



Greatness in the World & Kingdom!

Matthew 20:20-28

Mark 10:35-45

Matthew 20:20-28, *Then the mother of Zebedee's sons came to Him with her sons, kneeling down and asking something from Him. ²¹And 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."²² But Jesus answered and said, "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."²³ So He said to them, "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 those for whom it is prepared by My Father."*

²⁴And when the ten heard it, they were greatly displeased with the two brothers. ²⁵But 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. ²⁶Yet it shall not be so among you; but whoever desires to become great among you, let him be your servant. ²⁷And whoever desires to be first among you, let him be your slave—²⁸just as the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give His life a ransom for many."

Today's world everyone is promoting themselves.

The promotion of pride is a virtue these days.

In the Roman Empire, pride was exalted as a virtue and humility was looked on as a weakness. For no society can survive pride run rampant.

The society depends on relationships but when a mass of people are all committed to themselves alone then it will disintegrate.

Exactly that is what is happening in our society, homes, relationships are falling apart.

Materialistic concept in the business world based on pride, self-promotion, success-motivation, build yourself up, get more riches, get more esteem.

This self-promotion, self-esteem pride movement has found its way into Christianity. Leaders, Pastors are now twisting the Bible to promote pride, self-esteem, self-glory, self-promotion, self-image building.

There are even Christian books on how to make your body more beautiful and your face more beautiful.

This needs to be confronted.

We live in a Christianity now that thinks God's only design for us is to be healthy, wealthy, prosperous, happy, satisfied, fulfilled, and so forth.

We know very little about sacrifice.

We know very little of the pain of suffering.

All we want to do is eliminate every problem and pain so that we can get on to self-fulfillment.

We are consumed with the creature of comforts, pleasure, vacations, travel, etc., In the process, we have begun to exalt pride.

There was a time in the church were teaching and preaching on humility, and brokenness. The time of the Reformation, or Puritans, and we find such teachings.

There was a trembling at the Word of God.
There was humility, a meekness within the church.

But now the church wants to be proud, fulfilled, and indulgent.
The Church has fallen prey to flip-flopping the sin of pride and the virtue of humility.

Bible is very clear about these things.

Proverbs 21:4, *A haughty look, a proud heart, And the ploughing of the wicked are sin.*

Proverbs 16:5, *Everyone proud in heart is an abomination to the Lord; Though they join forces, none will go unpunished.*

Romans 1:30 pride is the mark of man's fallenness into a reprobate mind.

1 Timothy 3:6, "Pride comes from the devil."

1 John 2:16, Pride is part of the world.

1 Timothy 6:3-4 pride belongs to false teachers.

So, pride is sin. It is an abomination.

It is to be hated. I

Bible says that God resists the proud.

In **Isaiah 23:9** it says He brings the proud into contempt.

In **Psalms 31:23** it says the proud will be judged.

In **Exodus 18:11**, the proud will be subdued.

Psalms 18:27, pride will be brought low.

Daniel 4:37, proud will be humiliated.

Luke 1:51, proud will be scattered,

Malachi 4:1 proud will be punished,

Bible calls humility is a virtue and is exalted.

Micah 6:8, *He has shown you, O man, what is good; And what does the Lord require of you But to do justly, To love mercy, And to walk humbly with your God?*

There are many verses in the Bible talks about the great benefit from God when you are humble.

If you ever desire honour from God, or glory from God, it comes through the humility.

The lesson of honour through humility, of glory through suffering, we need to learn.

We are not alone in this lesson the disciples join with us to learn it.

The disciples too sought self-glory.

They were into self- promotion, self-glory, seeking to be somebody special, to be recognized, to be esteemed.

They sought the high places.

Our Lord needed to correct that, and He does correct that in this passage.

Unfortunately, He taught a lot better than they learned.

Jesus must re-teach this lesson just a few days after teaching here on the way to Jerusalem.

Background:

The disciples basically forsook all and followed Jesus. They did with a measure of genuineness.

But in addition to their genuineness in following Christ out of love and admiration and salvation. They followed Him knowing that whatever they gave up now would be more than replenished when He entered into His kingdom.

There was a residual, materialistic element in their thinking. They were eagerly awaiting the time when Jesus established His kingdom and returned to them a hundred-fold everything they had ever lost.

The Lord had even reinforced that promise.

