

Rossville Church of Christ Doorpost Devo



March 5, 2023



Encouragement from God's Word

Mark 9:33-37: Disciples Serve

What does it mean to be great? There are thousands of symbols that people wear, flaunt, or buy to signify status. Follower counts on social media, luxury cars, fancy titles, new technology, education, compliments after a sermon or a job well done, influence, speaking engagements are all things that might tempt us to think we have achieved something truly great. We crave the praise of others. We desire influence. We seek admiration and exaltation. This is evident in our culture's obsessive celebrity culture.

Cont. on pg. 3 and 4

Scripture Plan: Read

Mon, Tues, Wed.:

Mark 9:30-37 Each Night

Thurs., Fri., Sat.:

Acts 6:1-7 Each Night

Devo Plan

1. Mon.--Read and Pray Together
2. Tues.--Read, Pray, Ask Questions, and Discuss
3. Wed.--Read, Pray, and Think about how to Apply
4. Thurs.-Sat.--Repeat steps 1-3 with New Passage
5. Sunday--Pray and Reflect on What was Learned in Worship and Class

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Discussion Questions

Mark 9:30-37

Discussion Question #1: How does Jesus' teaching in verses 30-32 connect to verses 33-37? How does the death of Christ help us understand his call to serve?

Discussion #2: Why were the disciples arguing? In what ways do we reflect this same attitude?

Discussion #3: How does Jesus teach his disciples about true greatness and service? What can we learn from what Jesus says here?

Acts 6:1-7

Discussion #1: What was the source of conflict in this passage for the early church? Why was this so important?

Discussion #2: What was the solution for the conflict in the church? What can we learn about service here? What can we learn about leadership? What were the qualifications for those who would be chosen to serve?

Discussion #3: What was the result of this solution? How is the greater mission impacted?

Apply and Obey

To obey what God says, this upcoming week I will...

I will share what I learned with...

Prayer Points

- Lord, Thank You--For being truly great and glorious
- Lord, We Praise You--For Christ's glorious example of service and love
- Lord, Help Us--to give up our pride and lower ourselves in loving humility to imitate Christ

Athletes, singers, and actors are idolized, followed, admired, ogled, and imitated, as if becoming like them would allow us to catch some of their greatness. This fascination with celebrity reveals some things about what we value as a society. We value talent, charisma, good looks, charm, and wealth. And if we as Christians are prone to think Hollywood and American society are so messed up and that we are free from error in this matter, we ought to do some honest self-analysis. Even within Christian and religious circles in America, a celebrity culture seems to be so pervasive. The oxymoronic category of “celebrity pastor” is enough to demonstrate the fact. Even at a more local level, there is such a temptation to idolize people but also to strive for power and for influence. Even for most who realize they will never be worldwide celebrities, it seems that nearly all of us are seeking to establish our own little kingdoms. We climb the ladder within our circles as high as it will go, we rub shoulders with people we think can elevate our status, and we make calculating decisions on how to treat others based on what will benefit us the most. And when we identify the people that are great in our worlds or in our circles, too often the measure of that greatness is superficial and hollow.

Jesus’ definition of greatness profoundly cuts against our human conceptions of value and importance. The disciples of Jesus were often found arguing about who would be the greatest in the kingdom. Jesus’ response to his followers reflects his totally different standard. His disciples must think and live completely differently than the rat-racing, status-exalting world around them. Consider Mark 9:33-37:

“And they came to Capernaum. And when he was in the house he asked them, “What were you discussing on the way?” But they kept silent, for on the way they had argued with one another about who was the greatest. And he sat down and called the twelve. And he said to them, “If anyone would be first, he must be last of all and servant of all.” And he took a child and put him in the midst of them, and taking him in his arms, he said to them, “Whoever receives one such child in my name receives me, and whoever receives me, receives not me but him who sent me.”

The teaching of Jesus runs completely counter to the striving of the world. Instead of climbing to the top and doing whatever it takes to get there, no matter who is hurt along the way, greatness in Christ’s kingdom is a race to the bottom. Greatness is not about wielding influence for gain but about leveraging power for love and service. It is not about being honored but lifting others up.

"Hear, O Israel: The Lord our God, the Lord is one. You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your might. And these words that I command you today shall be on your heart. You shall teach them diligently to your children, and shall talk of them when you sit in your house, and when you walk by the way, and when you lie down, and when you rise. You shall bind them as a sign on your hand, and they shall be as frontlets between your eyes. You shall write them on the *doorposts* of your house and on your gates." --Deuteronomy 6:4-9

The way Jesus instructs his disciples here is profound. He set in their midst a small child. This is someone who was not viewed in that society as great. A child is dependent, weak, and needy. A child cannot do anything in return for you if you serve him. A child cannot return favors or elevate your status. Jesus loved and valued the weakest, the helpless, the needy. He treasured and valued those who could do nothing in return for him. He embraced children in his loving arms and did not see it as a waste of time. And not only that, but he became like those who needed him most. He entered the world of the broken and helpless. He became a helpless child in the incarnation. He lowered himself and took the form of a slave. God incarnate grew up in a forgotten and despised small town. The Lord of glory suffered with the sufferers and brought healing and grace. He welcomed those who had nothing to give in return.

When we are satisfied in Jesus and His grace fully, we will not be calculated strivers for fame, glory, wealth, and attention. We will be generous conduits of grace. We will not step on the backs of others to achieve higher levels of acclamation. We will lower ourselves and step into the worlds of the lonely, the misunderstood, the weak, and the vulnerable. For a disciple, greatness is weeping with a hurting friend who has no one else to turn to. Greatness is inviting the oppressed and the stranger into your house without announcing it to the world. Greatness is faithful prayer for the lost in a quiet closet over a lifetime. Greatness is giving your last two coins in generosity for the purposes of God. Greatness is making an effort to listen to people who are different, who make us uncomfortable. Greatness is the single foster mother who serves children in the name of Jesus. Greatness is a church janitor who joyfully cleans for the glory of God. Greatness is sending a card to an erring Christian every month for twenty years. Greatness is a 90-year old woman faithfully caring for her sick husband in the name of Christ. Greatness is driving hundreds of miles to help a grieving brother in Christ. Greatness is holding the hand of the dying in the hospital and singing songs about Jesus. Greatness is going to the hardest places and the most difficult people to meet needs and proclaim Jesus. I have seen greatness in my brothers and sisters in Christ, and this greatness looks like Jesus. If we are followers, let us follow Jesus into darkness to bring light. Let us follow him into the depths of servanthood and the sufferings of humiliation. Let us follow him into the joy of self-denial and self-giving love.

"Hear, O Israel: The Lord our God, the Lord is one. You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your might. And these words that I command you today shall be on your heart. You shall teach them diligently to your children, and shall talk of them when you sit in your house, and when you walk by the way, and when you lie down, and when you rise. You shall bind them as a sign on your hand, and they shall be as frontlets between your eyes. You shall write them on the *doorposts* of your house and on your gates." --Deuteronomy 6:4-9