

# Matthew 20:17-34

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Date: 11 September 2022

[ 0 : 00 ] Well, you're in the book of Matthew, Matthew chapter 20. We'll be in verses 17 through 34, making our way to the end of the chapter this morning. Matthew chapter 20, starting in verse 17 through 34.

You know why I was so excited when I saw the songs this morning? Not because I could sing them. Not because I was very familiar with them. It's because the first one was written by a blind lady, and we're gonna meet a couple blind men in our passage.

The second one's talking about marching upward to Zion, and very quickly in our passage, you'll see that they were going up to Jerusalem, which, by the way, is a city that is quite often referred to as Zion in Scripture.

So both of the songs that we opened up with this morning have direct references even to the passage that we will read. So if you're physically able and desire to do so, I'm asking you to join with me as we stand together and we read the word of God found in Matthew chapter 20, starting in verse 17, and we'll make our way to the end of the chapter, which gets us to verse 34, and then we will pray.

As Jesus was about to go up to Jerusalem, he took the 12 disciples aside by themselves, and on the way he said to them, Behold, we are going up to Jerusalem, and the Son of Man will be delivered to the chief priests and scribes, and they will condemn him to death, and will hand him over to the Gentiles to mock and scourge and crucify him, and on the third day he will be raised up.

[ 1 : 15 ] Then the mother of the sons of Zebedee came to Jesus with their sons, bowing down and making a request of him. And he said to her, What do you wish? She said to him, Command that in your kingdom these two sons of mine may sit on your right and on your left.

But Jesus answered, You do not know what you are asking. Are you able to drink the cup that I am about to drink? And they said to him, We are able. And he said to them, My cup you shall drink. But to sit on my right and on my left, this is not mine to give, but it is for those for whom it has been prepared by my Father.

And hearing this, the ten became indignant 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 their great men exercise authority over them.

It is not this way among you, but whoever wishes to become great among you shall be your servant, and whoever wishes to be first among you shall be your slave, just as the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve and to give his life a ransom for many.

As they were leaving Jericho, a large crowd followed him, and two blind men sitting by the road, hearing that Jesus was passing by, cried out, Lord, have mercy on us, Son of David. The crowd sternly told them to be quiet, but they cried out all the more, Lord, Son of David, have mercy on us.

[ 2 : 28 ] And Jesus stopped and called them and said, What do you want me to do for you? And they said to him, Lord, we want our eyes to be opened. Moved with compassion, Jesus touched their eyes, and immediately they regained their sight and followed him.

Would you pray with me? Lord, we thank you so much for the blessing of gathering together as your church. We thank you, Lord, that we've been able to come before you in song. We've been able to come before you in fellowship. Lord, we pray that you would speak to us now through your word.

Lord, we realize there's a great need that expands not only across our state, our nation, but also our world. Lord, we pray that you would raise up men and women to be servants within your body. Lord, we pray that you would move hearts, you would move minds.

Lord, we pray that first and foremost, that today you would draw us close to you. Lord Jesus, may we be by your side, and we hear what it is you have to say to each one of us personally. Lord, may your word speak to our hearts, and may it transform our minds.

May it move our feet and affect our hands. Lord, may we be used by you for your glory and yours alone, and we ask it all in Christ's name. Amen. You may be seated. We're making our way through the gospel of Matthew, and we're at a very pivotal time in the life and ministry of Christ.

[ 3 : 39 ] As a matter of fact, we're nearing the end of his public ministry. We know that he is on his way to Jerusalem for the last time. We know because we're on this side of the cross and the empty tomb, and even the ascension of the Son of God, we know what awaits him there.

He knows what awaits him there, and as he is going, he is trying to prepare those who are walking with him about what awaits him there. We know that he has more than validated who he claims to be throughout the gospel of Matthew.

Matthew is writing to a Jewish audience, and he is promoting Jesus as the King of kings and Lord of lords. The nation as a whole was looking for a coming king. We find that even in the call and the cry of the two blind beggars who are here calling him the Son of David.

The Son of David has messianic terms which are directly connected to a throne because they understood that the Messiah, the king, was coming to set up on the throne of David. So they were looking for an earthly king, and that's okay.

