

The South Florida Avenue MESSENGER

A Friendly Church With a Vital Message Proclaiming the Unsearchable Riches of the Lord Jesus.

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SUNDAY SERVICES

Bible Study.....9:30 a.m.
Worship.....10:30 a.m.
Evening Worship.....6:00 p.m.

WEDNESDAY

Ladies Class.....10:00 a.m.
Bible Study.....7:00 p.m.

HOME OF

Florida School of Preaching

MISSION FIELDS

Dub Hill.....Russia
Don Iverson.....India
Marc Veary.....Malawi, Africa
Graham McDonald..Scotland
J. Paguaga.....Honduras, C.A.
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IN
SEARCH
OF THE LORD'S WAY

Sundays @ 8:30 a.m. Check local listings

Attaining Greatness In God's Kingdom

Brian R. Kenyon

“Who is the greatest?” is a question historians often ask. There have been many people in history who have made a great and lasting impact on society. However, Jesus’ assessment as to who is the greatest in the kingdom of God may be surprising. In the dialog He had with the mother of the sons of Zebedee, James, John, and the rest of the apostles, Jesus revealed how true greatness is and is not attained (Mt. 20:20-28).

How Greatness Is Not Attained

As Jesus was about to go to Jerusalem for the final time, “Then the mother of Zebedee’s sons came to Him with her sons, kneeling down and asking something from Him. And He said to her, ‘What do you wish?’ She said to Him, ‘Grant that these two sons of mine may sit, one on Your right hand and the other on the left, in Your kingdom’” (Mt. 20:20-21). In His response, Jesus first made clear how greatness in the kingdom was not attained.

Not by What Others Do for Us The mother of the sons of Zebedee was a regular member of the disciple group (Mt. 27:56). In approaching Jesus, she recognized His authority; she kneeled to (“worshiped,” KJV) Him; and she had faith that His kingdom would come. In the secular arrangement, the “right hand” and the “left hand” were the highest places of honor next to the king himself. Perhaps the promise of sitting on thrones and “judging the twelve tribes of Israel” was in the background of her request (Mt. 19:28).

In any case, like any mother, she only wanted what she thought was best for her children. A mother looking out for her children is powerful, but not even a mother can attain greatness in the kingdom for her children. Yes, she can influence and encourage her children to be faithful to the Lord (2 Tim. 1:5; 3:15), but children cannot ride on the faith of their mother or anyone else. People must develop their own faith and “work out” their “own salvation with fear and trembling” (Phil. 2:12). If we are to attain greatness in the kingdom, it is something we must do through Christ, not by what another mere human else can do for us!

Not by What We Think Jesus answered the mother of Zebedee and her sons, ““You do not know what you ask. Are you able to drink the cup that I am about to drink, and be baptized with the baptism that I am baptized with?” They said to Him, ‘We are able.’” (Mt. 20:22). Jesus let them know that being great would involve tremendous suffering. Their answer at this time, “We are able,” showed that they did not understand what Jesus was saying. The “cup” of which Jesus spoke is a metaphor for suffering (cf. “let this cup pass from Me,” Mt. 26:39-44). The sons of Zebedee, at this point, had no idea the suffering they would have to endure. Greatness was not as they thought. Jesus went on to say, “You will indeed drink My cup, and be baptized with the baptism that I am baptized with; but to sit on My right hand and on My left is not Mine to give, but it is for whom it is (continued on page 2)

(continued from page 1) prepared by My Father” (Mt. 20:23). Eventually, they did “drink of the cup.” James was slain (Acts 12:1-2), and John was exiled to Patmos (Rev. 1:9). Evidentially, the Zebedees thought Jesus was the sole “bestower” of the places of honor in His kingdom. However, as Jesus pointed out, His will was not His own (cf. Jn. 5:30), but the Father who prepared the places of honor for those who would qualify! Greatness in the kingdom is not as we might think! If we are to attain it, we will have to accept the Lord’s will, and make it our will (cf. Isa. 55:9).

Not By the World’s Standards When the other disciples heard the discussion, “they were greatly displeased with the two brothers. But Jesus called them to Himself and said, “You know that the rulers of the Gentiles lord it over them, and those who are great exercise authority over them” (Mt. 20:24-25). The ten were moved by indignation because they also wanted positions of authority! Jesus called “them,” and told them something about which they were familiar—worldly leaders. “Lord it over” means to overpower, and “exercise authority” means to rule. In a world of “Might makes right,” secular leaders would often physically force their will on the people: “Do it or die!” However, God’s kingdom does not work that way. One is not great simply because he is physically more powerful or materially more wealthy! No matter how powerful we are according to the world’s standards, those standards must not override God’s standards!

How Greatness Is Attained

In contrast to the world’s view of greatness, where leaders overpower and force others to accept their will no matter what, Jesus said, “Yet it shall not be so among you” (Mt. 20:26a)! Jesus then revealed how true greatness was attained.

