

Becoming Smaller to Lead Bigger



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Exodus 18:1-27

I am so excited to get to preach to you guys this morning especially because of where we have landed in the text. We have been going through Exodus and today we have landed in Exodus chapter 18. It fell on my Sunday to preach, which I think is just providential because I love Exodus chapter 18. The reason I love Exodus chapter 18 is because it is all about leadership and I would consider myself a leadership junkie. I love leadership. I love reading about leadership. I love watching leaders lead. I love listening to podcasts and reading blogs about leadership. I like trying to figure out how to lead better and how to teach people how to be better leaders. I am not the best leader by any means, but I love the concept of leadership and I am a constant learner of leadership.

So, I am really excited about what happened in this particular text because really Exodus 18 is Hardin's playbook on leadership. This is how we seek to do leadership, so I want to tell you the story about how that came to be. Two years ago, I took on the role of associate pastor, while also still being youth pastor. With this new role, I was trying to figure out what exactly I could do to take some stuff off of Bro. Ricky so that he can do more of what only he needs to do. One of those things, other than preaching and teaching, was to be over the staff in a leadership type role. So for about two years I have been leading our staff. We have a weekly team meeting

on Wednesdays that I am over. I am trying to lead the staff in vision, direction, and the mission of the church, how they can play a part in that, how they can grow as a leader as I am trying to grow as a leader. About a year ago this month, I was riding in a tractor, which I do that from time to time to help my granddad, and I was listening to the book of Exodus over and over because I knew we were going to preach it the next semester. I was thinking about leadership, how we do leadership, how it looks at Hardin and then chapter 18 comes over the speakers in my tractor. As it began I stopped the tractor, I pulled out my iPhone, and began taking rapid notes on what I was hearing. I opened up my Bible, read through it again, and kept taking notes because it was like... *This is it! This is how God wants us to do leadership! This is what I want you to do!* It was this aha moment in the tractor. I was just so enamored by Exodus chapter 18 because I knew this was what we needed to do as leaders at Hardin. About a week later, as I am processing I go into our team meeting and I turn into the nerdy guy. I get the whiteboard out and I go crazy. This was our leadership playbook that came out of Exodus chapter 18. So what we have been doing for the past year is trying to flesh out Exodus 18 as a staff and trying to tell it to our leaders under us so that they can do it as well.

So, this morning, we are going to unveil our playbook about leadership. You might be thinking...*I am not a leader. I am not on staff here, so can we just skip this and go on to the next chapter?* No, we can't, because I think it is going to be extremely helpful for you to know how your staff uses leadership and how your pastors here use leadership. But also, wherever you find yourself, if you are the CEO of a company, a stay-at-home mom, or somewhere in between, whatever job you have, I think all of these principles can apply to your individual life. I think there is going to be a great benefit for all of this. So, what have we really been trying to do for the last year? Well, we have a few things.

Number 1: We have been trying to become smaller

We have been trying to become smaller. That is the title of the sermon today, "Becoming Smaller to Lead Bigger." That is what we have been

trying to do, and in doing that, we have been trying to do less to accomplish more.

Number 2: Do less to accomplish more

That has been a huge principle that we have been working through—do less to accomplish more.

Number 3: Multiple ourselves so that others can participate in the work of ministry

In that, the impact that Jesus can do through us would be exponential.

So, that is what we have been doing- becoming smaller, doing less to accomplish more, and multiplying ourselves into others so that the kingdom can grow far beyond what we could do.

Now, this is going to be different than worldly leadership because worldly leadership is about becoming bigger. The bigger you are the more powerful you are, and the more you can control things and the more glory you get. If everybody knows you do everything then you get all of the applause. That is the temptation for us—we want to do it the world's way so that we become bigger and bigger and everyone knows our name and what we do. We are in charge of everything so we get all of the glory when it all goes right. That is what worldly leadership is. Kingdom leadership is not becoming bigger, but it is becoming smaller so that more people do the workload and Jesus gets all of the glory. Then, things actually go better as we are going to see. So, let's go ahead and dive into Exodus chapter 18 as we look at Hardin's playbook on leadership.

