Y'all, candidly speaking: there are lots of things in the Bible that over the years I have found to be challenging, even offensive. There are a lot of things I didn't want to believe, that at first I resented, even hated. But I made a decision a long time ago that if Jesus is Lord, I wouldn't have conditions. What he says is my rule. He is Lord. He is the King of Kings, not King of Suggestions. If God says it, and I know he says it, by his grace ***I'm going to be committed to it regardless of how offensive or unpopular.***
- **So, I ask again: Is this your posture toward God?** I talk with so many people who have conditions on what they'll believe or what they'll do. Christian, God wants to use you powerfully, like he did Samuel, and David, but as he did with them, it starts with surrender. The Spirit only fills a completely surrendered vessel:
  - **I love how C.S. Lewis says it in, *Mere Christianity*:** "Christ says, 'Give me all of you! I don't want a certain amount of your time, a certain amount of your talents and money, or a certain amount of your work. I want *you*. All of *you*. I didn't come to reform or correct the natural self, but to kill it. No half measures will do. I don't want to only prune a branch here and a branch there; rather I want the whole tree out. Hand it over to me, the whole outfit, all of your desires, all of your wants and wishes and dreams. Turn them ALL over to me, give yourself to me and I will make of you a new self--in my image. Give me yourself and in exchange I will give you myself. My will, shall become your will. My heart, shall become your heart.'"

- God wants to do more than reform you morally; he wants to fill you with resurrection power, but that only comes through *surrender*.

### 3. God has a call on *your* life

- Samuel's experience is, in one sense, unique; Samuel had a special call on his life to be Israel's greatest prophet, and his whole "hear a voice in the middle of the night" routine is not the normal way God calls people. In fact, as far as I know, Samuel is the only person in the Bible God ever called this way.
- But, having said that, I do believe Samuel demonstrates how all of us should respond to the calling of God. You see, your call may not be revealed as dramatically as Samuel's was, but God has a calling specifically for you: **an assignment to be his mouth and hands and feet to someone** and you've got to be every bit as sensitive to God's voice and surrendered to it as Samuel was.
- **One of the most destructive myths that Christians believe is that only a few of us are called**, and calling only happens through some weird mystical moment like Samuel's, and if that hasn't happened, you're not really called.
- **There's only a few people in the Bible God calls in dramatic ways**: Samuel, Moses, Mary, the Apostle Paul. For the vast majority of us, it doesn't happen that way. But Scripture says that God has a special assignment for every believer, and your job is to figure out what that is and get after it.
- You say, "Well, how can I know what my calling is?" Great question. I'll give you the usual answer:
  - **Saturation in his word** (as God's priorities become clearer in your heart, your role becomes more apparent)
  - **Communion with God in prayer** (more mystical)
  - **Practicing your gifts**: Father Christmas...
  - **Involvement--deep, real involvement--in his church**. As we saw in our study through 1 Corinthians, God speaks to us, and guides us, through this church. So when I say "involvement in the church," I don't mean casual

attendance on Sunday--I mean being in a small group and on a volunteer team and being here basically whenever the doors are open and getting involved in mission--so that others are close enough to you that they can see the gifts at work in you and call them out.

- I'll do these last two together: **Special experiences** and **Circumstantial direction** ('special experiences' means particular ways God has written your story; particular things he's allowed you to experience that enable you to be a testimony to others; struggles you've had--with infertility, divorce, an addiction, a chronic illness, getting fired from your job, a past mistake like abortion--experiences that allow you to minister to others who are now in the same conditions that you were. "**Circumstantial direction**" means providential doors God opens for you)
- **These are the primary ways God speaks to people today.** How he speaks may not be the same as it was with Samuel, but he is still speaking. Living out the Christian life means honing in on what God has specifically for you, surrendering to it, and pursuing it.
- **And I have a special word for teenagers--not sure why this is on my heart, but I'll just share it:** It's never too early for you to pursue this! To make this your focus and your identity. One of the quests of teenagers is to develop an identity in front of your friends. To be known for something. "I'm good at *this*." "I've done *these* things." "I'm cool like *this*." Sometimes you even want to dabble in sin so that you can be cool in front of your friends that way: "Oh yeah, I've got experience in this or that..." Make pursuit of you calling your identity: "I belong to God; I'm committed to his mission; I'm his servant." Like Samel obviously adopted from a young age. *This is who I am.*" It's possible for you, middle school student, to be as clear about your identity as God's servant as Samuel was!

#### 4. Jesus is the greater Samuel

- This is the primary takeaway of the Samuel story: Samuel points us to Jesus.
- Like Samuel, Jesus was born in a dark time, “when the word of God was rare and there were no visions.” In fact, when Jesus was born, God had been silent for about 400 years.
- Like Samuel, Jesus was born in a time when Israel’s spiritual leaders were power-hungry, abusive and apathetic.
- Like Samuel, Jesus would not have the right pedigree for ministry. He was born in the wrong location to the wrong parents; he wasn’t rich or highly educated or raised in privilege.
- But, like Samuel, Jesus would be surrendered to God. Like Samuel, his power came not from his talent, but from his surrender.
- Like Samuel, Jesus would be a faithful prophet, faithfully delivering the Word of God even when incredibly unpopular.
- And like Samuel, Jesus stayed faithful even when the people failed to listen. There’s a scene in 1 Samuel 15 where Israel rejects Samuel’s word, and when they realize that, they come back to Samuel and say, “Will you still intercede on our behalf to God and represent us before him?” And Samuel says, “I could never sin against God by failing to pray for you.” In other words, I’ll remain faithful to you even when you are unfaithful to God.
- That’s a picture of Jesus, who not only faithfully delivered God’s truth to us, but refused to forsake us even after we rejected his words. In fact, Jesus willingly bore our punishment for ignoring those truths, something Samuel never did. It was like the thief on the cross, who railed at Jesus and mocked Jesus, and instead of cursing him, Jesus prayed, ‘Father, forgive them for they know not what they do,’ and then the moment that thief showed the slightest regret, Jesus responded with tenderness and mercy. That’s what he does with us.

