

Luke 22 (Part 3): 24-30 • The Servant Example of Jesus

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Luke chapter 22. We're picking it up in verse 24. We're going to read down through verse 30. And then we're going to pray and we'll see what the Lord has for us in these verses.

Verse 24, *"A dispute also arose among them, (and that's the disciples) as to which of them was to be regarded as the greatest. 25 And he said to them, 'The kings of the Gentiles 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 (the) table or one who serves? Is it not the one who reclines at (the) 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."
(ESV)

Let's stop there and let's pray.

Heavenly Father, open our hearts to the ministry of Your Word. And let Your Word speak to us today. We recognize Lord, that we have a need of Your Holy Spirit, to bring understanding into our hearts so that we can not only understand, but also apply the Word and bring wisdom to our lives through that application. Use this time Father, and use the Word to really speak to us and nourish our hearts. We ask it in Jesus name, amen.

Last week we ended the passage that we were on here in Luke chapter 22 talking about Jesus's announcement that one of them was going to betray Him very soon. And of course, that brought up a discussion among the disciples. They quickly began to discuss among themselves, which of them that it might be that Jesus was talking about.

And as unthinkable as it sounds. They went from that... They went from talking about which one might betray Jesus, to talking about which of them was the

greatest. I don't know how they made that transition exactly. But somehow they did. And it worked its way to this thing of greatness. And sadly enough this is not the first time that this sort of a conversation popped up among the disciples.

In fact, I want to show you a passage in Mark chapter 9. Look at this, verses 33 and 34. It tells us here that

Mark 9:33-34 (ESV)

And they came to Capernaum. And when he was in the house he asked them, "What were you discussing on the way?" But they kept silent, for on the way they had argued with one another about who was the greatest.

And they (were travelling on their way) ...to Capernaum. (they came there) And when (there were) ...in the house (all the disciples got together with Jesus and it says) he asked them, "What were you discussing on the way?" But they kept silent, for on the way they had argued with one another about who was the greatest.

Now, that was on the way to Capernaum. Now they're in the Upper Room. They're at the Last Supper. They are literally hours away from Jesus being arrested, taken through a court trial, as crazy as it was, during the nighttime. And then crucified in the morning by the Romans. Just hours away from all that happening. And Jesus has been telling them all along that it's going to happen just that way.

And these guys are talking about which of them is the greatest. Yeah. Actually, it says they were disputing with one another about who was the greatest. And honestly, Jesus had the right to be angry with them. I mean, He really had the right. He could have pounded His fist on the table and said, you numbskulls, don't you get it? I've been talking to you for months now, about the fact that this is our last trip to Jerusalem before I'm arrested. Before I am turned over to the Gentiles. And before I'm going to be crucified like a criminal.

He could have gotten angry with them. Could have called them all kinds of names, I suppose. And said, I don't know what I'm even doing with you guys. You just don't get it! But I love the fact that He didn't. I particularly love the fact that He used it as a teaching opportunity.

And He began in verse 25 this way. "And he began to talk to them about leadership. "...he said..., "*The kings of the Gentiles* (And you know what I mean. Gentiles just means non-Jews. For you and I, this is just... We're talking about "worldly leaders." Okay? Worldly leadership. But He says, "*The kings of the*

Gentiles exercise lordship over their Gentile subjects." (Okay. They exercise lordship.) All right.

And He goes on to say, *"and those in authority over them are called benefactors."* Now we're going to stop just right there for a moment. Because Jesus is using this as a teaching time because of the fact that they've been talking about greatness. He wants to talk to them about true greatness in the kingdom of God.

But He begins by drawing a contrast in the world. And by saying that, you guys know and we all do. We all know that in the world greatness is defined by being over others. In fact, the more people you are over, the greater you are. We see that all through life. We see it in the home. We see it when we enter the business place. We see it in politics: at the local, state, national level.

We know that the higher you get on the pecking order, on the ladder, if you will. The more people you are over and have the authority over and so forth, the greater you are. That is just for you and I, it's just as normal as the day is long. We expect that stuff. Not strange. It's just the way the world works.

But you see, Jesus is talking about a different kind of leadership for His people. And by the way, I'm hoping that includes you. In other words, there's a completely different leadership structure. But He begins again by exposing the world structure. And He's also exposing the heart that is behind the world structure.

