

And the Greatest Is...

Luke 9: 37-50

7/9/00

Intro

We pick up the story the next day after the transfiguration of Christ on the mountain.

It's a stark contrast between the awesome glory of God in Christ and the unbelieving nature of man.

Coming down from a mountain top experience into the troubled world below is something we can all relate to.

Several events in this section lead us to the main point...

Here are lessons about what it means to be truly great.

These are important lessons for us because many have desires of ambition, importance, significance, and value.

I. On His Own, Man is Essentially Weak in Nature

Vs 37-43

A. Jesus calls them an unbelieving and perverted generation.

- Unbelieving, in that faith is central to operating the way God intends.
- Perverted in that they were not straight. They were turned in a different direction than what God desired.

Mark 9:23,24,29 B. Weak men are the conduits of a powerful God.

- Prayer is one essential key to the operation of God's power in our lives.

C. Do you believe the physical is affected by the spiritual? Do you believe the physical is mastered by the spiritual?

If this is so, then the best thing we can do is to recognize the power and importance of the Spirit of God and begin to operate according to Him in our physical lives.

Illus- **Hudson Taylor**, the great missionary to China, said, "Many Christians estimate difficulty in the light of their own resources, and thus they attempt very little, and they always fail. All giants have been weak men who did great things for God because they reckoned on His power and His presence to be with them."

II. We Need to Change Our Definition of Greatness

Vs 46-48

A. In the world, the one who is great is the one who has many servants.

B. In Christ, the more people one serves, the greater he is.

Illus- The child is brought before them as a picture of this truth. Serving the least in the name of Christ is to serve Jesus Himself.

C. In the world, greatness is measured by position, even if there's a lack of character. In the Kingdom of God, greatness is measured by character, not position.

Illus- Rude executives; it's a way of getting what you want (it's also very effective in the world).

Illus- David Livingstone, Hudson Taylor will live in history as great men of God.

Would you rather be great in the eyes of man or the eyes of God?

D. Servant leadership.

- Is thinking of yourself less – true humility.

Illus- The professor at John Hopkins University.

- Is the model we choose for our church.

E. Jesus said, "I did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give my life as a ransom for many."

F. There is joy in true serving.

Those who are truly servants at heart, find great joy in it.

Illus- The man who lost his Christian joy.

Illus- Once a waiter, always a waiter.

III. Greatness is Not Measured By Any Other Standard

- A. It's not measured by how well you heal.
- B. It's not measured by speaking in tongues.
- C. It's not measured by the position you have.
- D. It's not measured by the money you have.
- E. It's measured by how you serve others.

- Considering lowly people as important.
- Considering others more important than yourself.
- When God loved the world He gave.

Conclusion

We all have goals and ambitions in life. In our hearts, we desire to be great. Jesus does not condemn the desire. He simply wants us to understand the key to attaining true greatness:

- Serving as many people as possible.
- Serving the lowly in the name of Christ.