Scripture

"Jethro, Moses' father-in-law, came with his sons and his wife to Moses in the wilderness where he was encamped at the mountain of God. And when he sent word to Moses, 'I, your father-in-law Jethro, am coming to you with your wife and her two sons with her,' Moses went out to meet his father-in-law and bowed down

and kissed him. And they asked each other of their welfare and went into the tent. Then Moses told his father-in-law all that the Lord had done to Pharaoh and to the Egyptians for Israel's sake, all the hardship that had come upon them in the way, and how the Lord had delivered them. And Jethro rejoiced for all the good that the Lord had done to Israel, in that he had delivered them out of the hand of the Egyptians. Jethro said, "Blessed be the Lord, who has delivered you out of the hand of the Egyptians and out of the hand of Pharaoh and has delivered the people from under the hand of the Egyptians. Now I know that the Lord is greater than all gods, because in this affair they dealt arrogantly with the people." And Jethro, Moses' father-in-law, brought a burnt offering and sacrifices to God; and Aaron came with all the elders of Israel to eat bread with Moses' father-in-law before God."

We are going to go through the entire chapter but that was the introduction, and what we see in the introduction is we have a big God. That is the whole point of that first part. We see we have a big God.

So, what happens is Jethro is Moses' father-in-law and he comes to Moses bringing along his family. Now, I think that is a little strange. Why was Moses' family not with Moses? Originally they were. When Moses left Midian and went to Egypt to set God's people free, his family was with him. Then God did this miraculous wonder—He set them free from slavery. But at some point, it says that Moses sent his family to the in-laws. Why would Moses send the family to the in-laws? I think we are going to find out really quickly in the text that it was because Moses was too busy for his family. I mean, he is crazy busy! He is an important guy. He is in charge of a lot of stuff so it is really hard to be a good husband and a good father if you are having to be a leader and savior of an entire people group. So Moses is like...*Hey, how about you go to your mom and dad's. You guys do that and I will lead these people.* So he sends his family away, but now Jethro comes with his family and wants to meet with Moses. The first thing we see is this celebration of how big God is. Moses says...*Man, Jethro! I want*

to tell you how big God is! He set us free! He took over Pharaoh. You are not going to believe what He did with the water and the Red Sea. He gave us water, He gave us bread, and He sustained us! Let me just tell you about it! He is telling Jethro all that God had done. God is BIG! God is to be celebrated and Jethro says... *Wow, God is above all other gods! God is the best! He is the greatest!* So right in the beginning of Exodus 18 is this celebration that God is big, which is a very, very good thing. See, it is good for God to be big. God is big. It is really good for God to be big in your life. When God is big in your life, everything else is at a good place. God needs to be big in your life.

But next, we are going to see that also we have a big Moses. Just walk with me through this text. Here is what it says in verse 13, "The next day Moses sat to judge the people, and the people stood around Moses from morning till evening." So his father-in-law comes and visits him, but then the next day it is time to go back to work. Moses gets up early, takes his place as the judge of all of Israel, the teacher of all of Israel, the prophet of all of Israel, and all of Israel comes to him. They line up and stand around him from morning until evening. This is a long day. He is a busy man. He is an important man. Everybody needs Moses. Moses is really big. I just have a feeling that Moses was really excited that his father-in-law came to his job. Can you imagine what Moses is thinking? He wakes up, goes to work early, and everybody needs him. The whole Israelite people are coming to Moses and I have a feeling that Moses is looking out of the corner of his eye and saying... *I wonder if Jethro is watching? Hey Jethro, I can't talk to you; I am really busy now. Do you see how important I am? Do you see this? Everybody needs me! They all come to me! I am the only one who can judge them. I am the only one who can teach them. Hey Jethro, check this out—they all need me!* I can just imagine Moses feeling this sense of pride. His head has to be big as he is thinking... *Ha, ha, ha! Jethro had no idea that when I became his son-in-law how big of a deal I was, but he is seeing it now.*

We want people to know how big of a deal we are. We want people to know we work hard, we have accomplished much, and people need us,

especially if you are a guy you want your father-in-law to know that. Just last week (it was the last week of school) we got to school and Crider had forgotten his backpack. So I called Katie and I said, "Katie, Crider forgot his backpack. Can you bring it to him at some point today.? She said, "I'll tell you what, Grammy and Pappy (which are my in-laws) are here and I will see if I can let them watch the kids and I will come." I said, "Great!" I get a text about 15 minutes later and Katie says, "Actually, my dad is just going to bring Crider his backpack." I put the phone down and then all of a sudden it hits me...my father-in-law is coming to my work to drop off a backpack. I was typing on the computer doing stuff and I stopped and thought...*Ok, what else do I need to be doing right now?* I grabbed some books off of my bookshelf and stacked them up. I got some notes out where I was writing some cards to some people. I made sure to plan with Casey (the church's executive assistant) to come in my office in about 15 minutes to talk about something, but to wait until she heard the doorbell. As soon as he got there, I planned to be on the phone talking to somebody in a really important conversation. I wanted to be really busy when he came because I wanted him to see I am important and if something happened to Kory that church would just die. I wanted him to think it's all about this guy right here in this office...he is so important!

