

Who should be the Greatest?

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[0:00] Can you guess who this is?

I am the greatest. I said that even before I knew I was.! Who said that? Muhammad Ali. He floats like a butterfly and stings like a bear. So he claimed. Muhammad Ali, the greatest boxer, one could say at that time, until he was defeated.

But he said, I am the greatest. And friends, we want to be great in life. But where is true greatness found?

How do we measure greatness in God's terms, in God's kingdom? We're going to look at how to be a servant in terms of our model, our motive, our mindset.

[0:59] Because being a servant is the true measure of greatness in God's kingdom. The first thing to consider is who are you following? You can choose to follow someone like Muhammad Ali.

I propose to you the best model, the best one to follow in terms of greatness is the Lord Jesus Christ. The greatest model.

Our model. Number one. When we think about leadership, we don't always relate that word with servanthood. Yet this is what our Lord teaches us.

He is the great model for us of how to be great in this life. And Jesus not only taught us how to live, he modeled how to be that servant in his own life.

The master himself, our Lord, shows us the heart and the attitude of a true servant. And the disciples asked the Lord Jesus, who would be counted the greatest?

[2:05] And they did it a number of times. And every time they ended up causing strife. And at such times the Lord said of servanthood.

He demonstrated servanthood. In Luke 22 there's an account. He says, I am among you as he that serveth.

I am among you as he that serveth. And at another time in Mark 9 we see the Lord saw the disciples arguing. They're having a bit of argy-bargy.

A bit of arguing. And disputing. And he asked them what was happening. And in Mark 9 we pick up the account from verse 34. When our Lord challenged them, it says, They held their peace.

For by the way they had disputed among themselves who should be the greatest. And he sat down and called the twelve and said to them, If any man desire to be first, the same shall be last of all and the servant of all.

[3:17] It's a question people ask today. Who should be the greatest? A little later in Mark's account we see them jockeying for position again.

And James and John asked of the Lord Jesus. We pick it up from part of verse 37 in Mark 10. They said, Grant unto us that we may sit one on thy right hand and the other on thy left hand in thy glory.

But Jesus said unto them, You know not what ye ask. Can ye drink of the cup that I drink of? And be baptised with the baptism that I am baptised with?

There's a cost to greatness. He explained to them that before the crown there is a cross. Before the glory there had to be the baptism of suffering.

The Lord Jesus told how greatness in the kingdom of God is measured. Not by realiship or authority as the world would count it. But by servanthood.

[4:30] By being a servant. It goes on in verse 42. Jesus called them to him and said unto them. You know that they which are accounted to rule over the Gentiles exercise lordship over them.

And their great ones exercise authority upon them. But so shall it not be among you. But whosoever will be great among you shall be your minister.

In other words your servant. And whosoever of you will be the chiefest shall be servant of all. For even the son of man came not to be ministered unto but to minister and to give his life a ransom for

many.

Whosoever will be great among you shall be your servant. Yet our world today is all geared about who's going to be the chief.

Who's going to be the first. Who's going to be the uppermost. The first in line. It's like a story was told of a Christian camp. And the children were told that there was going to be some ice cream.

[5:40] And they all wanted to get in line for the ice cream didn't they. And as the line formed the children pushed and shoved and tried to get right at the front of the cube.

They pushed their way in to the pecking order. And after they had determined where everyone would line up. The preacher instructed the children to turn 180.

And for the ones serving the ice cream to begin at the opposite end of the line. So those who had pushed their way to the front. Where were they?

At the back. At the back of the line. If you want to be a great Christian. Be a servant of all. The Lord Jesus wasn't the world's greatest leader because he lived the life of a tyrant.

But because he served the lowliest and those most in need. The Lord Jesus is the perfect example of selflessness.

[6:42] Selflessness. We read of that in Philippians 2. Philippians 2. A familiar passage. Philippians 2 from verse 5. Speaking of the Lord Jesus and his selflessness.

The greatness of his selflessness. It says Philippians 2 verse 5. Let this mind be in you. Which was also in Christ Jesus.

Who being in the form of God. thought it not robbery to be equal with God. But made himself of no reputation.

