

The Way Up is Down

Mark 10:42-45

INTRODUCTION

1. Jesus made many counter cultural statements
2. Look at the "Beatitudes"
3. These statements run counter to everything we are taught about success
4. Jesus turned life upside down
5. Listen to another statement made by Jesus
6. Matt. 20:26 (NIV)
"whoever wants to become great among you must be your servant."
7. That sounds totally upside down to us, but that's the way Jesus thought - if you want to be great, be humble
8. Look at what Jesus says about humility in Matthew 23:12:
"For whoever exalts himself will be humbled. And whoever humbles himself will be exalted."
9. According to Jesus, the absolute test of greatness is humility
10. Humility is tested every day -
11. Every conversation, every relationship, every decision is a test of whether I am going to exalt myself or humble myself
12. Is your life about being served or serving?
13. Many people think that being great means being a leader
14. Jesus taught his disciples that being great means learning to be a servant
15. There are many "models" for leadership today
 - Many churches are following the model of the secular business world
 - CEO's and administrative boards have replaced the biblical model of servant leaders
 - John Piper has a book out entitled Brothers, We are Not Professionals
 - His point is well taken – serving in the church is not about promotions and "climbing the corporate ladder"

16. If we want to learn about leadership in the church, we need to look to Jesus

- In His Kingdom - "the way up is down!"
- We do not serve by having power over others – but by using power for others (Mk 10:42-45)
- Until we learn this we will never get doing church right

TRANSITION: Three truths about servant ministry from John 13

I. THE MOTIVE FOR MINISTRY IS LOVE

1. John 13:1 -
*"Now before the feast of the Passover, when Jesus knew that his hour had come to depart out of this world to the Father, having loved his own who were in the world, **he loved them unto the end.**"*
 - a. Luke tells us that on the way to celebrate the Passover Meal the disciples began to argue among themselves about who would be the greatest in the kingdom (22:24)
 - b. The disciples were insensitive to what Jesus was going through and their actions were small, trite and selfish
 - c. But ... **"He loved them"**
 - d. He loved them not because of who they were - but in spite of who they were
 - e. He loved them not based on what they deserved - He loved them because it was His nature - His essence
 - f. Jesus lived His life as the expression of *the One Who is Love*
2. **"to the end"** -
 - a. i.e., - end of His life - all the way to the cross
"Greater love hath no man than this: that a man lay down his life for his friends" (Jn 15:13)
 - b. but **"end"** also means "completely - ultimately - totally"
 - c. The motivation of ministry is love - not just to those easy to love, but to those hard to live with
 - d. Ministry is even for *"the least of these"* (Matt 25:45)
3. Jn 13:1 says, *"Jesus knew that his hour had come to depart out of this world to the Father"*
 - a. William Barclay notes that the closer Jesus got to the cross, the more loving, the more sensitive, the more caring He was to those men gathered around Him (John 14:1-3)

- b. Even with the cross before Him - He remained focused on the needs of others
- c. Servant Leadership means putting others first (Lk 9:23)

TRANSITION: The motive for ministry is love . . .

II. THE MODEL FOR MINISTRY IS JESUS

1. John 13:4-5 - (ESV)

"Jesus ... rose from supper. He laid aside his outer garments, and taking a towel, tied it around his waist. Then he poured water into a basin and began to wash the disciples' feet and to wipe them with the towel that was wrapped around him."
2. Jesus humbled Himself
 - a. He humbled Himself by stepping out of eternity into this world
 - b. But He humbled himself in this world by living the life of servant
 - c. Mark 10:45 - *"For even the Son of Man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister and give his life as a ransom for many"*
3. But notice Peter's reaction to Jesus' act of service (Jn 13:6 - NLT)

"When Jesus came to Simon Peter, Peter said to him, "Lord, are you going to wash my feet?"

 - a. Peter did not want Jesus to wash his feet
 - b. Why?
 - c. It did not fit Peter's image of what Jesus (Messiah) should have been doing
 - d. Peter did not understand the type of Messiah that Jesus came to be
 - e. But he also rejected this type of servanthood – he did not want to do it himself -
 - f. He strongly rejected what Jesus was doing (Jn 13:8) - *"You shall never wash my feet!"*
4. Jesus commissioned His disciples to do as He had done (Jn 13:12-15)

¹²*When he had washed their feet and put on his outer garments and resumed his place, he said to them, "Do you understand what I have done to you?"* ¹³*You call me Teacher and Lord, and you are right, for so I am. ¹⁴If I then, your Lord and Teacher, have washed your feet, you also ought to wash one another's feet. ¹⁵For I have given you an example, that you also should do just as I have done to you.*

- 5. The Kingdom over which Jesus rules is not a kingdom in which we "lord it over" others –
- 6. We serve - we serve from our knees

TRANSITION: 1) The motive of ministry is love; The model of ministry is Jesus -

III. THE MEASURE OF MINISTRY IS SERVICE

1. Church growth experts measure ministry using many different devices
2. Numbers are not the only means of measure – but numbers are important
3. By Church Growth standards the three year ministry of Jesus was a failure
4. But kingdom success is not the same as worldly – secular – success
5. Success in God's Kingdom is "not measured by the number of people who serve you, but the number of people you serve"
6. Jesus demonstrated and modeled the life of a servant - the life He desires for all His followers to live
7. It is not easy
8. The Lord's summary statement on servanthood is found in **Matt 25:31-40**
9. In the end it is God's measurement that counts . . .