"THE GREATNESS OF BEING A SERVANT"

Matthew 20:17-28
9-16-2018

INTRODUCTION: (verses 20-26a)

***Greatness is in serving, not in being served!**

Who is truly great?

I. *You are great in God's eyes when you give your life in*
HUMBLE Service for Others (v. 26b)
("let him be your minister" - *diakonos*)

II. *You are great in God's eyes when you give your life in*
DEVOTED Service for Others (v. 27)
("let him be your servant" - *doulos*)

III. *You are great in God's eyes when you give your life in*
SACRIFICIAL Service for Others (v. 17-19, 28)
("The Son of Man came. . . to minister and give His life")

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Many are seeking a path that leads to "greatness" today!

Some take the path ofsports
popular music
financial power
military control
religious popularity

V. 21

Like most proud mothers, Zebedee's wife was deeply interested in the blessings and success of her two sons.

(A mother's self-worth and success is often linked to the success of her children)

Perhaps after hearing that her two sons would have the honored position of each sitting on thrones with Christ judging the 12 tribes of Israel (19:28) she became inquisitive as to who would have the two seats next to Jesus (EX: how children often desire to sit next to special guests at the dinner table or in the car).

Not only did she request this privileged position for her two sons, but they did as well (Mk. 10:35-37).

So Jesus response to them.

This was a self-serving request, a desire to exalt self, a quest for personal promotion.

V. 22

"Cup" - the bitter cup of suffering (Mt. 26:39).

"Baptism" - to be immersed in suffering and death

Jesus asks this question, implying that certain rewards and privileges will be given to those who face a martyr's death.

"Ye shall drink indeed" - James was the first martyr (Acts 12:2) for Christ. John would be boiled in oil, exiled to Patmos (Rev. 1), and eventually beheaded.

V. 24

The ten were deeply grieved, upset, and angry at James and John for desiring, along with their mother, seats of pre-eminence in Christ's Kingdom. With steam pouring from their ears, they began to debate as to who should be the greatest.

Perhaps Matthew appealed to his having given up a wealthy career of collecting taxes. John perhaps appealed to his great love and affection for Christ, Peter to his leadership, Judas Iscariot to his money management as the treasurer.

Even at the Last Supper Luke records their strife and bickering as to who would be the greatest (SEE: Luke 22:23-30).

V. 25

The world achieves "greatness" by raw power, military might, fame and fortune, by controlling and forcing subordinates into submission and total allegiance.

The best form of government is one that serves the people rather than exploits the people (like radical egomaniac dictators and self-serving Communists).

"William Barclay has succinctly commented, 'The world may assess a man's greatness by the number of people whom he controls and who are at his beck and call; or by his intellectual standing and his academic eminence; or by the number of committees of which he is a member; or by the size of his bank balance and the material possessions which he has amassed; but in the assessment of Jesus Christ these things are irrelevant." (MacArthur, p. 246).

V. 26

"It shall not be so among you" - God has different standards for His people. Different ways of achieving desired goals.

Today, a dangerous trend exists in the world, and it has afflicted many who name the name of Christ. It is a proud, self-centered, self-love philosophy which has a "me first" drive and an "I" agenda. If society were to write a Bible, its Golden Rule might read: "Thou shalt shove thy neighbor and love thyself."

Life itself depends on service! Every legitimate job is a service for someone else.
Teacher - instructs others
Bus driver - transports others
Farmer - provides food for others
Grocer - stocks and distributes food for others
Fireman - saves others
Police - protects others

The measure of your job is determined by the degree to which you really aid someone else.

We were saved to glorify God by serving (Eph. 2:10).

The least we can do is serve the One who saved us, bought us, and owns us!

Service is a duty. Luke 17:10 - *"So likewise ye, when ye shall have done all those things which are commanded you, say, We are unprofitable servants: we have done that which is our duty to do."*

***Greatness is in serving, not in being served!**

Who is truly great?

I. *You are great in God's eyes when you give your life in*
HUMBLE Service for Others (v. 26b)
("let him be your minister" - *diakonos*)

"Whosoever will" - Anyone who wants to be or desires to be "great" in God's eyes.

"Minister" - (*diakonos)* to perform common tasks, mundane tasks (cp. the 7 deacons in Acts 6). It is believed that this noun comes from the verb *"diako"* which means to run (to run errands) -- to be someone's "gopher."

"The world's way of greatness is like a pyramid. The prestige and power of the great person is built on the many subordinate persons beneath him. But in the kingdom, the pyramid is inverted. As the great commentator R.C. H. Lenski has observed, God's 'great men are not sitting on top of lesser men, but bearing lesser men on their backs'." (MacArthur, p. 240).

Luke 14:11 - *"For whosoever exalteth himself shall be abased, and he that humbleth himself shall be exalted."*

There is no limit to what a person will do for others if he is not consumed about who gets the credit.

All service for Christ done with pure motives of love will merit rewards ("giving a cup of cold water" - Mt. 10:42).

The greatest rewards in Heaven are not reserved for those who necessarily had the limelight of Christianity. They served in the "shadows" of the Church. Many they were not so well known. Their names were not printed in the "Who's Who" of Christianity. Their tasks did not require great brains or awesome talent. But they were faithful, dependable, reliable. "The greatest ability is dependability." (Bob Jones Sr.)

II. *You are great in God's eyes when you give your life in*
DEVOTED Service for Others (v. 27)
("let him be your servant" - *doulos*)

"Chief" - (*protos)* first; first in rank, principle, top in honor and influence.

"Servant" (*doulos)* - a slave for life, a "bondslave," one who gives up his will to do the will of another, to advance the cause of another, to be devoted to another to the disregard of one's own interests.