I had this temptation and I could almost feel what Moses felt. It is like...*My father-in-law is here. This is awesome. He is going to see how important I am and see that all of the people need me, and do you know what he is going to do at the end of the day? He is going to say, "Moses, I had no idea how important you were. Hey, let me just take your wife and kids back home. Let me raise them because you are way too busy, important, and big! Wow! We are so proud just to have known you. Man, you are awesome! Just keep doing your good work because everybody needs you"*

I have a feeling that is what Moses is thinking Jethro is going to say to him.

We have a big God and a big Moses...and we are actually going to see that a big God plus a big Moses equals a big problem. Here is what it says in verse 14, "When Moses' father-in-law saw all that he was doing for the

people, he said, 'What is this that you are doing for the people? Why do you sit alone, and all the people stand around you from morning till evening?'" This is not... *wow, Moses! Wait to go, buddy! You are the best...* This is a rebuke from his father-in-law. That had to have hurt Moses. Moses has to be thinking... *Here I am, really important, working crazy hours, I hardly ever sleep, my health is fading, I have gray hair like crazy, and I am killing and you are going to rebuke me? I cannot do anymore!? I have my plate full. There is nothing left on this plate to do and you are going to rebuke me?*

You can just imagine how Moses is feeling towards his father-in-law... *Are you kidding me? I cannot get any better. I cannot go any higher. I cannot get any bigger!* So, instead of celebration there is rebuke from his father-in-law. And, notice the rebuke: What are you doing? And, why are you alone? *These people are coming to you by the masses, by the thousands if not millions. They are all coming to you. You are by yourself on a judge seat and everyone is coming to you. And, guess what? It is not working very well. It is just not working. What are you doing? Why are you alone? Why have you not raised anybody up? Why is nobody helping? Why have you not shared the load? Why have you not raised up leaders? Why is nobody else doing anything? Why are you doing it all?* That is the big rebuke here.

The problem was Moses had what people call the "Messiah complex" or the "Messiah syndrome." We will call it the "Moses syndrome" and it is this idea that he is the Messiah, he is the savior, everyone needs him, everyone is counting on him, and he is doing everything. See, when you talk about big leaders like Moses right now, big leaders draw their identity from being really, really busy. Busyness is identity to them... *I am crazy busy and never have time off because if I had time off somebody would die.* That is a Messiah complex. It is the idea that I am in control of everything and if I stop everything else falls apart. That is where Moses was. Moses was really big and he was thinking he had to do everything. But, Jethro is saying... *look, it is not good what you are doing.* What Moses needed to do is not just lead the people, but he needed to start leading leaders who could help

him lead the people. That is a big thing we are going to see. We are going to see this big change that Jethro is going to prompt Moses to work through. But before this solution comes, we see justification because big leaders and important people always justify their bigness and their being important.

Here is what he says in the text starting in verse 15, "And Moses said to his father-in-law, "Because the people come to me to inquire of God; 16 when they have a dispute, they come to me and I decide between one person and another, and I make them know the statutes of God and his laws.""

Jethro: *Moses, why are you alone?*

Moses: *Because they need me.*

Jethro: *Yeah, but why are you alone?*

Moses: *Because they need ME, not people, ME! It is an "I" thing. It is a "me" thing. They need me because I am the only one who can settle arguments. I am the only one who can teach them about God. I am the only one who can do all of the things that the people need. So, they need ME! That is why I am doing everything because everyone is counting on ME.*

That is the excuse. That is the justification for people to continually be bigger and bigger as a leader... *People need me. They are counting on me. No one else can do it because I am the only one who can do it. I am the only one who does it right. I am the only one who can control it..* It is because big leaders try to control power and glory. And, Moses knew if he gave some of the leadership away then he did not have control, power, and glory. It would not be all about him anymore, it would be about others.

This was his justification and it was a half-truth, right? The people did need Moses. They really did need him, but they needed him to be the prophet.

They did not need him to be the ultimate judge of everything and the ultimate teacher of everything. They needed him to be a prophet not a judge/teacher. He could have easily delegated those things to other people, but he would not do it because he was big, he was important, and it looks good when everybody needs you.

So there was the justification and here is the conclusion that Jethro draws. It says this starting in verse 17, "Moses' father-in-law said to him, "What you are doing is not good. 18 You and the people with you will certainly wear yourselves out, for the thing is too heavy for you. You are not able to do it alone."

Again, here is that word "alone." You cannot do this "alone." Why? Because it is too heavy for you. It is too big of a burden for you.