By Service and Slavery Jesus told the disciples, “but whoever desires to become great among you, let him be your servant. And whoever desires to be first among you, let him be your slave” (Mt. 20:26b-27). Christ’s disciples and the world are to be different! The Greek word behind the translation “but” forcefully sets in contrast the disciples from the “Gentiles.” The one who wants to attain greatness in the kingdom must do so through the path of service. The Greek word translated “servant [minister, KJV]” (from *diakonos*) was initially used for one who waited on tables, and then came to be used for a servant of any kind (Mt. 22:13; Jn. 2:5; Rom. 13:4; 16:1), including the special servants of the church, “deacons” (Phil. 1:1; 1 Tim. 3:8). The Greek word translated “slave [servant, KJV]” (from *doulos*) refers to a literal slave (Mt. 10:24-25; Rom. 1:1; Gal. 3:28). Servants and slaves would be the last group of people from whom the world would think greatness came! This, however, is exactly from where Jesus said greatness comes! Are we servants and slaves of the Master, Jesus Christ?

By a Humble Disposition Although the word “humility” is not explicitly mentioned in the context of Matthew 20:20-28, the idea is throughout. Voluntarily becoming a servant and a slave of Jesus Christ is impossible unless one has humility. There are two other passages in Matthew where greatness in the kingdom and humility are linked. First, Jesus said, “Whoever therefore breaks one of the least of these commandments, and teaches men so, shall be called least in the kingdom of heaven; but whoever does and teaches them, he shall be called great in the kingdom of heaven” (Mt. 5:19). Doing even what we sometimes consider the “least commandments” requires humility, recognizing that Jesus is the authority in everything (Mt. 28:18), and that we must submit to His authority (Lk. 6:46). Second, after setting a little child in the midst of His followers, Jesus also said, “Assuredly, I say to you, unless you are converted and become as little children, you will by no means enter the kingdom of heaven. Therefore whoever humbles himself as this little child is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven” (Mt. 18:3-4). Greatness requires the humility of a little child. Are we humble enough to recognize Jesus as the Supreme Authority, to do everything He commands, and to have the humble disposition of a little child?

By Following the Example of Jesus After telling His disciples they must be servants and slaves if they were to attain greatness, Jesus concluded by giving Himself as their example: “just as the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give His life a ransom for many” (Mt. 20:28). Jesus came not to be served, but to serve others. This was the opposite of what the sons of Zebedee, their mother, and the rest of the apostles had in mind! The word translated “ransom” refers to the price paid to free a prisoner of war or a slave. We were the captives and slaves of sin (Rom. 7:23; Jn. 8:34), but Jesus was so great that He paid the price for our freedom from sin (Isa. 53:4-5). While discussing the greatness of Christ, Paul wrote, “who, being in the form of God, did not consider it robbery [a thing to be grasped, NAS] to be equal with God, but made Himself of no reputation, taking the form of a bondservant, and coming in the likeness of men. And being found in appearance as a man, He humbled Himself and became obedient to the point of death, even the death of the cross” (Phil. 2:6-8). Obviously, we cannot be the ransom for anyone’s sins, but we must follow the example of Jesus in all things that allowed Him to give His life for ours: humility and servanthood.

Jesus wants us all to be great in His kingdom, but we must attain it as He says. Are we great in the kingdom? We are if we are humble, servants and slaves of Him, and following His example. ♥ Brian

SFA FAMILY MATTERS

Prayer List

Our Members: Many in the congregation have had a bad stomach virus, please keep all the families affected in prayer. Also pray to keep the ones who have been spared to stay healthy. Keep Jim Turner, Ginny Hamby, Joe Dopwell, Jacquelin Dopwell, Kenny French, Genifer Johnson, JoAnn Hoback, Carol Eason, Elizabeth Tubbs, Janet Crosby, Jim Edmondson, Dorothy Trice and Margaret Coone in prayer.

Relatives: Wayne Hendrix, Tonya Mathis, Dee Moore, Margie Bolding, Blanche Dopwell & Dayne Romine.

Shut In Members: Virginia Plumlee, Ann Howard, Dick & Joyce Burbage, Janet Crosby, Don Starks and Duane Nelson.

Others: Jackie and Joyce Stearsman and Chrissi Fuesner. Keep all of these in your prayers.

Upcoming Events

November 12th: Youth Seminar at 6th St. Church of Christ. Registration at 8:45. Let Hiram know if you are interested in going.

November 13th-17th: Gospel Meeting at the 6th Street Church of Christ. The theme is "The Household of God." See the flyer or slide for more details.

November 19th: Men's breakfast at Orange Street Church of Christ in Auburndale at 8:00 a.m.

Congratulations

Josh & Marissa Estridge are the proud parents of a baby girl, Maddox Louise born by Cesarean Section, Friday November 4th. The proud grandparents are Stacey & Michelle Paulin. The proud great grandparents are Charles & Barbara Paulin. Mommy and baby are doing fine. Please keep Marissa in prayer as she heals from the surgery.

Visitors

Victor Travis and Alexis, Darnell & Jane Kirkland, Chad & Sabrina Tagtow and family and Dub & Shirley Hill.

SCHEDULED TO SERVE

November

Stacey Paulin..... **Table** Josh Estridge
Fred Rapley **Assist** David Anderson

Sunday, November 13, 2016

9:30 A.M.

