

Mary Craig Ministries, Inc.

Series: "How to Survive in the Kingdom of God"

Message: "The Law of Greatness"

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It's a great day! You look great! I feel great! Great, let's hear some more! He/she is simply great! What is it to be GREAT?

Today we finish up our series "How to Survive in the Kingdom of God" with the Law of Greatness. What is it to be GREAT really? We use the word so much anymore that it has become commonplace, and I think that the devil really likes to do that with our language. He's certainly done that even with words like grace and forgiveness and awesome and things like that. So we use the word GREAT quite liberally just as we LOVE everything. I LOVE this and I LOVE that until we hardly know what it is to LOVE truly.

So today we're going to finish up this series looking at the Law of Greatness. We're going to begin first off by reading Matthew 18:2-4 Here Jesus called a child to Himself and set him before them and said, "Truly I say to you, unless you are converted and become like children, you shall not enter the kingdom of heaven. Whoever then humbles himself as this child, he is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven." And so we see that one of the characteristics of becoming GREAT, truly GREAT in the kingdom of heaven or the Kingdom of God, is childlikeness, not childishness, but being like a child.

Well, what is a child like? You have to get around one today and really start observing what children are like. They really are trusting and we find that they are quite genuine. Sometimes their comments get us in trouble because they are so forthright in what they say and they just say things. They're very genuine. Normally, a child hasn't learned yet to have masks on and guards and have their soul wrapped up in costumes and things that they might hide behind.

With the mask mandates and social distancing and quarantining and adult worries thrust upon them, children today are learning a new normal that is actually not normal. Children around the world are suffering in their formative years.

Children typically are very open minded and accepting and they're teachable. They want to please. They want to be liked, to have someone treat them with dignity and kindness. Primarily, children are quite humble. They're at the low end of the pole there. They're at the low end and they are born extremely, completely dependent on their caretaker. And so humility is a characteristic that truly shines as to being like a child.

Their attitude towards others is loving unless or until they learn discrimination or discernment. Children love life unless they have been severely abused, neglected, or abandoned, or "messed with." But they love life. There's an innocence about them. They don't have any masks; they are transparent. They trust, until trauma is thrust upon

them; then they adjust. Warped behavior can result, perverted views, bents toward fear and protective actions surface. Suspicion mars any innocence amidst interpretations of betrayal followed by resulting anxieties. Children need defenders.

But let's turn over to Matthew 23:12 and hear this Law of Greatness stated for us. Over in Matthew 23:12 and start back up in verse 11..."**But the greatest among you shall be your servant, and whoever exalts himself shall be humbled and whoever humbles himself shall be exalted.**" The Law is really in verse 12: "**Whoever exalts himself shall be humbled and whoever humbles himself shall be exalted.**" And the principle is: **the greatest among you shall be your servant.**

Now the disciples that hung out with Jesus Christ weren't perfect people and they had a dispute arise among them. One of their disputes was to which one of them was regarded to be the greatest. In Luke 22:25 Jesus responds to this dispute and He says to them, "**The kings of the Gentiles lord it over them and those that have authority over them are called benefactors, but not so with you. But let him who is the greatest among you become as the youngest and the leader as the servant.**"

What's the point? The youngest being childlike and humble becomes the leader that serves, prioritizing others, looking out for the needs of others unselfishly.

For who is greater? The one who reclines at the table or the one who serves? Is it not the one who reclines at the table? That's what the world tells us, you see. But I am among you as the one who serves. So who is truly GREAT? That's the question that Jesus is raising. **And you are those who have stood by Me in My trials and just as My Father has granted Me a kingdom, I grant you, that you may eat and drink at My table in My kingdom and you will sit on thrones, judging the 12 tribes of Israel.** And then He goes on.

Ok, so He's raising the question: who is greater? The one who reclines at the table or the one who serves? The one who reclines at the table, and yet Jesus says, as it were, 'what is truly going on here?' The world says the one who is being served is the greater, but Jesus was among us as one who served. And God has granted Jesus a kingdom. Isn't that interesting? Jesus is telling us that we are to be like a servant and we are to be like a child. We are to go lower. The idea is that a gracious person lifts others up, so we are to lift others up. We are to give life, lifting up the weak and oppressed, the poor and the hungry. We are to stand by Jesus in His trials.

Jesus Christ indicted the entire world system in judgment by coming to the earth as an infant in a stable, the earth He created. Remember the stories of Luke 2 and Matthew 4? Jesus came as that child. He came as a vulnerable child and He lived the life of a servant. Jesus Christ understood spiritual authority. He knew that as He humbled Himself, God would exalt Him. He humbled Himself as to His rights as God, and submitted voluntarily to the Father in all things. He obeyed His Father's will and He lowered Himself beneath all people to lift them up.

