

# BUILDING RELATIONSHIPS

## "Patterns For Greatness"

Mark 10:35-45

### INTRODUCTION:

HOW do you want people to REMEMBER you? What rush of memories would you like conjured up when your name is mentioned? Would you rather be remembered as a **great leader**, or an **humble servant**? Jesus plainly pointed out that *"Whoever wants to become great among you must be your servant, and whoever wants to be first must be slave of all."* These questions aren't really all that far-fetched, *because what we're working on right now is the memory that people will have of us!* And HOWEVER people perceive us is in direct correlation to what we're manifesting in our ATTITUDES and ACTIONS!

In our text, Jesus & His disciples were on their way to Jerusalem [*where Jesus would be crucified*], & **James & John requested seats of honor** next to Jesus in His kingdom. In those days it was customary for a king to honor favorite subjects by seating them next to him by the throne. **IN JESUS' KINGDOM, THOUGH, PLACES OF HONOR ARE GRANTED FOR DIFFERENT REASONS THAN WHEN THEY WERE JUST GLORIFYING MEN!** [READ TEXT]

Mark 10:35-45 (NKJV) "Then James and John, the sons of Zebedee, came to Him, saying, "Teacher, we want You to do for us whatever we ask." "And He said to them, "**What do you want Me to do for you?"** 37 They said to Him, "Grant us that we may sit, one on Your right hand and the other on Your left, in Your glory." 38 But Jesus said to them, "You do not know what you ask. Are you able to drink the cup that I drink, and be baptized with the baptism that I am baptized with?" 39 They said to Him, "We are able." So Jesus said to them, "You will indeed drink the cup that I drink, and with the baptism I am baptized with you will be baptized; 40 but to sit on My right hand and on My left is not Mine to give, but it is for those for whom it is prepared." 41 And when the ten heard it, they began to be greatly displeased with James and John. 42 But Jesus called them to *Himself* and said to them, "You know that those who are considered rulers over the Gentiles lord it over them, and their great ones exercise authority over them. 43 "Yet it shall not be so among you; but **WHOEVER DESIRES TO BECOME GREAT** among you shall be your servant. 44 "And whoever of you desires to be first shall be slave of all. 45 **"FOR EVEN THE SON OF MAN DID NOT COME TO BE SERVED, BUT TO SERVE, AND TO GIVE HIS LIFE A RANSOM FOR MANY."**"

Matt.11:11- (NKJV) ""Assuredly, I say to you, among those born of women there has **not risen one greater than John** the Baptist; but HE WHO IS LEAST IN THE KINGDOM OF HEAVEN IS GREATER THAN HE."

### I. THE PRINCIPLE TAUGHT IN THE N.T. IS THAT "GREATNESS" IS A BENEFIT TO BE USED ADVANTAGEOUSLY FOR THE LORD!

- A. The "**rightness**" or "**wrongness**" of GREATNESS is NOT in the power it allows us to use!
1. We're the stewards of God and are to take advantage of every lawful tool we can acquire to glorify God! We are the "earthen vessels" in a small sense, today!
    - a) Do all to the glory of God! Col.3:17.
    - b) USE OUR TALENTS, that are given according to our several abilities! Mt.25:15.
  2. The **distress** that was dealt with in our text was the attitude of "**ME FIRST!**"!
    - a) Have you ever had a "**FIST-FIGHT**"? Most of us have had very few, if any.
    - b) Have you ever had a "**FIRST-FIGHT**"? Most of us have had very many, especially if we have siblings! ["I WANT TO BE FIRST!" "I HAD IT FIRST!" "FIX MINE FIRST!"]
    - c) This same attitude is **manifested in "lines"** at the store, or those "merging in" on the **freeway**, or looking for a **parking place!**
    - d) How long since you've seen somebody hold a door open for another to go first?
- B. If a poll were taken of the group assembled here today and we were asked for a **definitive answer** to the question: "What do we have to do to become great?" ---

1. What percentage do you suppose would reply: "**OBEDIENCE TO GOD AND SERVICE TO OTHERS!**"?
  - a) **In truth**, our answer would depend on our perception of "*greatness*", wouldn't it?
  - b) Don't you really feel that the teaching of Jesus regarding greatness is opposite to what the world generally thinks about it?
2. It's not really a disgrace TO BE GREAT, *but many are MOST DISGRACEFUL in the way that destination is sought!* There are two great lessons to be learned here:
  - a) DON'T PURSUE GREATNESS in an ungodly manner!
  - b) Let CONTENTMENT [tho not self-satisfaction] rule your heart!
- C. **Other than Jesus**, if you were to make a list of the "**Great People of the Bible**", who would probably come first to your mind?
  1. Wouldn't it be those like **Abraham, Moses, Joshua, David, Mary, John the Baptist, Peter and Paul?**
    - a) Do you think any of these **intentionally set out at an early age to become a "star"** in God's kingdom?
    - b) If not, then **WHAT WAS IT** that made these *special people so GREAT*, not only **in our memory** but also in the *view of God?*
    - c) Isn't it pretty well concluded that these people, even in their *IMPERFECTIONS* and *SHORTCOMINGS*, are those who were **dedicated to GODLY SERVICE?**
  2. **That being so, then posing a question like "Why don't people like Nadab & Abihu, or Ahab & Jezebel, or Ananias & Sapphira or Judas Iscariot head a list of GREAT people?" just becomes incredulous, doesn't it?**
    - a) In trying to think of "*great people of the Bible*" aren't we **really** trying to think of **THOSE** who were **GREAT IN THE SIGHT OF GOD?**
    - b) So if that is the gauge we use in examining others, **how can we come to be considered great**, **IF NOT BY BEING GREAT IN THE SIGHT OF GOD OURSELVES?**