You'll notice He begins to talk about those who are over their subjects, they exercise lordship. Well, the exercise of Lordship is really just another form of self-exaltation. And we like to do that, by the way. We like to exalt ourselves. It's fun to be in charge. It's fun to have people under you. It's fun to tell people what to do. Probably because you yourself hate to be told what to do. And you know how much you hate it. And so it's fun to inflict that on others. Go do this. And you have to do it. It's kind of fun. Our hearts like it.

You've probably heard that phrase, absolute power corrupts absolutely. Well, I don't know anything about absolute power. But I got news for you. We can get intoxicated on limited power. Just a little bit and we're just down the road. Because the source of corruption is not the power.

That saying says absolute power corrupts..., that's not really where the corruption lies, folks. The corruption lies in our hearts. And that's why it's not absolute power that we need to corrupt us. Because the corruption is there in

the heart. We'll just take a little bit of power and we'll run with it. And the heart of man is like that.

And we all need to admit it and understand that we are so far away from this style of leadership that Jesus is talking about here. That is so opposite of the world. You'll notice that He also goes on to say that those in authority over them are called benefactors. Actually the Gentile kings back in those days would be known by, and people would refer to them as, benefactor. When you'd come before the king, oh, great benefactor, and so forth.

You and I, we don't use those terms much today. And when they are used in our culture, they more refer to somebody who is financially supporting somebody else. But actually, benefactor, as it's translated in the Greek here in the New Testament, it actually speaks of the practice of bestowing gifts and favor on people in order to earn their favor. Right? In order to earn their loyalty and so forth.

It's basically doing good things for people. And while that probably sounds honorable in and of itself. Again, God knows the heart. And He knows that we like to be good for people or to people. Or we like to do things that are good for people because it makes us feel good. Right? We like it.

We like the response that we get from people when we help them out. Everybody else thinks that we're doing it because we're good. Don't we have them hoodwinked? That's not why we're doing it. We're doing it because it makes us feel good. We like it.

You ever help somebody out when they're in a desperate situation? And they come to you later on they, wow! You're the best! We wouldn't have been able to make it if it wasn't for you! And you try to be all humble, there, there. It wasn't that much. Well, I guess it was quite a bit. Whatever.

What Jesus is doing here is He's exposing our motives. The motives behind worldly leadership. We like to tell people what to do because it makes us feel good. And we like to do honorable things for people because it makes us feel good. And we vie for those positions because we want to be the greatest.

But Jesus goes on. Look at verse 26. The first part of this verse it's important for every Christian to see and understand. He says, *"But not so with you."* And that's for you and me. We are so ingrained in the thinking of the world about greatness. But Jesus comes along to you and I, and He says, *"not so with you."* You and I are not to be that way. We're not to think that way. We're not to

operate that way. Our motivation is to be entirely different, as to why we do what we do. And the rest of verse 26 defines leadership God's way. Notice what He says. He says, "... *let the greatest among you become as the youngest.*"

Now, let's think about this for a minute. Because this is the first challenge He's going to lay before us, in terms of addressing our human motives for why we're doing what we're doing. He says, you need to become the youngest. If you're... If you want to be the greatest among you, become as the youngest. What does that mean?

How many of you guys are the youngest in your family? Put up your hand. Youngest in the whole family. Me too! I was the youngest of four kids. And we got picked on didn't we? Younger... Yeah. We're going to have a support meeting right after the service today. We'll encourage one another. We'll cry a little bit and say, it's going to be all right. And they thought we grew up and we were spoiled. But we actually got picked on.

And I don't know if it was like that in your house. But in mine, the youngest person of the home was rarely respected. Rarely asked for their opinion. And too often ignored altogether. And I'm not saying that to say, poor me. I'm saying that's just the way it is. Because the older people in the home or business or whatever it is, they have more experience. They have more life experience. And there's some wisdom, frankly, to the fact that, when you're young, it's probably best to keep your yap shut. You know what I mean?

And frankly, we see this even throughout the Word. You guys remember in the Book of Job? Job's friends are going at him for this whole long time. Remember there was another guy there. And his name was Elihu. But he didn't even start to say his piece until the other three guys had finished saying theirs. Because culturally, young men just don't speak up. It would be rude and disrespectful to do so.

