

J.J.

BE GREAT

Matthew 20:20-28

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21 "What is it you want?" he asked.

She said, "Grant that one of these two sons of mine may sit at your right and the other at your left in your kingdom."

22 "You don't know what you are asking," Jesus said to them. "Can you drink the cup I am going to drink?"

"We can," they answered.

23 Jesus said to them, "You will indeed drink from my cup, but to sit at my right or left is not for me to grant. These places belong to those for whom they have been prepared by my Father."

24 When the ten heard about this, they were indignant with the two brothers. 25 Jesus called them together and said, "You know that the rulers of the Gentiles lord it over them, and their high officials exercise authority over them. 26 Not so with you. Instead, whoever wants to become great among you must be your servant, 27 and whoever wants to be first must be your slave— 28 just as the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many."

INTRODUCTION:

Have you heard the story about the person who didn't go to church?

So it was the Lord's Day, and the mom noticed that his son wasn't getting up from bed to go to church. So the mom said to him, "Son, it's Sunday, it's time to go to church. We don't want to be late." The son replied to his mom, "I don't want to go to church today." So the mom said, "Give me 3 reasons why you don't want to go to church today." So the son said, "First, I'm tired. I've been working the whole week. Second, people don't like me there. Third, I just don't feel like it." But the mom replied, "No, you have to dress up so we can go to church. We're already going to be late." So the son replied, "Okay mom, give me three reasons, why I need to go to church today." So the mom said, "First, it's Sunday and it's called the Lord's Day. Second, we need to worship Him and be of service to others. And third, (she paused,) the reason why you really need to go to church and not be late, is because you're the pastor of the church. That's why you need to go to church today."

Why did I share this story?

I had a similar feeling last Friday for the worship night. Earlier that week, my wife asked me if I'm going to the Worship Night. I said, "No." My wife said to me, "Why?" I said to her, "I'm tired, it's an opportunity for me to rest." And I gave the reason, that's the activity of the worship team anyway, I don't need to be there." But my wife said, "You have to go, you're the pastor." I said, "I'll think about it." And that Friday, before my wife left, she said to me, "Jerry, you need to go." I did not answer.

I slept embracing Baxter because I was really tired but 6:30 came around, I woke up and dragged myself to get wash my face, get dressed and then go. Even to the last minute, my wife called me, asking me where I was and I said, "I was on my way." I arrived exactly at 7 p.m.

I said hi to the people and then sat on the corner but I knew the God's presence was here. I began talking with Him and I just found myself crying in the corner, just focused on Him and Him alone and when we started to sing praises and worship with Him, it was just really focused on Him. Bringing up all my cares, my petitions and remembering how much He loves me even if I don't deserve His love. And it came out to be a wonderful event with our Lord Jesus Christ.

Why am I saying this? There will be times we don't want to go to church or Bible study or a mission ministry but we still need to go, just as long as the Lord is there, as Ptr. Boni preached last Sunday, **it's not a waste when it's for the Lord.**

As the Bible says:

Hebrews 6:10 God is not unjust; he will not forget your work and the love you have shown him as you have helped his people and continue to help them.

Remember also one of the reason why I didn't want to go? It's because I was tired. My body and my mind. Yes I was really tired and I wanted to rest. The Lord was true to His promise.

Matthew 11: 28 "Come to me, all you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest. 29 Take my yoke upon you and learn from me, for I am gentle and humble in heart, and you will find rest for your souls."

Yes, I was tired and I wanted to rest and when I went, He gave me the rest I needed. Soul-rest.

By the way, some of you might say, I went but it was like any other day. It's not necessarily about going to the physical place because as my daughter Mica said in the devotion because it's expected of us.

Encouragement: We can be here but our hearts are far away from the Lord. When we're here, let's make sure you are talking with the Lord. Because as He said, *"Come to me..."* **He didn't say,** "Come to the building or come to the event or come to meet people or come to find answers to your problems..." **He said,** "Come to me..."

And what's His promise...His presence.

James 4:8 Come near to God and he will come near to you

It's the attitude of the heart that matters. My encouragement to you, while you're here... come near to God...talk with Him...listen to Him. Be aware that He's here.

A few announcements before we start.