Their theology was a little bit off, but it doesn't matter. We'll get to that later. But we do know that there was this great anticipation of a coming king. Matthew here writing after the events.

[ 4 : 45 ] We know this. He is written after. After Christ has come, his ministry has happened, he's died to death, he's rose from the grave, he has ascended to the Father, and he writes to the early church and he writes to the early audience there that this is truly the King of kings and Lord of lords.

He has shown it through his lineage, his family tree. He has shown it through his miraculous displays of wonders. He has shown it through the testimony of even the disciples. We see that in Matthew 16, there's this great confession of Peter, and the disciples have this clear reality of who he is.

And then we have the mentioning of the church in the 16th chapter and even the 18th chapter of the book of Matthew. So we have, just in a couple of chapters there, the understanding of who Christ is, the account of what awaits him when he gets to Jerusalem, and his plan for the future that is the building of his church.

A lot has transpired and a lot goes on. But in the middle of all that, here the disciples are following him, along with a multitude of others, and all these things are kind of running through their mind, and they've happened rather successively, and they're coming to a little bit of an understanding of who this man really is.

He's not just someone. You remember when he calmed the sea, they said, Who is this that can calm the seas with the sound of his voice? No longer is he just someone who can tell the sea to be quiet. He's no longer just someone who can walk on the waves.

[ 6 : 0 0 ] He's no longer just someone who can multiply some sardines and some crackers. He's no longer just someone who can make things increase. Now they realize that he is the son of God. He is the Messiah.

He is the king. And kings have a kingdom. And with this understanding, they begin to have these new thoughts. They begin to have this new desire.

They begin to have this new ambition. And I want you to see this morning that their ambition is not much different than the ambition we see today. I want you to see from Matthew 20, verses 17 through 24, moving up in the kingdom.

Moving up in the kingdom. Because ever since they began to understand who he was, they begin to jockey and move about and try to figure out where they were going to be.

How are we going to be in the kingdom? Was it not Peter who said, We've left everything. What then will there be for us? What about us? What about us? And in light of all of this, Christ keeps reminding them of what awaits him.

[ 6 : 5 9 ] And yet their concern seems to be all about themselves. And it's moving up in the kingdom. We see first of all and foremost, the determination of the Savior.

It tells us in the 17th chapter, in the 17th verse of the 20th chapter, as Jesus was about to go up to Jerusalem. Now, we know if we were to look at it geographically, if we were to look at a map, it would appear that he is traveling south.

And he goes south and he crosses the Jordan River. And he goes into the Transjordan area there, a little bit opposite of Samaria, as would have been the common route. And he comes about a little bit to the east of Jerusalem.

And now he's going to go westward. We know that he goes into the city of Jericho, which was a western direction. And then he's going a little bit to the north and all these things going up. But we understand it says he goes up to Jerusalem.

Now, this is something we need to clarify. Jerusalem is raised up in elevation. So no matter which direction you come from, you always go up to Jerusalem. It doesn't matter if you're traveling south, if you're traveling north, you're traveling east, you're traveling west, you're going up.

[ 8 : 0 5 ] You never go down. And that's also important because that is also where the presence of God was manifested. That's where the temple is, right? And just so we know, I know we've said this before, but it bears mentioning and it bears being reminded of it, at least in my own life.

We never go down into the presence of God. We always go up into the presence of God, right? Because we cannot go down to his presence. We cannot go down to where he is at because that would mean that we were elevated above him.

So no matter how high we think we are, we still have to go up to get to him, right? So Jesus here is going up to Jerusalem. And he's on his way and there's a multitude around him because we know that it's coming upon the Passover time.

And the reason we know it's coming upon the Passover time is because we're about to enter the Passion Week. The very next chapter we get into the triumphant entry here as he comes in. And we know that he is the lamb that is slain as the Passover lamb.

He is the lamb slain before the foundation of the world. So there's this multitude of people that are going. It says, As they're going up to Jerusalem, he took the twelve disciples aside by themselves.

[ 9 : 0 7 ] So in this throng of people, somewhere between where they were at on the Transjordan area and somewhere between where they're going into Jericho, we can gather all this. He takes them aside and he has something he wants to say to them again.