Matthew 19:28-29, *So Jesus said to them, "Assuredly I say to you, that in the regeneration, when the Son of Man sits on the throne of His glory, you who have followed Me will also sit on twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel. ²⁹ And everyone who has left houses or brothers or sisters or father or*

mother or wife or children or lands, for My name's sake, shall receive a hundredfold, and inherit eternal life.

When Jesus talked about suffering, they didn't get it.
They weren't receiving that.

What they were looking for was what He said about glory, honour, and reigning in the kingdom.

Not only did they learn it, but they never forgot that.
But they didn't hear at all what He said about suffering.

Matthew 20:17-19 is the broadest description of His death.

Jesus already told them in **Matthew 16 and 17**, now for the third time that He is going to Jerusalem to suffer and die.
He is trying to balance their perspective.

There is a kingdom, but the way to the kingdom is through suffering.

- Death then glory.
- Humility is before honour

Jesus kept telling them that He is going to suffer and die.
He also had taught them a lot about their own suffering.

Matthew 8, He told them that they may not find a place to sleep.

Matthew 10, You may have to use a sword against your own family.

Matthew 16, take up your own cross and follow Me.

They got a lot of lessons about suffering, but it never seemed to go inside their understanding because they were so prepared themselves for their glory and greatness in the kingdom.

Jesus had emphasized humility in **Matthew chapter 18**.

You must come as a child into the kingdom.

You must forsake everything to come to the kingdom.

The profound lesson was humility, self-denial, and abandonment.

But they kept asking **what shall I get?**

Matthew 19:27, *Then Peter answered and said to Him, "See, we have left all and followed You. Therefore what shall we have?"*

Selfishness is incurable in this life.

It only can be brought under control.

It can't be eliminated.

Matthew 20:17-19, Jesus spoke about His suffering and death and resurrection never seems to change their attitude.

All they could think about was their own glory.

It is the same today.

Jesus is still talking about suffering.

Take up your cross.

Still humility is the path to glory.

Go abandon yourself, give up everything you have in this world to do what Christ wants you to do no matter what the cost.

Still a lot of people look at grace like a free ticket to the storehouse of divine goodies where they can pick anything and everything they want.

And all God wants to do is make you healthy, wealthy, happy, wise, comfortable, satisfied, and so forth.

Later they were at the very night of the Passover, at the Lord's Table as He was telling them of His own betrayal, death and resurrection. They still were arguing about who was going to be the greatest in the kingdom.

I trust that none of us is approaching the Christian life like that.

None of us is looking at the Christian life as to what we can get out of it.

None of us approach how we can be better esteemed, or get a bigger church, and be a more famous preacher.

"A chorus of many voices is chanting in unison today that I must at all costs love myself." John Stott

A. How not to be great?

Four wrong, worldly ways to seek greatness are given in this passage.

The world's kingdom does not operate in His kingdom.

1. Power play.

The world will tell us if you want to get something, it all depends on who you know.

If you want to go up the ladder, you have got to get next to the people who have got the influence.

You manipulate people and circumstances to find your way with those who will pull you to the top.

V 20, *Then the mother of Zebedee's sons came to Him with her sons, kneeling down and asking something from Him.*

This happens upon the heels of Jesus' explanation of His coming death. They seem to be indifferent to that.

They were on the road going up to Jerusalem from Jericho is the arrival of James, John, and their mother.

Mark 10 the mother is not even mentioned.

She was not on her own. They were tagging along.

V 22, *They said to Him, "We are able."*

They came as a trio.

Matthew seems to focus on her.

Mark focuses on James and John.

V 21, *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."*

This is a proud act.

- They want the chief place in the kingdom.
- They are seeking self-glory.
- They are seeking promotion, honour, esteem.
- They want to ride the throne.
- They want to be next to Christ so people can say that look at those two.
- Look how close they are to Christ. They must be the second and third most holy people there are.
- They really sought that kind of affirmation from people.
- They were bold.

If you have doubt about the boldness of James and John then read Mark 9 and Luke 9, you will find out.

Their names were "Sons of thunder."

We think of them as rather passive because Jesus speaks of John with such intimate terms of tender love. But they were brash, and bold, and even demanding kind of men.

They came to Jesus in what is a political power play.

They are playing on something which is very interesting.

