



Jesus Christ the Project Leader

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Abstract

What can project managers learn about project management from Jesus of Nazareth? In the four Gospels describing the life and work of Jesus, one sees that his life was to spark a widespread interest in a goal that aimed at both personal and social transformation. The paper takes a critical look at these sources, identifies relevant themes and shows how project leaders might enhance their practice by using the teachings and management practices of Jesus. The paper discusses the link between professional virtue and professional duty, the rigors of goal setting and its implication on work by mapping the sayings of Jesus into nine project management categories and illustrates how that knowledge can be interpreted for project management of modern times. In this attempt, the paper will educate the reader on clear focus, definite planning, strategic thinking and sublime values. Furthermore, the paper presents what has been done so far in this regard in the project management literature — especially in terms of leadership styles and emotional intelligence — and gives an interesting practical reference to the ontological concept of sin for project management.

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JESUS CHRIST THE PROJECT LEADER.

WHAT CAN BE LEARNED FROM JESUS CHRIST ABOUT PROJECT MANAGEMENT?

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ABSTRACT

What can project managers learn about project management from Jesus of Nazareth? In the four Gospels describing the life and work of Jesus, one sees that his life was to spark a widespread interest in a goal that aimed at both personal and social transformation. The paper takes a critical look at these sources, identifies relevant themes and shows how project leaders might enhance their practice by using the teachings and management practices of Jesus. The paper discusses the link between professional virtue and professional duty, the rigors of goal setting and its implication on work by mapping the sayings of Jesus into nine project management categories and illustrates how that knowledge can be interpreted for project management of modern times. In this attempt, the paper will educate the reader on clear focus, definite planning, strategic thinking and sublime values. Furthermore, the paper presents what has been done so far in this regard in the project management literature — especially in terms of leadership styles and emotional intelligence — and gives an interesting practical reference to the ontological concept of sin for project management.

1 INTRODUCTION

What can project managers (PM) learn from Jesus Christ? Through the ages the four gospels in the New Testament of the Bible, have been used in many ways to teach, equip and counsel many in their faith in God. The gospels are a set of four books that tell the story of Jesus from Nazareth, from his birth until the end of his earthly mission. When looked at in a wide perspective, the main projects portrayed in the Bible are, assuming that they are planned: The “creation” of the world, the salvation history, and the maturation of mankind till the end of the world. Sub-project could be various journeys, building of temples, and Jesus’s life on earth. The last one can be narrowed further down focusing on his three years of ministry.

In many ways, the initial development of the disciples as Christians and the foundation of the early church can be compared to the building up of project management as a discipline. Project management as an identified profession has evolved through the decades and the canon of reliable foundations, books like PMI’s

PMBok and IPMA's ICB 3.0 are still in making. In spite of those toolboxes some projects go well but other projects do not end as well. One or more requirements are not met or the project runs over in regard to budget or time. This paper will show how the ministry and teachings of Jesus can function as a catalyst for a deeper understanding of the PM's environment.

There is one way of looking at the difficult task of remaining within the well-known iron triangle (time, budget, properties) (Atkinson, Roger, 1999) and that is the biblical concept of sin. One definition of sin is a failure to reach your goal or miss your mark (Strong's Concordance, 2012)(New Testament Greek Lexicon - King James Version, 2012). When a hunter, using a bow and arrow fails to hit the heart of the deer, he is in danger of losing his prey, leaving it hurt. So from that perspective PM's have to realize that as human beings we have the tendency to fail in our endeavors, fail to meet the constraints set before us, hurting team members with our attitude or even the project owner by not finishing the project within given constraints. In terms of project management, this is called risk. It is like trying to shoot with a bent arrow or a damaged rifle. Things can seriously backfire if managed incorrectly. Keeping that in mind there is one word that needs to be discussed before we go further and that word is *faith*.

Robin Gill states in his book 'A textbook of Christian Ethics' when discussing Martin Luther's central arguments regarding faith that "*It is faith alone that matters: 'good' works, without faith, are worse than worthless, they are actually sin*" (Gill, Robin, 1988). Robin continues quoting Luther and contends that "*Work without faith is sin*" and "*Outward works, without faith, lead only to idolatry and hypocrisy*" (Gill, Robin, 1988). And last but not least he states that "*faith does not forbid good works: the vital thing is that it should always come first. Indeed, if everyone lived by faith, there would be no need for laws or ceremonies. Faith can eliminate all sins – even the most deadly*" (Gill, Robin, 1988). Simply said, there must be a focus, purpose, a clear vision and goal for every work performed. A work without such faith is pointless and will only cause problems.

To support that argument we can quote C. Peter Wagner who stated that "*For reasons I do not fully understand, some power is released through setting positive goals that otherwise remains dormant. But although I cannot explain it as well as I wish I could, it is a biblical principle that God seems to honor. Goal setting is the modern biblical equivalent to faith, without which it is impossible to please him (Heb. 11:6). Faith is the substance of things hoped for. Things hoped for are, of course, future. Putting substance on the future is what happens in a faith projection (goal-setting) exercise.*" (Wagner, C. Peter, 1983). This means that by setting goals we envision things that are not there yet, and when that vision has become so real to us that it feels real then and only then we can 'give birth' to the idea, so to speak; hence, it becomes a reality or gains substance which we can touch.

2 LITERATURE REVIEW

While researching academic archives as well as the Bible and the gospels it soon became apparent that not many have viewed the life of Jesus of Nazareth in terms of project management. There were no papers found that directly discuss the project management concept in relation to Jesus Christ as a PM. There were, however, some papers found that discuss biblical wisdom in Project Management (Low, 1998) and leadership (Shih-ying, 2011) as well as on the spiritual perspective of quality.

(Akinyele, 2008) Akinyele mirrors various aspects of quality with the wisdom set forth in the Bible. Examples of reflected aspects in his paper are leadership, strategic planning, customer and market focus, measurement, analysis and data management, workforce focus and process management. However, the wisdom being set forth in Low's paper is focused more on construction management but several aspects of it can be directly reflected onto Jesus Christ as a role model. Low uses Sun Tzu's Art of War for comparison with the Bible in regard to leadership style. He states in his paper that in Sun Tzu's Art of War "*peace is achieved through strong defense. Peace in the context of the Bible is, however, achieved through love for the fellow man*" (Low, 1998).