Now this is the third mentioning of what Jesus tells them, awaits him when he gets to Jerusalem. This is the third time he tells them of his coming death. With each telling, immediately following the great confession of Peter, Matthew 16, he tells them.

After they come down from the Mount of Transfiguration, in Matthew 17, he tells them again. And here he tells them for the last time in the 20th chapter. He tells them three times. But with each time, he opens up a little bit more of the story.

The first time, we're going to go in and he's going to be mocked and he's going to be handed over. The second time, he's going to be mocked and handed over and they're going to mistreat him and they're going to kill him. And the third time, they're going to mock him, hand him over to the Gentiles.

They're going to crucify him. Here he declares how he's going to die. He's going to die, but he's going to be raised on the third day. Each time, he opens up a little bit more of the story. Now this shouldn't be surprising because we understand that the longer we walk with Christ, the greater revelation we get from him, right?

[ 10 : 15 ] Now, when you come to Christ, you don't know all about him that you should know and that you don't know all about him that you will know because the longer you walk with him, the more he will reveal to you. We call that progressive revelation.

You have more and more and more and more of the word of God opened up to you. This is why no matter how many times we read any portion of scripture, we continue to go back to it because there are things we have not yet seen.

We have not mined the depths of scripture because there are gems in there we've not gotten to yet. It is much deeper, even though it's written in simple English. It is much deeper than our minds can fathom.

But Christ begins to open up. Now, some people will tell you, some Bible scholars will say that Jesus is here beginning to understand more of what awaits him. Now, I don't like that phrase. I don't like it.

I don't like to say that Jesus is beginning to understand because that implies that there was a time when he did not understand. I don't like it at all. I'm just being honest. It's my personal persuasions here.

[ 11 : 13 ] I am a man, if anything, of very steadfast convictions. An opinion I once heard, an opinion is something that you have that others can change. A conviction is something that has you that nobody can change.

And I am of steadfast convictions. I do not think that there was anything that Jesus did not know because I think that he is fully God and fully man. And being fully God, he knew all things. And being fully man, he felt all things, right?

I do not think that the further he went, the more he understood. I think from the moment of his birth, he understood all things and he knew all things because the Bible tells us that in the beginning was the Word and the Word was with God and the Word became flesh and dwelt among men.

And we call him Emmanuel, which is Jesus, John chapter 1. The Bible also tells us that he created all things and that by him all things exist and that through him all things have their existence and for him all things exist.

So the very tree that grew the wood that would become the cross, Jesus created it for his own good, right? He understood this thing. So we understand that he knows all things. I know I kind of went on a tangent there, but just because he's opening up revelation to man's mind doesn't mean he's figuring it out as he goes.

[ 12 : 14 ] That just means that he has given it to us as we can take it. Jesus doesn't figure things out as he goes along. He gives us grace and mercy and slows down telling us everything we need to know as we can take it, not as he finds it.

So we see here the other Gospels tell us that Jesus' face was set towards Jerusalem. And as a matter of fact, there's this phrase in Mark that says the people were astounded at the way he went or amazed at the way he went.

It is to be awestruck with the manner in which he is going to Jerusalem. You ever seen someone walking with a mission? All you have to do is follow my wife every now and then, right?

It's almost like, man, I got to catch up with her. I tell her she's one of the fastest walkers with the shortest legs I've ever seen because if she ever has her mind set on something, and sometimes people tell me, he said, Pastor, you're walking around crazy and you're always moving from here to there.

I've got a lot of practice at that. But you see people that are just, they have their face set. They know they're going somewhere. You meet people in a crowd sometimes like me that are just kind of wondering.

[ 13 : 17 ] They're meandering. And there's nothing wrong with meandering. I like walking around with nowhere to go, right? I like not being in a hurry. I like just kind of taking my own time. And then you meet people like the gentleman we saw at one particular airport.

I believe it was in Chicago. Chicago is so kind in their airports, they have moving sidewalks for you, right? I don't like those things, but they have them. So that if you're in a hurry, you can get on a moving sidewalk and you can walk or you can just kind of ride along.