I can just hear Moses... *No way! I got this!*

Jethro: *Really, do you see the line? People are like six months out for an appointment with you. You think you have this, but guess what? The people in the back of the line are not saying, 'I am so happy Moses is going to see me one day in the future.' No, they are grumbling and they are mad. They are saying, 'what is going on? Why does he not speed this line up?' They are not being helped. They are not being encouraged. They are grumbling and complaining against you because you are not helping them. So, it is not working. What is going to happen is you are going to wear yourself out. Your health is going to suffer, you are going to suffer, the ministry is going to suffer, your leadership is going to suffer, and you are going to wear the people out because you are not able to do it alone.*

See, the thing about big leadership is this- it is not sustainable for the long haul. It is just not sustainable; you can do it for a little bit, but it is not sustainable for you or for the people around you. You will fail and you will fail the people around you often when you get bigger and bigger as a leader.

So, here is the problem. Big God + Big Moses = Big Problem

So, if that is the problem, what is the solution? The solution is becoming smaller to lead bigger. That is the solution- becoming smaller to lead bigger. If you want to have a big impact, if you want to have an impact on the kingdom, on your life, and on your legacy, how do you do that? You do it by becoming smaller. I know that sounds counterproductive, but I am going to show you in the text why that is true.

So, the first thing you must do as a small leader is this: do less to accomplish more. Small leaders do less to accomplish more. That is principle number one. So, if you are a leader in any capacity write that down. Small leaders do less to accomplish more. You have probably heard that saying before. I did not originate it, but I think it sums up this text very well. Listen to what Jethro says to Moses starting in verse 19, "Now obey my voice; I will give you advice, and God be with you! You shall represent the people before God and bring their cases to God, 20 and you shall warn them about the statutes and the laws, and make them know the way in which they must walk and what they must do."

The first thing Jethro is going to tell Moses to do is to focus more on what only Moses can do. That is a huge principle! So, how do you do less to accomplish more? You focus on what only you can do. There were some things that only Moses could do. Only Moses could walk into the presence of God and hear from the Lord; that is a Moses only job. So, what did Moses need to do? Do that more! Can you imagine how much he did not do that because all of the people needed him? How much time do you think he was spending with the Lord when he had to deal with everybody's junk all day long? He was probably not getting a lot quiet time with the Lord. Right? He was probably getting no quiet time with the Lord because he was not doing the things that only he could do. Only he could go into the Lord, hear from him, and tell the people what God said. Only he could do that! So, Moses needed to focus only he could do.

We have been trying to work through this as a staff and I have been in my own heart because I always have the tendency to be a big leader, not a small leader. So, we try to do this all of the time! What are the few things that we can only do as a staff? For example, Abbey and Shelley, what are the few things that only they can do? They need to do those more and then they will accomplish more. And, they need to stop all of the other things. So, in order to do the things that God has only equipped you to do you have to stop doing everything because when you do everything you are not going to do the one, two, or three things that you do that only you can do that maximizes your potential and makes the greatest impact. You have to do less. You cannot be busy doing everything. You have to let some stuff go and only focus on the things that only you can do. You need to get better at those because that is what maximizes your influence. And, not just in the kingdom, but in all of life. You can apply this to anything!

So, we have been trying to do this as a staff, but I also do this in my life. I will just give you a practical example of this in my life this week. This week my task was to preach this sermon. That was one of my biggest tasks. So, that was a week where only I could do this right here. I could not call up my brother-in-law, Logan and say... *hey, Logan, could you preach for me this week because I have a lot going on.* That would be wrong of me to give that to Logan because God has called me to do that specifically this week. But, there are some other things this week that I could give to other people. For instance, we are doing a thing called Grace Marriage. We are piloting it right now, but we are going to hopefully launch it to the whole church next year. It is going to be awesome, but Grace Marriage is a group led thing and I am the leader of our group. So, for six hours I was leading a group yesterday. I was thinking... *ok, I have a sermon and I have to do this. You know what, I do not need to do that. So, I will call Chris Allen.* I called Chris and said, "Hey, Chris Allen, can you lead our group that will happen on Saturday so I can focus on the one thing that I really, really need to do this week?" He said, "Yeah, I would love to!" So, I just went to group and he led the whole thing. I ended up putting time and effort into preparing and he did it phenomenal!

This week, Scott called and said, "Hey, we are going to have the whole Crossing staff here. Could you pray over us and do a commissioning service type thing?" I said, "Yeah, sure man! That would be awesome." So, this week I was thinking... *you know, I do not have to do that. I can get someone else to do that.* So, I asked Nick. I said, "Hey, Nick, could you do the welcome, pray over, and commission the Crossings staff?" Nick said, "Yeah, I would love to!"