In regard to leadership style Ralf Müller and J. Rodney Turner concluded that PM's leadership style influenced project success and that different leadership styles are appropriate for different types of projects (Müller & Turner 2007). They also found in their qualitative study that emotional competence had a significant impact on project success. Müller and Turner's conclusion also supports Anthony C. Mersino's opinion in his book Emotional Intelligence for Project Managers that by enhancing emotional intelligence it can be your most valuable asset in regard to project success (Mersino, A. C., 2007). To support that further, both Mersino, Müller and Turner show by pointing to the book Primal Leadership by Goleman et al, how you can use six kinds of inspirational leadership styles to optimize both individuals and teams in their efforts (Mersino, A. C., 2007)(Müller & Turner, 2007). Those leadership styles are *visionary, coaching, affiliative* and *democratic*. The last two are considered to be dissonant leadership styles but they are *pacesetting* and *commanding*.

There are more leadership styles apparent. One of them is the Situational Leadership® model which states "*that the style of leadership should be matched to the level of readiness of the followers*" (Hellriegel, D. & Slocum, J. W., 2007). The leadership style is based upon two main behaviors, task behavior and relationship behavior. Within each are two leadership styles. In the task behavior there are the *telling* and *selling* styles but in the relationship behavior there are *participating* and *delegating* styles. A proper balance is then necessary to manage people depending on the situation within the project.

A similar leadership style should also be mentioned here and that is the servant leadership style. Robert K. Greenleaf started the discussion on servant leadership in his essay *The Servant as Leader* where he stated: "*The servant-leader is servant first... It begins with the natural feeling that one wants to serve, to serve first. Then conscious choice brings one to aspire to lead. That person is sharply different from one who is leader first, perhaps because of the need to assuage an unusual power drive or to acquire material possessions...The leader-first and the servant-first are two extreme types. Between them there are shadings and blends that are part of the infinite variety of human nature*"(Greenleaf, Robert K., 1970). Kathleen Patterson presented a further developed model of servant leadership that divided the leadership style into its component constructs and defined each of them, i.e. altruism, empowerment, humility, love, service, trust, and vision (Patterson, Kathleen A., 2003).

Other leadership styles worth noting and which can be applied to the ministry of Jesus are the transformational and transparent leadership styles:

The transformational leadership is built upon four elements. The first one is *Individualized Consideration* which means how much the leader is mentoring his followers. The leader is supportive and shows empathy, encourages communication

and challenges his followers. The second element is *Intellectual Stimulation* where the leader is stimulating the creativity of his followers. He takes good care of those employees who think independently. Furthermore he takes risks and is open for new ways and ideas in doing the job. The third element is *Inspirational Motivation* where the leader is able to clearly reveal the vision to his followers and inspire them to run with it. They radiate with optimism about their future goals and emphasize the meaning of the task. The fourth and the last element is *Idealized Influence* which "provides a role model for high ethical behavior, instills pride, gains respect and trust" (Wikipedia, 2012). In Haukur Ingi Jónasson's and Helgi Thor Ingason's book *Leiðtogafærni* (e. Leadership skills), transparent leadership is defined as the ability of an individual in a leading role to influence others and sustain those influences on the foundation of the leader's self-knowledge and awareness on the influence of his or her emotions, attitudes and ideas about his or her co-workers. This ability demands awareness of self and self-discipline (Jónasson, Haukur Ingi & Ingason, Helgi Þór, 2011).

There are also other sources that should be noted. Laurie Beth Jones's book 'Jesus, CEO' pinpoints many aspects of visionary leadership and reflects those aspects in the life of Jesus. One example from that book supports the aforementioned participating style where one chapter is called "He Spent Lots of Time with Them". In this chapter Laurie Beth shows the importance of being available and visible to the team members. Phil Pringle says in his book "You the Leader" that "*the making of a great leader starts with mastering the spirit. To conquer the person within is the personal Mount Everest we each face here on earth.*" (Pringle, Phil, 2005).

The book *Project Leadership* by Briner, Hastings and Geddes presents a very interesting look at the role of the project leader. He needs to look into six different directions to be able to gather and manage all aspects of a project. The first two directions he needs to consider are areas where he manages the stakeholders. He needs to look upwards (to the owner or sponsor of the project) and outwards (to the clients interested in the project). The next two areas the project leader uses to manage the project life cycle. He looks forward (creates plans to successfully perform the project) and he looks backwards (to see how things went and make necessary corrections).

Last but not least the project leader needs to manage the performance of the project, both his performance and of the team's. To do so he needs to look downwards (to make sure his team is performing well) and inwards (to make sure that he as a leader has a good overview of the project but is not stuck in details that block his vision of the project). There are therefore three dimensions to the project leader's role: Management of stakeholders, project life cycle and performance (Briner, Wendy, Hastings, Colin, & Geddes, Michael, 2009).

3 RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This research aimed to highlight some of the wisdom found in the gospels and which could be mirrored in the discipline of project management. The objective was to reveal some of the truths, if any, that we could identify from the scriptures and apply them to general aspects of project management.

When reviewing the four gospels of the New Testament it became apparent that it would be beneficial to map out and categorize the verses found on project

management. The categories were focused on various aspects of project management as well as the project management as a specific topic. Table 1 displays the categories and explains them. The names of the categories were chosen in regard to the nature of the verses. A decision was made not to narrow the focus on the verses to the literal meaning of every word and letter but to take a higher level approach in understanding of the principles that have shaped different cultures for centuries. A decision was also made to use the Good News Translation of the Bible in quoting the verses due to its modern English presentation. All the verses in the tables were revisited and adjusted to make sure they fit in the correct category.

Table 1 Description of categories used in mapping the gospels.