Song at Bible Class Ken Walker
Prayer..... David Anderson

10:30 A.M.

Announcements..... Jimmy Sweeney
Song Leader Jason Hendrix
Opening Prayer John McShane
Sermon..... Hiram Kemp
Closing Prayer Paul Romine

6:00 P.M.

Song Leader David Williams
Opening Prayer Fred Strickland
Sermon..... Hiram Kemp
Greeters The Frenchs
Att. Cards..... Paul & Quadarius
Closing Prayer Tim Croson
Open & Close Building..... Charles Paulin

Wed. November 16, 2016

Song Leader David Williams
Opening Prayer John McShane
Closing Prayer Fred Strickland

Please meet in the library. If you cannot serve, please call Chuck Wyatt so he can get a replacement - 859-5231 or 602-9005

Sunday, November 20, 2016

9:30 A.M.

Song at Bible Class Kyle Bingle
Prayer..... Tucker Sweeney

10:30 A.M.

Announcements..... Jimmy Sweeney
Song Leader Jason Hendrix
Opening Prayer Kenny French
Sermon..... Hiram Kemp
Closing Prayer Jim Edmondson

6:00 P.M.

Song Leader David Williams
Opening Prayer Steve Hunley
Sermon..... Hiram Kemp
Greeters..... The Bingles
Att. Cards..... Sebastian & Quadarius
Closing Prayer..... Ken Walker
Open & Close Building..... Charles Paulin

Wed. November 23, 2016

Song Leader Jim Turner
Opening Prayer Jimmy Sweeney
Closing Prayer Jeff Bingle

~ HOW ARE WE GIVING ~

Oct. 16.....	\$4,825.05
Oct. 23	\$4,760.25
Oct. 30.....	\$5,709.36
Nov. 06.....	\$5,565.20
Contribution Average	\$4,968.86
2016 Weekly Budget	\$4,422.60

Watch . . .



In Search of the Lord's Way

Sundays @ 8:30 a.m. Check local listings

What Is Your World? What Is Your Perspective?

The Chicago Cubs just played and won the World Series. On the one hand, it was surprising just how many Cubs fans were in this area, especially since the Cleveland Indians used to have their Spring training in nearby Winter Haven. On the other hand, it made sense for people of a certain generation. Before cable television (and way before the Tampa Bay Rays), people in this area only received about three or four television channels. Two or three local, and one that broadcast shows from Chicago. Before ESPN, about the only consistent sporting event that many people in this area could watch during the summer (when they had a bit more time on their hands) was Cubs baseball. So from their perspective, it was only natural for them to cheer for that team. The world to which we are exposed all too often



becomes the world in which we are comfortable. That may be okay when it comes to sports teams, but when it comes to pleasing God, we must be careful! The psalmist declared, "Blessed is the man Who walks not in the counsel of the ungodly, Nor stands in the path of sinners, Nor sits in the seat of the scornful" (Psalm 1:1). "Walks," "stands," "sits" show digressive stages to becoming comfortable with the "ungodly," "sinners," and the "scornful." A Christian's perspective does not usually revert back to the world overnight, but it happens in gradual stages. We must not "love the world" (1 John 2:15-17) nor must we become too comfortable with "Evil company" because it "corrupts" *(continued below)*



South Florida Avenue
CHURCH OF CHRIST
 1807 South Florida Avenue
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The End of Your Search for a Friendly Church . . .

Sixth Street church of Christ
 320 West Sixth Street • Lakeland, Florida 33805
 presents

SATURDAY YOUTH SEMINAR

Young People
What's Up?

Are You Shining Your Light in This Dark World?
Speaker: Nathan Trancoso

What Do You Think About Denominationalism?
Speaker: Brian Kemp

Can You Defend The Faith of Christ?
Speaker: Terrance Brownlow-Dandy Sr.

PLEASE RSVP via PHONE by Sunday, October 30th
 Terrance Brownlow-Dandy (941) 225-2393

November 12, 2016 • 9:00am-1:30pm

*"And these words, which I command thee this day, shall be in thine heart;
 And thou shalt teach them diligently unto thy children..."*
 - God (Deuteronomy 6:6-7)

(continued from above) good habits" (1 Corinthians 15:33). Instead of getting cozy with the world, let us determine like the psalmist who said, "I have not sat with idolatrous mortals, Nor will I go in with hypocrites. I have hated the assembly of evildoers, And will not sit with the wicked" (Psalm 26:4-5). May we heed wisdom's advise: "Do not enter the path of the wicked, And do not walk in the way of evil. Avoid it, do not travel on it; Turn away from it and pass on" (Proverbs 4:14-15). Let us make our world a constant "walk in the light as He is in the light" (1 John 1:7) so that our perspective will be "fully pleasing Him, being fruitful in every good work and increasing in the knowledge of God"

(Colossians 1:10) ❤️ *Brian*

Young People, Let's Support This Meeting and Support Our Own Spirituality as We "Let Our Light So Shine"!



Pray for and encourage our young people as they work with this year's L2L program!