

# Summary

This sermon explores the concept of true greatness through Jesus' teaching in Mark 9:30-41. The pastor challenges the cultural definition of greatness as climbing a ladder of success, comparison, and achievement, particularly relevant in a city like Nashville. Instead, Jesus demonstrates that kingdom greatness is found in humility, service, and inclusivity. When the disciples argued about who was greatest, Jesus responded by placing a child among them and teaching that true greatness comes from being last and serving all. The message emphasizes that Jesus modeled this by lowering himself, taking the form of a servant, and ultimately washing his disciples' feet. Kingdom greatness is not about status or exclusivity but about serving others, especially those who are marginalized or can offer nothing in return.

The sermon concludes with a call to step off the ladder of worldly success and embrace an others-focused mission. Rather than striving for recognition or climbing higher, believers are invited to kneel lower and hold the ladder for others. This freedom from performance allows Christians to live from God's love rather than for human approval, finding true greatness in serving when nobody is watching and including others in God's kingdom.

## Intro Prayer

Heavenly Father, as we gather together today, we ask that You would open our hearts and minds to what You want to teach us. Help us to set aside our preconceived notions about success and greatness, and give us fresh eyes to see Your kingdom perspective. Lord, we invite Your Holy Spirit to move among us and speak to each person exactly what they need to hear today. May we be receptive to Your truth and willing to be transformed by Your Word. In Jesus' name we pray, Amen.

## Ice Breaker

If you could have dinner with any famous person, living or dead, who would it be and what's the first question you would ask them?

## Key Verses

1. Mark 9:35
2. Mark 9:36-37
3. Matthew 20:28
4. 1 Peter 5:7
5. Galatians 3:26-28

## Questions

1. What does our culture typically define as 'greatness' and how does this differ from Jesus' definition?
2. Why do you think the disciples were arguing about who was the greatest right after Jesus predicted his death?

3. How does social media and comparison culture affect our understanding of success and self-worth?
4. What does it mean practically to 'kneel lower' rather than 'climb higher' in our daily lives?
5. Jesus used a child as an example of who to welcome and serve. Who are the 'children' or marginalized people in your community that need to be seen and served?
6. Share about a time when someone served you in a way that made a significant impact. What made that service meaningful?
7. How can we maintain an 'outward focus' on serving others when we're dealing with our own struggles and challenges?
8. What's one practical way you could serve someone this week that might go unnoticed by others?

## Life Application

This week, identify one person in your life who might feel invisible, marginalized, or unable to offer you anything in return. Make a deliberate effort to serve them in some way - whether through a kind word, practical help, or simply giving them your full attention. Don't post about it on social media or tell others; just serve quietly and let it be an act of worship to God.

## Key Takeaways

1. Kingdom greatness isn't climbing higher, but kneeling lower in humility and service
2. Kingdom greatness isn't about status, but about rolling up your sleeves and serving others
3. Kingdom greatness isn't exclusive, but inclusive - it's about inviting others into God's kingdom
4. Jesus modeled true greatness by lowering himself, taking the form of a servant, and washing his disciples' feet
5. We are freed from the exhausting ladder of comparison and performance to live from God's love rather than for human approval

## Ending Prayer

Lord Jesus, thank You for showing us what true greatness looks like through Your life and example. Help us to step off the ladder of worldly success and comparison that leaves us exhausted and empty. Give us the courage to kneel lower, to serve others, and to find our identity in Your love rather than in human approval. Open our eyes to see the people around us who need to experience Your love through our service. May we be a people who hold the ladder for others rather than climbing it ourselves. Transform our hearts to have an outward focus, and use us to bring Your kingdom down to earth through acts of humble service. In Your precious name we pray, Amen.