Category	Description
Project management	Verses that can be applied to project management principles in general.
Leadership style	Verses that describe the leadership style of Jesus Christ.
Conflict management	Verses that show how Jesus Christ handled conflict.
Sponsor management	Verses that depict how Jesus Christ managed "upwards" in his relationship with his father in heaven.
Self-management	Verses that show character traits of Jesus Christ and his disciples.
Ethics	Verses that reveal ethical issues handled by Christ.
Laws and regulations	Verses that depict discussions between Jesus and the religious leaders about the Law and rules made by the Jews.
Strategy	Verses that reveal visioning, goal setting, focus and scope.
Management of interested parties	Verses that help manage stakeholders both upwards and downwards, inwards and outwards.

By viewing the verses with the biblical principles as a perspective we were able to apply them more easily to everyday life. Subjective and qualitative approach was used to answer the research question mentioned in the beginning of this paper. By 'subjective and qualitative' we mean that personal opinions and interpretations of the verses and other sources were used and applied to this study. The intension was to bring forth the understanding that the way Jesus did things had both relevance and could be applied to the field of project management today.

4 RESEARCH RESULTS

When researching the four gospels it became apparent that there are many verses that can be applied to various aspects of project management. Each category according to Table 1 is presented in one table. Each table has at its top a selective criterion and a preliminary interpretation of the verses that fall under that category at the bottom of each table. These preliminary interpretations are not exhaustive. Some verses found might be in more than one category since they can relate to one or more topics. In chapter 5 we will look at examples on how we can interpret the verses in a beneficial way for PM's.

Project Management	
<i>Selective criteria</i>	
Verses that catch various aspects of project management e.g. <u>planning and team building</u> .	
Matt 5:17-20	Meeting requirements (laws and regulations).
Matt:6:24	One task/work package at a time.
Matt 10:5-13	Clear instructions.
Matt 13:24-30	The weed - the importance for it to grow.

Matt 14:25-32	Jesus walks on the water. Be able to conquer the circumstances.
Mark 6:48-52	Know the scope of your project.
Matt 15:22-28	Know your role. Christ a revelation in the lives of the disciples.
Matt 16:13-20	Project planning.
Mark 8:27-30	Project closure.
Matt 25:1-30	Team selection.
Luke 14:25-35	Take care of your team.
Matt 25:31-46	
Mark 1:16-20,	
Mark 3:13-19	
Luke 15:4-6	

John 6:67-71	Team building.
John 13:34-38	Know your fellow team members.
Mark 6:37-44	You give them to eat! Practice what you have learned.
Luke 5:4-11	Realization of the power of new methods.
Luke 10:1-3	Disciples sent out, plan implemented.
Luke 11:28	Hear the word and act upon it.
Luke 12:15-21	Set your priorities straight.
Luke 13: 20-21	Good teamwork is infectious.
Luke 14:15-24	Event management.
Luke 16:9-13	Be faithful in little things.
John 14: 8-10	Give me some proof.
Preliminary interpretation	
Set the project outline by defining the project scope in terms of time, budget and properties. Define the roles within the project team and select carefully its members and empower them. Be a doer. Create clear communication plan with clear instructions. Create an atmosphere where new ideas are welcome. Ask questions that enhance quality. Highlight lessons learned and celebrate project closure.	

Leadership style	
Selective criteria	
Verses that depict aspects of leadership or indicate the leadership style used.	
Matt 5:13	Salt of the earth. Influence by charisma.
Matt 5:14	Light of the world. Influence by charisma.
Matt 5:38-48	Love your enemies - get them on your side.
Matt 6:1-4	Possible tool for staff reimbursement.
Matt 7:7-12	Treat others like you want them to treat you.
Matt 9:9-13	Kindness - not sacrifice.
Matt 10:1-4	Delegation of authority.
Matt 20:25-28	Whoever wants to be a leader among you must first be your servant.
Matt 23:11-12	Servants.
Mark 1:21-28	Teaching with authority.
Luke 4:31-32	
Mark 2:21-22	Correct attitude and flexibility towards new things.
Mark 4:21-25	Those who understand and use what they have, get more.
Mark 9:33-37	Serve others.
Matt 24:42-51	Servant leadership - faithfulness
Mark 10:35-45	Servants.
Luke 1:74-75	We can serve without fear. Security in place.
Luke 5:16	Prayer, time to meditate and prepare.
Luke 7:12-15	Knowing your authority, taking charge of difficult circumstances.
Luke 9:23-26	Lead with dedication and purpose.
Luke 10:30-37	Putting words into action.
Luke 13:6-9	One more chance.
Luke 15:8-10	Finding value in any person.
Luke 15:11-25, 27-32	Father and the lost son.
John 10:10-17	Shepherd.
John 13:1-10	Jesus the servant.

John 13:12-17	Serve each other.
Preliminary interpretation	
Let your personality both flavor and light up the environment wherever you are. Exercise your talents to influence others. Communicate with your adversaries. Treat others like you want them to treat you. Be merciful, do not use threats. Delegate work to team members and trust them to do the job. Compensate them for a job well done. Maintain a servant attitude where your focus is on the team and what you can do for them – not what the team can do for you. Empower the team by building up trust and sensitivity towards the needs of the team. Develop a flexible leadership style (e.g. Situational Leadership®, Transparent leadership or Transformational leadership) which fits the situation. Take time to meditate. Be a doer.	

Conflict Management	
Selective criteria	
Verses that enable possible solutions in regards to conflicts or to avoid them.	
Matt 5:25-26	Be quick to reconcile.
Matt 7:1-6	To see yourself correctly - the speck and the log. Respect value. Avoid misusing true values.
Matt 7:21-27	Prepare well before and set clear goals when approaching conflict.
Matt 8:23-27	Authority in difficult circumstances.
Matt 9:1-8	Disarming circumstances.
Matt 9:14-17	Team flexibility – Wineskins.
Luke 3:8-9	The value in changing your attitude.
Luke 5:36-39	Old and new wineskins.
Matt 10:16-31	Be aware of men. Embrace wisdom.
Matt 12:22-37	Use strong arguments to break down conflict.
Matt 18:15-19	Solving conflicts using a process. Where people have vision and common goals things go well.
Mark 4:1-20	Importance of correct understanding.
Mark 4:35-41	Boat is sinking, Maintaining calm attitude in difficult circumstances.
Mark 5:1-20	Environment not ready to accept change – even if it's a good one.
Mark 11:27-33	Authority in difficult circumstances.
Luke 6:43-45	A tree is identified by its fruits.
Luke 6:46-49	Clear purpose and knowledge. Thinking ahead.
Luke 7:2-10	Obedience to the authorities.
Luke 12:58-59	Settle things before they go too far.
John 1:35-50	Learn to read people. Train your emotional intelligence.
John 3:3-8	It's a matter of perspective. To solve things we need attitude change.
John 3:17-21	Those who learn – live. Those who express faith in their work, succeed.
John 5:6-14	Know the rules better than the opponent.
John 7:49-52	Jumping to conclusions.
John 9:39-41	Are you saying were blind?
Preliminary interpretation	
Be quick to ensure correct understanding between all parties involved and then negotiate terms when conflicts arise. Look first inwards to	