Matthew, Mark, and John tell us that when Jesus was being crucified, at the foot of the cross there were standing three women.

Each of those gospels Matthew, Mark and John give us the names of those women.

Matthew 27:56, among whom were *Mary Magdalene, Mary the mother of James and Joses, and the mother of Zebedee's sons.*

Mark 15:40, *There were also women looking on from afar, among whom were Mary Magdalene, Mary the mother of James the Less and of Joses, and Salome,*

Matthew calls her as mother of Zebedee's sons.

Mark calls her as Shalome.

John 19:25, *Now there stood by the cross of Jesus His mother, and His mother's sister, Mary the wife of Clopas, and Mary Magdalene.*

John says this: "There was Jesus' mother, His mother's sister, then Mary the wife of Cleophas, and Mary Magdalene. So

We know who Mary Magdalene is.

We know Jesus' mother Mary.

Mary, the wife of Cleophas, must be the other Mary.

Mary, the mother of James and Joses, as both Matthew and Mark tell us.

That leaves this other one who is called mother of the sons of Zebedee, **Salome**, and now is called **Jesus' mother's sister**.

The mother of the **sons of Zebedee is the sister of Mary** the mother of Jesus.

They want to play on the affection of Jesus for His mother, and they want to use the thing that they had in their ace in the hole was they were His cousins.

Their mothers were sisters.

So, they come as those who think they have it because they know somebody can get where other people can't get.

This is politics.

This is manipulation.

They wouldn't just come as cousins, they bring their mother, because they want to play on the sympathy of Jesus and the compassion that He would have for the sister of His own mother.

She comes, and says she worships *Proskuneō*, bowed down, knelt, treated Him like a king. Desired a certain thing of Him.

She didn't tell Him what she desired.

Mark 10 says she wouldn't tell Him. She wanted Him to promise to give it to before she told Him what it was.

Mark 10:35-36, *Then James and John, the sons of Zebedee, came to Him, saying, "Teacher, we want You to do for us whatever we ask." ³⁶And He said to them, "What do you want Me to do for you?"*

Childish.

Have you ever had your child do that to you?

She comes like a little child.

It was common for kings to do this. It was a way you exalted the king, like Herod who said to the dancing girl who got John the Baptist's head, "I will give you anything you want, just ask."

She kneels, she bows, and treats Him with homage as to a king, and then says, "Make me a grand promise that You will do this." Thinking she could play upon His love of royalty, and power.

She is not asking for herself. She gets her glory through the honour that's given to her two sons. The exaltation of her sons would be the joy of that mother's heart.

She shows that she believes Christ is going to do what He said He is going to do, bring His kingdom.

V 21, *"Grant that these two sons of mine may sit, one on Your right hand and the other on the left, in Your kingdom."*

A very brash statement.

They were cousins. They thought they had a certain intimacy. They were in the inner circle.

They knew that Peter was always getting rebuked so he couldn't qualify. Peter was forever getting in trouble.

They also thought the same stuff Peter thought but kept their mouth shut so they looked holy.

Sometimes it is a virtue to keep your mouth shut!

We are in the inner circle. Peter's been disqualified by the many rebukes. It's got to be us!

So let us go and get mom.

We will get Jesus thinking He is a king, and we will get the promise, and we will get to sit on the right and left.

We want to be exalted. We want the chief seats.

Disgusting.

The church still suffers from those people who come in and want to have the preeminence, who love the chief seats just like the Pharisees did in the synagogues.

3 John 1:9, *I wrote to the church, but Diotrephes, who loves to have the preeminence among them, does not receive us.*

They want the chief seats where they can sit above men and have them call them father.

There is always that self-seeking. It is true in Christianity.

People in the church who want to be known, esteemed, and lifted up.

But our Lord rejects political power play.

He rejects it totally. That is not how you reach the place of blessing and honor in the kingdom.

2. Selfish Ambition

V 22-24, *But Jesus answered and said, "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." ²³ So He said to them, "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 those for whom it is prepared by My Father."*

²⁴*And when the ten heard it, they were greatly displeased with the two brothers.*

Who will be those who receive the greatest reward in heaven?

Those who suffered the most in life for the cause of Jesus Christ. Those who confronted the hostile world and paid the greatest price in self-effacement, in self-denial and dedication for His purposes, they will be the ones who receive the greater glory.

