

Mar 12, 2023



Oaks Early Risers Bible Class

**The Oaks
Baptist Church**
Grand Prairie, Texas

Lesson Leaders:

James Haymon
Barry Hosford

Class Leaders:

Inreach: Pat Hester
Deacon: C M Hester

FOOD FOR THOUGHT

THOUGHT FOR THE WEEK:
True greatness resides in serving the smallest and lowliest

PRAYER FOR THE WEEK:
Dear God, help me to humbly serve others

SCRIPTURE FOR THE WEEK:
And He sat down, called the twelve, and said to them, "If anyone desires to be first, he shall be last of all and servant of all."
(Mark 9:35 NKJV)
(from "Our Daily Bread", Aug 05, 2021)

Series: Jesus Calls Us
UNIT 1: Called from the Margins of Society
NEXT WEEK
Jesus Talks with a Samaritan
(John 4:7-15, 28-30, 39-41)

The Greatest in the Kingdom Matt 18:1-9

Lesson Background and Introduction

By the time of today's text, Jesus' disciples had witnessed his divine power through his acts of healing (Matthew 14:35-36) and exorcism (15:21-28; 17:14-18), miraculous provision (14:15-21; 15:32-38), and control over creation (14:22-33). The apostles Peter, James, and John witnessed Jesus' power personally as they observed Jesus transfigured before them (17:1-13; Mark 9:2). Later, Peter interpreted the transfiguration as showing Jesus' divine honor and glory (2 Peter 1:16-18). Jews assumed that the Messiah would come with power and strength as the anointed servant of God (see Isaiah 42:1-4). They did not desire or expect a suffering and humbled Messiah (see Matthew 16:21-22; compare 20:25-28). The Gospel writers use different names for God's rule on earth as inaugurated by the Christ. All four Gospels include the designation "kingdom of God" (Matthew 12:28; Mark 12:34; Luke 9:2; John 3:5; etc.). However, Matthew's Gospel includes a second designation: the "kingdom of heaven" (Matthew 3:2; 4:17; etc.). The reason for Matthew's unique designation is unknown, but students propose that Matthew used it to avoid writing the holy name of God. Both designations refer to the eternal kingdom established by God where he rules (see Psalms 145:11, 13; 103:19; compare John 18:36). Jesus' teaching and ministry prepared people to receive this kingdom (see Matthew 4:17; Luke 8:1). To receive the kingdom requires that people be born again (John 3:3-8) and obey the will of God (Matthew 7:21). Today's Scripture reveals a third condition to enter God's kingdom. Parallel texts to today's lesson are Mark 9:33-37 and Luke 9:46-48.

Most people, at some time or another, desire to have power and be seen as great by the world. We are bombarded with messages and images that celebrate people who appear powerful, prestigious, and famous, great by the standards of the world. The response to these messages requires that believers immerse themselves in Jesus' teaching regarding the required attitudes toward greatness. Through the power of the Holy Spirit, followers of Jesus must learn to embrace Jesus' definition of greatness, it must include childlike humility. Further, followers of Jesus must remove those things that would cause themselves or others to stumble in sin. This includes disregarding the world's messages of greatness, power, and prestige. Believers should also remove the temptations to sin in the things that they see, hear, and do. These are the parts that make up a believer's actions and habits. Do your actions shape you to desire the world's definition of power and status? Do your habits lead you to sin or cause others to sin? If so, remove those causes of sin and adjust your habits! Finally, followers of Jesus must embrace an attitude of humility and trust. This is not a sense of naivety, but confidence that God will provide for his people and show mercy consistent with his nature. When we embrace this attitude, we will likely not receive worldly glory. Instead, we will share in the promised, and far superior, glory from God (Romans 8:17).

(Adapted from the NIV Standard Lesson Commentary)

NOTES AND CROSS-REFERENCES

Measure of Greatness through Humility (Matt 18:1-5)

Worldly desires for greatness (1)

- Worldly greatness can lead to misguided security (1 Cor 10:12)
- Worldly greatness can lead to pride before the fall (Prov 16:18)
- Worldly greatness can lead to false expectations of self (Matt 26:33-35)
- Worldly greatness can lead to self-deceiving knowledge (1 Cor 8:2)
- Worldly greatness can lead to foolish plans (Luke 12:18-21)

Greatness cannot get us into heaven (2-3)

- Getting into heaven requires righteousness (Matt 5:20)
- Getting into heaven is hard for those who have great riches (Matt 19:23)
- Getting into heaven requires entering through the narrow gate (Luke 13:24)
- Getting into heaven requires being born again (John 3:5)
- Getting into heaven can require hardships (Acts 14:22)

Greatness requires humility (4-5)

- Humility through grace (James 4:6)
- Humility before God (James 4:10)
- Humility by considering other's interest before ours (Phil 2:2-4)
- Humility that is not false (Col 2:17-19)
- Humility that comes from godly wisdom (James 3:13)

Warning of Sin Related to Greatness (Matt 18:6-9)

Warning of being a stumbling block (6-7)

- Stumbling block by standing in the way of others (Matt 23:13)
- Stumbling block by misuse of freedom (1 Cor 8:9)
- Stumbling block by not loving our brothers and sisters (1 John 2:10)
- Stumbling block because we are not perfect (James 3:2)
- Stumbling block by causing others to sin (Matt 18:6)

Warning of consequences of disobedience (8)

- Disobedience that comes from the influence of Satan (Eph 2:1-3)
- Disobedience of being deceptive (Eph 5:6)
- Disobedience that should not even be mentioned (Eph 5:12)
- Disobedience through actions that display the denial of God (Titus 1:15-16)
- Disobedience that will receive just punishment (Heb 2:2)
- Disobedience that keeps one from entering God's rest (Heb 4:6)

Warning to get rid of the causes of sin (9)

- Get rid of things that come from the old self (Eph 4:22)
- Get rid of all unrighteousness (Col 3:8-11)
- Get rid of everything that hinders (Heb 12:1)
- Get rid of all moral filth and evil (James 1:21)
- Get rid of all deceitfulness (1 Peter 2:1)