These were things that I did not have to do because not only I could do them. I could give away things so that I could do the few things that God has really called me to do this week. That is what this principle looks like—doing less to accomplish more. And, in that free time that I had allowed me to put more time into this sermon, which has more impact than if I would have led a group yesterday. So, it is doing less. It is not working less; it is doing less stuff so that you can accomplish more with what you are actually doing. It is finding the things that God has really niched you for, the things that you are really good at, that you benefit from, that others benefit from, and finding out how you can do those things more and all of the other stuff less. That is one of the keys to being a small leader.

Then, principle number 3, small leaders multiply themselves for greater impact.

This is a huge principle. Small leaders multiply themselves for greater impact. What does Jethro tell Moses? Starting in verse 21, "Moreover, look for able men from all the people, men who fear God, who are trustworthy and hate a bribe..." So, here is what Jethro is saying... *here is what you need to do. Moses, you are doing everything and you are doing alone at doing it. What you need to do is find other people. You need to enlist other people to take those tasks that you are doing right now that is keeping you from doing the one, two, or three things that God really called you to do. If you want to have a bigger impact you have to do less and do those less things better. And, in order for all the other stuff to get done, you have to multiply yourself. You have to raise up leaders.*

So, here is what you do on this step. You drop pins so that others can participate. Let me tell you what that means. Have you ever seen the clown who has the bowling pins and he is juggling them? They start out with two pins and you are thinking.. *Wow, that is cool. Two pins? That looks easy.* Then, they add a third one. They are throwing pins and catching them. Then, they add another one and now they have four. They have them everywhere! Pins keep coming and the juggling keeps going.

Now there is 7.... 8.... 9... 10... 11.

You can see the more pins the less focus they are on each pin and more focus is on all of the pins. Eventually a pin comes that causes everything to fall. Right? It is this idea of how many pins can you juggle before it all falls? That is kind of the world's system of leadership. If you want to be seen in the community as a hard worker, as a big person, see how many pins you can juggle. The more pins you have the more people say... *man, I do not know how you do all that you do. It is crazy! You are superman! Yeah, I know. Do you have anything else I could do because I will take it from you. I love these pins! They are awesome because they really just massage my ego. This is awesome! Tell me how important I am again, could you?* We love this! We love getting big and having all of the stuff in the world depending on you and you are doing everything. But, the problem is that is not small leadership with greater impact. That is big leadership and you are actually accomplishing very little. What needs to happen is you need to drop some pins.

So, what do I mean by that? As you are juggling, you get something else on your plate, you say... *you know what? I do not need that. I am just going to drop it on the floor. I am just not going to do that.* You are like... *WHAT!? How will it get done?* I struggle with this. I think... *if I do not do that then how will it get done?* Just drop it. Just let it go. Just throw it down... *I am not going to do that anymore. I am just going to let it go.* Do you know what happens when you drop a pin? It is a beautiful moment because when you drop a pin someone close to you, someone around you has the opportunity to be empowered to grab that pin and do something

and participate in the mission that God has given you to fulfill. It is a beautiful thing! When you drop something, you are empowering somebody to go pick it up and then do that thing. It is beautiful! How this works is so beautiful.

I will give you a few little stories. First, we are trying to work through this, we are talking, and Abbey says, "You know, I really want better music in the barnyard. I want our kids to sing songs and do dances. So, I am just going to have to research a lot what kid's music is cool and I am going to try and figure out some dances, do them, and show the kids."

I said, "Abbey, do you know really good music? Do you really study up on kid's music that is new and cool?"

She said, "No, but I can research that. I can figure that out."

I said, "You know what, Abbey? My wife is awesome at that! She knows Ellie Holcomb and all of the cool stuff that is really neat and that I actually like to listen to that is really cool and really biblically based. She is awesome at that. So, how about instead of you doing all of that you just tell Katie to rock with that?"

Abbey was like, "Well... but then I will not be doing it."

Me: "I know. But, you are not good at it so it is not going to go well. So, just give it to Katie."

It was like pulling teeth, but Abbey said "...ok..."

Drop the pin!

Then, she made a call. She called Katie and said, "Katie, I know you are busy, but would you like to..."

Katie: "YES!!!!!! I LOVE THIS!!! I love kid's music. I love making up dances! I love what you are telling me right now. Yes, I have this!"