Samuel was an amazing prophet and priest, but Jesus was the ultimate prophet, priest and King. He was the faithful Shepherd, leader, captain, protector, provider and defender that we’ve always

yearned for. Every other great leader--like Capt Krause, the Good Shepherd in the movie *Greyhound*--becomes good only as they model their leadership after his. A leader who puts the people’s interests above his own, who refuses to give up or walk away; who is faithful to his or her calling to the end.

And while we have plenty of historical examples of those who abused their positions of leadership, like Eli and his sons, it’s also true that Christ’s example has inspired some of the greatest leaders in history.

I think of Lottie Moon, whose memory we commemorate every year in a nationwide Christmas missions offering. That offering takes its name from a small, 4’ 3” American missionary named Charlotte Digges Moon who died in China more than 100 years ago.

She graduated from the girls’ college in Charlottesville--the female counterpart to UVA--one of the first women in the South to earn a master of arts degree.. She was incredibly bright. She was engaged to be married, but for reasons that we don’t know for certain--many suspect it had to do with her fiancée’s struggle with belief--she went to China as a single woman. It wasn’t easy. In fact, one of the most touching lines I read in her biography: *“I pray that no missionary will ever be as lonely as I have been.”* But she said, *“I’ll be faithful to Jesus whatever the cost.”*<sup>3</sup>

She gave undying devotion to the Chinese that she loved. When many were fleeing China during the China-Japan war she stayed where she was.

For years she saw little fruit among the Chinese. But eventually, the gospel began to take root, and converts were subject to intense persecution at the hands of even their own family members. There are stories about her putting her own body literally between the

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<sup>3</sup> *Some Gave All*, Ellen Caughey, pp 145–55

persecutors and Chinese Christians. She said “If you attempt to destroy this church, you will have to kill me first. Jesus gave himself for us Christians. Now I am ready to die for him.”<sup>4</sup>

In 1911, a great famine swept her portion of China. Again, she refused to leave. During that time, as she had done many many times before, she wrote to American pastors pleading with them, can’t you give to help your brothers and sisters in China? After she died, churches began to take up an offering every year at Christmas time in her name.

So yes, it is true that many Christian leaders fail at their post, but many others learn from Jesus and lay down their lives for the people they serve; willing to be unpopular if they must, faithful to the end.

**That was true of Samuel, it was true of David, and most of all, it is true of Jesus.**

Which leads me to the last thing I want to point out from this story:

##### **5. Spiritual abuse is a deadly serious matter, and so is silence**

- Eli wasn’t like his sons. **In fact, 1 Samuel 2 said that their actions grieved him and he rebuked them.** But, and this is the key, Eli wasn’t courageous enough to do anything about it. He seems to be a good guy; a good high priest. But he prioritized family unity over institutional integrity.
- When it comes to spiritual abuse, silence is as sinful as the acts themselves.
- You see, there’s probably nothing as damaging, spiritually, as when a spiritual leader who has been appointed to represent God to people uses that position to exploit and take advantage of those people. And it is equally grievous when other leaders, like Eli, who would never dream of doing these things themselves,

won’t take action to expose these wolves-in-sheep’s-clothing and get them out of the church.

- **Abuse is a deadly serious matter, and so is silence and apathy in the face of abuse.**

Some of you who pay attention to the news know that the Southern Baptist Convention, of which our church is a part, recently has taken decisive action on this--to say that we will not tolerate any version of Eli who seeks to protect other leaders at the sake of God’s people.

- Not only would our silence allow people to be hurt, it also leads, as we see here in 1 Samuel 3, to a complete loss of the presence of God. God literally took the Ark of the Covenant away.

The NT says that elders should be men of proven character--not greedy for money, not addicted to wine, who are faithful to their wives and families and who have lives characterized by integrity and selfless leadership.

- **We want to think this way at TSC. We have put multiple safeguards to make sure that I, or no one else,** can run the system. We have a board of lay elders to whom I am accountable. I don’t control money. My salary and my giving are transparent both to our elders and other people to whom I have made myself accountable. I don’t have any passwords that someone else (or, usually several someones) doesn’t know. I regularly seek out feedback on my leadership or my messages from our elders, other staff, and members in our congregation.
- **If we discover that one of our pastors has used their position to extort or exploit that is an immediately fire-able offense.** We want you to be confident that your leaders are here to serve you, not to serve themselves. If there’s anything about one of our leaders that says, “I’m here for the church to serve me,” that’s not the kind of leader we want, no matter how talented they are.

BTW, I know that I’m talking to some who have been the victims of that kind of abuse. We want to be here to be a resource for you if you

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<sup>4</sup> *The New Lottie Moon Story*, Catherine B. Allen, 184.

can. I know we're not perfect--far from it--but we're committed to you. And I realize that it may be difficult for you to learn to trust any church leader again, but if you give us a chance, we'd love to be able to walk this path of healing with you. Start the conversation with us.

## VAMP

We want you to know how much that leader's actions grieved Jesus and they grieve us, too. Jesus said it would be better for someone to have a millstone tied around their neck and cast into the sea than to cause one of his little ones, the vulnerable ones, who believed in him, to stumble. I can't think of anything that would make someone stumble more than being abused or exploited by their spiritual leader. That's how Jesus feels, and we want to represent that.

So, start the conversation with us.

## Prayer