



SERMON REFLECTION QUESTIONS – September 3, 2023

Sermon Title: 'How to Become Great'
Sermon Series: How Will You Grow?
Scripture: Mark 9:30-37
Preacher: Rev. Mike Kenyon

Theme/Concept: Words that define “worldly” greatness are wealth, power, status, achievement, comfort, etc. Jesus defines it differently. Jesus said to be great in God’s eyes, we must become servants. Words that define Jesus’ teaching are sacrifice, humility, generosity, quiet strength, compassion, and care. This morning we’ll look closely at how Jesus taught and modeled servanthood to his disciples, and then we’ll look at practical ways for us to serve this fall!

Icebreaker: (if with a small group) When you were a child, who is one person you considered ‘great’ and why?

Reflections on the sermon: What did you learn from the sermon that changed your perspective on what it means to be ‘great’?

Background Scripture: Mark 9:30-37 (New International Version)

³⁰ They left that place and passed through Galilee. Jesus did not want anyone to know where they were, ³¹ because he was teaching his disciples. He said to them, “The Son of Man is going to be delivered into the hands of men. They will kill him, and after three days he will rise.” ³² But they did not understand what he meant and were afraid to ask him about it.

³³ They came to Capernaum. When he was in the house, he asked them, “What were you arguing about on the road?” ³⁴ But they kept quiet because on the way they had argued about who was the greatest.

³⁵ Sitting down, Jesus called the Twelve and said, “Anyone who wants to be first must be the very last, and the servant of all.”

³⁶ He took a little child whom he placed among them. Taking the child in his arms, he said to them, ³⁷ “Whoever welcomes one of these little children in my name welcomes me; and whoever welcomes me does not welcome me but the one who sent me.”

Reviewing the Scripture:

1. What key events had occurred before Jesus came to the house in Capernaum?
2. Why did Jesus not want anyone to know where they were? (Verses 30-32)
3. Compare what Jesus said in Mark 9:30-31 with what Jesus said in Mark 8:31. Why do you think the disciples had such a difficult time understanding Jesus' words foretelling his death? (Verses 30-32) Why do you think the disciples were afraid to ask Jesus what He meant?
4. What did the disciples argue about while on the road to Capernaum? Why do you think that the disciples were silent when Jesus asked them what they were discussing?
5. Why do you think the disciples were arguing about who was the greatest?
6. What does the disciples' argument tell you about their understanding of who Jesus was and what He came to do?
7. What did Jesus mean when He said that anyone who wants to be first must be the very last and the servant of all? How did Jesus model this?

8. Why did Jesus call a child to him? What point was Jesus trying to make with his teaching in verse 37?

9. What additional insight do you gain from Matthew 18:2-5 about how children illustrate the attitude we need to have?

Going deeper:

1. Look up a dictionary definition of 'great' or 'greatness.' What are some common ways our culture defines 'greatness'?

2. The disciples argued about who was the greatest and tried to prevent others from doing the works of Christ. (Verses 34, 38-41) Where in your life have you seen or been a part of this same kind of competition, comparison or cliquishness? In your life at home? At school? At work? At church? If you could go back in time, would you act differently in light of Jesus' teaching?

3. Based on Jesus' teaching in Mark 9:33-37, what do you understand Jesus' definition of greatness to be? What are some of the character traits usually associated with someone who acts according to Jesus' definition of greatness?

4. How is the general principle stated in Mark 9:35 different from the way that most human societies function?

5. Can a person have flaws and still be 'great'? What are some Biblical examples of this?

6. How can you be 'the very last and the servant of all' with those in your reach? Is there a place where this change of focus is needed in your life?

7. What is one practical way that you might consider serving this Fall?

Closing prayer:

Dear Lord-

We acknowledge that we cause pain in our lives and the lives of others by striving to be 'great.' Please change our focus back to You, Lord. Help us follow your model of serving so that we truly find joy in being last and the servant of all. We also ask that you give us a renewed ability and desire to love and selflessly serve all people.

In Jesus' name, Amen.