



**SERIES: Walking with Jesus**  
**SPEAKER: NAT CRAWFORD**  
**Wednesday, December 20, 2023**  
**Scripture: Mark 9:33-37**  
**TITLE: What Is Real Greatness?**

This past summer, we spent three days at Universal Studios. At the end of each day and then at the end of the experience, my son would ask, “What ride was your favorite? Rank your top three.” This would begin a passionate discussion about the best rides and why. They acted as if they had created their favorite rides. It was rather amusing. But if not checked, their ranking changed to arguing over something trivial.

Well, Jesus had to coach His disciples on their own ranking system. It wasn’t a ranking for rides but a ranking for greatness.

What did Jesus have to say about being great? This is what Jesus said in Mark 9:33-37, (CSB).

They came to Capernaum. When he was in the house, he asked them, “What were you arguing about on the way?” But they were silent, because on the way they had been arguing with one another about who was the greatest. Sitting down, he called the Twelve and said to them, “If anyone wants to be first, he must be last and servant of all.” He took a child, had him stand among them, and taking him in his arms, he said to them, “Whoever welcomes one little child such as this in my name welcomes me. And whoever welcomes me does not welcome me, but him who sent me.”

Jesus is with His disciples and arrives at the house. Who’s house? We don’t know. But most assume it was Peter’s home. But like any astute teacher or leader, He noticed the disciples were arguing like a bunch of kids in the back seat of the car. So he asks, “What was all that fighting about?”

I love what Mark records. “But they were silent.” In other words, they were busted. They knew it. They were caught. Now they are quiet because of their guilt. Jesus knew the issue, so He wanted to address it head-on.

So He sits down like any Rabbi would do and says to them, “If anyone wants to be first, he must be last and servant of all.” Jesus uses a Greek word that means servant, as a server at a restaurant and not like a slave.

Jesus doesn’t try to teach an “everybody wins” or “everyone gets a ribbon” philosophy? He doesn’t deny greatness. He redefines it. He says, “true greatness is not found in pride by humility.”

Jesus would say that He came not to be served but to serve. God in the flesh, who is the King of Kings and Lord of Lords, is the epitome of greatness. He would serve to the point of death on a cross. Why? So dead sinners could be spiritually alive.

Greatness is not in wealth, job title, accomplishments, popularity, social media influence, or anything like it. It's found in servanthood. As an example, Jesus invites a child to His presence. Children and women were viewed as property and objects of limited value. Jesus and the disciples flipped the script on that. The example of humility is not the child but Jesus welcoming the child...truly in His society "the least of these."

That's why this is my challenge for you today: humble yourself in service. Jesus welcomed in the least of these. In Jesus' day, it was a child. Today, there are many people and individuals who are discarded and disregarded.

Find one way to welcome them in. Find one way to show them the grace of God. Demonstrate an authentic act of kindness. The humblest act of kindness sets off a chain reaction that shakes heaven itself, for whatever is done to the little and least is done to Jesus, and whatever is done to Jesus is done to God!

When we do that, Jesus wins the day.