Since then, like right now, my wife is in the barnyard teaching your kids an awesome song from the album "The Ology" by Sovereign Grace, which is just incredible. Go to our website and click on the little kid's video. There are dance moves and it is awesome! Your kids are learning the gospel right now because somebody dropped a pin and somebody took it up. Katie is doing a far better job than Abbey could have ever of done and she will admit that! Now, Katie could not do what Abbey does! Katie could not do children's ministry as good as Abbey does it. She kills it at that, but if she started being the children's director and the puppet shows then everything else falls away and she does everything. But, as she drops pins, others are able to pick those up and the other people actually will do them better than they could have ever done them. So, it is the art of learning how to drop pins so that others can take those and run with them.

So, Jethro's encouragement to Moses is saying... *man, you have to look for other men. You have to look for other people. You have to stop doing everything. You have to drop some pins so that others can take those and do all of those things that you are trying to do. They are going to do them better.*

I will give you another quick, little story. We started social media a little over a year or a year and a half ago. I thought we needed to be on Facebook, Instagram, and Twitter. So, I launched that and I became the social media guy. I was putting up daily readings, posting pictures, and posting stories. And, all of a sudden, I found myself doing social media a lot for Hardin and I did not really know if that fit the role of associate pastor and youth pastor. I did not really know if that is what I should have been doing with my time. I did not know if that was a good use of me. So, I called Stevie Stout and said, "Umm, Stevie, could you run our social media for us?" She said, "Yeah, I love social media!" So, she took it over, did the daily readings, and knocked it out of the park! She scheduled them and now everything is great! Then, we began asking her to do video stuff.

She does all of our video stuff for us and she does awesome work on video! So, she does social media and video and then I said to her, "Hey, Stevie, how about you just do video?"

She said, "Well, I can do social media too..."

I said, "Let's just do that because I want you to focus 100% on video. I have this girl named Lucy who I think is awesome at social media. I will call her and she can just do social media."

Now we have two people doing what I used to do, but those two people do it far better than I could ever do it. If you follow our daily readings on Instagram or Facebook, they have cute pictures of places, text, and all kinds of information and cool things. I would never do that! It would just be like... read Exodus 18. That is all you would get! But, when I realized I could not do it, I threw them down and other people picked them up. Lucy takes so much pride in going out and taking a picture and finding exactly what we want to say that week. Stevie takes a video and knows exactly how we want to capture it. They kill it at those things!

It is the idea of you do what only you can do and let others come around you and pick up all of the stuff that you let go. You are not saying those things are not important; you are saying this is not what God's called ME to do. But, they can pick it up and say God has called them to do this. So, they can run with it and they can do it better than you could ever do it. It is the idea of becoming smaller by dropping some things so others can be empowered to pick those things up. The kingdom impact is exponential because others are being raised up to do those things.

The third principle of being a small leader is this: small leaders lead leaders.

This is a huge thought. It is a big transition. We had to make a huge transition as a staff because as a staff, here is what we thought: as a staff,

we lead people. Abbey leads 300 kids. Nick leads 200 youth. Those are their roles. If you try to do the math that does not work out very well. We had to think like this... no, we can't lead people. We have to lead leaders who lead leaders who lead leaders who lead people. We have to lead through leaders. We have to set up a different system just as it says in the text. It says, "... place such men over the people..." So... *you are not over the people anymore, Moses. Other people are over the people under you and that means you are still over the people.*

Continuing in verse 21, "... as chiefs of thousands, of hundreds, of fifties, and of tens. 22 And let them judge the people at all times. Every great matter they shall bring to you, but any small matter they shall decide themselves." So, the current model was Moses leads all of the people. Every dispute went to Moses. Guess what? I am guessing that did not work very well. What is the new model?...*Hey, Moses. How about you raise up leaders who can do what you do? How about you train them to do what you do so that they can actually judge in your place for you? So, when they are judging they are judging based on how you would judge. They are teaching based on how you would teach. They are doing what you do based on what you would do. But, it is no longer you; it is multiplication. It is a system of stagger. We will have a person over a thousand and then in that thousand we will have people over the hundreds. So, then people over the hundreds. Then, you have another people under them over the fifties. Then, you will have people over the tens.* Now everybody in Israel had somebody to go to. They had a leader who was just over ten of them. They had a leader that was over fifty of them. They had their hundred leader and they also had their thousand leader. Then, if something was so crazy they could still go to Moses because guess what? Now, Moses had some time on his hands. Moses had some rest. He had some space in his life to deal with the crazy issues that came up. But for the most part, people could get their needs met through leaders who were under Moses. Because, what Moses needed to do was become a leader of leaders instead of just a leader of people. And, that was a huge shift that had to happen if everyone was going to be helped.