You will be successful if you live to make others successful!

Examples of people with servants hearts:

--Sarah - obeyed her husband (I Pet. 3:6)
--Rebekah - watered Eleazar's camels (Gen. 24)
--Moses - led Israel for 40 years
--Ruth - gleaned for Naomi
--Jesus - washed the disciples' feet (Jn. 13:14)
--Stephen (etc.) - dispersed money to Christian widows (Acts 6)
--Barnabus - encouraged new and weak Christians
--Aquilla & Priscilla - opened their home to disciple new converts and hold church meetings (Acts 18:26; I Cor. 16:19)
--Dorcas - sewed coats and garments for the needy (Acts 9:36, 39)

III. *You are great in God's eyes when you give your life in*
<u>SACRIFICIAL</u> Service for Others (v. 17-19, 28)
("The Son of Man came. . . to minister and <u>give His life</u>")

V. 28

The point of V. 28 is that a servant makes sacrifices for others - as Jesus did.

When God through Isaiah introduced the suffering Messiah in Is. 52:13-53, He said, *"Behold, <u>my Servant</u>..."* (52:13)

V. 17

"Took the 12 disciples apart" - By pulling them away from the crowds Jesus would often privately teach them many things (SEE: Mark 9:30-35).

V. 18

"They shall condemn Him" - They lied about Him, hired false witnesses whose testimonies did not agree.

Their condemnation fulfilled God's sovereign plan so you would be free from condemnation (Rom. 8:1).

"Betrayed" - by the kiss of Judas Iscariot

"Chief priests. . . scribes" - the Jewish religious leaders of Christ's day (men who were supposed to be expert in worship and Bible interpretation).

V. 19

"Gentiles" - Pilot, Herod, and the Roman soldiers who mistreated Him and nailed Him to a cross

"Mock" - *"Hail, King of the Jews"*
"He saved others, Himself He cannot save"
"Come down from the cross"

"Scourge" - He was whipped with a cat-o-nine-tails that would rip and dig a furrow into His body with every laceration.

"Crucify" - the lowest, most humiliating form of death.

Jesus also foretold of His being *"spitefully entreated and spit upon"* (Lk. 18:32)

V. 28

"Not to be ministered unto" - not to be served (*diakoneo*)

Jesus came not to be waited upon but to attend to the needs of others.

This entire verse has several indications of Christ's sacrificial servitude.

* ***"The Son of man"*** - Even this title shows Christ's humility in condescending to mankind by becoming a man. The "Son of God" became the "Son of man."

II Cor. 8:9 - *"For ye know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that, though he was rich, yet for your sakes he became poor, that ye through his poverty might be rich."*

* ***"Came"*** - He who ruled Heaven *"came into the world to save sinners"* (II Tim. 1:15)

He left paradise for a sin-cursed earth. Implicit in the word *"came"* is Christ's purpose. He came with a purpose of sacrificing Himself for others.

* ***"Give" -*** the response of love (Jn. 3:16; Rom. 5:8). His life was not taken, it was voluntarily given.

* ***"His life" -*** Christ's entire life was given for others, but the particular reference here is to His death.

"Some years ago, Joe Delaney, a star football player for the Kansas City Chiefs, saw three young boys out in a lake, crying out for help and struggling to stay above the water. Although he was himself a poor swimmer, Joe dived into the water and tried to save them. One of the boys was rescued, but Joe and the other two boys drowned. He willingly laid down his life in an effort to save those boys, making the ultimate sacrifice in their behalf." (MacArthur, p. 245).

* ***"Ransom" -*** (*lutron*) the price paid to free (liberate) a slave or captive. *"You are bought with a price"* (I Cor. 6:20).

His life and particularly His blood (I Pet. 1:19) was the price for your spiritual freedom, your release from sin and its penalty.

"For many" - (*anti)* in the place of - His sacrifice was substitutionary

"For many" - (*polus*) for a great host of people. The word "many" is not used in contrast to "all" (as the Limited Atonement view believes). Rather, the point is a contrast between His life (singular) and the multitudes (plural - *"many"*) for whom He died.

CONCLUSION:

There is a good feelings you receive when you serve someone else (Acts 20:35 - *"It is more blessed to give than to receive")*

Many truly great people in the corporate world of business became great because of their willingness to expand their service to others.

(Good service will always eventually lead to promotion)

Today, people measure ministry success by:1) Bodies2) Bucks & 3) Buildings
But God measures it by service!

"Concentrate on the depth of your ministry (service), and God will take care of the breadth of your ministry" (MacArthur)

Today, Christianity does not need more celebrities but more servants!

Gal. 6:10 - *"As we have therefore opportunity, let us do good unto all men, especially unto them who are of the household of faith."*

What service is being rendered to this church body by you?

President Kennedy said, "Ask not what your country can do for you, but what you can do for your country."

Ask not what the people of FBC can do for you, but what you can do for the people of FBC!

What service should you render? It depends on what gifts God gave you to serve with. Discover your gifts and use them! (I Cor. 12; Rom. 12; Eph. 4:12-15).

Where do I begin? Find a need and meet it! (ask permission if needed; get instructions as to how to go about it if needed).

Many are good at finding needs, and then gripe and complain about them! . . . But few give thoughts as to how they might be an answer (solution) to the problem (need).

Are you willing to do the most humble of tasks?

Are you willing to sacrifice the time, energy, and resources necessary to serve someone else?

The measure of your greatness is the greatness of the time you spend serving other people.

The greatest service you can render is service in the greatest things! (in the Gospel

ministry)