

“THE PATH OF GREATNESS”

Matthew 20:20-28

Who makes Navy Seals? The one who says: How can I help the guy next to me? Our text: Jesus shows the Path of Greatness.

Matthew 20:25–28 ²⁵Jesus called all the followers together and said, “You know that the rulers of the non-Jewish people love to show their power over the people. And their important leaders love to use all their authority. ²⁶But it should not be that way among you. Whoever wants to become great among you must serve the rest of you like a servant. ²⁷Whoever wants to become first among you must serve the rest of you like a slave. ²⁸In the same way, the Son of Man did not come to be served. He came to serve others and to give his life as a ransom for many people.”

I. THE MISTAKES OF GREATNESS

A. There is something in the heart of people that we want to make a difference/we want our life to count

1. Whoever wants to be great: Larger in size or importance – one who stands out

a. Flows out of our desire for worth: *To feel that we have value or importance*

B. A lot of Jesus teaching was to correct the disciples wrong ideas: *Here - wrong ideas about greatness*

1. **Mistake #1: That greatness can be given; V21 grant that my 2 sons can sit on the right/left...**

a. James/John get their mom to ask Jesus to appoint them to important positions

1. *My destiny is in someone's hands – they could give it to me; I would leap into greatness/destiny*

2. **Mistake #2: Greatness comes from attention; V21 grant that my 2 sons can sit on the right/left...**

a. Places of honor: People will see us on stage/near the throne...who's that with Jesus

1. *If I can have a microphone/be on stage*

3. **Mistake #3: Greatness is all about power - ordering people around**

a. *V25 rulers of the non-Jewish people love to show their power over the people... Tell them off/tell them what to do*

1. *Man appointed van driver for an impact team: Laid down the rules. At first light – everyone jumped out!*

C. These wrong ideas cause problems

1. **They make you view other people incorrectly: They are competitors for attention/positions**

a. *Luke 9:46 a dispute arose over who would be the greatest*

2. **It produces conflict: You wind up fighting with people/they wind up fighting with you**

a. *Matthew 20:24* ²⁴When the other ten followers heard this, they were angry with the two brothers.

II. THE PARADOX OF GREATNESS

A. Jesus doesn't deny that there are great people in the Kingdom: *People who have greater value in usefulness*

1. But He turns worldly ideas of how to become great upside down

a. *Matt 20:26-27* Yet it shall not be so among you; but whoever desires to become great among you, let him be your servant. ²⁷ And whoever desires to be first among you, let him be your slave--

1. *Minister/deacon: One you hire to do menial service - whatever needed doing* 2. *Slave: One who does the will of another*

2. If you will not make life be about you – you will become great: *Have value/importance*

a. Look at life/take actions based on what is good for God b. What is good for other people

III. THE ELEMENTS OF GREATNESS

B. 3 elements of true service

1. **Finding a need and meeting it: John 13:4-5** So during the meal Jesus stood up and took off his outer clothing. Taking a towel, he wrapped it around his waist. ⁵ Then he poured water into a bowl and began to wash the followers' feet, drying them with the towel that was wrapped around him.

2. **Doing things for the benefit of others: Acts 9:36** At Joppa there was a certain disciple named Tabitha, which is translated Dorcas. This woman was full of good works and charitable deeds which she did.

3. **Not being concerned with recognition:**

a. Servants/slaves didn't perform for an audience – or praise: *Ladies & gentlemen the toilets are clean!*

1. *Luke 17:7-10* And which of you, having a servant plowing or tending sheep, will say to him when he has come in from the field, 'Come at once and sit down to eat'? ⁸ But will he not rather say to him, 'Prepare something for my supper, and gird yourself and serve me till I have eaten and drunk, and afterward you will eat and drink'? ⁹ Does he thank that servant because he did the things that were commanded him? I think not. ¹⁰ So likewise you, when you have done all those things which you are commanded, say, 'We are unprofitable servants. We have done what was our duty to do.' "

C. The power of service

1. God's will is accomplished by servants: *Imagine what a church would be if everyone had a servant mindset!*

2. God can choose servants for larger tasks: Because they can be trusted

a. *Luke 16:10* He who is faithful in what is least is faithful also in much; and he who is unjust in what is least is unjust also in much