

The King's New Garments

Once upon a time, as many good stories begin, there lived a king who had power over all nations and peoples.



His courts were of richest splendor; his tables were laden with the finest food. Music and laughter and gaiety floated from his castle. Clouds wrapped it in ethereal majesty.

Peasants – living in their valley of violence and hunger – stopped and looked at the castle for a long while, wishing they might know the king, but none was able to gain access.

In the cold of winter, the king's tailor entered the royal chambers with the latest additions to the king's wardrobe. He had selected the finest materials and woven them into the most beautiful garments that eyes had ever seen.

To the tailor's surprise, the king was not pleased. His majesty ordered the tailor out, vowing to make his own clothes. The door to the throne room was shut and locked.

Weeks passed. The royal court waited with great anticipation to see what the king would make for himself. They knew they were bound to be blinded by the glory of his creation.

Finally, the awaited day arrived. The door opened and the king appeared.

Everyone – and especially the tailor – gasped in surprise.

The king was dressed in the simplest, cheapest, most unkingly garments imaginable. He had the choice of the world's finest materials, but he had chosen to wear the clothes of a beggar.

Adding to the astonishment of the nobility surrounding the king, he spoke quietly, "I am going to the valley!"

Does that story say something to you about wise use of authority or, put another way, servant leadership? It is the model of leadership advocated and taught in various training classes within Life Care – in particular, the Life Care Journey.

(more)

Robert Greenleaf, founder of the modern Servant Leadership movement and the Greenleaf Center for Servant Leadership, said:

“The servant leader is servant first,” meaning that the desire to serve, the servant’s heart, is a fundamental characteristic of a servant leader. “It is not about being servile, it is about wanting to help others,” Greenleaf said. “It is about identifying and meeting the needs of colleagues, customers and communities.”

A greater authority than Greenleaf described it first and best. Jesus became not only the example of a servant leader, but He taught it to His disciples:

And whosoever will be chief among you (i.e., a leader), let him be your servant (Matthew 20:27).

And don’t let the primary truth of the parable be lost upon you. Jesus Christ left the throne room of heaven, with all its glory and splendor, to put on human flesh and go into the valley of violence and hunger. And He made the ultimate sacrifice – giving His life on the cross – to save a lost and dying humanity. Salvation is offered to those who place their faith in Him as the only begotten Son of God.

– Beecher Hunter