

GREATNESS TURNED UPSIDE DOWN | LUKE 22:24-38 | PASTOR MARK BOFILL | 8/23/2026

I. The Servant's Perspective (24–30) | II. The Savior's Provision (31–34) | III. The Soldier's Preparation (35–38)

INTRO: Everybody wants their life to **matter**. We want to make an impact, earn respect, and become something Great. But what if our **definition of "Greatness"** is completely different from God's? – Ask yourself: Do I want to Stand above All or do I want to be a Servant of All? – **TODAY**, Jesus turns our **definition of greatness** upside down. I've entitled this message: **GREATNESS TURNED UPSIDE DOWN**.

I. THE SERVANT PERSPECTIVE (22:24–30): At some point during the last supper, the disciples began to argue about Greatness. Their perspectives needed adjustment! – **READ:**

A. DISPUTING GREATNESS (24): They were just questioning themselves about the possibility of *"being the betrayer"* (v.23); now they are disputing who is the Greatest of them all.

1. **What is the reason for such worldly thinking?** Maybe there was some jealousy of the seating position at the table. Perhaps it was caused by speculating who would betray Jesus. Whatever the cause, Jesus had addressed this issue before (**Matt. 20:20-28**). *Whoever desires to be first, let him be...slave*
2. **True Greatness involves Self-Denial—not Self-Promotion!** (**Heb 10:24**): *"Let us consider one another in order to stir up love and good works."* (*Love then is the goal of serving*)

P/A: Be careful when serving Jesus becomes a way of proving yourself. Ministry isn't about: *Who gets the credit, who is considered the greatest* – If we need recognition for serving Jesus, **we've forgotten WHO we're serving!**

B. DISPLAYING GREATNESS (25): Jesus exposes their **worldly view of Greatness**. – He said: *"The kings of the Gentiles exercise lordship and authority over them, ...are called 'benefactors.'"* – A **Benefactor** was a title claimed by rulers who wanted to appear generous, yet ruled as tyrants.

Jesus' Point: **Stop thinking like the world does!** – (**1 John 2:15-17**) commands believers *"...not to love the world or the things in the world."*

C. DEFINING GREATNESS (26): As always, the **Great Shepherd** directs His sheep to green pastures. He provides them with the correct instruction here...

1. **Act not like the world** – The phrase *"not so among you"* tells His followers to act differently...
2. **Act with Humility and Servitude** – When Jesus spoke with His disciples earlier on this issue (**9:46-48**), He uses a **CHILD** to illustrate the **Kingdom example of Greatness**, then went on to say, *For he who is least among you will be GREAT!* (*Be Humble and always dependent on the Father*)

D. DILEMMA OF GREATNESS (27): To further accentuate this **Kingdom law**, Jesus questions them using the **Master/Slave** principle, of which the answer is quite obvious...

1. **The Master** (*who sits at the table*) is the one usually deemed greater, not the servant. – Yet, **!** (*The Master says*) **AM among you as the ONE who serves**... *What an example!*
2. In (**John 13:4-11**), Jesus demonstrated this kingdom law, when He washed the disciple's feet! (**tt. John 13:12-17**), **Read and Expound**... *"Do you know what I have done to you?"*

E. DIRECTION OF GREATNESS (28-30): Jesus then reminds them that *they had remained with Him* for three years—an encouragement to stay the course!

1. **Continuing with Jesus (28)** – *They witnessed Jesus' miracles and sorrows.* Though it was hard, they all (*except Judas*) continued with Jesus in His Trials. (*Will you remain with Jesus in all of your trials?*)
2. **Crowned by Jesus (29)** – *As Jesus endured and was victorious;* He was crowned by the Father. He will likewise crown us if we endure hardships as good soldiers (2 Tim 2:3; Jam 1:12; Rev 2:10)
3. **Celebrating with Jesus (30a)** – In Revelation, Jesus says, To him who overcomes I will grant to sit with Me on My throne, as I also overcame and sat down with My Father on His throne. (**Rev 3:21**)
4. **Committed to be Judges (30b)** – This is a direct reference to the **Millennial Promise.** Matthew give more insight: "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. (**Matt 19:28**). – As they continued, **they would be rewarded in Heaven!** (*True Greatness*)

P/A: There's no easy way to ask it: **Are You Full of yourself?** – When your identity and value are measured by your looks, abilities, wealth, popularity, experience, or even knowledge, it may reveal that your focus is **NOT** Kingdom-minded, but carnally driven.

