

**Sermon Series:** Book of Mark  
**Sermon title:** Go Down!  
**Scripture:** Mark 9:33-37  
Clearwater Bay International Baptist Church  
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As I have studied these passages in Mark with a wide angle lens- I have started to see something.

In this section of Mark, Jesus foretells 3X that he is doing to be killed and he's going to rise again.

In between these 3 tellings of his death, are some teachings for his disciples.

Some very good teachings.

Actually, it seems to me that these are core Christian teachings that we would do well to build our lives on.

Let me show you the pattern.

Jesus tells of his upcoming death and resurrection.	
“Listen to Jesus”	Bible reading
“Express faith by praying”	Prayer
Jesus tells of his upcoming death and resurrection.	
“Go down not up”	Humility
“Those who are not against us- are for us.”	Kingdom Unity
“Cut off hands and pluck out eyes.”	Holiness
“Don’t separate what God has joined.”	Marriage
“Let the children come”	Discipleship
“Sell all you have and come follow”	Stewardship
Jesus tells of his upcoming death and resurrection.	

We covered the first 2 -the last 2 weeks and now this week we come to a passage where Jesus teaches them about ‘Going down in humility instead of trying to go UP.’

They have just failed to cast out a demon from a boy and yet they are now arguing about which one of them is the greatest.

Why are they doing this?

Maybe Peter, James and John started the argument. They had been singled by Jesus to go up on the mountain to see his glory....along with 2 of their biblical heroes. Perhaps they were rubbing it in.

We don't know exactly why this argument started, but we do know that several times the disciples had a 'discussion' about which of them were the greatest.

And oddly....Jesus is talking about going to die and they're talking about being great. Strange.

So, Jesus gathers them together cause he knows what has been going on. He needs to teach them something.

He asks them what they were talking about on the way and notice that they are silent. No one wants to say what it was.

So Jesus says, **“If anyone would be first, he must be last of all and servant of all.”**

**The point is easy:** you should not try to be great or worry about which one of you is the greatest.

“If you want to be first, be last. If you want to be number one, be a servant.”

Well, there you go. That's the answer. Go and do it.

Amen.

But there's something difficult here:

**How** do we do it?

How do we get there if we are **NOT** there?

It would be of no use for Jesus to say to them, "You are proud and selfish, so stop being that way."

Would Jesus encourage them to just 'be better' by the flesh?

I don't know about you, but I need more help than that. I need to know **HOW** to stop being like the disciples.

So, we have an illustration.

Let's look at the illustration starting in verse 36.

**"And he took a child and put him in the midst of them, and taking him in his arms, he said to them, 36 "Whoever receives one such child in my name receives me and whoever receives me, receives not me but him who sent me."**

It's a hard illustration to understand.

Most commentaries that I read on this illustration were not much help.

They seemed to take the illustration Jesus used and make it about the way **WE** treat other people.

But there's something deeper here I think.

What is Jesus trying to say?

What's the key to ruining pride?

What's the key to overcoming that fleshly desire to be great?

Here's what I think it means.

“Disciples, you are arguing about being great because you misunderstand greatness.”

“Greatness is being attached to me...being received by me....having my name on you.”

“If you have me.....if you know me....you have all you need.”

“All desires for greatness cease— when you see what you already have!”

“You have me and if you have me you have the FATHER.”

Meditate on that.

Let that soak in.

Rehearse that.

“Even a little child who has my name on him is great.”

I think the key word in the illustration is **“In my name”**.

“Even a child who is embraced by me is great.”

“Even a little child who works in my kingdom is great.”

“Anyone who believes in me...anyone who is ‘in Christ’ is great already....because of me.

If you firmly believe that reality....you can be last.

If you firmly believe that reality you can be a servant.

In fact, you must believe that or you CAN'T be last or be a servant.

You can't GO DOWN in humble service unless you realize the place you already have!

Let me show you another passage where they argue about who's the greatest. Look at [Luke 22:24-30](#)

**24 A dispute also arose among them, as to which of them was to be regarded as the greatest. 25 And he said to them, “The kings of the Nations exercise lordship over them and those in authority over them are called benefactors. 26 But not so with you. Rather, let the greatest among you become as the youngest, and the leader as one who serves. 27 For who is the greater, one who reclines at table or one who serves? Is it not the one who reclines at table? But I am among you as the one who serves. 28 You are those who have stayed with me in my trials, 29 and I assign to you, as my father assigned to me, a kingdom, 30 that you may eat and drink at my table**

**in my kingdom and sit on thrones judging the twelve tribes of Israel.**

Do you see the point?

Do you see where Jesus directs them in order to get them to stop thinking about who is the greatest?

He takes them to **their place in the kingdom.**

I'll show you another place and probably the most clear.

Turn to **John 13** where Jesus shows them what it means to GO DOWN...and serve...by washing their dirty stinky feet.

### **John 13:1-5**

**Now before the Feast of the Passover, when Jesus knew that his hour had come to depart out of this world to the Father, having loved his own who were in the world, he loved them to the end. 2 During supper, when the devil had already put it into the heart of Judas Iscariot, Simon's son, to betray him, 3 Jesus, knowing that the Father had given all things into his hands, and that he had come from God and was going back to God, 4 rose from supper. He laid aside his outer garments, and taking a towel, tied it around his waist. 5 Then he poured water into a basin and began to wash the disciples' feet and to wipe them with the towel that was wrapped around him.**

Notice in verse 3...what I believe is the key to Jesus' humility.

He knows exactly who he is.  
He knows where he's come from.  
He knows where he's going.

Jesus is completely content in who he is!  
He has nothing to prove.  
He has nothing to protect.  
So, he can **GO DOWN**.  
He can lay aside his garments.  
He can serve.  
He can wrap a towel around his waist.

The Christian ethic and the command of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ is that we are to strive to be a servant. We are to be the last. We are to GO DOWN. That's what Jesus did.

It's for all believers. We are all commanded to be like Christ and take the form of a servant.

As **Philippians 2:3** says...

**3 Do nothing from selfish ambition or conceit, but in humility count others more significant than yourselves. 4 Let each of you look not only to his own interests, but also to the interests of others. 5 Have this mind among yourselves, which is yours in Christ Jesus, 6 who, though he was in the form of**



**God, did not count equality with God a thing to be grasped, 7 but emptied himself, by taking the form of a servant.**

And **how** do we do it?

By understanding....by meditating on...by believing with all our hearts.....that...

**TRUE GREATNESS IS BEING RECEIVED AND EMBRACED BY JESUS CHRIST.**

**the one who knows God is already great-even a child.**

We have to preach this to ourselves continuously.

We have to preach the gospel to ourselves.

We have to rehearse the gospel all the time.

Remind yourselves brothers— of who Christ is and who you are in him.

Remind yourselves sisters— of who Christ is and who you are in him.

and..... **GO DOWN.**