

GREATNESS IN SERVING

The kingdom of heaven being brought forth by Jesus would not be like the kingdoms of earth. Jesus told Pilate, *"My kingdom is not of this world"* (John 18:36). Likewise, He told the Pharisees, *"The kingdom of God does not come with observation... for indeed, the kingdom of God is within you"* (Luke 17:20-21). The parables of the kingdom in Mark chapter four indicate the kingdom will grow and bear fruit in those whose hearts are prepared to receive and be changed by God's word.

One of the key ways in which the kingdom of God would be different from the kingdoms of earth would be the relationship between greatness and serving. From a worldly perspective, those who are great are those who command servants, and oftentimes greatness is measured by the number of servants under one's command. Jesus pointed this out when the question of who would be at His right and left hand (positions of greatness and authority) in His kingdom was posited by the mother of two of His disciples. He said to them, *"You know that the rulers of the Gentiles lord it over them, and those who are great exercise authority over them"* (Matt. 20:25). By the world's standards, great men do not serve, they are served by others.

Jesus made it clear kingdom standards are not the world's standards. While earthly greatness is often characterized by ruling over others, Jesus said, *"Yet it shall not be so among you; but whoever desires to become great among you, let him be your servant. And whoever desires to be first among you, let him be your slave"* (Matt. 20:26-27). Greatness in the kingdom would be characterized by serving.

Of course, Jesus always leads by example, and His life (and death) was the ultimate example of service: *"Just as the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give His life a ransom for many"* (Matt. 20:28). Jesus, the King of the eternal heavenly kingdom, came to earth for the singular purpose of serving. He showed it in His everyday actions toward others and He showed it by giving His life so that we might have the hope of eternal life.

We are called to follow the example of Jesus (1Cor. 11:1; 1Pet. 2:21; 1John 2:6). If we are truly to follow His example, we will strive to live a life of service to others. Greatness in God's kingdom is found in humble service to others. Are you striving to be great?

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