And took upon him the form of a servant. And was made in the likeness of man. And being found in fashion as a man. He humbled himself. And became obedient unto death.

Even the death of the cross. Wherefore God also hath highly exalted him. And given him a name. Which is above every name. That at the name of Jesus.

[7:46] Every knee should bow. Of things in heaven. And things in earth. And things under the earth. And that every tongue.

Should confess that Jesus Christ. Is Lord. To the glory of God the Father. Who should be the greatest. Who should be the greatest.

Our model. Our master. Our saviour. Jesus Christ is the Lord. The Lord of lords. And the King of kings. Our great and perfect model.

Of servanthood. Is our very Lord himself. The very Lord Jesus Christ himself. Our model. Our master. The model for life. What does he teach us?

Servanthood. He teaches us how. We should be a servant. Make that your goal today. Brother. Sister. Make that your goal. To be a servant. To follow that model.

[8:42] Above all models. That Lord above all lords. The Lord Jesus Christ. Servanthood. Servanthood. Let that be your aspiration. It's not always easy.

Being the servant. You'll serve people. And they won't always appreciate it. You may not get the pat on the back. It can be costly. It costs something to be obedient unto death.

Doesn't it? That's obedience. Isn't it? So we have seen firstly the who. The who should be the greatest. The model. Our Lord Jesus Christ.

The who. Of true greatness. Is Christ Jesus. Our Lord. Who should be the greatest. Our model. Of greatness. Is Jesus Christ. A second aspect.

Of servanthood. Is the how. How can we. Be a servant. How can we be. A servant. It's important. To consider. Secondly. Our motive.

[9:44] How are we to be. A servant. Our motive. Is a key. To be a servant. We need to check. Our motive. What do we think. When we ask the question.

Who should be. The greatest. We need to consider. What is the motive. Of our life. Who should be the greatest.

In our life. What do some people say. Look out. For number one. That's what some people think. Isn't it? Their philosophy. Look out. For number one. Me first.

Everybody else is second. Who should be the greatest. What's our motive. In life. Who should be the greatest. In your life. In mine.

Our Lord. And his will. Should determine. Our way. Of life. Our motive. Should be to find. And to do his will. The whole purpose of life. Is to be. A servant.

[10:40] To serve. To please. Our master. To honour. Our Lord. Let that. Be our motive. Our motive. To be servant hearted. To have a humble.

Spirit. Spirit. So. What. Does this look like. In. The everyday life. That we are to live. What does it look like. If we are to be. Such a servant.

And you know. Right through the Bible. The people of God. Were called servants. Of God. The servant. Of the Lord. It's a very. Often. Recurring theme. And many men and women.

Through the Bible. Are called. God's servants. God's ministers. Serving God. What does it look like. How. Will it look. How will it be seen.

In the day by day. Of life. And this is an example. Not unlike. A workplace. That I'm familiar with. I quote. A nursing school graduate. Illustrates. How.

[11:34] This could happen. In our lives. And hearts. This woman was. A. A worker. In a. Long term. Care facility. And one of her first. Patients.

Was a woman. Named. Eileen. And Eileen's. Major health problem. Was she had. An aneurysm. Burst in her brain. Leaving her. Totally unconscious. To the observing eye.

And apparently. Unaware. Of anything. That was going on. Around her. And it was necessary. For the workers. To turn. Eileen. Every hour. To prevent. Bedsores. And she had to be fed.

Through her stomach tube. Twice a day. Eileen never had visitors. There was apparently. No one. Who cared. About her. And one of the other nurses. Said. When it's this bad.

You just have to. Detach yourself. Emotionally. From the whole situation. And as a result. More and more. The workers. Treated Eileen. As just a thing. With people.

[12:30] Just going in. And doing their work. And then leaving again. As quickly. As they could. But this young nurse. Decided that she. In living. Her Christian faith.

Would treat this woman. Differently. She talked to Eileen. She sang to her. She even brought her little gifts. And this is America.

It says. On Thanksgiving Day. The young nurse. Came to work. Reluctantly. However. She wanted to be home. It was a holiday. She wanted to be home. And as she entered Eileen's room.