2 Corinthians 4:17, *For our light affliction, which is but for a moment, is working for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory,*

What is it that leads to glory?

It is an affliction.

When we are afflicted and persecuted and suffer for the cause of the gospel, we are building up a greater inheritance of glory.

As we learned in the early part of chapter 20, all of us equally receive eternal life, all of us will be paid equally the same wage in terms of eternal life.

V 22, *But Jesus answered and said, "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?"*

If you seek then to sit beside Me, you will seek the same suffering that I experience. Are you able to drink the cup that I drink?

"Are you able to drink the cup?"

The cup is an Old Testament symbol that means to take everything in the cup.

Are you able to suffer to the degree that I am, to drink the whole cup?

Isaiah which talks about the cup of **God's fury**.
Christ drank all of that.

Are you able to take it all in to experience all of it?
Matthew 26, the bitter cup, **the cup of suffering**.

Could you fully suffer like I am going to suffer?

Jesus is going to be exalted to full glory because He went through such profound suffering.

Because Jesus suffered most, He is glorified most.
Whoever suffers next most to Him will be glorified next to Him.

Eternal weight of glory is predicated on suffering.
If you seek then to find that place of eternal glory where you can exalt the Lord Jesus Christ forever in His presence uniquely seated beside Him in some sense, you will find it not by political power play and not by audacious ambition, but

you will find it by humility and suffering, and an abandonment to self-denial and self-sacrifice for His sake.

V 22, *They said to Him, "We are able."*

How dumb?

They weren't able. Excessive confidence.

Over ambition.

A lot of people think, "I can do it."

There are a lot of people who charge into a task and think they can do it.

Some of us have excessive confidence. If you think you can do it in your own strength, you can't.

Peter said, *"Everybody may forsake you. I will never forsake you."* We know what happened. Before the cock crowed, he was denying the Lord.

Do you remember what happened?

What happened to James and John, and the rest??

Matthew 26:31-56, when Jesus was taken prisoner, the disciples fled. They couldn't handle it.

Jesus says that you don't know what you are asking.

You don't get your way up the kingdom by boasting about

V 23, *So He said to them, "You will indeed drink My cup, and be baptized with the baptism that I am baptized with;*

Jesus told them the truth. The time came when they were faithful.

Acts 12 says James was the first dying martyr. John was faithful, too, and he was the first living martyr, exiled to the Isle of Patmos to spend his life.

They drank the cup.

They couldn't have drunk it all as Jesus did, but they tasted that same cup.

They knew the fellowship of His sufferings. They came around by the power of the Holy Spirit. They never were able to handle this until after the Spirit came and infused them with internal spiritual strength.

V 23, *but to sit on My right hand and on My left is not Mine to give, but it is for those for whom it is prepared by My Father."*

I am in submission now.

I am going to suffer.

I am emphasizing My submissiveness to the Father. He is the one passing out the rewards. He is the one who gives the ultimate glory, and it is His decision to whomever He has prepared that.

Who would be the most glorified?

The only answer is the one who suffered the most, the one who is the most abandoned to self-denial.

- It won't be the one who sought it by political power play or audacious ambition.
- It won't be the ones who sat around the table arguing about who would be the greatest.
- It would be those who were taken with worm theology and lived it out.

V 24, *And when the ten heard it, they were greatly displeased with the two brothers.*

All of them weren't spiritual.

They were mad, because they got in there before they did.

Luke 22:24-27, They were arguing about it at the Last Supper who is going to be the greatest. They were mad at James and John for going in there instead of them.

They were mad about it.

Why?

Because they sought the same thing.

Jesus gives them two more wrong ways that men get greatness, but not in God's kingdom.

3. Dictatorship.

V 25, *But Jesus called them to Himself and said, "You know that the rulers of the Gentiles lord it over them,*

They lord it over them. This is a dominant dictatorship.

This is the world's way.

Not only does the world seek greatness through its political power play and its audacious ambition, but the world seeks prominence by dominating as dictatorship.

Antiochus Epiphanes, the Caesars, the Ptolemies of Egypt, the Herod's, the Pilates, the Hitlers, the Idi Amins, and the whatever other kind of strange gurus and dictators of the world. We have seen them all. They have been and gone. They keep coming. They rule by their dominant dictatorship, they lord it over people.