see if the log is in your eye – if you are misunderstanding the issue etc.
 If possible, take authority in managing the conflict. Prepare well by knowing the laws and regulations better than the opponent so your arguments are solid and well grounded. Be flexible – like a new wineskin.
 Strive for achieving unity and common understanding of the problem.
 As a PM people will look to you as a problem solver. Be careful not to be entangled into political schemes. Train your political and emotional intelligence. Know people by their fruits. Obey the leader, or in case of immoral project – resign. Obey authorities. To minimize conflict within a team, select persons that you know and trust.
 Make sure that team members understand the cultural background of each other. Maintain a learning attitude. Don't jump to conclusions – ask the right questions to open up for new aspects or thoughts and mutual understanding.

Sponsor Management	
<i>Selective criteria</i>	
Jesus's relationship with God in terms of sponsor/PM relationship.	
Matt 7:21-27	Get an accurate plan from your sponsor and work with him on that plan.
Matt 17:1-5 Mark 9:2-13 Luke 9:28-36	Listen to him! Transformation mountain - the old passed away, see new things have come. Father promotes his son over Moses/Abraham.
Luke 3:21-22	Father promotes his son.
Luke 13:6-9	One more chance. Sponsor vs. PM
John 3:26-29	Submit to authority.
John 5:19-23	Father gives authority to his son.
John 5:26	Sponsor PM relationship.
John 8:25-30	Know and trust your sponsor.
<i>Preliminary interpretation</i>	
Build a good relationship with the sponsor. A good sponsor backs up his PM. If there are conflicts the sponsor should be backing up the PM's decision. The project becomes more likely to succeed if the sponsor (owner) promotes it. When difficulties arise in a project, the relationship between the sponsor and PM can make or break it.	

Self-management	
<i>Selective criteria</i>	
Character traits of Jesus.	
Matt 6:25-34 Mark 11:16	Worries.
Matt 6:14-15 Luke 17:1-4	Forgiveness - to others and yourself. Stay focused - watch yourselves.
Matt 18:1-4	Like a children - transparent and sincere.
Matt 11:28-30	Come to me.
Matt 25:14-30	Use your talents/invest in them
Matt 5:13-14 Mark 9:50	Be salt, season your environment. Be a light.
Mark 12:38-40	Beware of hypocrisy.
Luke 5:4-11	Willingness to learn.
Luke 5:12-13	Loving people. Meeting their needs.

Luke 11:33-36	Use what you have been given. Be a light.
Luke 14:7-14	Humility rewarded.
Luke 18:9-14	Humility and free of pride.
John 1:32-34	Charisma.
John 6:35-41	Bread of life.
John 6: 52-57	Learn from me, inherit my attitude and vision.
John 6:61-65	Revelation.
John 7:37-39	Understanding will flow.
John 8:34-36	Held captive by your thoughts.
John 12:35-36	Walk in the light.
<i>Preliminary interpretation</i>	
Maintain a worriless and forgiving lifestyle, both regarding you and others. Transparent and sincere lifestyle is valuable. Be accessible to your team. Use your talents. Don't hide them. Be true to yourself and willing to learn new things. Be open towards others opinions. Humble attitude takes you further than pride. Be bold in speaking what you belief in. Allow others to enjoy what you have to give. Walk in the light of honesty and be open to new ways of doing things.	

Ethics	
<i>Selective criteria</i>	
Verses that point towards ethical elements.	
Matt 6:5-8	Take time to pray. Be honest in everything you do.
Matt 6:19-23	Your treasure - where your heart will be.
Matt 8:28-34	Pigs more valuable than men? Maintaining correct values.
Matt 10:38, Matt 16:24-25	One who loses his life will find it.
Matt 10:16-31	Be faithful to yourself.
Matt 16:1-12	Maintain correct attitude and ethical standard.
Mark 12:28-34	The highest commandment
Luke 17:15-19	Thankfulness.
<i>Preliminary interpretation</i>	
Maintain both humble and thankful attitude. Attitude of giving to others – eliminate selfishness. Seek to understand with your being not just head knowledge. Choose your values wisely and protect them with your life.	

Laws and regulations	
<i>Selective criteria</i>	
Verses that show discussion and teaching about laws and regulations. Necessity to know the laws that apply to each project.	
Matt 8:1-4	Obey the rules not just talk.
Matt 12:1-14	Law speculations / understanding.
Matt 22:34-40 Mark 2:23-28	The fundamental commandments Know the true meaning of the law.
Mark 3:1-6	Correct understanding of requirements.
Luke 5:21-26	True authority.
Luke 6:6-11	Correct understanding of the laws and regulations.
Luke 7:2-10	Obedience to the authorities.
Luke 10:25-28	Follow the rules.
Luke 12:1-3	Warning regarding traditions. Be transparent.

Luke 14:1-6	The interpretation of the law challenged.
Luke 19:45-48	Correct understanding of the law.
Luke 20:1-8	Know the law better than the opponent.
John 7:21-24	Don't judge unless you have the correct grounds to do so.
John 8:3-11	Know the Law (mercy/judgment).
<i>Preliminary interpretation</i>	
Wherever you are, obey the local rules and regulations and know them well. Seek to understand the local laws that apply to the project. Obey local authorities.	