And it seems to be faster than the people that are walking because it takes you a little further along. I remember I was amazed at that the first time I went to that airport and thought this is cool. I'm going to get on this sidewalk and let it take me where I want to go.

By the way, the only other time I had been on one of those was when I worked at Nissan and that's when cars were beside you and you were supposed to be working. I didn't like that so much because the line moved and the floor moved and everything moved, but you were supposed to be working.

This one, you could go stand on it and it would take you from point A to point B. We had a little bit of a layover and that was nice. But I remember when I was there, someone got really upset at me because I was standing on the moving sidewalk because they felt like the sidewalk moved and they needed to run.

[ 14 : 19 ] And they were in a hurry. They had somewhere to go. They were steadfast. And I was amazed at why someone would get on a floor that was already moving and try to walk even faster. I guess they were trying to make double time with it.

But you meet those people who are intentional. And the gospel tells us that that's the way Christ was on his way to Jerusalem. That it was amazing to people how intent he was to get there.

Now, take this in context. He stops and tells them, when we get to Jerusalem, they're going to hand me over. They're going to mock me. They're going to ridicule me.

They're going to beat me. They're going to spit on me. They're going to slap me. They're going to hand me over to the Gentiles and they're going to crucify me. And then they're going to bury me.

There was nothing about what awaited him that surprised him. He knew full well everything that awaited him when he got to Jerusalem. Yet, the Savior was so determined to get there, it surprised those walking with him at how steadfast he was.

[ 15 : 25 ] Friend, listen to me. The events that took place in Jerusalem did not catch him off guard. It did not take him by surprise. It was fully known and fully prepared and fully expected. And he was determined to get there for you and I.

Because this is the purpose and the plan from the very beginning. He had to go to Jerusalem. Because without the lamb in Jerusalem, there could be no Passover.

Oh, man would have celebrated their feast. And they would have ate their lamb and bitter herbs. And they would have had their meals. But there could have been no Passover. No blood over the doorpost of our hearts to pay for the price of our sins.

So that we could be led out of our Egyptian slavery of sin and called free. And Jesus was determined to be there. We stand amazed at the determination of the Savior.

And we shouldn't be because it tells us in the 28th verse that the Son of Man did not come to be served. But to serve and to give his life a ransom for many. Now we're going to answer that question because it's there, right?

[ 16 : 29 ] Why does it not say a ransom for all? By the way, throughout church history, churches have just been in disrepair. And men have ruined themselves trying to understand this verse.

What does it mean that he gave his life a ransom for many? Did not he give his life a ransom for all? And the best way to say that is that his death is sufficient for all. But it's only applicable to those who accept it. It is sufficient for all, man.

His death is good enough to save everyone. But his application is only to those who do accept it. To the many who will.

That means it's sufficient for all, but efficient only for those whom the Bible says God knew would accept it. And we understand that's not, we could take ages going through that verse.

We're just going to leave it right there. We're amazed at how determined the Savior was to be in Jerusalem. Number two. With the determination of the Savior, sadly we have joined to it the desire of man.

[ 17 : 34 ] With the determination of the Savior to be there to pay the price for man's sin, we are met with man's desire. Because at this same moment, shortly following this event where Jesus took his twelve aside.

By the way, two of those twelve are James and John. The sons of thunder, also known as the sons of Zebedee. Two of those twelve would have been there. So just a little bit after they had heard this, they come with their mother.

Now I know I kind of gave them a bad rap last week. Because I said if I was going to be called a son of thunder, I wouldn't send my mama to go over and ask a question. And I said that kind of jokingly. But we also understand that some supposed throughout history that the mother of James and John is also the sister of Mary.

So there would have been some family connections. So she would have probably had at least a little bit of boldness to go before Jesus and ask a question. Because she's in the family, if you will. But even there, we see there in verse 20.

Then the mother of the sons of Zebedee came to Jesus with her sons. Now before we get too far into this and before we give her such a bad beat and even them such a bad beat, we need to know this.

[ 18 : 43 ] It says bowing down and making a request of him. So they came at least with a posture of worship. Bowing down before him. Now the reason they came with a posture of worship is because they had a clear understanding of who he is.

They had made this confession along with Peter. They had heard what he had talked about of his suffering. And they knew all this thing. But they're also coming as believers because they speak of a coming kingdom.

