



HOLINESS

A Divine Way of Living



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LESSON 9

HUMILITY, HONOUR & HAPPINESS.

The word “greatest” in the Greek is *meizon*, a comparative of the word *megethos*, which means “great.” *Meizon* is a superlative; it refers to the greatest of the great – mega-importance.

Is it any wonder that when the Lord was taken in the Garden of Gethsemane everyone fled? Is it any wonder that the disciples did not remember the things that were going to happen? Is it surprising that the dawning of the first Resurrection Sunday found them huddled behind locked doors, afraid, depressed, and helpless? No, it is no surprise at all. Because when Jesus was teaching, they were preoccupied, not with who He was and what He was going to do, but with their own greatness, an inflated mega-self-importance.

Read Mark 9:31-37.

When a Jewish rabbi had an important lesson to impart, he would sit down, a signal to his students to take their place, that he was about to teach. So, the Lord sits down and calls the twelve to Himself. He takes the word they are using, “*great*,” and changes it to “*first*” (*protos*). Why would He do that? Because He knew what they really wanted, just as He knows what we really want. The disciples were not asking for greatness, they were asking for prominence. They were interested in recognition. And so, the Lord strikes a blow at the inordinate ambition of the disciples, while at the same time holding out to them the potential for true greatness.

“Last” is *eschatos*, which means “last in order, last in place.” “Servant” is *diakonos*, the root of “ministries” in 1 Corinthians 12:5. In the ancient world the *diakonos* was a table waiter, a common servant, someone whose sole purpose in life was to serve someone else. The *diakonos* filled his time with serving; he made his living serving; he was recognised by everyone else as one whose only function was service.

Notice that Jesus does two things with the child (Mark 9:36-37). He reaches out and takes the child and sets him on his feet in the middle of the disciples. He lets the disciples look at the child and then he gathers him into His arms. “Gather” is from *enagklizomai*, which means “to enfold or embrace.” He wraps Himself around the child and then He begins to teach the lesson about greatness.

“Receive,” *dechomai*, means “to welcome.” The word never carries the connotation of mere toleration; it always has the idea of receiving to oneself with an embrace. The Lord has just illustrated what He is now teaching with words. He is telling the disciples – and He is telling us – not just to accept, but to warmly welcome, the smallest and the apparently least important person.

Note that He says not only to receive the child, but to do it in “My name”. Our motivation should be the desire to serve the person of the Lord Jesus Christ. Think about what this implies in the smallest functions of life. What we do for His sake, because of our love for Him, we have actually done to Him.

Christ declared John the Baptist to be a/the greatest prophet who ever lived! (Luke 7:28). The reason is that John was “the least” of those who served. He declared: John 3:30 “He (Christ) must increase, but I must decrease”. This is the secret of true greatness.

HUMILITY.

1. Humility is displayed through restraint. (1 Cor 4:12, Titus 3:2, Eph 4:2)
2. Humility is produced by the Holy Spirit, we need to yield to Him. (Gal 5:22-23, Col 3:12).
3. Humility is absolutely essential in teaching. (2 Tim 2:25, 2 Cor 10:1)
4. Humility is absolutely essential in learning. (Psalm 25:9, Acts 17:10-12)
5. Humility is priceless in the sight of God. (James 4:6, 1 Peter 5:5).
6. Humility is the path to divine promotion. (1 Peter 5:6, James 4:10).
7. Humility is the basis of correct self-esteem. (John 15:5, Psalm 18:35, 2 Cor 3:5).
8. Humility is perfectly exemplified in the Lord Jesus Christ. (Isaiah 53:7, Phil 2:4-7).

Each of us chooses whether we will have the attitude of service. Then we choose how far our service will go. God allows us to define the boundaries of our own growth in time and of our own greatness in eternity. The further down we are willing to go, the more we are willing to serve unnoticed and without acclaim, the greater we will be in eternity.

Any large Jewish household would have had a great number of vessels, some made of gold and silver, many more made of wood and earthenware or clay. The gold and silver were very valuable and would be used for special purposes. The wood and clay were common and would be used for menial tasks.

*2Ti 2:19-23: Nevertheless the foundation of God standeth sure, having this seal, The Lord knoweth them that are his. And, Let every one that nameth the name of Christ **depart from iniquity**.*

*But in a great house there are not only vessels of gold and of silver, but also of wood and of earth; and some to honour, and some to dishonour. If a man therefore **purge himself from these**, he shall be a vessel unto honour, sanctified, and meet for the master's use, and prepared unto every good work.*

Flee also youthful lusts: but follow righteousness, faith, charity, peace, with them that call on the Lord out of a pure heart. But foolish and unlearned questions avoid, knowing that they do gender strifes.

