

SERMON NOTES

Preacher: Kevin Hardy

Date: February 9, 2025

Text: Mark 9:30-41

Title: What Is Greatness?

Big Idea: Disciples of Jesus must become humble servants, putting others first.



I. CHRIST'S LOVE FOR SINNERS (vv. 30-32)

for he was teaching his disciples, saying to them, "The Son of Man is going to be delivered into the hands of men, and they will kill him. And when he is killed, after three days he will rise." (v. 31)

The SON OF MAN is going to be delivered into the HANDS OF MEN.

Jesus is saying: "the one who gives himself for others will die at their hands."¹

"delivered" = Jesus' death was not an accident! By God's plan this would happen.

II. LOVING ONE ANOTHER (vv. 33-37)

And he sat down and called the twelve. And he said to them, "If anyone would be first, he must be last of all and servant of all." (v. 35)

True greatness in God's eyes is not about power, wealth, or status, but about humility, service, and love.

Question: Are we pursuing the world's definition of greatness, or are we seeking the greatness that God desires?

Jesus gives a radical lesson on status here.

Jesus is saying that true greatness is found, not in rank or possessions or any of these other markers we may have, but in character and service!

III. LOVING OUTSIDERS (vv. 38-41)

For the one who is not against us is for us. (v. 40)

"God's kingdom...is about service, not status. If we focus on status, we compare other people against ourselves, put them in their place, and exclude them because they might compete with us. If we focus on service, we point people to Jesus, get alongside them, and encourage them in serving him."²

¹ Edwards, *The Gospel according to Mark*, p. 283.

² Griffith-Jones

APPLICATION QUESTIONS

To be used for personal reflection and/or sermon-based small group discussion.

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READ Mark 9:30-41

Why do you think Jesus wanted to keep His journey private while teaching His disciples? (v. 30-31)

What does Jesus mean when He says, “The Son of Man is going to be delivered into the hands of men”? (v. 31) How does this foreshadow His mission? Why were the disciples afraid to ask Jesus about His statement regarding His death and resurrection? (v. 32)

What does the disciples’ argument about who is the greatest reveal about their understanding of Jesus’ mission? (vv. 33-34)

Jesus teaches that true greatness comes through servanthood (v. 35). How does this challenge the world’s definition of success? How can we practice servanthood in our daily lives, both in church and in our communities?

In verses 36-37, Jesus uses a child to illustrate humility and welcoming others. What does this teach us about how we should treat others, especially those who seem insignificant?

John tells Jesus about someone casting out demons in His name, yet the disciples wanted to stop him (v. 38). Why do you think they reacted this way? Jesus responds by saying, “*For the one who is not against us is for us*” (v. 40). How should this influence our attitudes toward other believers or ministries that may be different from ours?

Jesus emphasizes the importance of even small acts of kindness done in His name (v. 41). How can we cultivate a habit of serving others in small yet meaningful ways?

PRAY