- **The Remedy: Be a servant of God as Jesus Christ was!** Faithful service here will transfer into God's Kingdom; *where moth cannot destroy, rust cannot corrode, neither can any man steal away!*

II. THE SAVIOR'S PROVISION (22:31-34): I am not sure if **Simon Peter** was at the center of the previous disputing, but Jesus addresses His next statement directly towards him. – **READ:**

A. Satan's Request (31): *"Simon, Simon!"* – The repetition communicates tenderness and urgency. But the phrase: *Satan has asked for you,* reveals that the devil needs permission to touch a believer!

1. (**Job 1:10-12**) reminds us that **Satan could not simply attack Job** without divine permission.
2. **Satan is powerful—but he isn't sovereign!** – The devil can request, but **God retains Authority!**
3. What did Satan desire to do to Peter? *"to sift him as wheat."* – **Satan wanted to violently shake Peter up!** – **P/A:** Satan's purpose was destruction. But know that when God allows such permission, He uses the same shaking for development!

B. Savior's Request (32): Some of the most comforting words in this passage: *"But I have prayed for you..."* Satan is asking for Peter... **Jesus is Praying for Peter!** – Jesus doesn't say: *"Peter, I've prayed that you won't experience difficulty."* – He prayer specifically: *"that your faith should not fail."*

- Peter would soon deny Jesus and would weep bitterly (**vv.60-62**). – **BUT PETER'S STORY ISN'T OVER!** – **WHY?** Because Jesus says: *"I have prayed for you!"* (*Christ is the ultimate intercessor!*)
- (**Rom 8:34**): *"It is Christ who died, and furthermore is also risen, who is even at the right hand of God, who also makes intercession for us."* (**Heb 7:25**) ...**He always lives to make intercession for us!**

P/A: Jesus isn't merely the Savior who died for you... He's the High Priest who **prays for you!**

C. Strengthened Return (32): Jesus says, *"and when you have returned to Me, strengthen your brethren."*

1. Notice Jesus doesn't say **"IF,"** He says: **"WHEN!"** – Jesus sees Peter's failure **before it happens**— but He also sees **Peter's Restoration Beyond the Denial!**

- In (John 21:15-19), Jesus restores Peter beside the **Sea of Galilee**. – Then in (Acts 2), the man who denied Jesus before a servant girl **stands before thousands and BOLDY proclaims Christ.**
- **God can turn your Greatest Failure into a ministry that strengthens somebody else!**

2. Jesus said: **"strengthen your brethren."** – i.e., Peter, when you've been broken... **BUILD OTHERS UP!** – Because you've been restored... **RESTORE OTHERS!** – *God uses Broken people!*

QUOTE: A.W. Tozer *"It is doubtful whether God can bless a man greatly until He has hurt him deeply."*

D. Self-Confident Response (33–34): Peter responds: *"Lord, I am ready to go with You, both to prison and to death."* Peter was sincere... but **sincerity isn't the same as spiritual strength!**

1. Jesus essentially says: **"Peter, you don't know yourself nearly as well as I know you."** *"the rooster shall not crow this day before you will deny three times that you know Me."*
2. Peter's problem wasn't that he **loved Jesus too little**. – His problem was that he **trusted PETER too much!** (1 Cor 10:12) *"Therefore let him who thinks he stands take heed lest he fall."* – There a huge difference between: **Confidence IN CHRIST** and **Confidence in MY commitment to Christ**. – **P/A:** Never say, *"I'd never do that."* – Instead say: **"Lord, apart from You I can do nothing."**

SEGUE: Jesus had **corrected** their view of greatness and **comforted** them concerning coming failure. Now Jesus **PREPARES** them for a dramatic change. *The days ahead will require...*

