

Greatness Through Service

Ponder: Don't great people have attendants serving them?

Scripture: "he who is greatest among you, let him be as the younger, and he who governs as he who serves" (Lk. 22:26, NKJV).

Greatness, as the world views it, brings authority, honor, privilege, and probably wealth. But service? Many might pay lip service to the concept, but that's about as far as it goes.

As Jesus' disciples argued about "which of them should be considered the greatest" (Lk. 22:24) they certainly weren't focused on serving! Their view aligned more closely to that of the Gentile kings who exercised lordship over their subjects (22:25). Even some of Israel's ancient kings had behaved heavy-handedly. Rehoboam, for example, boasted to his people that he would oppress them even worse than his father, Solomon, had done (see 1 Kings 12:10).

Jesus, however, modeled a different kind of greatness, and He requires the same of His followers. As the youngest of four children, I can identify with the paradox of the greatest being as the younger. The younger generally gets stuck with the lackluster tasks nobody else wants to do! Ditto for the governor's attendant. How many times do you suppose a governor serves the coffee to his staff?

The Lord practiced what He preached, too. "For who is greater, he who sits at the table, or he who serves? Is it not he who sits at the table? Yet I am among you as the One who serves" (Lk. 22:27). Indeed, Jesus set the example for the twelve as He washed their feet at the last supper (John 13:1-17). Ordinarily this menial task would have been performed by a household servant. When Jesus finished washing their feet, He asked, "Do you know what I have done to you?" (v. 12). We might expect them to say, "Of course we know. You washed our feet!" But His question went deeper. "You call Me Teacher and Lord, and you say well, for so I am. If I, then, your Lord and Teacher, have washed your feet, you also ought to wash one another's feet. For I have given you an example, that you should do as I have done to you" (vv. 13-15). What a marvelous lesson for men who, only a short while previously, were arguing about who would be the greatest!

Do you want to be great as Jesus sees greatness? Serve!

Song: "Make Me A Servant"

Prayer: Gracious Father, we thank You for giving us the perfect example of a servant in Your blessed Son, Jesus the Christ. Help us, we pray, to humble ourselves and to see the greatness of service. In Jesus' name, Amen.