She knew that. She would be doing the normal tasks. With no thanks. Whatsoever. She decided to talk to Eileen. And said. I was in a cruddy mood.

This morning Eileen. Because it was supposed to be. A day off. But now that I'm here. I'm glad. I wouldn't have wanted. To miss seeing you.

[13:26] On Thanksgiving. Do you know. This is Thanksgiving. And just then. The telephone rang. And the nurse turned away. From the bed. To answer it. And as she was talking. She turned to look back.

At Eileen. And suddenly she said. Eileen was looking at me. Crying. Big damp circles. Stained her pillow. And she was shaking. All over.

This was the only emotion. That Eileen had ever shown. But it was enough to change. The attitude of the entire staff. Towards her. Not much later. She died.

And the young nurse. Closed this story. Saying. I keep thinking. About her. It occurred to me. That I owe her. An awful lot. Except for Eileen.

I might never have known. What it's like. To give to someone. Who can't give back. That's catching the spirit. Of Jesus. Giving to someone.

[14:21] Who can't give back. End quote. Now this is the kind of. Demonstration. Of the. Servanthood. That we can live. When we give. Without.

Necessarily. Getting praise for it. When we give to those. Who can't. Necessarily. Give back to us. And it might be. In those. Quiet. Unrecognised. Ways of life.

Our motive. As a servant. Should be. Beyond. Pleasing ourselves. Beyond. Pleasing ourselves. Or getting something. For ourselves. Our motive.

Transcends. Ourselves. Our focus. Is to please. Our Lord. The motive. Has to be right. The motive. Of a servant. To please the one. Who he serves.

And this can apply for us. In our own. Everyday. Responsibilities. You know. There's people. Doing some tough jobs. In this church. All kinds of. Difficult. Roles. And. Maybe.

[15:18] Not very. Thankworthy. Tasks. At times. Not. Much glory. In. Such tasks. And. You know. I was talking to a fellow.

Who. I spoke to yesterday. And he was explaining to me. That he was not able to be. In the assembly today. He was not able to come to church today. Because he's in a healthcare role. And he has to work. Today. And I said to him. By email. Just work. As unto the Lord. Work. As unto the Lord. And the shift workers here today.

Sometimes you can't make it here. On a Sunday. Just work. As unto the Lord. Your workplace can be. A worship place. As you work. Unto the Lord. As you make your work.

Today. A ministry. I told this man. As you serve. You can do it. As unto the Lord. Do it. As unto him. Being a great Christian. Means delivering our best.

[16:13] All the time. All the time. Not just when we show up to church. But all the time. To be a servant. Let it be your motive. Really being a great Christian. A good Christian.

Is a lot like being a great employee. A good employee. You know. What are the qualities people look for. In a great employee.

And of course we're not saying necessarily. Every great employee is a great Christian. But there's a parallel there. There's a degree of. A likeness there.

To what is a good employee. And what a good Christian should be like. You know. And as an employer. You know. I'm someone who hires and fires people sometimes. I look for people who are reliable.

Who'll turn up. Who'll turn up. And who won't slacken off. People I can trust. You know. You know. My boss was telling me lately.

[17:13] You know. He was saying how. And I look up to him as a man. In a secular role. But a man with wisdom. In that role. And he said. You know. People do the wrong thing.

It's not. That the absolute issue. Is that they have integrity. That they have integrity. You know. That they actually fess up. And acknowledge. When they've done something wrong.

And they. You know. They don't try to hide it. Or. You know. Lie. They tell the truth. There's an integrity to them. And. There's all these qualities.

What makes a great employee. People that you look for. People who won't rock the boat. Why?

Because they're too busy rowing. They're too busy rowing the boat to rock it.

People who have a heart. Of humility. To serve willingly. To serve willingly. Cheerfully. Gladly. Now. There's people that took initiative this morning. And looked after the door to greet people.

[18:10] It's having that mindset. That motive. That you don't have to be told. You just think. You've got a motive. That wants to serve. And these are the same qualities. That make a great Christian.

