

Matthew 20:26-28 Becoming Great Through Service to Others

Introduction: In chapter 18 the disciples all wanted to be great. They inquired of Jesus who would be greatest. Jesus called a child and said whoever would humble himself as the child would be greatest. James and John still wanted to be the greatest and asked to be appointed as top men in the kingdom. The ten became angry because they too still wanted to be the greatest. To prevent a power struggle after His death, Jesus set up “congregational” church government. Then He taught them all over again how to become truly great.

I. The way to become great.

- A. “whoever will be great among you, let him be your minister,” verse 26b.
 - 1. Minister here does not mean “preacher.”
 - 2. The Greek word means “servant.”
 - 3. This is the same word that is translated “deacon”, but here does not refer to an ordained deacon.
 - 4. It just means “one who serves another” – especially doing the menial tasks.
- B. “And whosoever will be chief among you, let him be your servant,” verse 27.
 - 1. The word translated “servant” literally means “bond slave.”
 - 2. If anyone wants to be great, let him be your servant.
- C. This is exactly opposite to the way the world measures greatness. (Wealth, power, fame, honor, etc.)
 - 1. The world says the way to be great is to be exalted; Jesus says the way to be great is to be humble.
 - 2. The world says the way to be great is to be served; Jesus says the way to be great is to serve – to be a bond slave to others. (Voluntary)
 - 3. Just as surely as you serve others, you are on your way up the ladder.
- D. This is not meant to punish him for desiring to be great but to help him to become great.

II. Dorcas, an example of greatness through service.

- A. Luke writes of Dorcas in Acts 9:36-40.
 - 1. She was full of good works and alms deeds, verse 36.
 - 2. She made garments for poor widows, verse 39.
 - 3. She made herself a servant – a bond slave – to others.
- B. Dorcas was not great in the eyes of the world, but she was a great woman.
 - 1. She was great in the eyes of those she had helped.
 - 2. She was great in the eyes of her Christian friends.
 - 3. She was great in the eyes of the Holy Spirit who inspired Luke to write words of praise about her.
 - 4. She was great in the eyes of Jesus because she had followed His counsel in our text.

III. Examples here at Pleasant Hill.

- A. Many have volunteered their labor here at this church. (Teaching classes, working on church building, grounds, parsonage, hauling off trash, etc.)
- B. Many have done so much personally for Sister Davis and me.
- C. Just this past Monday I receive a call from one of our newer members volunteering his service in assisting Brother Paul Clark and I clean out a sewer line and cut down a tree. (It's all done.)
- D. There are so many, many others.

IV. The greatest example of all – Jesus.

- A. If anybody has any right to be served by others, Jesus does.
- B. Yet He came not to be ministered to but to minister, verse 28.
 - 1. He saw the whole human race in sin. (By nature, by choice, by practice.)
 - 2. He saw all hell-bound as a result of sin.
 - 3. He volunteered Himself a ransom for sin.
 - 4. He willingly went to the cross to die for us. (That is where He was headed in our text.)
 - 5. He did not merely give Himself as a bond slave but as a blood sacrifice for sinners.
- C. Because of His sacrificial death:
 - 1. All mankind has the opportunity of salvation.
 - 2. Some of us are saved.
 - 3. Lost souls here today can be saved.

Conclusion:

- 1. I call on every lost soul here to be saved now.
- 2. I call upon every saved person to give yourself in service to Jesus.
- 3. I call also upon every saved person to volunteer your services to others. Help the aged, help the young, help the poor, help the helpless, help your neighbor, help your friends, help strangers. (Be careful, but do it.) Help fellow Christians, help non-Christians.
- 4. Don't do it for praise or recognition or reward. Do it for Jesus. Jesus will think you are great.

Preached at Pleasant Hill 10-6-85 A.M.