Strategy	
<i>Selective criteria</i>	
Strategic thinking, vision, purpose.	
Matt 1:1-20	Analyze your environment (P[R]ESTEL).
Matt 5:38-48	Be perfect - perform with care.
Matt 7:13-14	Maintain focus - visualize your work before performing it.
Matt 9:2	Faith equals modern day goal setting.
Luke 5:18-20	
Matt 13:3-23	The sower - reaching your goals.
Matt 17:14-20	You lack faith (vision and goal setting).
Matt 17:27	Visioning.
Mark 1:35-38	Prayer - foundation of vision.
Mark 2:13-17	Setting the scope.
Mark 6:1-12	Apostles sent.
Mark 7:31-37	Everything he does, he does it well. Scope and focus.
Mark 8:1-21	Change your attitude.
Mark 9:23	One can do anything who believes.
Mark 11:20-26	Focus - certainty.
Luke 5:30-32	Clear vision about his purpose.
Luke 8:43-48	Reaching her goal.
Luke 8:50-56	Holding on in a lost battle.
Luke 9:1-11	Team training.
John 11:32-44	Visioning the impossible.
<i>Preliminary interpretation</i>	

Beware of scope creep; maintain focus on your journey. It matters where you put your resources so make a plan. Put your goals into action. Faith is the equivalent of goal setting. One can do anything who believes. The environment can hinder you in reaching your goals. So perform risk assessment. Live in forgiveness.

Management of interested parties	
<i>Selective criteria</i>	
Communication, attitude change, relational aspects.	
Matt 5:33-37	Be self-consistent.
Matt 7:15-20	Learn to read people - Of their fruits you shall know them.
Matt 8:5-13	Manage upwards and outwards, inwards and downwards, forwards and backwards.
Matt 20:29-34	Clear requirements.
Mark 2:1-12	Jesus changes people's attitudes.
Mark 5:39-40	Jesus changes attitudes - raises a girl from dead.
Mark 7:1-23	Attitude and understanding of scripture.
Mark 8:22-26	Jesus heals a man outside of town.
Luke 8:5-8, 11-15	Different kinds of soil need different handling.
Luke 8:26-39	Reaction to authority.
John 2:23-25	Jesus knew the human heart.
John 6:10-13	Distribution of information.
<i>Preliminary interpretation</i>	
All requirements need to be clear and unambiguous. Be consistent on all levels of the project. Train your relationship building and negotiating skills. Work on changing attitude where needed. Use situational leadership style when managing stakeholders. Understand human nature.	

The tables above give an overview of the vastness of verses that can be studied and learnt from in regard to project management. By using the implied biblical principles from the verses in those tables we can draw significant learning experiences from them. Please note that the list is not exhaustive. Next we will give examples of how we can interpret verses from the gospels in relation to project management.

5 INTERPRETATION

This chapter will discuss and interpret the findings mentioned both in chapter 2 and 4. We will start our discussion on leadership styles and then show how we can interpret the words of Jesus using the verses found in the Project Management table on page 5.

5.1 Leadership styles

We mentioned earlier several leadership styles and among them a style called Situational Leadership®. It mentions four leadership styles which are categorized into two main behaviors called task behavior and relationship behavior. These styles are

called *telling*, *selling* and *participating* and *delegating*. This leadership style can be compared to Jesus's way of managing people. It depended upon the situation how he reacted towards the people around him. Examples of that can be found in the four gospels. We see the telling style used powerfully by Jesus when he preached the Sermon on the Mount of Beatitudes (Matthew chapters 5-7) and before his ascension in Matthew 28 where he tells the disciples to go into the entire world and preach, teach, make disciples and heal the sick. An example of the selling style used by Jesus is in John 8:28-30 where many started to believe in him by the words he spoke. An example of the participating style can be found in John 13:3-17 where Jesus shows the disciples a level of humility which they should show towards each other. And last but not least an example of the delegating style can be seen in Matthew chapters 10-11 where Jesus prepares the disciples for ministry and sends them to the cities around them to heal the sick and preach the good news. Jesus also used other leadership styles like the commanding style but only when casting out demons or approaching mind-sets which stood against his teaching.

In relation to the participating style in the last paragraph, the verses in John 13 show that Servant Leadership style was also a part of Jesus's arsenal of leadership styles. The component constructs identified by Patterson (altruism, empowerment, humility, love, service, trust, and vision) are strongly related to Jesus's character. Jesus showed altruism in relentlessly meeting people's needs (Luke 9:10-17), empowerment when he preached (Matthew chapters 5-7), humility and service in washing the disciples feet (John 13:3-17), love when he healed the sick (Matthew 8:16), trust when he sent his disciples to heal the sick (Matthew 10:7-9), and vision when he spoke of the kingdom of God (Matthew 24:30).

The four elements of Transformational leadership can be tied strongly both to his character and ministry. The first element (*Individualized Consideration*) can be seen where Jesus used opportunities available to mentor and teach his disciples (Luke 9:10) and showed empathy to those who needed help (Luke 9:11). We can also show that Jesus demonstrated a high level of emotional intelligence in his ministry. Examples of that can be found in Matthew 9:4 and Luke 5:22. He often challenged and inspired his disciples (Luke 9:13, Matthew 14:28-30) to think differently and break out of their mind-set and take risks, hence also fulfilling the second element of Transformational leadership (*Intellectual Stimulation*). Both the teaching of Jesus and his fellowship with his disciples provided the *Inspirational Motivation* needed to lay the foundation of the vision (Matthew 21:43) they would run with later when building the early church. Jesus was a role model for his disciples. He provided an *Idealized Influence* for them where he showed them ethical behavior (Matthew 5:6-10), built their confidence (Matthew 5:16) and earned their respect and trust (Matthew 16:15-16).

When discussing leadership styles we cannot leave that discussion without mentioning Transparent Leadership. It can be argued that the leadership style Jesus used could be compared to transparent leadership. Herb Baum displays seven principles that have guided him through his business career. The first one is: '*Surround yourself with people who challenge you*'. Jesus did that. His disciples were young men – some almost teenagers. To name a few there was Peter who was impulsive, Judas was a thief, Matthew was the tax collector, Thomas who doubted and Jacob and John the sons of Zebedee thought they were better than the others. For some reason, which we can speculate on, Jesus called them Sons of Thunder'. This group of young men most certainly challenged Jesus during his ministry.

