

THE CHRIST-CENTERED LIFE

How to Be Great in the Kingdom

Mark 10:35-45

INTRODUCTION: I mentioned last week that the disciples liked to prod each other with conversation about which of them would be the greatest in the Kingdom of Heaven.

Jesus responded in three ways to His disciples' preoccupation with "Who is the greatest?"

HE TRIED TO COMFORT THEM WITH THE PROMISE THAT THEY WOULD BE MORE THAN WELL REWARDED FOR THEIR ROLE IN THE WORK OF GOD'S KINGDOM.

Matthew 19:28–29 NKJV 28 So Jesus said to them, "Assuredly I say to you, that in the regeneration, when the Son of Man sits on the throne of His glory, you who have followed Me will also sit on twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel.

29 And everyone who has left houses or brothers or sisters or father or mother or wife or children or lands, for My name's sake, shall receive a hundredfold, and inherit eternal life.

Now, while some of the leaving of these things may be permanent from an earthly perspective, that's not all Jesus is talking about. He is talking about painful separation.

Obeying and following Jesus may cause you to have to move away from folks you love, even a temporary although perhaps a long season from your spouse. Jesus is simply saying, "Whatever you give up, temporarily or permanently, for My name's sake, will be worth it. You will be rewarded in the Millennial Kingdom after I return and sit upon the throne of My glory reigning as King over the earth."

Folks, I guess this is one of the reasons I love the study of the End Times in Scripture.

- So, on Wednesday nights I am in the middle of a twelve week study of the End Times, and I invite you again to join us. You can also access this study on our website and stream the teaching if you cannot attend on Wednesday evening.
- And next Sunday morning, I am going to preach a message I am calling "The End Times in a Single Chapter" where Jesus Himself gives a summary of major events of the end times.
- But folks, I personally love the passages describing the end times because they tell me two things.

- They tell me that every morning I wake up could be the day the Lord Jesus appears in the sky and calls all the believers up to come meet Him in the air, gives us our resurrection bodies so we can fly up to meet Him, and then takes us to our homes in the New Jerusalem, right now still in Heaven, where we will safely await the end of the Tribulation that is coming upon this old earth.

But the other thing the Scriptures tell me about the end times is ...

- Every day, I may only be seven years from Jesus coming on His white horse at the Battle of Armageddon, casting Satan into the Abyss, and taking His seat upon His throne of Glory and beginning His reign for a thousand years over this earth. And on that day, I, and all of us who have trusted Christ, will have the blessed privilege of beginning to rule and reign with Christ.

Oh, my friend, how wondrously true it is the words of the Spirit though Paul,

1 Corinthians 2:9 NKJV But as it is written: “Eye has not seen, nor ear heard, Nor have entered into the heart of man The things which God has prepared for those who love Him.”

My friend listen, if being a faithful worker in the Kingdom of God has cost you some things on this earth, just look ahead to what God is going to do. Those things you have done in Jesus' name are the best investments you could ever make. They will not only count for God, they will bear dividends beyond measure for you.

- Heaven's Treasurer does not pay minimum wages to God's workers!
- God does not buy property at depressed values.
- The Lord does not waste your time in Kingdom business, but places value upon beyond what the world would ever give.
- Jesus said, “A hundredfold!”
- Whatever you give up for His name's sake will be rewarded at a hundred times its value.

But comforting the disciples about the rewards that await them was not all that Jesus did to address the question of “Who is the greatest in the Kingdom of Heaven?”

JESUS TAUGHT THEM PLAINLY.

Let's read it.

Mark 10:35–44 NKJV 35 Then James and John, the sons of Zebedee, came to Him, saying, “Teacher, we want You to do for us whatever we ask.” 36 And He said to them, “What do you want Me to do for you?” 37 They said to Him, “Grant us that we may sit, one on Your right hand and the other on Your left, in Your glory.”

38 But Jesus said to them, “You do not know what you ask. Are you able to drink the cup that I drink, and be baptized with the baptism that I am baptized with?”

39 They said to Him, “We are able.”

So Jesus said to them, “You will indeed drink the cup that I drink, and with the baptism I am baptized with you will be baptized; **40** but to sit on My right hand and on My left is not Mine to give, but it is for those for whom it is prepared.”

41 And when the ten heard it, they began to be greatly displeased with James and John.

42 But Jesus called them to Himself and said to them, “You know that those who are considered rulers over the Gentiles lord it over them, and their great ones exercise authority over them. **43** Yet it shall not be so among you; but whoever desires to become great among you shall be your servant. **44** And whoever of you desires to be first shall be slave of all.”

Here is the principle. It is not hard to understand how to be great in the Kingdom of God. Jesus said,

TO BE GREAT IN THE KINGDOM OF GOD, BE A SERVANT.