That is how they get their greatness.

One of the reasons is that Africa is so susceptible to communist revolution. The reason for the unending foment in Latin America and Central America is because those nations are coming out of dominant dictatorships where the people were so utterly abused by the dictator who was in it for his own self-glory, self-promotion and self-aggrandizement, and who filled his own coffers at the expense of the people.

Reaction against that, they have become fertile soil for communist agitators and infiltration who have stirred up the kind of chaos that leads to the progress of communism in their own style.

A reaction to the dominant dictatorship which so marks the world.

But that's a style of leadership you find a lot of places.

You can find it in some businesses.

You can find it in some churches where the man thinks he wants to dominate everybody.

You can even find some in their homes.

1 Peter 5:2, *Shepherd the flock of God which is among you, serving as overseers, not by compulsion but willingly, not for dishonest gain but eagerly;*

4. Charming control.

V 25, and those who are great exercise authority over them.

Throw your weight around informally and it is the idea of vaunting their power.

The dominant dictatorship is the power of position, this seems to be the power of personality.

The charm, the charisma, the wit, the verbiage, the ability to speak with smoothness, gives them a certain power to sway and move people.

There are people who achieve greatness in the world by virtue of their charismatic ability to control people.

This happens in the church too!

People with charm and the cleverness.

How people can listen to certain preachers and certain teachers, and ever believe anything they say?

They are intimidated and dominated by a person that they are so captivated by the personality of the person. The person knows how to move people. What psychological tricks and gimmicks to use and they become victim and fall prey to his trap.

If you would be great don't seek it by political power play.

- Don't try to climb some ladder based on who you know.
- Don't seek it by audacious ambition.
- Don't overstate confidently your abilities.
- Don't seek it by dominant dictatorship.

- Don't just try to pull rank on people and shove them around.
- Don't use your natural capabilities and personality characteristics to manipulate and move people around.

B. How to be great?

The encouragement comes in verses 26 and 27.

The example is given in verse 28.

1. Encouragement.

V 26, "But it shall not be so among you"

In the world, people get their greatness by political power play, audacious ambition, dominant dictatorship, charismatic control. Not so with you in the kingdom where it is all reversed.

John 18:36, *Jesus answered, "My kingdom is not of this world. If My kingdom were of this world, My servants would fight, so that I should not be delivered to the Jews; but now My kingdom is not from here."*

The opposite to the world is the kingdom.

Total reverse.

In the world it is pyramidal. You get on top, and you control everybody underneath you.

In the kingdom, the pyramid is inverted, and you are on the bottom.

We do not seek greatness in the kingdom as the world seeks its greatness. Sad to say, many do. There are many like James and John and their mother.

There are many who pursue the limelight of Christianity.

People want to be a part of the Christian superstar list.

- They want to want to seek a prominent place, the place of prestige and honour.
- The place of respect,
- The place of power and control.
- They can generate those kinds of creature comforts that minister most to their physical bodies and their psychological needs.

They may be esteemed by some to be great, but not so in God's kingdom. When the true evaluation is made in the end, they will be far down the line from those who are the truly great, whose lives were marked by humble, selfless, and slavish service.

We notice that the standard is different.

V 26, *Yet it shall not be so among you; but whoever desires to become great among you, let him be your servant.*

Jesus never promotes a sinful ambition.

Jesus dealt with the sinful ambition of James and John.

Jesus reaffirmed that it wasn't wrong to seek to be great, but it was only wrong to seek it for the wrong reason.

Paul said, "Run that you may win."

He also reiterated that we ought to be concerned that our works, when they stand the test of fire at the judgment seat of Christ are not wood, hay, and stubble, but gold, silver, and precious stone.

When we come to that day and face the Lord Jesus Christ, we may receive reward for the things done in the body, whether they be good or worthless.

John reminds us, at the climax of the whole Bible.

Revelation 22:12, *“And behold, I am coming quickly, and My reward is with Me, to give to every one according to his work.”*

It is not wrong to seek glory in eternity.

It is not wrong to seek exaltation.

The Lord has given us that as a goal.

It is only wrong to seek it for the wrong reason.

When James and John seek it so that they can lord it over the others it is wrong.

They were seeking greater authority, greater power, greater comfort. It's not wrong to seek it for wrong and selfish reasons.