Most certainly did Jesus use Baum's second principle, *'Tell it like it is, even when it hurts'*. The Pharisees and the lawyers did not like it when Jesus told them very clearly how badly they were leading the people. The third principle, *'Marketing is the world'*, is firmly grounded in Matthew 28:18-20 where Jesus sets the whole world before his disciples as one market. Jesus *'didn't fall victim to the popularity contest'*. The gospels tell us that those were some of the main reasons the religious leaders wanted him dead (Matthew 12:2-15). The fifth principle, *'Knowledge is power'* is seen clearly in Luke 14:1-6 where Jesus challenges the Pharisees by using his knowledge of the Scriptures. Jesus also *'knew when to walk away'*. When visiting Nazareth, his home town, the people wanted to kill him. They were not ready to accept his teachings (Luke 4:16-30). Jesus taught his disciples to do the same when he sent them away to preach and heal the sick (Matthew 10:14) and gave them clear instructions (Matthew 10:5-13). The seventh and last principle is *'The early bird really does get the worm'*. Herb Baum's idea behind this principle is that those who work a lot reap well. Jesus did that too. He often stayed up all night to pray and prepare for the next day (Luke 6:12).

When comparing the above mentioned principles and Haukur's and Helgi's definition on Transparent Leadership we can see that Jesus truly had "the ability of an individual in a leading role to influence others and sustain those influences on the foundation of the leader's self-knowledge and awareness on the influence of his emotions, attitudes and ideas about his co-workers" (Jónasson, Haukur Ingi & Ingason, Helgi Þór, 2011). Jesus was therefore a transparent leader.

The six observations or "the six lookings" as they are called in Briner's, Hastings and Geddes book Project Leadership give a strong connection to Jesus of Nazareth. As mentioned earlier the first two directions he needs to consider are areas where he manages the stakeholders. He needs to look upwards (to the owner or sponsor of the project) and outwards (to the clients interested in the project). In connection to Jesus we see examples of how he "managed" his connection towards his father in heaven (upwards). His father in heaven can be looked at as the sponsor who three times confirms Jesus's authority by speaking out loud so other people could hear. He also managed well the interested parties (outwards) who were his disciples, the people in need and the Pharisees. He did so by meeting the people's needs and leading the Pharisees towards the right direction (Luke 4:38-40 and Matthew 4:17). In the next two "lookings" the project leader looks forwards and backwards. This is the planning and continuous monitoring phase. Here we can also see a clear connection to Jesus where he looked forward by using prayer. That was his time for planning ahead. His continuous planning was always accurate and he seemed to know exactly what was going to happen the next day. An example of that can be seen in John 11:14-15. Jesus also looked backwards by seeking feedback from his disciples to make sure he was achieving his goals (Matthew 16:15-16).

The last two "lookings" are downwards and inwards and these focus on the performance of both the team and project leader. The gospels show us clearly how Jesus did this. He looked downwards in Matthew 17:1 and Mark 4:34 where he was alone with his disciples training them and explaining the events that had occurred that day. In John 11:35 Jesus wept over the people of Jerusalem because he saw how they were trapped in a mind-set that would cause them to crucify him. He also looked inwards through his time of prayer (John 14:7, John 17) where he gained the necessary strength to achieve his goals.

5.2 Interpretation of the Project management table

The tables that display the categorized verses from the gospels in chapter 4 give us an idea of the vastness of possibilities in studying project management in relation to the gospels. Let's look at the life of Jesus as a project. In terms of the whole Bible his life was one task in a significantly bigger project which is the creation and maturation of the mankind. This chapter will show examples of interpretation of scriptures to illustrate the applicability of the four gospels in studying project management. We will look at the Project Management category in Table 1 and illustrate how we can interpret all the verses displayed in the Project Management table on page 5. The titles on each sub-chapter are chosen to depict the matters being interpreted.

5.2.1 Role/Identity

The question of roles is important when we think about teams and PM's leading such teams. In the gospel of Matthew we read a passage where Jesus asks the disciples a question. *"Who do people say that the Son of Man is?"* And the disciples mention several persons the people were talking about. But Jesus does not let them go so easily and continues by asking: *"What about you? he asked them. Who do you say I am?"* Simon Peter quickly answers that he's the Messiah (Matthew 16:15-16 & Mark 8:27-30). To define the project team's roles can be easy to put on paper, but in reality, in the actual project it is usually not like that. There are always issues that come up which in some ways fall outside of the written role descriptions. So the role description becomes like a fried egg. The yellow core is the described role but then all the other small tasks that need also be done are the white part of the egg which flows around the core (Dignen, Robert, 2012). And due to this diversity there are two things that are important to understand. Firstly, we need to know ourselves and our role within the project or we can also look at it as we need not only to define but to understand our own definition of us as individuals. We need also to include in that definition the understanding others have of us as individuals and our roles within the project. If the other team members' understanding of us is radically different from our own, we have a problem which needs to be rectified immediately if we want to be a part of a team. Secondly, we need to know the PM's role. In both aspects there has to be flexibility which enables all team members to engage in side jobs and therefore contribute to the project. This is a matter of attitude. We see both in Luke 10:1-3 and John 13:34-38 the necessity of knowing your team members. Those who know their strengths and weaknesses, advantages and limitations have great opportunities to both work towards improvement and to do well in their life either as a team member or a PM. A team member that knows his role will prosper in his work because a good PM has given him a clear scope of his duties so he knows what he is supposed to do in given circumstances. He knows also what access he has to the PM regarding issues where he needs consulting with.