III. THE SOLDIER'S PREPARATION (22:35-38) – READ:

A. Previous Provision (35): Earlier, in (Luke 9:1-6; 10:1-12), Jesus sent His disciples out with minimal provisions. **Why? They were learning dependence.** – And now Jesus asks: **"Did you lack anything?"** **"No."** What a testimony! – **P/A:** Remember God's past faithfulness when you're facing an uncertain future. (Phil 4:19): *"And my God shall supply all your need according to His riches in glory by Christ..."*

B. Practical Preparation (36): Notice the phrase, **"BUT NOW."** – Things were about to change!

1. Previously, the disciples enjoyed a certain degree of hospitality. But after Jesus is **ARRESTED** and **CRUCIFIED**, His disciples would increasingly experience hostility.
 - To prepare them for **realistic ministry**, He says *take a money bag and knapsack* for yourselves.
 - Trusting God doesn't mean **refusing to prepare**. – (Prov 22:3): *"A prudent man foresees evil and hides himself, but the simple pass on and are punished."* (Scout motto: **Be Prepared!**)
2. Then Jesus says, *"He who has no sword, let him sell his garment and buy one."* **This was not a call to advance His Kingdom through violence.** When Peter used a sword, Jesus immediately stopped him (Luke 22:51; Matt. 26:52).
 - The point was preparedness: **hostility was coming**, and the disciples needed to be ready.

C. Prophetic Fulfillment (37): Jesus explains: *"For I say to you that this which is written must still be accomplished in Me: 'And He was numbered with the transgressors.'"* A quote from (Isa 53:12).

1. Seven hundred years earlier **Isaiah prophesied that Messiah would be: “numbered with the transgressors.”** – Now Jesus says: **It's about to happen!** – Though completely innocent, He would be arrested, condemned, and crucified as a criminal, alongside two robbers (**Mark 15:27**).

2. **Don't miss the Gospel in this passage.** – Jesus was numbered with transgressors so that transgressors could be numbered among the redeemed!

P/A: He took our place! – *“For Christ also suffered once for sins, the just for the unjust, that He might bring us to God.”* (1 Pet 3:18)

D. PERPLEXED DISCIPLES (38): *“Lord, look, here are two swords.”* And He said, *“**It is enough.**”*

1. **The disciples misunderstood Jesus,** thinking physical swords were the answer. But **Christ was not calling for weapons**—He was closing the conversation... **“It is enough.”**

2. **God's kingdom is never advanced by human force.** Jesus said, *“**My kingdom is not of this world. If My kingdom were of this world, My servants would fight**”* (**John 18:36**).

P/A: The real strength of Christ's people is not in their hands but in their hearts—Faith in Christ, Dependence on the Spirit, and **the Word of God as their True Defense** (cf. Eph 6:17).

CLOSING APPLICATION: (**Luke 22:24–38**) gives us three pictures of discipleship!

1. **SERVE HUMBLY:** The disciples asked: *“**Which of us is greatest?**”* Jesus answered by becoming the servant. – **Disciples are to stop chasing recognition!** **Take the towel... Serve somebody!**

2. **STAND DEPENDENTLY:** Peter said: *“**I am ready.**”* Jesus knew Peter wasn't! – **Our strength isn't found in how tightly we hold onto Jesus, but in how faithfully Jesus holds onto us!** – When you **Fail**... **RETURN!** – When you're **restored**—strengthen somebody else!

3. **STEP FORWARD READY:** Jesus told them: *“**But now...**”* because a different season was coming. Opposition and Pressure was coming... **But so was God's provision!**

CHURCH — The same Jesus who prepared them is preparing us! *Though...*

- The world says, “Climb higher...” Jesus says, **“Bend lower.”**
- The world says, “Trust yourself...” Jesus says, **“Depend on Me.”**
- The world says, “Fight for your place...” Jesus says, **“Take up your Cross and Follow Me.”**

So, are you Promoting Yourself—or Surrendering Yourself?

TRUE GREATNESS is found when we are at the feet of Jesus... that is **GREATNESS TURNED UPSIDE DOWN!**