- **Installation of the 2 elders** : Noel and Roger, after the sermon.
- **Breaking of the Bread**
- **Sebastian is already making the Bible Study Groups** based on geographical locations as discussed and agreed with the elders.

It will serve two purposes:

First, it's to bring in other members in your circle. Church is not “tayo-tayo” at “kanya-kanya”

Second, the purpose of the Bible study group is for members to invite also your friends or families in the group because that's where you bring food “potblessing”

What is my request from everyone :

- Please be ready to open your homes as the Bible study will be hosted in different homes within the geography. This goes to say that Bible study will be face to face.

It's a chance for you to serve others when you open up your homes and to invite your friends or other members of the family while the Bible study is there.

- The elders will be the one who will lead the Bible study.
- **Merger Timeline** – thank you to Arlene for helping us on this.
- **New Name of the church** – team has been formed; Pitchie, Micaela and Crisha Pray for the new team. If you have any suggestions for the new name, please approach them.

Let it be in line with Vision and Purpose of the church**VISION AND MISSION**

A Spirit-filled Church equipped with the Word to equip other believers and evangelize the lost.

OUR PURPOSE AS A CHURCH**The Great Commandment**

“Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind. This is the first and greatest commandment. And the second is like it : Love your neighbor as yourself. All the Laws and the Prophets hang on these two commandments.” Matthew 22:37-40

The Great Commission

All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age.” Matthew 28:18-20

Gentle Reminder:

- **We are one body in Christ.** Let’s prevent it to become like a Filipino social club. There’s no place for tayo-tayo and kanya-kanya (I don’t know the English of that). There’s no more DCF. There’s no more LINC. We are one body in Christ and our purpose as a church to spread the Gospel and make disciples. This is the reason the renaming of the church is number one priority in this merger. We are now all ONE IN CHRIST.
- **The church is a Theocracy.** As mentioned even before we have merged as a church, the church is not a democracy, where the will of the people is paramount. The church is Theocracy. It means we are governed and lead by our Lord Jesus Christ, who is the head of His church. And His will is paramount.

Note: If the will of the people is paramount, it was the will of the people who cried out, “Crucify Him!” **The church is lead by God and His will has already been revealed in His Word in the Bible**

Since the church is theocracy, our only concern is for our Lord’s will to be don

Remember, what I shared last time, the passage that freed me.

Revelation 2:1 “To the angel of the church in Ephesus write: These are the words of him who holds the seven stars in his right hand and walks among the seven golden lampstands. 2 I know your deeds, your hard work and your perseverance. I know that you cannot tolerate wicked people, that you have tested those who claim to be apostles but are not, and have found them false. 3 You have persevered and have endured hardships for my name, and have not grown weary.

Now, this is the verse that freed me.

4 Yet I hold this against you: You have forsaken the love you had at first.

You might ask, why did this free me?

It’s because it made me realize, it doesn’t matter if the world has something against me or even if, I myself, have something against me...**just as long as our Lord Jesus doesn’t have anything against me. And what is that one thing, we forgot why we’re doing this.**

Our Lord is saying, everything that we’re doing in the church, for my name is because of our relationship...It’s because of our love for one another.

My brothers and sisters who are loved by our Lord Jesus Christ, if we remember and remind ourselves, why we're doing this, sacrificing time, being persecuted, suffering, serving Him, **here's the result**: Look at what Peter wrote :

1 Peter 1:8 Though you have not seen him, you love him; and even though you do not see him now, you believe in him and are filled with an inexpressible and glorious joy,

So it doesn't matter if people say something against you or if you have something against you (we are our own worst critics usually) but if the Lord has nothing against us because we continue to nurture that "love" relationship with Him, then that's the only thing that counts.

As mentioned before, "I am a servant of many, but I have only one Master."

Let's proceed with God's Word by God's grace.

PRAY

So how can we 'BE GREAT' in the Kingdom of God.

So let's see how our Lord unfolded this.

BE GREAT!

Quick Review:

I. THE POSITION

Matthew 20: 20 Then the mother of Zebedee's sons came to Jesus with her sons and, kneeling down, asked a favor of him.

21 "What is it you want?" he asked.

She said, "Grant that one of these two sons of mine may sit at your right and the other at your left in your kingdom."

We know that in the Eastern tradition, being in the right hand is a position of power.