In light of him talking of his impending death, they also know that there is a coming kingdom. Because Jesus had told them that. Jesus had told them that when the kingdom came, they would be sitting upon twelve thrones.

So they come with an attitude of worship. And they come with a mind and a heart of belief. And they come with all sincerity. But the reality is they're also coming with a desire of man. Because while Jesus was determined to get to Jerusalem, man desires to secure his own position.

Jesus wanted to pay the price. Man wants to know his place. And the mother comes.

[ 19 : 45 ] Knowing all things, Jesus even looks at her and says, What do you want? What do you wish? And she gives this, she says, Command, knowing that you have authority.

Command that these sons of mine may have a specific place, a special place in your kingdom. One on your right and one on your left. Now that's the place of prominence. We know the right hand would be the place of power.

To be on the right hand of king is a place of power. The second position of power is on the left hand of the king. She says, I want my sons to have a place of prominence and power in your kingdom. Because see, we're concerned about where they're going to be at.

We know the kingdom's coming. And we know you're the king, Jesus. And we know you have the primary throne. But what we want to know is, where are we at? On our thrones. By the way, this shouldn't surprise us because man still wrestles with who's on that 12th throne.

Judas Iscariot gave it up, right? Judas Iscariot gave up his throne when he betrayed Jesus. And when you open up the book of Acts, you know that they drew straws.

[ 20 : 51 ] And there was one who was picked as the 12th apostle. But then Paul himself calls himself an apostle born out of due season. So, well, where is Paul? Is Paul on the throne?

Is this one on the throne? Is this one on the throne? Is this one? Who's on the 12th throne? You know what Paul would say? Paul would say, I don't care. Because while I'm an apostle born out of due season, I'm also the chief of all sinners.

And by his grace, I am what I am. Man always wants to know their place and their position. Because this is the natural desire of man, even in the realm of the kingdom.

We want to know where we're going to be. And here are the two sons of Zebedee, James and John, along with their mother. They come and we gather from the text that they are asking it as well.

Because Jesus doesn't address the mother. Jesus addresses the boys. Jesus looks at them and says, you don't know what you're asking. You have no idea. Have you ever got that answer from God?

[ 21 : 48 ] I know sometimes in prayer we go to him and we make these requests. And we talk to him and sometimes we get this reply that we don't like. You don't know what you're asking. And the reality is, no, we don't.

Because too often we go with a position of praise and prayer. And even with a heart of belief. And we bow before him. And we ask things which seem right according to our own desires.

But the reality is, is we don't know what we're asking. And he says, are you able? Now he's not talking to the mother here. He's talking to the boys. Are you able to drink this cup that I'm about to drink?

And in their boldness, we always think that Peter is the bold one. But even in their boldness, they say, yes, we're able. Now Jesus is going to take the cup of the full wrath of God for the sin of man and drink it in its entirety.

And he says, indeed, you will drink of my cup. Now they won't drain it. They won't drink the entirety of it. James will be the first of the apostles to be killed.

[ 22 : 45 ] He will be martyred. His head will be chopped off. John will be exiled and sent to a life of misery and pain. He'll be on the island of Patmos. Great church history teaches us that he suffered innumerable things before being exiled to Patmos.

Some say that he was thrown off the pinnacle of the temple. Some say he was cast before the wild beast. Some say he was put into a boiling pot of oil. And in all of these things, yet he lived.

And since they didn't know how to kill him, they decided to get rid of him. And they threw him on the island of Patmos. And that was all well and good. Because when he got there, the Lord appeared to him on the Sabbath. And he had a great vision. And we have it as far as the book of Revelation.

See, God wasn't done with him yet. Then they sent him back and said, you've been on Patmos long enough. Patmos, by the way, wasn't a resort town. It was a rock quarry. You go there to beat up stones, right? To beat stones into small gravel so that Rome could build their roads.

All these Roman roads. They got tired of him being on Patmos. And they sent him back to Ephesus where he had been the pastor prior to that. And he died of an old age. But before his death, he drank of the cup of Christ.

[ 23 : 49 ] He suffered. And even then, he says, you don't know what you're asking. Because, see, man's chief desire is always, what about us? What about us?

