

101721 "A desire to be bigger than others" Mark 10:35-45

A group of tourists visiting a picturesque village walked by an old man sitting beside a fence. In a rather patronizing way, one tourist asked him, "Were any great men born in this village?" The old man replied, "Nope, only babies."

People often say things like this. Every person who is a born-again Christian starts life as a baby in Christ. Whether the new convert is six or sixty, that person is still a new Christian and needs to grow in the Lord. God intends for us to grow and mature so that we live as children of God and we can be a positive influence in the lives of others. Until we learn to dig into the meat of the Word for ourselves, we will never grow. (*Developing the Leader within You*, John Maxwell)

To understand today's passage, let's place it in the context of what comes before and after. According to the Gospel of Mark, Jesus first gave the 12 disciples power and authority and sent them to preach the Kingdom of God. In addition, there was a miracle of the five loaves and two fish which fed a multitude. He also performed the miracle of seven loaves of bread which fed a multitude as well. And Peter made a wonderful confession of faith to the Lord. And then, a mysterious transfiguration story was located. After this, even a haunted child is healed by Jesus. As we watch these series of miracles and the amazing reactions of people, the disciples are debating "who is the greatest among them." In their eyes, even in the atmosphere, they were experiencing the popularity of Jesus! They thought that soon Jesus's world would unfold in this world.

In a situation like this, James and John came to Jesus and asked that when the world of the Lord was unfolded, one would sit on the right side of Jesus and the other would sit on the left side of Jesus. Actually, James and John were there when Jesus was transfigured on the mountain. They saw Jesus in the middle, and Moses and Elijah standing together. James and John know what Jesus looks like in power and they want a deal. However, Jesus set another measure of greatness. Not the power to rule over others, but the power to serve others. Verse 43 says, "But it is not so among you; but whoever wishes to become great among you must be your servant."

Do you want to be great? Some of you may say, "Pastor, I am not interested in becoming a great person, but I want to live an ordinary life." By the way, the adjective "great" here is the Greek word [megas], which means "abundant, important, outstanding." In other words, Megas is not just a person who holds a high position politically, but anyone who wants to live a wealthy life and want to be recognized as someone important to others. Who in the world does not want to live in abundance? If you think about it this way, "Whoever wants to become great among you..." The target audience of this verse is not any particular class of people, but everyone.

An example of that is shown in today's Bible verses without fail. In Mark 10:41 we read, "When the ten disciples heard it, they became angry with James and John." What does it mean? Yes, there were twelve disciples of Jesus, and all ten disciples except James and John were angry when they heard what James and John asked. Likewise, the fact that the rest of the disciples also became angry when they saw the ambitions of James and John is proof that they themselves were also ambitious, right?

Everyone wants glory. The world talks a lot about glory. It is glorious to be highly educated, have good things, and enjoy many experiences. This worldly glory is a stark contrast to the glory that Jesus is talking about. In the bible, to let go of my will is glory. In Romans 8:5-7, "Those who live according to the flesh have their minds set on what the flesh desires; but those who live in accordance with the Spirit have their minds set on what the Spirit desires. The mind governed by the flesh is death, but the mind governed by the Spirit is life and peace. The mind governed by the flesh is hostile to God; it does not submit to God's law, nor can it do so."

Jesus left heavenly glory and gave himself to a lowly farmhouse manger in the arms of a lowly carpenter. He came to this earth with the blessings of shepherds – who were thought to be the lower class and the three magi – who were foreigners. There was no fancy birthday party but this was enough for Jesus. Before He entered Jerusalem Jesus knelt down and washed his disciples' feet. It was the work of a slave to wash another person's feet at that time. Jesus, the son of God, to whom all the worship of the entire world is still not enough, this Jesus entered Jerusalem not on the back of a white stallion, but a donkey. The night he was captured, His prayer to God the father was to do the Father's will. Our Lord has shown us how to do it. It is not glory to get my will across to Him. He knew the only glory was that the Father's will be done.

John 12:24. "Very truly I tell you, unless a kernel of wheat falls to the ground and dies, it remains only a single seed. But if it dies, it produces many seeds. Anyone who loves their life will lose it, while anyone who hates their life in this world will keep it for eternal life."

When a kernel of wheat falls and dies, it produces many seeds. That is the law of nature as God has created it. The reason a kernel of wheat can produce so many seeds is because each kernel contains life. The reason Jesus' death can save so many lives is because in Him lives True Life.

Who are those who love their life? They are those who try to live life with their own strength, methods, and will. Jesus has implored us to let go of our will and live according God's will. This is a very difficult task for us. Of course, Jesus is not unaware of the weak nature of human beings. Judas will betray him, His favorite Peter will deny Him three times. After all the miracles He has shown them, every single disciple will scatter away. But Jesus does not forsake them. He continues to believe in them. Yes they were weak, but He knew that if He believes in them and waits, they will slowly transform. It really has changed their lives. It is the same for us.

In the scriptures Jesus speaks six times about a fruitful life for His followers. Five out of those six times, it is in relation to the cross. In other words, a fruitful life means to live a life that bears a cross, to die daily before the cross. John the Baptist said something amazing in his last days. "He must increase, I must decrease." (John 3:30) Or More of Jesus, less of me. Does this mean that Jesus can be great only when I am destroyed? Does our God hate our personal successes? Have the countless people of faith in the bible live such miserable lives? Absolutely not!

It is said that Napoleon once lost control of his horse and a private jumping into the path of the horse took control of it. Napoleon then said, "Thank you, Captain." With that one word Napoleon promoted the soldier from the rank of private to captain, but it was because that soldier put his general first.

Likewise, God promises to honor God's servants. (Billy Sunday, the Man and His Message, William T. Ellis)

Dear sisters and brothers in Christ, thank you to all of you who have faithfully served God and the body of God so far. I pray that in our hands, a life of true service stemming from the love of the Lord will exist in our today and tomorrow as well. Fairfield Grace, May God's grace and peace and blessing be with you and your family, and your business, and your studies, and with the lives of your children. Amen.