That's what the mother of James and John wanted.

And why would they have the audacity to ask Jesus about this?

We have studied time, that the **the mother of Zebedee's sons, James and John was Salome who is the aunt of Jesus and James and John are practically, the first cousins of Jesus Christ when he became man.**

This is the reason why THEY HAD THE AUDACITY to ask this request because in their eyes, they were relatives.

Now, the reason why James and John asked this position of power from Jesus is because they think they deserve it because of affinity.

But what Jesus saw was the motivation in wanting that position. They wanted the position for recognition and power – which to them is equivalent to greatness!

And the other disciples also wanted that position of power.

How do we know that? Look at the reaction of the other disciples.

24 When the ten heard about this, they were indignant with the two brothers. (same words also used in Mark 10:41)

How do we know that?

- First, if you're not really interested in the same position, why would you even get bothered by it if someone else wants it.

Second, look at the other passage in Luke on the same story:

Luke 22:24 A dispute also arose among them as to which of them was considered to be greatest.

IMPORTANT NOTE: Jesus did not rebuke James and John and even the disciples in wanting to be great.

The problem is their idea of what it means to be great. They thought being great is about having power. It's about being above others. But that's not the Lord's idea of greatness.

So the Lord showed them

II. THE PATH

So what is the path to greatness?

Three Things : Suffering, Servanthood and Selflessness

- **Suffering**

22 "You don't know what you are asking," Jesus said to them. "Can you drink the cup I am going to drink?"

"We can," they answered.

23 Jesus said to them, "You will indeed drink from my cup, but to sit at my right or left is not for me to grant."

That's why He said,

"Can you drink the cup I am going to drink?"

What does this cup mean? REMEMBER, CONTEXT, CONTEXT, CONTEXT.

He just explained to them in previous verses 18 and 19

18 "We are going up to Jerusalem, and the Son of Man will be delivered over to the chief priests and the teachers of the law. They will condemn him to death 19 and will hand him

over to the Gentiles to be mocked and flogged and crucified. On the third day he will be raised to life!”

Our Lord is saying, will you be able to stand the insults, the pain and the death that I will go through? The cup is the cup of suffering.

Do we want to be great? Then expect suffering as a Christian.

Note : We do not want it. We do not look for it. But expect that suffering for His name is part of our heritage here on earth.

Now specially if God wants to use you mightily, by God’s grace, I showed you in His Word last time that if He wants to use a person, that person undergoes suffering.

Romans 8:16 For his Spirit joins with our spirit to affirm that we are God’s children. 17 And since we are his children, we are his heirs. In fact, together with Christ we are heirs of God’s glory. But if we are to share his glory, we must also share his suffering.

As A.W. Tozer said,

“It is doubtful whether God can bless a man greatly until He has hurt him deeply.” (The Root of the Righteous)

Look at our Lord Jesus Christ when He became man.

Hebrews 5: 7 In the days of his flesh, Jesus offered up prayers and supplications, with loud cries and tears, to him who was able to save him from death, and he was heard because of his reverence. 8 Although he was a son, he learned obedience through what he suffered.

IMPORTANT : It is through suffering where we learn to truly trust Him, obey Him and even praise Him in the midst of the pain and the trials.

Isn’t that what Job said,

Job 13:15 Though He slay me, yet will I trust Him.

You know suffering becomes a good thing when it brings us closer to Him. Isn’t that what happens when we suffer as Christians, our prayers become deeper and our conversations with Him becomes more frequent.

One of my favorite quotes is from Hudson Taylor, “It doesn’t matter what the pressure is, what matters is where the pressure lies.” If it brings us closer to God, then suffering becomes a good thing.

So that’s the first path to greatness. Now we’ll continue. The second one...

- **Servanthood**

24 When the ten heard about this, they were indignant with the two brothers. 25 Jesus called them together and said, “You know that the rulers of the Gentiles lord it over them, and their high officials exercise authority over them.

26 Not so with you. Instead, whoever wants to become great among you must be your servant, 27 and whoever wants to be first must be your slave—

Again, remember the reason why they were indignant with James and John. It's because they wanted the power to themselves. In fact, in the same scenario, here's how Luke wrote it.

Luke 22:24 A dispute also arose among them as to which of them was considered to be greatest.