Let me show you this actually on the screen. It's Job chapter 32. It says,

Job 32:4-6 (ESV)

Now Elihu had waited to speak to Job because they were older than he. And when Elihu saw that there was no answer in the mouth of these three men, he burned with anger. And Elihu the son of Barachel the Buzite answered and said, "I am young in years, and you are aged; therefore I was timid and afraid to declare my opinion to you."

Now Elihu had waited to speak to Job because they (meaning his friends) were older than he. And when Elihu saw that there was no answer in the mouth of these men, he burned with anger. (And so it says,) then Elihu, the son of Barachel, the (we say Buzriht here in America. Because we butcher everything. But it's actually,) Buzite. (Anyway, he answered and said, I am... look at this) "I am young in years and you are aged. Therefore I was timid and afraid to declare my opinion to you."

I got to tell you something. I like this cultural sort of a thing where the young respect the older and wait to talk. Because that's not the way it is in our culture today here in America. Is it? We're all about youth. And we think that the young people actually have something to say.

You remember some of you guys were old enough. Do you guys remember, The Monkeys? The group the Monkeys. Some of you guys are going, I don't know. I don't know. Anyway, they actually had a theme song during their show. And I said, (Pastor Paul sings) we're the young generation and we've got something to say. And now we're all older now. And we go, (Pastor Paul singing shakes his head in the negative.) No, you didn't! Right? We're like, you guys were idiots! Because I was young too. And I thought, hey, listen to me, man. What a dork that I was. I like this whole idea of waiting for the older.

This is what Jesus is saying, you want to be great? Be like the youngest. Hold your tongue. You walk into a room. Don't expect to be the one who has all the answers. You walk into a situation, wait, let other people talk. Don't walk in there like you're in charge. Walk in like you're not qualified. It's a different sort of a deal. Isn't it? From our whole kind of a world.

A typical leader walks into a room and commands the presence of the room. When the expert walks through the door, it's like, okay. Sssshhhh! We're going to wait and hear this guy talk." Jesus says, no. When you go into a room, you want to be great? You want to be a leader? Go in the room and let other people talk. Be like the younger."

You see what He's doing. He's exposing the motives. The motive behind it is humility. Because it is humility that causes us to hold our tongue. It's humility that causes us to see ourselves as not better, not greater, not over other people. Right? But as the servant of those individuals. Go there to serve. Go there to be for them, and so forth. That's the first thing Jesus talks about. And you can see here that, that really speaks to the whole element of the motive of why we want to be what we are, or who we are.

Then the other thing Jesus encourages us to do is to reflect real kingdom leadership, not worldly leadership. It's at the very end of verse 26. Look what He says there. He talks about Himself, "*as one who serves.*" Did you catch that? Such a beautiful picture. Such a humble picture.

And it is flat out the opposite of how worldly leadership functions in the world. Because worldly leadership is all about being served. It's rising up the ladder and getting people under you who serve you. Who do what you want and so forth. And frankly, it feels good. Like I said, it feels good to have people serve you.

I mean, we even like... Sue and I, like to go to restaurants once in a while. We call them - the ones where they serve you - we call them sit down restaurants. I don't know when we started saying that. But we just... That's our family... It's like, "Do you want to go to a sit down restaurant? Which is... Versus a drive through restaurant where they don't serve you, they throw food at you. Right? As you're going through the drive up. And if they don't throw it to you in under two minutes, it's free. Right?

But it's just nice once in a while to go to a nice place, and sit down, and have somebody come along and say, hi, my name is so and so. I'll be serving you today. And can I get you something here as we start?" And then they come back several times during the meal. Are you guys doing okay? Can I get you anything else? It feels good. Right? It feels good. I like that. Everybody wants to be taken care of. It's nice to have people do things for you. And stuff like that.

And yet Jesus says, look in verse 27. He's actually using a restaurant motif sort of an idea. He says, "*For who is the greater, the one who reclines (or who is sitting at the table,) or the one who's actually serving the person.* Right? He says, is it not the one who is reclining or sitting? We don't recline at table. But He says, isn't that the actual the greater person?

But look what He says again. And I love this you guys, "*I am among you as one who serves.*" In other words, "I'm here as the servant." And what's incredible about that is, that here is the man who truly deserved to be served. I mean... You know what I mean?