The PM has to know his role in order to manage his team effectively as well as to be able to manage the project sponsor. Knowing his role helps him both manage and handle himself, his personality and his feelings, weaknesses and circumstances. It can also be seen from these verses in Matthew 16 the different attitude and understanding that people surrounding Christ had towards him. The Pharisees were the rule makers and constituted the bureaucratic authority of that time. They had in their search for protecting the law and the community lost focus on the real meaning of the law and had therefore almost succeeded in suffocating the nation with their home made rules, while the layman and disciple, Simon Peter, had begun to understand the simplicity, role and reason why Jesus came to earth. He accepted

that by faith. He also understood at that time, that he didn't have the whole picture before him unless having Jesus around in his life. Jesus needed the disciples to know who he was and to understand his role as a leader. This also helped the team to focus on who the leader was. The essence of what Simon Peter said was: "I don't care what others say about you, I'm going to follow you because you are my leader, period". In spite of rejecting Jesus later, his leader did not reject him. On the contrary, Jesus used Simon Peter's mistake to build him up, reminding him that he was not perfect and that everybody makes mistakes. This further strengthens the notion that Jesus knew the hearts and thoughts of the disciples. He knew their attitudes and reactions. He knew because "he spent lots of time with them" (Jones, Laurie Beth, 1995). This being said the focus is directed towards planning.

5.2.2 Planning

In the next sections we will study Luke 14:25-35 but to begin with, we will look closer at verses 28-30.

"²⁸ If one of you is planning to build a tower, you sit down first and figure out what it will cost, to see if you have enough money to finish the job.²⁹ If you don't, you will not be able to finish the tower after laying the foundation; and all who see what happened will make fun of you.³⁰ You began to build but can't finish the job! they will say."

This scripture gives us insight into project management. Firstly it says in verse 25 that a large crowd was following Jesus. Many people in those days did not have a vision or purpose in their lives. Uncertainty due to the presence of the Roman Empire was prevalent and many were captivated by fear. For that reason Jesus urges the people to make a decision and set the course in their lives. If they are following him, why not take it all the way and be self-sustained in their faith. Set the focus on Jesus, learn from him and do what he was doing. Let nothing come between them and their mission in life. We are not just talking about the obvious theme here. We are also talking about taking this method and applying it to everything we do. We decide the strategy for our lives. First is to know who we are as individuals. We perform a personal SWOT¹ analysis, decide our values and roles we envision for our future and set viable and measureable goals as well as creating a manageable plan to achieve the vision we have. This is what verses 28-30 are telling us to do. Make your plan realistic and achievable. The mind-set displayed in verses 28-30 shows us that saying "it's going to be alright" does not work for projects. But one is foolish who starts the project without necessary project management. Whether a building is being raised or a military action is needed, proper planning is essential for a successful conclusion. However, when a project is not on time, within budget or is not finished the blame falls on the PM. This parable shows clearly the need for planning ahead and determining the risk within the project.

We can find similar stories regarding planning in Matthew 25:1-30 where Jesus is telling two stories. First he tells us about the ten young women who were waiting for the bridegroom to come. Five of them were foolish and didn't prepare themselves. The other five did the preparation and clearly expected the bridegroom to be late so they planned ahead and filled their oil containers to make sure they had enough. The moral of the story is that 'works without faith is sin' (Gill, Robin, 1988). If we do not have faith or vision for what we do, our work will have no meaning and lose its intended effect.

¹ SWOT = Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, Threats

The same goes with the other story where Jesus tells a parable of the three servants. A king went on a trip and assigned various amount of gold coins to three servants according to their ability and expected them to invest and make profit. Two of the three did as was requested and managed well what the king had given them and doubled the amount they had. The third did nothing except digging a hole in the ground where he hid the money. This servant did not make any plans in what to do with the money with the aim of gaining interest of it. What he did was pointless and faithless; hence, he sinned.

5.2.3 Strategic thinking – teamwork and delegation

Luke 14:31-33 says:

"³¹ If a king goes out with ten thousand men to fight another king who comes against him with twenty thousand men, he will sit down first and decide if he is strong enough to face that other king.³² If he isn't, he will send messengers to meet the other king to ask for terms of peace while he is still a long way off.³³ In the same way, concluded Jesus, none of you can be my disciple unless you give up everything you have."

It is interesting to note in these verses how the concept of negotiation is introduced. As a PM the king needs to observe all possibilities to either ensure he wins or if there is no hope of winning to ensure the safety of his citizens by negotiating peace with the enemy. It is also interesting to see that while the enemy is far away the king is consulting with his counselors to discuss, not just various military strategies, but also the mood and enthusiasm of the army. Do they have the guts to do it? How hungry are they for victory? Does the army firmly believe that they can win an army which is double in size? On what grounds do they believe that? What methods do they intend to use? Is the environment (landscape, public opinion) helping the king or is it against him? And so forth. Careful planning lays the foundation for a successful outcome. And Jesus knew that. Verse 33 tells us that we must set the focus outside of ourselves. In other words, serve others and let the needs of others concern you and meet those needs. Putting all the focus on internal matters is a sign of sickness. All the energy becomes focused on healing the body and the person gets too often isolated from the rest of the world. A good PM gathers people around him that he trusts and are gifted in the areas where he is weak. He delegates work to his team and functions more as an overseer to make sure everything is done that needs to be done. And now let us look at the last verses which direct us towards values and ethics.

5.2.4 Values and Ethics

Luke 14:34-35 says:

"³⁴ Salt is good, but if it loses its saltiness, there is no way to make it salty again.³⁵ It is no good for the soil or for the manure pile; it is thrown away. Listen, then, if you have ears!"

In the remaining verses it can be seen that Jesus's idea is to help the crowd to be themselves but not to be oppressed by the environment. He is encouraging them to live their lives full of flavor that influences their environment and protects it from

corruption, which is, by the way, the nature of salt. He is urging them to lead a moral life where ethics are intact and rules are clear and unambiguous.

It's important to lead a life that sets a standard which motivates healthy thought processes and is flavored with your talents and personality. Therefore, the life of the PM sets in many ways the paradigm for the organizational culture where the whole team draws from the PM the standards that he has set in his life as core values. His flavor affects both the team and the project. Assuming that all team members adhere to the PM's policy it will provide both flow and unity to the teamwork, making it easier to deliver the required product.