The Lord knowing that they are disputing who should be the leader, called them
25 Jesus called them together and said, “You know that the rulers of the Gentiles lord it over them, and their high officials exercise authority over them.

You know that the rulers of the Gentiles

KJV : princes of the Gentiles “archon” arch, commander...one who enforces...one who commands... that's where we get the word “archo” archangel.

Side Note: That's why when Jesus is called the Prince of Peace...He's the one who enforces peace or commands peace in your life.

That's why we cannot produce peace on our own. That's why it's a fruit of the Spirit.
Galatians 5:22...the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace...

How can we have this peace? By trusting in Jesus. When we trust JESUS THAT'S WHEN HE ENFORCES PEACE OR COMMANDS PEACE IN YOUR HEART, IN YOUR LIFE.

Isn't that what the Lord said in *Philippians 4:6 Do not be anxious about anything, but in every situation, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God. 7 And the peace of God, which transcends all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.*

And when Jesus said, “the lord of the **Gentiles**”...he means, **Gentiles mean...they are not the people of God.** In short, He is saying, **that's HOW THE WORLD THINKS WHAT GREATNESS IS ALL ABOUT.**

What is the world's idea of greatness?

lord it over them

Etymology: lord it over them, exercise dominion over them (KJV), “katakuryuo” “kata” down, “kyrios” lord.

In short, one who looks down from above.

Bow the head Illustration: We have a habit with Filipinos. I don't know if it's only Filipinos. That when the boss comes, we do this with our head, bowing down several times and then say, we lower ourselves down and say "Good morning bossing" If you're the bossing and people are doing that to you, somehow, it feels good, because of the pride that you're the "bossing".

That's the world's idea of being a leader. One who has power over the people.
and their high officials exercise authority over them

It's interesting how KJV translated this.
*And they that are **great (megas)** exercise authority upon them.*

Etymology : exercise authority over them "kataexousiazō" kata "down" exousiazō from exousia "power"

In short, one who has power over others.

Illustration: One time, we were playing basketball in the Philippines and there were some "dayo"...young men who were from another village who wanted to play basketball with us. So the game got heated and it turned out, two got into a brawl. The "dayo" was **overpowered** but then while he was leaving he said, "Kapag naging pulis na ako, babalikan kita." (Once I get my police badge, I'll get back at you.)

This is the world's idea of greatness or meganess or bigness – one who is above others and one who has power over others.

But that's not the Lord's idea of greatness. The path to greatness is servanthood.
That's why He said...
26 Not so with you.

*Instead, **whoever wants to become great among you must be your servant, 27 and whoever wants to be first must be your slave—***

Etymology : **servant; minister**, "diakonos"... where we get the word "diako"...
Icebreaker : That word diako has a Japanese word for this, "Otosan"

Diako literally means, a person who runs errands. You can describe him as the server or waiter.

Waiter Ignored Illustration: If you've eaten in a restaurant, and then you want to order something or you want to order more and the restaurant is busy, I know you have experienced this, you are trying to get the attention of a waiter. You know the waiter or waitress sees you in his or her peripheral vision and yet just moves on and ignores you.

Contrast this to what I experienced the first time I flew with Korean Airlines, in 2009.

Korean Flight Attendant Illustration : You know the stewards or stewardess, in many airlines, after serving you food and drinks, the flight attendants, would just go to their stations and just talk with each other and wait for someone to push a button. But the flight attendants in Korean Airlines during that time, after serving food and drinks, they would not go into the kitchen but instead they will stand in the middle of the aisle, and just be there, ready to help or go to a person who needs help. This is true. I woke up in the middle of the night and I saw the flight attendants, still standing there in the aisle.

Application: That is what a diakonos, waiter or servant is. They're looking around and being alert on how they can help and serve others.

And that is how we should be when it comes to church, we are always ready to and always looking for ways to “run errands”, to be a “waiter” to be a “Korean airlines flight attendant” to be an “Otosan” for others.

Next week, we'll continue with the path to greatness - selflessness

27 and whoever wants to be first must be your slave—

and finish it with the Pattern of greatness

28 just as the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many.”

INSTALLATION OF ELDERS NOEL AND ROGER
BREAKING OF THE BREAD

S.G.D.