

SEQUOIA NOTES

Today's Sequoia Message...

The Upside Down Kingdom

With Ryan Dawson - Lead Pastor
August 23, 2026



1) Everyone wants to know they Matter.

2) Jesus redefines Status & Significance.

Mark 9:33-37 (NLT) After they arrived at Capernaum and settled in a house, Jesus asked his disciples, "What were you discussing out on the road?" ³⁴ But they didn't answer, because they had been arguing about which of them was the greatest. ³⁵ He sat down, called the twelve disciples over to him, and said, "Whoever wants to be first must take last place and be the servant of everyone else." ³⁶ Then he put a little child among them. Taking the child in his arms, he said to them, ³⁷ "Anyone who welcomes a little child like this on my behalf welcomes me, and anyone who welcomes me welcomes not only me but also my Father who sent me."

3) The Way Up in the Kingdom of God is Down.

^{35b} "Whoever wants to be first must take last place and be the servant of everyone else."

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Mark 9:30-32 (NLT) Leaving that region, they traveled through Galilee. Jesus didn't want anyone to know he was there, ³¹ for he wanted to spend more time with his disciples and teach them. He said to them, "The Son of Man is going to be betrayed into the hands of his enemies. He will be killed, but three days later he will rise from the dead." ³² They didn't understand what he was saying, however, and they were afraid to ask him what he meant.

- Our ultimate significance is found in our identity in Christ.

Big Idea: Because Jesus has secured my significance, I am free to serve others.

- We can take the lower place because we no longer need the higher place to prove that we matter.

John 3:29b-30 (NLT) "...I am filled with joy at his [Jesus'] success. ³⁰He must become greater and greater, and I must become less and less."

How can you apply this?

- Choose the lower place this week.

"Who is God putting in front of me that I can serve this week?"



Sequoia Impact Communities are where we
live out our identity as a
Family of Servants on Mission.
To get plugged in email:
impactcommunities@sequoiachurch.org

The Upside Down Kingdom
#2 of 6 - August 23, 2026

Context

1. Read Mark 9:33–37. What was happening among the disciples on the road to Capernaum, and why do you think they became silent when Jesus asked what they were discussing?
2. What do we learn from the fact that the disciples were arguing about who was greatest, even while they were following Jesus? What does this reveal about the human desire for status and significance?

Observation

3. What does Jesus mean when He says, “Whoever wants to be first must take last place and be the servant of everyone else”? What stands out to you about His definition of greatness?
4. Why do you think Jesus placed a child in the middle of the disciples? What does welcoming the child communicate about how Jesus views people who have little status, influence, or ability to repay us?

Meaning

5. The message says, “Because Jesus has secured my significance, I am free to serve others.” How does knowing that our identity and worth are secure in Christ change our motivation for serving?
6. How does Jesus’ death on the cross demonstrate that He didn’t simply teach us to take the lower place—He took it Himself? Why is this important for understanding Christian service?

Application

7. Where are you most tempted to prove that you matter—through success, recognition, appearance, finances, parenting, ministry, influence, or something else? How might trusting your identity in Christ free you from that pursuit?
8. Where is God inviting you to “choose the lower place” this week—at home, work, church, in a relationship, or in your community? What is one specific act of humble service you can do without needing recognition for it?



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