

10/23/20

The Secret of Greatness
Mark 10:35-45

One day a young preacher went up to the pulpit very confident and proud only to have a very difficult time with his sermon. He came down depressed and broken hearted and Mr. Spurgeon said, “If you had gone up the way you came down, you would have come down the way you went up.”

* Pride and humility are as opposite to each other as sin and holiness, pride will cause us to sin while humility will guard against pride.

We want to look at an interesting section in the gospel of Mark where our Lord provides for us the secret of greatness through three movements. Mk. 10:35-45

- I. The seeking of greatness. vs. 35-37
- II. The reproof for seeking greatness. vs. 38-40
- III. The principles for servant greatness. vs. 41-45

I. The seeking of greatness. vs. 35-37

A. James and John sought Jesus for greatness because of pride. vs. 35-36

- * Jesus just mentioned His death and resurrection for the third time!
- 1. The two had been chosen to see Jairus' daughter raised from the others. Mk. 5:37

- 2. The two had been chosen to see Jesus transfigured on the mount. Mk. 9:2
- 3. The two had concluded that whatever they asked of Jesus, He would grant it.
 - a. The common conversation of the twelve was who was the greatest. Mk. 9:34
 - b. Their mother came kneeling. Matt. 20:20-22
 - c. The mother of James and John is believed to be Salome, the sister of Mary the mother of Jesus, making them cousins to Jesus, as John the Baptist.

B. James and John sought for power and prestige. vs. 37

- 1. Sit on right hand implies privilege and power.
 - * Webster defines power as the ability or capacity to exercise control; authority.
- 2. In your glory implies prestige.
 - * Webster defines prestige as prominence or influential status achieved through success, renown or wealth.
- 3. The words “grant” is an imperative command aorist active tense and “sit” is also an aorist active tense, indicating that granting and sitting was to be once and for all, permanently! Lenski
 - * Matthew has “in Your Kingdom”. Matt. 20:21

4. What made this request so heinous was that Jesus just mentioned His death and resurrection for the third time and they are concerned with self!

Illustration

Haman sought greatness out of pride, thinking himself to be above all he declared what was to be done to the one the King would want to honor, not knowing it was Mordecai.

Application

1. Sometimes we have a wrong concept of the Kingdom thinking it is a place to be acknowledged as great.

* “When **pride** comes, then comes shame; But with the humble is wisdom.” Prov. 11:2

2. Sometimes we are given privileges by God that can cause us to be lifted up in pride, depending on our prestige and misuse our power.

* “**Pride** goes before destruction, And a haughty spirit before a fall.” Prov. 16:18

The seeking of greatness reveals pride!

II. The reproof for seeking greatness. vs. 38-40

- A. Jesus says they did not know what they asked. vs. 38a-b

1. The word ask is in the indirect middle voice, representing the person acting in his own interest, self seeking. (Wuest)

2. The heart of man is deceitful and desperately wicked...Jer. 17:9

B. Jesus asks can you drink of the cup that I drink and be baptized with the baptism that I am baptized with? vs. 38c-d

1. The cup represents the experience of the cross, agony and suffering. Ps. 23:5; 75:8
2. The baptism identified with His sorrow and death. Ps. 22; 69:15
3. They responded without hesitation, “We can”, not recognizing it would have meant being in the place of the thieves, next to Jesus on the cross.

C. Jesus prophesies that indeed they both would drink the cup and baptism. vs. 39

1. James was killed by the sword. Acts 12:1-2
2. John was exiled to Patmos after being boiled in oil. Rev. 1:9

D. Jesus said the Father will determine who gets that privilege. vs. 40

1. Jesus was subject to the Father in the plan of redemption, the head of Christ was God the Father. 1Cor. 11:1-3
2. Father will give that honor. Matt. 20:23

Illustration

D. L. Moody once said, “The measure of a man is not how many servants he has, but how many men he serves.”

Application

1. At times we are unaware that our petition is out of self interest and benefit, in spite of our certainty that it is not, as James and John. Phil. 2:5

* This is the practice and tendency of our sinful nature to be noticed and exalted until the Holy Spirit convicts and pierces our hearts.

2. At other times we are reprovved by God because we start complaining about the cup and baptism of our petition because all we had in mind was the personal benefit and not the cost.

* Whoever desire to come after Me, let him deny yourself, and take up his cross, and follow Me.” Mk. 8:34-35

3. Too often we desire a position because of who we know rather than on God's sovereign and righteous choosing.

* God places and gifts members as He pleases. 1Cor. 12:18

4. God rewarded according to the motives of heart. 1Cor. 4:5

The reproof for seeking greatness is due to self-seeking!

III. The principles for servant greatness. vs. 41-45

A. The twelve did not possess servant greatness of themselves. vs. 41

- 1.** The ten heard and were grieved with James and John.
 - a.** The ten heard and were greatly displeased “aganakteo”, indignant, grieved with James and John.
 - b.** The two had beat the ten to what they also had in mind.
 - 2.** The reason being because they had the same thing in mind, but were beat to it.
 - a.** All 12 had discussed who was the greatest before on the way to Cparernum. Mk. 9:33-34
 - b.** Three different times this conversation is recorded, the third is at the Last Supper. Lk. 22:24-34; Jn. 13
- B.** The world model and practice is to rule over and exercise authority over men. vs. 42
- 1.** Those considered great in view of admiration.
 - 2.** The great ones considered from administration.
- C.** The Kingdom model and practice is to serve. vs. 43-44
- 1.** The word for servant “diakonos”, means to waiter on tables. vs. 43
 - a.** Those great among you shall be your servant “diakonos”, the word is used for deacons in the church.
 - b.** This marks a proper view of self!

2. The word slave “doulos” means slave by choice.
 - a. Those desiring to be first shall be slave of all “duolos”, the word is used by Paul for his service to Christ in his epistles.
 - b. The word marks right attitude, love for God and fellow man.
 - c. A servant is not greater than his master. Jn. 15:20

D. The Kingdom example is Christ. vs. 45

1. Jesus, “the Son of Man” the title of Messiah, came not to be served. Dan. 7:13; Matt. 9:5
2. Jesus came not to be served, but to serve and be our example. 1Pet. 2:21
3. Jesus came to give His life a ransom for many. Phil. 2:5
 - a. The word ransom “lutron” means the price of redemption for a slave.
 - b. The vicarious substitutionary sacrifice for us. 2Cor. 5:21; 1Pet. 1:18-19

Illustration

The Navigators are well known for their emphasis on having an attitude of servant hood. Once a businessman asked Lorne Sanny, then president of the Navigators, how he could know when he had a servant like attitude. The answer was, “By how you act when you are treated like one.”

Application

1. Man is not a servant by nature, not one righteous. Rom. 3:10-18; Is. 64:6
 - a. Look at the world where you work and live!
 - b. Look at the history of man!
2. The Christian can only be great if he or she serves.
 - a. If anyone serve Me, let him... Jn. 12:26
 - b. A servant is not greater than his lord... Jn. 15:20
3. Jesus has left us an example and His steps to follow. 1Pet. 2:21
 - a. Husbands are you serving your wife and family?
 - b. Wives are you serving your husband and family?
 - c. Are you both serving Christ in the church?
 - d. Young people are you serving others.

The principles for servant greatness!

Conclusion

The secret of greatness is in serving one another as Jesus, even to the point of laying down His life, as Mark has been revealed this to us through in three movements.

- I. The seeking of greatness!
- II. The reproof for seeking greatness!
- III. The principles for servant greatness!