

A GLIMPSE OF GREATNESS *(Mark 9:33-50)*

True greatness is the antithesis of pride and exclusivity. Yet in our culture, it's all about position, rank, and prestige. This is a very real danger none of us are immune to so we should seriously guard against it.

I. TRUE GREATNESS MEANS BEING LAST (vv. 33-35)

1. Jesus and the twelve made their way back to headquarters in Capernaum.
 - The disciples had been commissioned, empowered and sent out to proclaim the Gospel.
2. Then a disturbing development took place: a heated argument over who was the greatest.
 - Look back at verse 31: They still did not get it! Jesus was going to the cross to serve God and others; that's Kingdom-centered greatness.
3. They were demanding recognition, attention, and applause.

II. TRUE GREATNESS IDENTIFIES NO CLASS DISTINCTION (vv. 36-37)

1. Jesus knew the source of the issue. He knew their hearts—sinful pride.
 - Pride is the sin we cannot see in ourselves, yet so detest in others.
2. To drive home His point, Jesus illustrated it with an object lesson.
 - Greek and Hebrew society viewed children as unimportant.
 - Those who are considered great in the Kingdom are not those who claw their way to the top, but rather those who seek for others to get the honor while humbly looking out for others' interests ahead of their own.

III. TRUE GREATNESS REJOICES IN OTHERS' REWARDS (vv. 38-41)

1. Something John heard stirred his conscience and he half asked a question and half confessed.
 - They had seen another person successful in ministry and had a problem with it.
2. Pride has no place in the Kingdom of God.
 - In fact, we should rejoice in the rewards Christ gives to others.
 - Pride is not a virtue. It's the root of all sin.

IV. TRUE GREATNESS DOESN'T CAUSE OTHERS TO STUMBLE (v.42-50)

1. Let's examine the words of verse 42:
 - The word for *little ones* is not "children" but refers to common, ordinary disciples.
 - The word for *cause to stumble* means to cause a believer to fall away from God.
 - Jesus took this seriously enough to proclaim it would be better that they be drowned than cause another to stumble.
2. Nowhere is physical mutilation called for in the Bible.
 - Jesus is talking about habits and activities that have a control over you, that keep you from following God's will.
 - Jesus calls us to endure the pain of severing those things from our lives.
 - It's better to cut them off than endure the chastisement of God.

The truly great are those who surrender everything in their life to Jesus. The truly great are rarely honored. They are those who are hidden, those who associate with the weak, those who serve others at their own expense.