

Message Notes

An Ambitious Mother Comes to Jesus
Matthew 20:17-28
Gospel of Matthew, Part 68
March 19, 2006

Message Outline

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I. The PRINCIPLE of Kingdom Greatness

... but whoever wishes to become great among you shall be your servant, and whoever wishes to be first among you shall be your slave – Mt. 20:26-27

Worldly Greatness	Kingdom Greatness
Focused on self	Focused on God and others
Achieved by manipulation and self-ambition	Achieved by God's grace and self-denial
Marked by authoritative lording over and using of others	Marked by humble service of others

II. The POWER of Kingdom Greatness

... just as the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give His life a ransom for many. –Matthew 20:28

- A. Jesus is “the why” we pursue Kingdom Greatness
- B. Jesus is “the how” we pursue Kingdom Greatness

III. The PATTERN of Kingdom Greatness

- A. Jesus shows “the way” we pursue Kingdom Greatness
- B. Some practical ways to follow the pattern of Jesus in the power of Jesus. . .
 1. *Meditate on the ways that Jesus “served and gave His life a ransom” for you.*
 2. *Ask God to give you the grace and power to deny yourself and serve others.*
 3. *Learn to see the many ways you live for yourself. Confess your sins to the Lord and to a friend.*
 4. *Serve others who can't serve you back.*
 5. *Serve anonymously where there is no possibility of recognition or affirmation.*
 6. *Serve in the places you think are “below you.”*
 7. *When you want to quit serving, keep serving, calling on the name of the Lord.*
 8. *When you want to complain, pray for joy instead.*

Growth Group Understanding Questions

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1. Read Matthew 20:17-34 together. What's ironic about the flow of this text? Why are we appalled by the mother's question in 20:21 in light of 20:17-19? Is there anything funny about Jesus healing blind men right after His discussions with the disciples in Matthew 18-20?
2. Why might we call this incident an example of a "counter productive feature" that actually testifies to the truthfulness of Matthew's gospel?
3. What do we learn about the worldly greatness in this passage? What is its focus? How is it achieved? What is it marked by? How about kingdom greatness?
4. What is the cup that Jesus is about to drink in 20:22? (For some help look ahead to 26:39.) Is the cup physical or emotional or spiritual? How did James and John also drink this cup? (Check out Acts 12:2 and Rev. 1:9!)
5. What does Jesus say about his own authority in this passage?
6. Explain how Jesus is "the why" of serving others as He commands. Explain why Jesus is "the how" of serving others as He commands. Why must we see Jesus as our substitute (our ransom) before we see him as our example?

Growth Group Application Questions

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1. What is most challenging or new in the text/message this week?
2. I notice the temptation to not see myself here in this text? Why must we see ourselves in this text for it to be any good for us? Where should we see ourselves in this text?
3. Of course none of us would send our mother to Jesus with such a question, but how do you pursue worldly greatness in more subtle ways? Why is our need for self strokes a bottomless pit? Why do we not see this unconscious or subconscious part of us?
4. In 20:25 Jesus makes a statement about power, privilege, and position in the ancient world. So has anything changed? What are some modern examples of the abuse or corruption of power in our own day? In politics? In business? In the church?
5. Explain why we can't just "know the Principle of Kingdom Greatness" and "follow the Pattern of Kingdom Greatness." Why is that not enough? Where will that leave us?
6. Which of the 8 practical suggestions jumped out at you as the way you need to "follow the pattern of Jesus in the power of Jesus?"