While the desire and the determination of the Savior is to go die for us in our place and to be exactly smack dab in the will of God, the desire of man too often is, but where will we be?

What about me? We see it even in our churches today, where we feel like some positions have more weight, some positions and places carry more authority, and there's this ambition.

I remember hearing a professor one time, when I first started taking Bible classes. I think I was at Clear Creek. I was taking classes through Clear Creek Baptist Bible College.

Clear Creek's motto is training mountaintop preachers. You know, we may be country here, but there are hillbillies there. Clear Creek, Kentucky, it's a whole different world out there in Pikeville, Kentucky.

[ 24 : 54 ] Nothing but coal mines and hills there. It's right near Hazard County, and Hazard County is no place to get lost. I've been to some church meetings there in Pikeville, and it's a different breed of individuals there.

I remember my professor talking. He said in one class in particular, many years ago, he said, I was speaking to all the new pastors, the ministers-to-be, and I was telling them, listen, ministry is not a profession you choose because of its upward delegation, because of its upward mobility.

You don't choose it to get rich. You're called to it to serve. And he said, I messed up, and I told my students in class, I said, the highest-paid pastor, now this was at that time. This was a long time ago.

The highest-paid pastor in the United States makes \$600,000 a year. And he said, one of my students jumped up and said, praise God, glory, hallelujah. And he said, but that's not going to be you because the average pastor makes, and you don't want to know.

Now that pastor at that time that made that money was Second Baptist Church of Houston, Texas. He said, that's a lot of money, right?



[ 26 : 04 ] But it also was a 30,000-member congregation. At that time, I think it was 30,000 members meeting in one building. That's a lot of responsibility, a lot of responsibility.

I've attended Second Baptist Church, Houston, Texas. It was the largest Southern Baptist church in the nation. I wouldn't want to be that pastor.

See, we understand, so many of us, we can pick on pastors, and I do that quite often because I'm one of them. But even in our own realm, our desire and our concern too often is, but what about me?

Where will I be? And the desire of man seems to be in direct contradiction to the determination of the Savior. So we get to the third reality.

And the third reality is a description of greatness. A description of greatness. Nowadays, it's okay to call people a goat.

[ 27 : 06 ] When I was growing up, you didn't call anybody a goat if you didn't want to get punched in the nose. But now it's okay to be called a goat because that means you're the greatest of all time, right? It's okay to refer to someone, oh, man, you're the goats.

When I was growing up, that just wasn't a good thing. You didn't want to be called that. Only goats I knew walked around peeing on their beards and smelling awful, and we just didn't want to be called that. And, you know, I had some of those growing up, and there just wasn't a way to work.

So that's just not something you put. But some man came up with this great acronym, the greatest of all time. And we call people the goat, and we put them up there because of their sports achievements or because of something they do on a ball field or a ball court, and we do something because of something they attain to in this world's standards.

And the reality is that doesn't make one the greatest of all time because people that are great at one thing can absolutely stink at something else. But the good news is that when we open up the pages of the Bible, we have the greatest of all time, He who created time, telling us what greatness looks like.

He defines it for us. And if there is anyone who wants to set the standard of what it looks like to be great, if there is anyone that we think is worthy of giving us a valid description, it has to be Christ.

[ 28 : 21 ] I mean, Christ created it all. He spoke it into existence. As a matter of fact, everything that exists, that people are great at, He spoke into existence for His own glory.

Oh, well, you do something on the football field. Well, you play it on grass with a pigskin football, wearing all this stuff that was created for the glory of Christ.

Or you do it on a hardwood court. Well, that was for the glory of Christ. See, everything, even the breath in our lungs, exists for His glory, the body He gives us. Now, I think sports has a place in human history.

I think sports has a purpose, and we need to keep it within that realm. But we need to understand, too, that greatness can only be defined by He who is above it all. I don't need someone who is okay at something telling me what's great.

I need someone who is good at everything, the best at all that there could be. He who created it all is above it all. And when He tells me what it looks like to be great, now there's a definition I can stand on.