Let's just turn over to Philippians 2 and hear again what the word of God says. In Philippians 2 we read, "**Do nothing from selfishness or empty conceit, but with humility of mind let each of you regard one another as more important than himself. Do not merely look out for your own personal interest but also for the interests of others. Have this attitude, or mind, in yourself which was also in Christ Jesus who although He existed in the form of God did not regard equality with God as a thing to be grasped, but**

emptied Himself, taking the form of a bond servant and being made in the likeness of men and being found in appearance as a man, He humbled Himself by becoming obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross. Therefore, also, God highly exalted Him and bestowed on Him the name that which is above every name that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow of those who are in heaven and on earth and under the earth and that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.”

So you see, we are to be like a child in our attitudes and our behavior. We are to be as a servant and the attitude is one of humility, trusting our Heavenly Father, letting the Father’s perfect love cast out fear, being anxious for nothing, loving life, enjoying God our Creator/Redeemer, and glorifying Him.

The principle of the servant spirit is established when we put the needs of others ahead of our own. We are to actively seek, to identify them, and deliberately fulfill them. This is taught all through the scriptures and even in Mark 10:43-44 we read, “Whoever wants to become great among you must be your servant for the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve and to give His life as a ransom for many.”

So if we want to become great in the kingdom of God and want to know what it truly is, we will look to the life of Jesus Christ. Jesus serves as that example that we’re to follow in being the servant-leader. If we want to lead, we must learn to serve others and look not only to our own personal interests but also to others’ needs and interests.

We are to have the humility of a child; we are to be open and teachable particularly. We are to be transparent as it were. We are to pull down the masks that surround us, the bindings around our soul. We are to be marked by humility, accepting, open-minded and genuine. We are to trust God. We are to obey Him as He gives us opportunities and leave outcomes to Him.

Jesus looked to our needs unselfishly. Remember He could have stayed up in heaven and done none of what He did in His life here on earth. He looked to our needs at a time when we weren’t even aware of them. While we were yet enmity with God, Christ came and fulfilled all righteousness. He met all necessary and sufficient conditions legally. He forgave our sins. Romans 5,6,7,8 tell us not only did Jesus look to our needs when we weren’t even aware of them, but He did so without promise of gratitude or thanks from us. And He didn’t wait for us who had wronged Him to take the initiative. He took the initiative. Jesus Christ didn’t refuse to consider us better than Himself. Believers are co-heirs with Christ.

We can read in Hebrews 2 that He made Himself like our brother, considered us brethren and He didn’t consider anything too hard or demeaning in looking to our needs, even to the point of dying for us as we read in Philippians 2. And this: Do not merely look out for your own personal interests, but also to the interests of others. It’s a “one another” thing: serve one another. Regard one another as more important. Don’t be selfish, self-centered.

We all are born with an attitude contrary to Christ. We want to say Me First, Pay yourself first, Look out for #1, Satisfy yourself, etc. But if we are to be GREAT truly, we will start asking God for the grace to have the kind of interest and love for others that Christ has for us, and we will actively seek ways to serve the needs of others as God sends opportunities to meet those needs into our lives.

May we show love for others without concern for self, promise of reward or of return love. Let's step up by stooping down as God gives grace to be filled with the Holy Spirit, the Spirit of Christ, the Spirit of the Father.

Who was called great? Monarchs, aristocrats, military persons, religious figures both Christian and Jewish, noted for their exploits, buildings, influence, etc.; to name a few: Cyrus the Great, Darius the Great, Alexander the Great, Herod the Great, Charlemagne, Constantine the Great, Catherine the Great, and more:
https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/List_of_people_known_as_the_Great

I did not find Jesus Christ on this list, but the Word of God identifies Jesus as that Great Shepherd of the Sheep...

Now may the God of [the] peace, who through the blood of the eternal covenant brought back from the dead our Lord Jesus, that great Shepherd of the sheep, equip you with every good thing to do His will. And may He accomplish in us what is pleasing in His sight through Jesus Christ, to whom be glory forever and ever. Amen. Hebrews 13:20, 21 Berean.

Mary Craig, D. Min.

For the grace of God that bringeth salvation hath appeared to all men, Teaching us that, denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly, in this present world; Looking for that blessed hope, and the glorious appearing of the great God and our Saviour Jesus Christ; **14**Who gave himself for us, that he might redeem us from all iniquity, and purify unto himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works. Titus 2:11-13 KJV

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