5.2.5 Team building

In Mark 1:16-20 we see where Jesus picks his first team members. Bill Hybels states in his book *Axiom*: "*The most powerful two-word leadership phrase Jesus ever uttered was "Follow me." The apostle Paul told believers to imitate him just as he imitated Christ. Follow me, imitate me – both statements refer to the power of leading by example.*" (Hybels, Bill, 2008). And a little later on same page he states: "*If you cannot say, "Follow me," to your followers – and mean it – then you've got a problem. A big one.*" (Hybels, Bill, 2008). In Mark 3:13-19 Jesus makes his final selection of the twelve disciples. When building a team the time comes that the leader has to select those individuals who he wants to have by his side. When reading the gospels we see the diversity in the disciples' character. In our discussion on Transparent Leadership we mentioned the necessity for the leader to surround himself with challenging personalities. If we study the disciples' character we can see that that is exactly what Jesus did. In Luke 15:4-6 we see how Jesus takes care of his team. By using this parable he showed not only how God wants to take care of his people but also how a team leader is supposed to wrap his arms around his team in meeting their needs so they can mature and grow as individuals. John 6:67-71 tells us when many of the disciples left but only the twelve remained. Jesus states: "I chose the twelve of you, didn't I? Yet one of you is a devil!" (Matthew 13:24-30) meaning Judas Iscariot, the disciple that betrayed him. What can we learn from that? Should we as team leaders accept individuals on the team that we know will work against us? Usually we use any means available to avoid such circumstances. However, there are circumstances where adversaries can be necessary to break mind-sets within a team or a company which are hindering progress within the project. A lot of wisdom is needed in such cases and every measure should be taken with extreme care.

In Luke 5:4-11 Jesus starts changing Peter's thinking by asking him to lay the nets on the other side of the boat. We can imagine Peter thinking: 'But we have always laid the nets on the left side.' But when we look into his character he more likely thought 'That guy has to know what he is saying, I don't see the point since we have been fishing all night without getting any, but I'll do it anyway.' He was ready to try new things and reaped full nets of fish. Here we can see one more example of how the Transparent Leader in Jesus is being revealed.

Good teamwork is infectious. When a team reaches the performing stage the life within the team starts to flow and it starts to have a positive effect on others who are working with or for the team. As mentioned earlier a shared faith or vision for the project result, is the core of a successful project. One by-product of good teamwork is that everyone is faithful in what they do. Everyone does what is expected of them. In Luke 16:9-13 Jesus is teaching about faithfulness. If we are to

be trusted with big projects we have to finish the small projects on time, within budget and containing the required properties. Therefore, to train the disciples he engaged them in some of the miracles e.g. when feeding the five thousand men (plus women and children) and thereby giving them practical training in faithfulness.

5.2.6 Other verses in the project management table

In John 14:8-14 we can say that we are witnessing an audit performed by the disciples. Philip says, "Show us the Father; That is all we need." He is saying 'Give me some proof and I will be happy with that'. He is acting like an auditor making sure the leader is doing what he is saying. And Jesus gives him the proof he needs, reminding him of what he has already seen during his ministry. "Whoever has seen me has seen the Father".

In Matthew 5:17-20 Jesus talks about the necessity of following the given rules. Those who do will be exalted and earn their rewards. Project managers act as role models in this regard. Good preparation in this regard enables the PM to tackle political attacks or manage the projects stakeholders in a peaceful way.

In Matthew 6:24 it is stated that we cannot become slaves to two masters. Either we love one and neglect the other. A project consists of many tasks. Some tasks must be done before other tasks can be started. These tasks create what is called the Critical path. This critical path also defines the project length. Projects are usually under time pressure or lack the necessary resources. In that respect it becomes hard to manage your human resources in a way that they are not overloaded with work and therefore risking a burnout. People that are assigned too many tasks at the same time will do one task well and other tasks poorly, or in the worst case scenario, perform ineffectively in all the tasks assigned to them.

In Matthew 15:22-28 Jesus and his disciples meet a foreign woman who seemed to live in an unrighteous environment. She pleads to Jesus to heal her daughter. Jesus knew that she had treated her daughter badly by feeding the dogs with her daughter's food. Jesus knew both his calling and scope. He was called to serve the people in Israel. He did not allow anything that was diverting his focus from his main goals. He refused to help the woman until he saw her faith. Her faith plus her action of repentance and pleading with Jesus triggered the aforementioned relationship between faith and work where Luther stated that work without faith is sin (Gill, Robin, 1988).

Both Matthew 14:25-32 and Mark 6:48-52 talk about Jesus walking on the water. Good PM's do that metaphorically every day. By ensuring they have the correct information at all times, they are creating an environment where they have a clear picture of the project in whole thus enabling them to step in when things are going wrong. Even when the waves are high and the winds are strong, correctly defined flow of information, available when needed, enable you to "walk on water".

When thinking about project closure then Matt 25:31-46 comes to mind. Jesus is teaching about the end of days when all people are gathered to him. Those who did well will receive their rewards. For PM's project closure is a time for learning in terms of what went well and what didn't. There we can judge for ourselves how the group or we as individuals performed in our tasks.

6 CONCLUSION

This paper breaks a new ground. The results show that the gospels are a rich source of information for further study of project management. Literature for this area is limited so for future research it would be interesting to expand the scope of this paper and include the whole New Testament - and possibly the whole Bible - into the project management picture. We have shown that it is important to look for the biblical principles when exploring the gospels and applying its stories to project management.

The analysis in chapter 4 opens up a wide area for researching deeper into the life of Jesus as a project manager and project leader. But that far exceeds the scope of this paper and will be interesting to see other papers and writings that will expand that knowledge for the benefit of project management.

Other conclusions we can draw from this study is the importance of faith before work. In relation to Jesus and what the gospels tell us is the necessity to project your faith and vision onto your goals before you put them into action. To start working without faith – not seeing in your mind your destination – is a sin where you are shooting with a bent arrow and missing your mark and therefore failing in your project.

Paul Tillich discusses in his book *Meaning of Health* the Greek concept of 'soter' which means to be a healer, doctor, savior, good manager and leader. Direct translation means "the one who makes whole" (Tillich, Paul, 1961). The reason that word has been applied to Jesus of Nazareth is simply because of the influence he had both on his society and the whole world. He provided a direction for the world to follow.

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