We get served and it's fun, but we don't deserve it. He deserved to be served with every ounce of being of the people who came around Him. I mean, He deserved to have people drop everything and serve Him. He deserved that. We sometimes try to demand it of others, but we don't deserve it. Here's the man

who truly should be served by all of mankind. And yet He comes and He says, I am among you as a servant. *"I... (come) among you as one who serves."*

And He's not just referring to what we know took place at the Last Supper. And that was the washing of the disciples feet. Interestingly enough, that's only covered for us in John's gospel account. And here's how John put it. I'll put it on the screen from John chapter 13. It says,

John 13:12-15 (ESV)

When he had washed their feet and put on his outer garments and resumed his place, he said to them, "Do you understand what I have done to you? You call me Teacher and Lord, and you are right, for so I am. If I then, your Lord and Teacher, have washed your feet, you also ought to wash one another's feet. For I have given you an example, that you also should do just as I have done to you."

"When he had washed their feet and (then) put on his outer garments (once again he) resumed his place, (at the table) he said to them, "Do you understand what I have done to you? You call me Teacher and Lord, and you are right, for so I am. (But) If I then, your Lord and Teacher, have washed your feet, you also ought to wash one another's feet. For I have given you an example, that you also should do just as I have done to you."

Now, don't take that too literally, as if you need to go get a towel and a basin and wash everybody's feet. Understand that the washing of feet was done by the lowest of the household servants. And when He says, I've shown you this by fundamentally lowering Myself to the position of the lowest of the servants. Not just a servant but the lowest of the servants.

He says, now that I have shown you an example of being the lowest form of service, I want you to understand that in the kingdom, leadership is all about functioning as the lowest of the servants. That's where greatness is defined. That's where greatness is seen. Right?

Again, this is an upside down kingdom. Everything that the world elevates and loves about being in charge, being the one who has served and so forth, is the opposite of the way it works in the kingdom of God. And it's all about motive. It's all about what's in our hearts.

Paul talks about the incarnation of Jesus, as really the most powerful picture of the humbling of service. Check this out from Philippians 2. He wrote,

Philippians 2:5-7 (ESV)

Have this mind among yourselves, which is yours in Christ Jesus, who, though he was in the form of God, did not count equality with God a thing to be grasped, but emptied himself, by taking the form of a servant, being born in the likeness of men.

Have this mind among yourselves, which is yours in Christ Jesus, who, though he was in the form of God, (and make no mistake about that) did not count equality with God a thing to be grasped (or held onto) but (rather) emptied himself, by taking the form of a servant, being born in the likeness of men.

You know, one of the things that's most interesting to me about that passage, other than the fact that Jesus took the form of a servant, which is crazy on its own. But that statement that says, that He “*emptied himself...*” Did you catch that? He emptied Himself. Nobody emptied Him. He emptied Himself. And of course that the Greek literally means to pour out. He poured out Himself in order to take on a humble position of serving other people.

And again, Jesus is really the only One who ever really had anything to pour out. And the Bible tells us right here in this passage who being in the form of God did not consider that equality such that he was unwilling to pour himself out. And He actually did that. He emptied Himself so that He might come and live among us as a servant. He had something to pour out. And He was willing to pour it out. You and I don't have anything to pour out. And we're still not willing to do it. That's the fact of the matter.

We are those truly humble servants. If we would see ourselves as we really are. But we don't want to see ourselves that way because it doesn't make us feel good. And we're all interested in our self-esteem these days. We're going to do anything that's going to build us up in our own eyes. I'm going to be strong. I'm going to be powerful. I'm going to have people under me. I'm going to have people serving me. Yeah, that's great. You can do that. But I'm telling you in the kingdom of God, that is not the way to greatness. And that's what Jesus is saying in this passage.

And the last thing that we read in these verses that we're covering this morning is probably the most amazing of the whole passage. Because it says, beginning in verse 28, if you look with me there. Jesus says, “*You are those who have stayed with me in my trials, and I assign to you, as my father assigned to me, a kingdom, that you may eat and drink at my table in my kingdom and sit on thrones judging the twelve tribes of Israel.*”

And we read this passage and we're like, Jesus, were you paying attention? These are these dope heads that were just arguing a few minutes ago about which of them is the greatest. And what are You doing? He begins to talk to them about assigning them a kingdom. And thrones to rule over the 12 tribes of Israel. And we're like, these guys rule and reign? They need to clean the outhouse for about a hundred years to learn some humility. And You are talking to them about ruling and reigning? And it makes you wonder, Jesus, have You been paying attention to these guys? Do You know just how carnal they really are?