## **II. SINCE "GREATNESS" IS A USABLE TRAIT FOR THE LORD, WE NEED TO KNOW HOW TO OBTAIN IT, ...FAVORABLY!**

- A. Do we see that **the Bible URGES** greatness in the servants of God?
  1. The word of God nowhere minimizes the necessity of good influence, or an abundance of good works, or of being proficient in the knowledge of the Truth. **2 Pet.2:2; 3:18.**
    - a) A predominant presence is just what it often takes to *exhort to GODLINESS!*
    - b) The Lord didn't SHAME James & John, but told them how to acquire leadership!
  2. And this desire for greatness wasn't unique with the two men in our text, **but all the apostles were yearning for greatness!** **Luke 22:24-30** (NKJV) "Now there was also a dispute among them, as to **which of them should be considered the greatest**. 25 And He said to them, "The kings of the Gentiles exercise lordship over them, and those who exercise authority over them are called 'benefactors.' 26 "But not so *among* you; on the contrary, he who is **GREATEST** among you, let him be as the younger, and he who governs as he who serves. 27 "**For who is greater, he who sits at the table, or he who serves? Is it not he who sits at the table? YET I AM AMONG YOU AS THE ONE WHO SERVES.** 28 "But you are those who have continued with Me in My trials. 29 "And I bestow upon you a kingdom, just as My Father bestowed *one* upon Me, 30 "that you may eat and drink at My table in My kingdom, and sit on thrones judging the twelve tribes of Israel."
- B. **WHY IS IT** that being **GREAT BEFORE GOD** is one of the hardest acquisitions in Christianity?
  1. Mainly, because the road to greatness is *by the route of humility!*
    - a) And humility is *a requisite enjoined on all of us!* **1 Pet.5:5-6**-"*Likewise you younger people, submit yourselves to your elders. Yes, all of you be submissive to one another, and be clothed*

with humility, for "God resists the proud, But gives grace to the humble." 6 Therefore humble yourselves under the mighty hand of God, that He may exalt you in due time,"

b) It's not just "**a way**", **IT'S THE ONLY WAY!** **Matt.18:3-4** - "[Jesus] said "Assuredly, I say to you, unless you are converted and become as little children, you will by no means enter the kingdom of heaven. 4 "Therefore **WHOEVER HUMBLER HIMSELF** as this little child **IS THE GREATEST IN THE KINGDOM OF HEAVEN."**

2. And humility is just the opposite of PRIDE! Hear just a few of the inspired revelations of the Wise man:

**Prov 8:13** - "The fear of the LORD is to hate evil; Pride and arrogance and the evil way And the perverse mouth I hate."

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

**Prov 13:10** - "By pride comes nothing but strife, But with the well-advised is wisdom."

**Prov 14:3** - "In the mouth of a fool is a rod of pride, But the lips of the wise will preserve them."

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

**Prov 29:23** - "A man's pride will bring him low, But the humble in spirit will retain honor."

C. What, **SPECIFICALLY**, have you **DONE IN ORDER TO BE GREAT** in the sight of God?

1. How do you **FEEL** about **YOUR BEING "GREAT"**?
2. Do you think **OTHER RESPONSIBILITIES** would be involved?
3. How **NECESSARY** is it for us to **PURSUE GREATNESS**?
4. Can't we just be *quiet, non-threatening, busy, lovers of the Lord and His cause* without **all this hub-bub** about greatness? **NO!** *Those are the very things that make us great!*

## **CONCLUSION:**

**1 Pet.2:21** - "For to this you were called, because **CHRIST ALSO SUFFERED FOR US, LEAVING US AN EXAMPLE, that you should follow His steps:**" **Jesus really gave us an example of true greatness.** Even though He is Lord of all creation, He left heaven, became a man, and gave His life as a sacrifice for our sins. He truly became a **SERVANT** of all. **IF WE WANT TO BE GREAT IN HIS KINGDOM, WE HAVE TO PRACTICE THE SAME KIND OF UNSELFISHNESS!**

Our greatness, our exultation, our delight in glorification, *even here on this earth*, comes, **not by our own pushing of ourselves upward**, but by an **HUMBLE, CONDESCENDING, SERVING** spirit! --- Just like the **Divine Pattern** we have in the ***Spirit of Christ!*** **Phil.2:8** - "And being found in appearance as a man, **He humbled Himself and became obedient to the point of death, even the death of the cross.**"