TO BE THE GREATEST IN THE KINGDOM OF GOD, BE A SERVANT TO ALL.

Think about that for a moment.

When we think about what it means to be a servant, we sometimes contrast that with being a leader.

That is not quite correct.

A better contrast to make is between servant and tyrant.

We find tyrants in kingdoms, in businesses, in volunteer organizations, and in churches.

TYRANT	SERVANT
Demands that others help him (or her)	Spends time helping others
Tries to be successful	Works for the success of others
Takes all the glory	Lets others have the glory
Demands admiration	Accepts humiliation
Always out front	Often works behind the scenes

While we wrestle with this for a minute, examining our own servanthood, let me add the third thing Jesus did in response to the question, "Who is the greatest in the Kingdom of God."

JESUS LIVED A LIFE OF SERVANTHOOD.

- **HE MADE HIMSELF SUBJECT TO THE WILL OF HIS HEAVENLY FATHER.**
- **EVERY WORD HE SPOKE WAS GIVEN HIM BY THE FATHER.**
- **EVERYTHING HE DID, THE FATHER TOLD HIM TO DO.**
- **HE HUMBLED HIMSELF, ALLOWING HIMSELF TO BE LABELED A CRIMINAL, IN ORDER TO SERVE HIS FATHER AND ALL MANKIND.**
- **HE ACCEPTED THE HORRIBLE AGONY OF THE CROSS, ALTHOUGH HE HAD DONE NOTHING WRONG.**
- **HE BECAME THE GREATEST LEADER THE WORLD HAS EVER KNOWN, WHILE BEING THE CONSUMMATE SERVANT/LEADER.**

Now let me add the last verse of our text to the plain instructions Jesus gave His disciples about how to be great in the Kingdom of God.

Mark 10:42–45 NKJV 42 But Jesus called them to Himself and said to them, "You know that those who are considered rulers over the Gentiles lord it over them, and their great ones exercise authority over them. 43 Yet it shall not be so among you; but whoever desires to become great among you shall be your servant. 44 And whoever of you desires to be first shall be slave of all. **45 For even the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give His life a ransom for many.**"

Shortly before His death, at the last supper, Jesus washed the feet of His disciples.

John 13:12-15 NKJV 12 So when He had washed their feet, taken His garments, and sat down again, He said to them, "Do you know what I have done to you? 13 You call Me Teacher and Lord, and you say well, for so I am. 14 If I then, *your* Lord and Teacher, have washed your feet, you also ought to wash one another's feet. 15 For I have given you an example, that you should do as I have done to you.

Jesus was the leader of the disciples, no doubt. He did not deny that. He was their teacher, and He was their Lord. But He also was their servant, the perfect servant/leader.

We are not all called to be leaders, but we are all called to be servants.

How can you serve the Lord?

- **By attending faithfully**

- You minister just by your presence because of the indwelling Spirit.
- No LCG is as good in your absence as it would have been in your presence.
- No sermon I preach is as good in your absence as it would have been in your presence. (So some Sunday when the preaching is warm, that means not so hot, just say, "Boy, we need more people there today.")
- Your faithful attendance makes a difference!
- **By working diligently**
 - God did not save us to sit.
 - Paul called himself a fellow laborer. And we are to be laborers.

Ephesians 2:10 NKJV For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand that we should walk in them.

- This church has many diligent workers.
- But we need many more, especially after the pandemic. We need more workers in many areas:
- Medical Clinic, Benevolence Ministry, Preschool and Children's Ministry are some of our greatest needs.
- Going on mission – Jerusalem, Judea, Samaria, Ends of the earth.
- God is not concerned about your ability but about your availability.
- Everybody should have an area of service.
- If you are not physically able to do anything but pray at home, you can be a prayer warrior for the church, for our ministries, for our missions. That too is service. Everybody can serve in some capacity.

- **By giving generously**
 - Not as a substitute for your personal work but as another act of service.
- **By cooperating lovingly**
 1. Now I am going to tell you honestly. This church today, overall, has a sweeter and more cooperative spirit than many churches.
 2. This is not a mere matter of individual personalities; this is a matter of Christian maturity.

3. Neither is loving cooperation tied to unanimous agreement. People can disagree on things and still choose to be loving and cooperative.
4. When we act with Christian love and cooperation, we are serving our Lord and our church.

This is not a pick 1 or 2 out of 4. All 4 are things every believer should do as a servant of the Lord Jesus!

We are not all called to be leaders, but we are all called to be servants.

Conclusion: Years ago, Chuck Swindol wrote a book entitled Improving Your Serve. Does your serve in the Kingdom of God need to be improved? Here's a good question for each of us to ask ourselves. **How's my serve?** How's my serve of the Christ who gave His life for me. How's your serve?