Trust me, He knows. He knows how carnal these guys really are. But do you know what He also knows? He knows the kind of men that they will become. He knows the kind of men they will become. And you know what? He knows the kind of person you're going to become, too. Regardless of how you may see yourself now.

God knows the kind of person you will become because He's not limited by time. And you and I - we get so caught up in the kind of people we are now. I mean... And we think about it all the time. And we stress and we fret. Because we don't see the changes in our life that we think we ought to be seeing.

And that's just one of the most popular things people say to me. One of those common concerns that people have about their Christian life is, pastor Paul, I just don't feel like I'm changing the way... And it just goes on. It's just ad nauseam.

But can I tell you something? We are not transformed into the image of Christ by carefully observing our own growth. And judging our every action. Can I just tell you, just honestly, that you're a really rotten fruit inspector on your own limbs. You're not that great about inspecting other people's fruit either. Just to be honest with you. But you're even worse at looking at your own. And many people - and this is probably part of our culture - we're so me centered in our culture. We're so think about ourselves centered that we bring that same attitude into our walk with Jesus Christ.

And we start looking at ourselves and we're literally obsessed with thinking about ourselves. Pastor Paul, I'm really worried because I just not seeing the fruit in my life that I think I should be seeing for this stage of my life. And I'm like, you know what? Do you know how you want to know how you begin the real... allowing Him to... let Him do the real work of transformation in your life? It's not by looking at you, it's by looking at Him. It's by keeping your eyes on Him.

The Bible says that you are to focus on Jesus, the Author and Perfecter of your faith. It doesn't say focus on you. Just focus on Him. When we look at Him and see Him, in a greater reflection of His glory, we are transformed into His image. But it is not as you look at self. You need to break that mirror and stop looking at yourself. And stop stressing over yourself.

And stop obsessing about what you are, or aren't, or want to be, or whatever. And you need to commit it into the hands of the Lord. And look deeply into His face. And you need to look at Jesus. You need to learn of Jesus. You need to grow in Jesus. And focus on what He does in His life. What He says in the gospels. What He has told you in the Word of God. Get your eyes off yourself.

We will never grow and we will never change. And we will never get around to serving others if we're constantly looking at self. It just isn't going to happen. The world tells you, you have to love others before you can love... Excuse me. You have to love yourself before you can love others. Right? Isn't that what they say?

And by the way, whatever the world tells you, it's the opposite. Okay? The opposite. It's just really good to know. It just helps you understand. Whatever the world says, they're messed up. They go, yeah, you have to really learn to love yourself first. That's not true. Get your eyes off yourself. Love Jesus with all your heart. He will do the work of transformation. He will do the work to change your heart and make it into what He wants it to be. Stop thinking about you. Think about Him.

Our problems get bigger the more we look at them. You don't want that to be getting bigger. Let Jesus be the focal point of your attention. And you're going to find that your problems are going to begin to fade. You got marriage problems? Great. Who doesn't? You know what, though? They're not going to get any better by looking at them. Think of Jesus. Come to Jesus. Look to Him for the answers. You don't have the answers. You know that. And frankly, I don't either, except what I see in the Word of God. Look to Jesus.

When people come and talk to me about their marriage issues, the one question I always want to ask them is, where does Jesus come into all this? And they're like, what do you mean? Well, what can Jesus do for your marriage? I don't know. I haven't thought about that. Well, maybe it's time to start.

Or whatever the issue might be in your life. Whatever it may be. How does Jesus figure into that? Get your eyes onto Him. Think about Him. But we're just all turned inward. I'm looking at my life, my problems, my thoughts, my

feelings, my everything, my... What do you think of me? And I don't think He likes me! Goodness gracious, we waste time!

The kingdom of God... Being who we are in the kingdom of God, is not about self. It's about Jesus. It's not about us being powerful. It's about us being weak, serving others, humbling our self in the sight of others. That's greatness! And transformation happens. Not as we look to self. But as we look to Jesus, amen.