If you seek greatness on God's terms, you will seek it on the track that He has ordained.

The track of suffering.

- The path to glory is the path of suffering.
- The path of sacrifice.
- The path of slavery.

- The path of selfless service.

V 27, *And whoever desires to be first among you, let him be your slave—*

We hear the word slave, we don't understand much, because we don't have slaves, but they did.

- They knew what it was to see slaves whipped and beaten.
- They knew what it was to serve in the terrible kind of conditions that many of them served in.

For them it became a graphic demonstration of how committed they should be to serving one another to find the true place of greatness.

You are to be a slave.

Paul looked at his life in that way that his life was not his own, that his Master was in charge.

Romans 14:8, *For if we live, we live to the Lord; and if we die, we die to the Lord. Therefore, whether we live or die, we are the Lord's.*

Paul was a slave bound to Christ. Repeatedly he said that. He calls himself a slave of Jesus Christ.

Slavishly did he fulfill his responsibility before God for the sake of others.

Paul did it seeking to be exalted for those reasons. But he did it so that the Lord might be glorified in his exaltation.

This was demonstrated by his willingness to go through the path of pain to get there.

Lot of people who want the path to glory, but they don't want the pain. They build Christian institutions around them and organizations around them. They build their little kingdom. You see very little of the pain and suffering.

All of us need to ask that question **is my motive is pure?**

Paul becomes a wonderful illustration for us, who sought glory, but he was also willing to bear the pain.

Scars are the authentic marks of faithful discipleship.

The cost of greatness is humble selfless service.

People who are seeking to do ministry are you seeking without any hardship? Willing to go through the uncomfortable things and places for the sake of Gospel?

The cost of greatness may be persecution.

It may be death in some cultures more so than in ours. But even in ours, there is a price to pay.

The cost of humble, suffering service is marked by loneliness.

There is a certain loneliness.

There is a certain being apart from the social scene.

There is a price of quietness to pay.

Loneliness is the price of saintliness. A. W. Tozer.

Even the good things sometimes cannot be fully enjoyed because deep in the heart is this mandate of God that you should accomplish His goals for eternity. There is loneliness involved in that.

Most people don't understand the burden that's in the pursuit of glory along the path of suffering.

What sacrifice do you make to serve Christ?

What pain? Or do you demand mostly to be served?

When it is uncomfortable, are you willing to do it?

2. Example.

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

Son of Man is our example.

1 John 2:6, *He who says he abides in Him ought himself also to walk just as He walked.*

His life was utterly abandoned as an act of humble selfless service on behalf of others.

Philippians 2:6-9, *who, being in the form of God, did not consider it robbery to be equal with God,⁷ but made Himself of no reputation, taking the form of a bondservant, and coming in the likeness of men.⁸ 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.*

The Lord Jesus Christ went through the greatest humiliation ever. God became man. The sovereign of the universe, the sovereign of all eternity came to be a victim of sin. The greatest humiliation of all.

This is the reason in the kingdom, He is the greatest.

The most exalted because He was the most humbled.

He is the example.

He is called the Son of Man.

The messianic term drawn from Daniel 7:13 used more than 80 times in the Gospels by Christ to refer to Himself.

It speaks of Him as the incarnate one, the Messiah, God in human flesh.

did not come to be served, but to serve,

He didn't come like other kings come.

John 18:37, *Jesus answered, "My kingdom is not of this world. If My kingdom were of this world, My servants would fight, so that I should not be delivered to the Jews; but now My kingdom is not from here." ³⁷ Pilate therefore said to Him, "Are You a king then?" Jesus answered, "You say rightly that I am a king. For this cause I was born, and for this cause I have come into the world, that I should bear witness to the truth. Everyone who is of the truth hears My voice."*

Pilate got confused.

You don't look like a king, and you don't act like one.

You have been abused, maligned, and mistreated.

You don't do anything.

You don't retaliate.

By all standards, there was no way that He could be a king.
Jesus replied and said to Pilate you don't understand because My kind of kingdom isn't your kind of kingdom.
Most kings demand to be served. This King came to serve.

Luke 22:27, *For who is greater, he who sits at the table, or he who serves? Is it not he who sits at the table? Yet I am among you as the One who serves.*

I am among you as one who serves.
He washes the feet of the disciples.
They are so self-seeking that they will not wash each other's feet.

