

Glad Tidings

“And we bring you good tidings of the promise made unto the fathers...” (Acts 13:32)

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The Great Serve

(Jerry Fite)

The mother of James and John wanted Jesus to grant her two sons the honor of sitting on the right and left of Jesus in His kingdom (*Matthew 20:20-21*). Apparently, James and John are at least compliant with the request because Mark records them as making the request, causing anger to rise in the hearts of the other ten apostles concerning these two. (*Mk. 10:35, 41*). Contention arose among all of them as they determined who was accounted as the greatest (*Luke 22:24*).

Jesus begins to instruct their hearts as to who is truly great in God’s kingdom. Is it the ones exercising “lordship” over others as “Kings? In the Gentile world, maybe, but among Jesus’ followers, it is not so. Jesus says, “...but whosoever would become great among you, shall be your minister; and whosoever would be first among you, shall be servant of all. For the son of man also came not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and give his life a ransom for many” (*Mark 10:43-45*).

Jesus connects words together that are antithetical in the working vocabulary of most in the

world. Becoming great is connected with the one who serves, not reserving such honor for the one who rules over others. Being first, or being the important one, is connected with being literally a slave or a bondservant to all. Would you ever think that the one taking orders of everyone in the room, and complying with their needful requests was “first” or the “chief” among them all? If not, we are not thinking like Jesus thinks.

Jesus is the example of greatness before God. He did not come to this earth to be served, but to minister. Then, why do we serve him? Why is Epaphras praised for being “*a faithful minister of Christ*” (*Col. 1:9*)? Should he not be told that Jesus did not come to be ministered to? How come Paul is not shy in claiming to be a “*servant of Jesus Christ*” (*Rom. 1:1*)? Should he not know that Jesus did not come to be served?

Jesus did not come to this earth to be served as if he needed anything from man (*cf. Acts 17:25*), but came to serve others and provide their greatest need of salvation. Epaphras and Paul were both serving the Lord by communicating the Gospel mes-

sage to others so they can be saved through Christ.

When Epaphras is ministering to Paul’s needs on behalf of the church in Philippi, it probably attracted little notice. He was just bringing a word of love from the Philippians’ lips to Paul’s ear. But before God he was manifesting greatness.

Indigent 60 year old women may have gone unnoticed in the world even though they had been married to one man, and raised children; having extended hospitality to strangers, washed the saints’ feet, and relieved the afflicted. But the Lord considers such women as great, because they have lived a life of serving others.

Jesus refutes the popular concept of greatness, demanding his apostles adopt a new standard for achieving greatness. We evangelists, elders, and deacons need to remember that any level of greatness that could be attributed us is measured by the Lord in the actual service we render to others, not in our titles. All Christians become great ones before the Lord when they serve others, instead of remaining small by demanding others serve them.