[ 29 : 23 ] And He comes and He tells us that. He gives us a description of greatness. Now, we don't like it. Let's just be honest. Because it puts on its head, it puts on the head everything that we think greatness looks like.

We think greatness looks like a large bank account, or like a good position, or a great suit, or, you know, having a good place in society, or what we drive.

I remember not too long ago. Now, anybody knows that if I have ever seen me around a funeral, when I officiate a funeral, I don't drive my vehicle.

I usually get my wife's vehicle to go. But then I usually meet her somewhere, either at the graveside or wherever, where nobody's really looking, and then we swap, so she didn't have to drive mine.

And I pulled up in my suit one time after a funeral, and someone said, well, Pastor, I thought, all pastors drove and started discovering this. I said, well, no, mine's an old 280,000-mile truck that leaks oil and blows smoke and leaves a mess everywhere I go, so I can't use it in a funeral procession.

[ 30 : 28 ] It wouldn't be fitting. It doesn't look real good. I said, but this is me. In our world, in our society, we think greatness has a look to it. But the beauty of it is, is that Christ tells us that we could all be great.

We all have the ability. He said, there's some things I can't do. Don't tell your kids they can do anything they want to. You say, Pastor, what do you mean?

I mean, be fair. There's some things I can't do. I mean, I'm 5'11". There's some things in this life I can't do. I've barely been able to hit the bottom of a basketball net.

I'm never going to be able to jump up and hit my head on the rim, okay? It's just not going to happen. You say, well, if you work that, no, no, it's not going to happen, even at my best. There's some things I can't do. I have physical limitations.

And the older I get, the more they become prevalent. And that's okay. That's okay. But we all have the ability to be great in the kingdom because he tells us here.

[ 31 : 32 ] But Jesus called them because, see, the other 10 became indignant. Now, they didn't get mad at James and John because they asked the question. They got mad at James and John because they beat them to the question.

They got mad because they asked it first. Now, if anybody wanted a right-hand seat, don't you think it probably was Peter? Peter probably thought, well, I need to be there. I'm the only one of us that's walked on water. I'm the one that made the confession.

I'm the only one that is going to cut somebody's ear off. It needs to be me. So they became indignant because they beat them to the punch. And Jesus calls them to himself and said, you know that the rulers of the Gentiles lorded over them.

That is, they raised themselves up. And their great men exercise authority over them, telling people what it is that they should and shouldn't do. It is not this way among you.

Here we are. Here's a description of greatness. Whoever wishes to become great among you shall be your servant. Now, the word servant is the one that will meet you at the door with a bowl of water and a towel and wash your feet when you came in the door.

[ 32 : 40 ] What Jesus is going to do at the Last Supper. He says, if you want to be a great, become a servant. You say, of who? Of all.

He says, whoever wishes to be first, he uses a different word here. Whoever wishes to be first shall be your slave.

Now, a servant had a right to serve or not serve. A slave has no rights. He said, if you want to be great, you become a servant. If you want to be first, be a slave.

And he uses himself as an example. For the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to give himself. I did not come so that others may serve me, he says, but I came to serve.

Unfortunately, church history has struggled with this. And the church presence struggles with this. Because we feel like greatness is by means of self-promotion when really Jesus says, greatness has nothing to do with your position.

[ 33 : 46 ] It has everything in the world to do with your posture. You do not make yourself great. You make yourself humble and low and serve.

You open up your bulletin. There's this little thing that says, you want to serve. It's got hands sticking up. Looking for ways to get involved.

I'll be honest with you, a great church is a church that serves. Serves itself, serves its community, serves its state, serves its nation. A great church is the church that serves.

And we see this. And this is why we know, listen, as we serve, we are great in the kingdom. And we do. There's always room to grow.

Fourth and finally, we close with this. There is a displayed reality. Because these things sound good in theory. Well, it sounds good to talk about it, but is this, is this a reality?

[ 34 : 54 ] And this is here where we meet the two blind, two blind beggars. Now, one of them, we know his name. His name is Bartimaeus. Because Mark and Luke both record him as Bartimaeus, blind Bartimaeus.

The second one remains unnamed. We don't know him. Only Matthew records the fact that there is a second one. By the way, when you open up Mark and Luke, you will see that he meets blind Bartimaeus as he comes into Jericho.