The Lord takes off His outer garment, puts a towel on His waist, and then He washes their feet. What humility?

He is the example.

Forfeiting our comfort to meet other's needs, that's service.

V 28, *to give His life a ransom for many."*

The ultimate act of service to die on behalf of someone else.
The voluntary act of ultimate self-denial.

John 15:13-14, *Greater love has no one than this, than to lay down one's life for his friends. ¹⁴ You are My friends if you do whatever I command you.*

Jesus sets the pattern for us.

He gave His life on our behalf.

The passage could end there, and all we would really need to hear, at this point, would be that Jesus is our pattern.

He gave His life in service. We must do the same. If we want to be great, we do so by selfless abandonment.

But the passage can't end there.

The reason it can't end there is because if it does, there will be a misunderstanding. The misunderstanding will be that Jesus died only as an example of selflessness, that Jesus died only as an example of one who was willing to humble himself for others sake.

But He died only to try to demonstrate humility. But there's more than that.

The Spirit of God adds a new teaching in the New Testament never here before given to this point.

V 28, to give His life a ransom for many."

As a ransom.

For the very first time in the New Testament, to the redemption work of Christ, the substitutionary, vicarious, ransoming, redeeming act on the cross.

It is not only an example.

Yes, He gave Himself as an example and there is no question about that.

An example of selfless sacrifice.

Peter makes it very clear, in

1 Peter 2:21, *For to this you were called, because Christ also suffered for us, leaving us an example, that you should follow His steps:*

But Peter also says it was more than an example.

1 Peter 2:24, *who Himself bore our sins in His own body on the tree, that we, having died to sins, might live for righteousness—by whose stripes you were healed.*

The word “ransom”

Only used twice in the New Testament.

Here and in **Mark 10:45**.

The Greek word **Lutron** is the price of the release of a slave.

Do you have a slave who wants his freedom?

Lutron was whatever the price was to free him.

We were slaves of sin, death, Satan, the flesh, the world, and hell. Christ paid the **Lutron** to release us.

Jesus’ death was not only an example, but it was also a ransom. He paid the price for our sin to release us.

There was a price a slave could pay to be released. But a slave, for the most part, could never earn it, because a slave was paid only the wage to sustain his life.

How could he also amass enough money to buy his freedom when all that he received was given just to sustain the bare necessities?

We could no longer or could no more buy our freedom than a slave could. Someone else had to come and pay the price.

Christ did it.

He became the ransom.

The idea of ransom and redemption is a very common idea in Scripture.

1 Corinthian 6:20, *For you were bought at a price; therefore glorify God in your body and in your spirit, which are God's.*

We have been redeemed.

We have redemption.

1 Peter 1:18-19, *knowing that you were not redeemed with corruptible things, like silver or gold, from your aimless conduct received by tradition from your fathers,¹⁹ but with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot.*

This passage then comes to a wonderful climax in the fact that the Lord Jesus is not only our example, but He is our redemption. He is our ransom who purchased us from sin.

V 28 the word "for," because it is a very important theological term.

It is the Greek word anti.

It means as over against something or in exchange for something, or in the place of something.

Jesus is saying here is He is a ransom in exchange for many.

It was His death for our death, His life for our life, his sin bearing for our sin bearing. He was our ransom.

The word “many.”

What does that mean by many?

Did Jesus die for a few/ many?

Is this teaching a limited atonement?

“Many” is simply an expression referring to all, but it is used in a contrasting way, as over against one who gave the sacrifice, many are ransomed.

It’s simply used to demonstrate contrast.

Romans 5:12, *Therefore, just as through one man sin entered the world, and death through sin, and thus death spread to all men, because all sinned—*

Romans 5:15, *But the free gift is not like the offense. For if by the one man’s offense many died, much more the grace of God and the gift by the grace of the one Man, Jesus Christ, abounded to many.*

So, “many,” then, when used in a contrasting context, is substitute for the word “all,” to demonstrate contrast.

Romans 5:19, *For as by one man’s disobedience many were made sinners, so also by one Man’s obedience many will be made righteous.*

Jesus has been ransomed for all of us.

Because of what Jesus did, God has highly exalted Him and given Him a name which is above every name that the name of Jesus every knee should bow, and every tongue should confess Jesus as Lord to the glory of God.