So, here is how you do this. You train others to do what you do. It is an essential part of leadership. If you want to lead bigger by becoming smaller, you have to train people to do what you do. You have to empower people. And, do you know what that sounds a lot like? It sounds a lot like discipleship. What is discipleship? I know some stuff, let me teach you the stuff I know and how I do what I do—that is discipleship at its core! Instead of storing all of the stuff in your brain and in your life and letting everyone come to you, what if you got some people around you and started teaching them what you know, you started discipling them so people could start coming to them and get help from them? Then that will be a lot more sustainable, a lot more doable, a lot more people would be helped.

So, we see this idea of leading through leaders and that is what we are trying to get our staff to do. Abbey, Shelley, Chris, Ellen, Chris, Nick... all of you guys! You need to be leading leaders who lead leaders who lead leaders. Because if we are going to grow, if we are going to continue to push forward in this kingdom thing we need more leaders. See, if Nick is a big Moses in the youth ministry, if it is all about him, the youth ministry is not going to go well. If Nick is small and he has a lot of leaders around him, leaders leading leaders, then guess what? Students are being discipled, helped, and encouraged because they all have somebody watching out for them. But, the bigger Nick gets the worse off the students are. The smaller Nick gets the bigger the impact.

Just a few weeks ago, it was 9:15, the Sunday School hour for youth, and Nick is walking in the foyer. I said, "Nick, what are you doing? It is Sunday School hour for the youth! What are you doing?"

He said, "I am just being a small Moses."

I said, "Oh yeah. Oh yeah, I taught you that, didn't I? Ok, that is good!"

But, it was like a rebuke to me. It was like... *hey, you have been telling us to be small. So, do you know what is going on right now? Do you know*

what is going on upstairs? All of the classes are being taught by multiple leaders. And, do you know what? I do not even have to go up there right now because everybody does not need me. Because I have trained, I have raised up leaders, and the leaders are leading students, discipleship is happening, and guess what? If I die today the youth ministry keeps going. That is the goal! Do you see that? If you die today, will the churches keep going? I mean, they would miss you! We would go to your funeral! But would it keep going? That is the question to ask! If I die today I hope there are some holes that need filling, but not everything depends on me so that everything would go away.

That is what happens with big leadership. The bigger the leader gets, when they die, everything falls apart. Small leadership is knowing King Jesus is big, he is always going to live, he is eternal. So, we can rest on him being big and us being small. We spread out the leadership. What are the results of all of this? Here are the results: everybody wins.

I love what this says. Here is what it says in verse 22, "...So it will be easier for you, and they will bear the burden with you. 23 If you do this, God will direct you, you will be able to endure, and all this people also will go to their place in peace." Peace! That is something I am guessing that Israel has not experienced yet! Nobody is going home in peace. Everyone is going home mad at Moses because he did not get to their case today. *Hey, you want to be helped, you want to survive, and you want everyone to go in peace, here is what you need to do. You need to become smaller.* So, the benefits are both endurance and peace. It is a model that was sustainable. Moses was not going to die of a heart attack. Moses could get rest. Moses could meet with God. Moses could do what only Moses could do. All of the people are helping. They are using their gifts. They are being empowered. They are getting the joy of serving and doing something in this kingdom thing. And, everybody is going home in peace. Everybody is getting heard. Every case is being settled. Why? Because Moses is not leading all of the people, he is leading leaders who are leading leaders. It is a small Moses. It is spread out among the people so that Jesus is the only

one who is big in this scenario. It works! That is how everyone is going to get served in a real way.

And you know, this is the model that Jesus did. Jesus came to Earth and what did he do? For about 3 years, he poured himself into 12 guys. He did not say.... *Hey, I am just going to do all of this by myself and I am not going to get any help. I am just going to do it all on my own.* No! He poured himself and multiplied himself into 12 so that when he left those 12 could multiply themselves into others. That is why Paul is so passionate about Timothy... *Hey, here is my Timothy. Hey, Timothy, you go raise up men who can do the same thing because this has to happen. You have to raise up leaders if this thing is going to survive...* And, that is what they did. The church raised up leaders after leaders. So, Jesus did it. This is the model of the New Testament. In Ephesians 4, what is a pastor's job? It is not to do all of the work of ministry. You do not come here and say... *hey, I am glad these guys are on the stage and they are going to do all of the work of ministry this week. This is going to be awesome! I am just going to go, applaud, hear a sermon, and then go home...* That is NOT what the church is supposed to do. The pastors are supposed to equip the saints to do the work of ministry. We are supposed to be empowering YOU to do THE work of ministry. YOU are the workforce, YOU are the ones who are going to be doing most of the ministry this week in our communities, in our schools, in our homes, and in various places. You are the vessels of ministry. We are equipping you to do that. It is not you just come and we do everything. No, it is you play our part. You grab a pin and you do your part in this thing.