Matthew tells us that he heals him as he leaves Jericho. There's kind of a two-fold understanding. Either, while he's on his way to Jericho, Bartimaeus meets him and he's there for a little bit because we also know that he goes to this little guy's house when he's there.

This little guy who wore a, kind of a cloak and climbed a tree to go see him. Remember him? Zacchaeus. He was a wee little man. A wee little man was he. So he climbed a tree.

Jesus goes to Zacchaeus' house too. And blind Bartimaeus is following him around the whole time. And it wasn't until they left Jericho that he actually healed him. Or there's this historical position that there's old Jericho and new Jericho.

[ 35 : 59 ] New Jericho was rebuilt during Herod's reign. So it's somewhere between leaving old Jericho and coming into new Jericho that Jesus did the healing. Therefore, he could be leaving and entering at the same time.

Pretty amazing, isn't it? Every time they tell us the Bible contradicts itself, history shows us there is no contradiction. Because he could have literally been leaving Jericho and entering Jericho at the same time.

Luke and Mark could have been referring to old Jericho, Matthew as a Jew, writing to Jewish people, referring to new Jericho. Vice versa.

Mark and Luke referring to new, Matthew referring to old. Anyway, we go on. The two blind men hear that he's coming and they know that Jesus is on the way, so they start crying out to him.

Now Jesus has taught them about what it looks like to be great. Look at what the text says, though. The text says that he's going and there's a great crowd around him, right? His popularity there.

[ 36 : 57 ] At the height and the pinnacle of his popularity, he's going to pay the ultimate price for man's sin. All the people around him. And these two blind men are over here and they're crying out, Lord Jesus, Son of David, have mercy on us.

And it tells us that everybody in the crowd told them to be quiet. The word is that they sternly rebuked them and told them to leave him alone. By the way, sometimes in our life, we get to this place where all we can do is cry out to Jesus and it seems like people around us are always trying to push us down.

The beautiful thing about these men is they didn't let the crowd's opinion affect their cry. They didn't let the world's thoughts affect their desires. They didn't let anyone around them distract them or keep them because it says that they cried out even more.

So the longer the world told them to be quiet, the louder they got. The longer the world says he doesn't have time for you, the louder they got while calling out to him. And the reason the world probably thought that he didn't have time for them is because here is Jesus.

And these two men over here are blind beggars that most people would have looked past, walked past, and wanted nothing to do with. And some would have counted condemned because they were cursed with blindness.

[ 38 : 09 ] What sin was in their life that they would be born blind? That's the raging question. But I love what the text tells us.

It says in verse 32, and I'm coming to a close, and Jesus stopped. He said, well, yeah, he's on his way to Jerusalem to die for the sin of man.

His disciples around him are arguing about who's going to be great, and some blind men are calling out to him. And Jesus stopped.

And he called them to himself. He says, what do you want? Isn't that beautiful? That he who had so much to do for us had time to stop for two men that most of the world wanted to look past?

The reason that's so beautiful is because that's me. Right? I'm the blind beggar. And Jesus stopped. And says, what do you want me to do for you?

[ 39 : 20 ] All the crowd around him, I'm sure, had a request. But only those that most people thought he didn't have time for were called to him. And then it says in the text that he touched them.

Those who were considered untouchable. And he healed them, and they followed him. See, what he's doing is he is giving us a displayed reality of greatness.

You know what's great? The fact that the King of Kings and Lord of Lords one day stopped and looked at me and said, what do you want me to do for you? With everything he had before him, with all the wickedness of my desires within my heart, with all the raging confusion around him, he stopped and looked at me and said, what can I do for you?

And what's great is that by calling us to himself, he does that to each and every one of us. That's great. That's great. We move up in the kingdom by going up to the Savior and falling down at his feet and saying, Lord, use me how you see fit.

Let's pray. Lord, thank you for this day. Thank you for the beauty of your word. Lord, we pray you continue to speak to our hearts and minds. Lord, be used for your glory and honor and would you move in each and every one of us.

[ 41 : 01 ] We ask it all in Christ's name. Amen. Amen.

Amen. Amen.

Amen. Thank you.