For someone who's trusted the Lord. As their saviour. A great Christian. Will have that same. Quality. Of character. Of motivation. To deliver the best.

That we can deliver. For the master. And the good servant. Will try to ensure. That the task that the master. Would want to do. Gets accomplished. To his satisfaction.

The good servant. Will be so tuned in. To what the master wants. They don't have to be told. They don't have to be told. They don't have to have chapter and verse.

They know what the principles are. They know that I must serve the master. The Lord Jesus. The good servant. Believes and cares for his master. And is always loyal.

[19:06] To his master. This is our great motive. Brothers and sisters. In this great task. Of life. That we're all called to. As servants of God. Our great motive. Should always be.

That what we do. Will be to God's glory. And praise. That what we do. How we serve. Will be willingly. To his good pleasure. That what drives us.

Will have. That what gives us the energy. And the persistence. And the get up and go. And the keep on going. Is that our motive. Our motive that drives us. Is to please him.

Even in the mundane things of life. You know. There's people here. That are so switched on. Spiritually. That they get the vacuum cleaner out. At the end of the service.

Without anyone telling them to. There's people so. Godly here today. That when they see. There's a task to be done. They just get up and do it. You know. The minding of the communion.

[20:02] And preparation. And the practical things. Opening the curtains. And putting the fans on. And turning up for the prayer time. And doing what they can. Doing the best that they can.

Giving of their best for the master. This is what we are to be about. Brothers and sisters. That motive. That should motivate us. That model. That should lead us. That from his lips one day. I will hear. You will hear. From his lips that one day. Well done. Thou good. And faithful servant. Enter into the joy. Of thy Lord.

So examine your model today. Let it not be someone like. I am the greatest. Muhammad Ali. But let it be that one. That one. The Lord Jesus Christ. The greatest.

Of the greats. How do you serve? Will it be looking to Jesus. Having his mind and heart. Being a faithful servant. As he motivates you to be. Our heart should be for the master.

[21:00] Our model. Our motives. And thirdly. Our mindset. Our mindset. What will servanthood look like? What will it look like? In those practical things of life.

In the practical side of life. What is it? That sets a great Christian. Apart from an average Christian. A great Christian.

That should be our aspiration. That every one of you. Can be a great Christian. You can be a great Christian. That your mind should be for the master. That your way of thinking.

Your attitude. That which possesses you. Your mindset. Will be. That of a servant. So we see thirdly. Our mindset. Will we have the mindset.

Of a servant. What were the disciples thinking. When they said. Who should be. The greatest. The greatest. They were saying it pridefully. Pridefully.

[21:57] They were consumed. With their own sense. Of self importance. God forbid. That that should be true. Of us. Of me. Of you.

That we should be so consumed. With our own sense. Of self importance. That we should say. Who should be the greatest. Me. Is what they're saying. Quietly.

To themselves. That's right. It reflects. Their whole way of thinking. Doesn't it? And for some. Life is all about. Climbing some kind of ladder. It's about. Achieving some kind of.

Pecking order. Above others. And winning arguments. Above others. So that we can put others down. And elevate ourselves. What should.

Our mindset be. What should it be. Philippians 2.5. Let this mind. Be in you. That which was also. In Christ.

[22:52] Jesus. You know. One of the biggest problems. In churches. Is when. The mindset. Is wrong. When we get prideful. We all have to watch pride. I have to watch pride.

I don't know about you. But I have to watch pride. And. It causes discord. When there's a. Selfishness. Rather than a. Selflessness. Let it be a selflessness.

An article I read. Said this. You know. The one. Who is the greatest. In the church. Is the one. You don't even think so. You don't even think so.

Because they humbly. And quietly. Serve. Christ. Every day. Of their life. And never say a word. About themselves. Or their service.

They're not there bragging. Or. You know. Showing off. They're just quiet. Achievers. That's what we should aspire to be. Brothers and sisters. Quiet.

[23:47] Achievers. Instead of being prideful. So the Lord Jesus says. If you want to be first. Or great. You must become a servant. Of others. Put yourself.