So, what is the application? We have a few more minutes and I want to give you some real quick application.

First, for your life. What about for your life? This kingdom work is for anywhere and I will just give you an example from my home. My wife is a stay-at-home mom. So, how in the world could this leadership apply to her? The bigger my wife gets in my home the worse off the home is. And, here is what I mean. If Katie does everything my kids suffer, she suffers,

and our home suffers. So, do you know what Katie has learned to do? She has learned to empower our sons who are 7 and 5 to do a few things around the house. When they get up they make their own beds. Why would she go make their bed? They are 7 and 5 years old. They can do some stuff. So, they can make their own beds. When they go to take a shower and their clothes are in the floor, Katie says, "Hey, your clothes are in the floor. You go take them to the laundry bin." Yeah, she could do that for them, but then she enables them to do nothing. Or, she could empower them to pick up a pin, take responsibility, and become a leader.

In any scenario you can try to empower others to do things rather than doing it all for them and enable them to sit back and think they are benefitting, but they are not. Because what God has called them to do is to do some stuff, too. It is in any scenario. At your job, if you are a leader or just an employee, you can find ways to implement this. Think about what do I do the best? How can I do that more? And, how can I do everything else less so that I can maximize my influence?

What about here specifically in our church? What about in Hardin? Well, I have told you as a staff we are trying to do this. So, when call for a volunteer push it is not because we are lazy. It is not because we just do not want to do this stuff! No, it is because we really believe that God has called us do to specific things that only we can do and if we are doing everything we cannot do those things and the mission of the church of Christ that is given to us cannot go forward in this community. And, that is a big deal to us! So, we want people to come along and help grab some of those pins so that we can focus on those things that God has called us only to do and we can do them the best so that the kingdom is maximized. So, we need help! That is a good application.

What if you are a leader? Right now you are a current leader, what should you be doing? Well, I think if you are a leader you should be multiplying yourself. Let's say you lead a small group of kids on Sunday mornings. You are a Sunday school teacher to small kids, what should you be doing? You start thinking... *how do I train someone else to do what I do? How do I*

bring a friend in and say you know what, I teach on Sunday mornings. It has been a joy! Will you come with me and help me? I am going to eventually teach you how to do this so that if my class grows I can put you over this other set of kids. You just have them come with you! Train them in what you do so that you can multiply yourself if the vision and mission grows with the church.

What do you do if you are a current leader? Or, whatever it is! If you make coffee in the mornings, grab somebody to come alongside you and help make coffee so you can train them. So, if you miss a Sunday or if you die the coffee is made because that is important on a Sunday morning for me. Ok? So, how do I multiply myself? You teach somebody to do what you do so that you are smaller, but Hardin is making a bigger impact. What if you are just a volunteer? What if you just do a task? Well, how can you figure out how to not just do a task, but lead leaders? Try to lead a few people. Try to rally this thing and just lead two people who you can be over because you know Hardin needs more leaders. Then, as your leadership grows you are put in more and more responsibility. What if you are just an attender? You just attend, you do not do anything at the church. Well, hopefully you have seen that our model is for you to do things! We need people to grab pins that are all on the floor. We have pins everywhere just lying. It is like... *hey, you do not do this very well. I know, could you pick it up and do it? Because that would be awesome! Because we are really terrible at it and we are not going to do it until somebody else does it. Because we are doing other things that are what God has called us to do.*

So, if you are not helping at all. We had a volunteer push! Maybe you missed it because you thought we did not need you now you know we need you! Go to the information center and say I need to pick up a pin. And if they hand you a pen say, "No, the leadership one.—the juggling thing. You have not heard the sermon yet have you? Just give me a card and I will fill it out." They will give you a card, you can fill it out, and then you can say... *yes, I am volunteering!* We will find you a pin to grab and to run with so that we as a church can carry on the mission and vision that Christ has given us. WE NEED YOU!

The root sin of big leadership is a misunderstanding of the gospel. We think we are the savior and we have to save everything. That is not true. Jesus is the savior. He is the only one that needs to be big. All of us need to be small and continue to be smaller to make a bigger impact. I just want us to pray together as a church. You pray for us as leaders. Pray that Brother Ricky gets small, pray that Brother Kory gets small, pray that all of the staff gets small, and Jesus gets bigger and bigger. I pray that I get smaller and I find my role so Jesus can be big and all of us can be small and the kingdom can march forward for the glory of Christ. So, you, will you pray for us? Will you pray for me? Will you pray for yourself?

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