



THE COLLECTION

The Nail

A Roman crucifixion nail, and the one life that settles what leadership is.

CHRIS VALLETTA

Hand-forged Roman iron nail
Close to two thousand years old

I HOLD A LOT OF OLD THINGS. Nothing stops me like this one.

It is a hand-forged iron nail, close to two thousand years old, the kind Rome used to fasten men to a cross. Holding it is almost more than I can put into words, because I know what a nail like this was for, and I know who submitted to one.

We spend our lives arguing about what makes a great leader. I have come to believe it comes down to a single word, and the entire case for it is one life.

Jesus could do anything. He walked on water. Crowds pressed in just to touch the edge of his robe and be healed. Power was never in question for him. And with all of it, he served. He washed feet. He fed people. He made time for the ones nobody else would stand near.

Then, at the end, beaten and spit on and nailed to a cross by a nail like the one in my hand, he was still serving. That is the part I cannot get past. Not power used to escape the pain. Power laid down inside it.

“For even the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many.”

MARK 10:45

That is the model. It is why I say leadership is service and mean it as the definition, not a line for a wall. If the one person who had every right to be served chose instead to serve all the way to a cross, then service is not the soft part of leadership. It is the whole of it.

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