Last. So let's check. On this. How is. Our mindset. Do I want us. Wrap up in. Serving others. In that. Heart. Of. Giving.

In our lives. In our homes. In our jobs. In our schools. We're called to greatness. Every one of you. Are called to greatness. We're saved. To serve.

Someone has defined deacon. Or servant. As one who executes. The commands of another. Let this be our mindset. We execute his commands. We execute his commands.

We have an ear for the master's voice. For his commands. For his word. We want to think like Jesus. Like Paul said. We have the mind of Christ. Let that be true for you.

[24:45] For me. That the very mind of Christ. Should be your mind. And mine. That we'd be so in tune. With what the master wants. We'll anticipate it. We'll anticipate it.

We won't have to hear. The bell jingle. For him to summon us. Or have some. Direct. Verbal. Word. From someone. Saying. Thus saith the Lord. But we'll have his word.

So deep in our heart. So much in our psyche. That it'll be just the. Natural response we have. To execute the commands. Of our master.

And we'll anticipate. His commands. We'll anticipate. You know. What would. Jesus do. It's that simple isn't it. Amen. Isn't it. What would.

Jesus do. It's really that simple. If he was here. What would he say. For us to do. It's been said. A church that serves together. Stays together.

[25:39] Want to serve together. Beat team players. As it were. Have that mindset. Of a servant. As good as. As a good employee. Let's have the same. Work ethic.

That mindset. Of a servant. So. Our boss won't have to give us the sack. You know. We won't have to worry. That he will say. Well done to us. He will say well done.

Because we're doing. Our level best. You know. He is our master. In 1 Corinthians 6. It says. Your body is not your own. You're bought with a price. A price. Therefore glorify God.

In your body. And in your spirit. Which are God's. You know. Back in. Olden days. The servant.

Was the possession. Of the master. Now of course. We're not justifying.

Slavery. As in the. The evils of slavery. Of past. But there was a sense. Where the servant. Had a role. And a place. In a very.

[26:38] Privileged place. In many effects. It was better to be a servant. Than to not have any. Role to play. And to be a beggar. But we are. His servant. In his household. But more than that.

We're his children. Really. But we are his possession. He. Has purchased us. And so we ought to obey. Our master's word. With no rights.

Of our own. He is due. Our unquestioning. Obedience. Luke 6. 46. He says to son. You say. Lord. Lord. And do not. The things. Which I say. Friends. We've got to do. What he says. To be a good servant. Do his will. Whatever the cost. And there's one time.

A preacher was. Being farewelled. By someone. He was waving goodbye. At the train station. And this. Well meaning. Christian. Said to the preacher. Take care. Take care. And the preacher.

[27:33] Stopped him. And said. No. Don't take care. Take risks. Sometimes being a Christian. Is taking risks. Isn't it? It's stepping over the line. It's stepping out of our comfort zones.

It's doing things. That we've never done before. I know. When brother Jim. Started attending this church. Many years. As a Christian. And this was one of the first places.

That he had a place of delivering a message for God. In front of the people. And it was something scary for Jim. I hope I'm not embarrassing Jim here today.

But Jim. An older man. A long serving Christian. And he stepped over the line. He stepped outside of that comfort zone that day. And he took a risk.

Risk. And sometimes. How are we going to serve God. Unless we say. Yes. I'm willing. To serve him. I'm willing to do something. I've never done before.

[28:29] I'm willing to take risks. Because I want to serve God. As much as I can. And not to. Claim fame for it. But because I want to please him.

I want to serve him. Because I trust him. And. Friends. The mindset of a servant. Is one of humility. In Luke 17. Verse 10. There were some servants.

And they said. The Lord said. Of these servants. Who showed humility. He said. So likewise. Ye. When ye.

Shall have done. All those things. Which I commanded you. Say. We are. Unprofitable. Servants. We have done that. Which was. Our duty to do. When.

When. Life's. Journey. Is ended. And this. Day. Of life. Is closed. And. As it says. When the night comes.

[29:24] No man can work. When. It's all said and done. When we stand before him. We can say. We have done. That. Which was. Our duty to do. Yeah. It's.

