
"Jesus answered, "You do not know what you are asking. Are you able to drink the cup that I am to drink?" They said, "We are able." (Matthew 20:22)

I. A Mother's Request

- a. Every good mother wants the best for their children. The "sons of Zebedee" were James and John.
- b. Unfortunately, the mother's request excluded the other disciples.
- c. If James and John are at Jesus's left and right, where will Peter be?
- d. The other disciples are angry, not because they have a different attitude of greatness, but because they want the top set for themselves.
- e. The mother shows respect and honor to Jesus, by bowing before Him. Jesus knew what she was going to ask, and He used this as a teaching moment for the disciples.
- f. The question, *Who is the greatest?* Was answered in Matt 18:1-4.
- g. The mother must have recognized Jesus authority (Messiah) and His future kingship. She wanted her sons to be placed in a position of favorable attention.
- h. For Jesus, kingship is intimately tied to suffering.

II. Greatness is Measured by Service

- a. Self-ambition, a desire to be recognized for achievement and to be first is a difficult root to weed out. Humble service paves the way to Kingdom greatness. What did Jesus teach on this subject?
- b. *The Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and give His life as a ransom for many.*
 1. Jesus was mocked, flogged and crucified. This is the ideal expression of greatness which is service to others, endurance of hardships and a willingness to personal sacrifice for the mission.
- c. *Whoever want to become great among you must be your servant, and whoever wants to be first among you must be your slave.*
- d. Greatness in the world is determined by status, but in the kingdom by function.
- e. In the world greatness is shown by ruling, but in the kingdom by serving.
- f. In the world's eyes the great are those who can order others around, but in the kingdom the great are those who endure hard times and injustice without complaining.
- g.
- h.
- i.

III. Apply the Scriptures to Your Life

- a. Throughout the centuries the church has been slow to learn this lesson. We are status-ridden.
- b. We talk in terms of promotion in the work and ministry of the church. Generally, clergy leave the menial tasks to others, instead of sharing in the washing-up!
- c. We love honorific titles like 'Right Reverend' and 'High Bishop', whereas Jesus came to be, and to be seen the Servant.
- d.
- e. .