The least that we can do. Is to serve him. Our loyalty. Is to him. Paul says. Do I seek. To please men. For if. I yet.

Pleased men. I should not be. The servant of Christ. You might have to tread on toes. To serve him. Don't be afraid. Pleasing him. Is what it's all about.

And. Think of how. How can you be a good servant. Are we careless. Or lazy. In our service. Are we picky. And choosy. About what.

Is beneath us. Or. Do we just. Serve God. When it's convenient. To do so. When it's convenient.

[30:19] To do so. Or will we be a servant. That's always ready. For the master. To call on. Paul said. Romans 6. You're servants.

To the one. That you obey. Romans 6. Verse 16. Colossians 3. He told. Of. Earthly servants.

Servants. And he instructed them.

Whatsoever you do. Do it heartily. As unto the Lord. Not unto men. So when you do something. For God. Don't say. Oh. The church has asked me.

To do this today. They don't really want to. You know. Or whatever it be. Or. Oh. I guess I've got to turn up. For church today. Even though I've got a headache. Or I've had a late night. Or whatever it be. But do it heartily.

As unto the Lord. Do it unto him. And the day by day life. That you live. The day by day job. That you do. In Psalm 40. Verse 8. It says. Our delight.

[31:16] Is to do the master's will. Our delight. Is to do his will. To obey him. To follow his command. What is it that makes a good servant? One who is cheerful and willing.

Not. Out of. A sense of. Having to. But out of a willingness to. An important question. As we close. Who.

Should be the greatest. Whose servant are you. Whether you realise it or not. Every one of you. Is a servant. Everyone.

Is a servant. If you don't serve the Lord Jesus Christ. By default. You serve Satan. It's one or the other. Make your choice.

Whose servant are you. Be sure that Jesus Christ. Is your master. Serve him with a true heart. Not self-seeking.

[32:17] But. Seeking his will. That at the end of earthly day. He will say. Well done. To you. Psalm 100 verse 2. It says. Serve the Lord with.

Gladness. Why do we serve the Lord with gladness? He saved us. He's broken the chains. He's set us free.

He's given us a life eternal. By his grace. We can. Delight. To do his will. And serve. The Lord with gladness. Serving him.

Knowing him. Knowing that. Serving him. Is the highest use. Of our life. To serve him. So. Who. Will be.

Your model. In your life. In John 13. We see the master. The maker of heaven and earth. The maker of all creation. The object.

[33:12] Of all glory. Honor and praise. And authority. The master. Clothed. In a towel. Washing man's feet. What a.

Mundane. Demeaning job. What a demeaning job. That was where he was. The servant.

Of all. Humility. Humility. The ultimate humility. We see. In Christ. What is humility. Do you find as. A lack of vanity. Or self-importance.

Humility. The Lord Jesus. Clothed himself. With the. Garb. Of a servant. Let's forsake. Our pride. And take. Our place.

With our master. With the town. Around us. Washing one another's feet. Totally lacking. In self-importance. And rank.

[34:11] The most important. And powerful figure. Ever to walk the planet. The chief. The first. The king. The lord. The servant. Of all.

Here is true greatness. Who. Should be. The greatest. He is the greatest. Not Muhammad Ali. He is the greatest. Who should be the greatest.

Truly our model. The lord. Jesus Christ. Should be. The greatest. The who. Is Jesus Christ. The how. Is our motive. Our all-consuming purpose.
Is his glory. To have a heart. To please our master. The what. Of greatness. Is our mindset. That our occupation. Our obsession.
Our resolve. Is to find. And to do. His will. His will. To think. Like Jesus would think. To do. As Jesus would do. To have that wonderful quality.
[35:07] Of servanthood. In our lives. And there is. A cost. A cost. It will cost you. It will cost you. Your pride. To humble yourself.
Will cost you. Your dignity. It will cost you. To consider. To consider. Others. And to love. As he would love. To be that good.
And faithful servant. Let us do the master's will. Let us delight. To do his will. Let us find that servant heart. That he commands. And let us follow his example.
Daily. Walking in his steps. Let us pray. Let us pray. CONGRATIST Thank you.