Greatness

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Preacher: Shawn Woo

[0:00] to 50. Before I read and preach, let me pray and ask God for help. Heavenly Father, as you spoke on that mountaintop and told the disciples of your son Jesus to listen to him, Lord, we have gathered as disciples of Jesus today, again, to listen to him from your word.

So won't you speak to us? That we might be captivated by that glorious vision of Christ and live our lives aligned with the glorious Christ who suffered and died and was raised for our redemption. Please shape us in the likeness of Christ this morning. In Jesus' name we pray. Amen. Luke 9.
On the next day, when they had come down from the mountain, a great crowd met him. And behold, a man from the crowd cried out, Teacher, I beg you to look at my son, for he is my only child.
And behold, a spirit seizes him, and he suddenly cries out. It convulses him so that he foams at the mouth and shatters him and will hardly leave him. And I begged your disciples to cast it out, but they could not.
[1:28] Jesus answered, O faithless and twisted generation, how long am I to be with you and bear with you? Bring your son here.

While he was coming, the demon threw him to the ground and convulsed him. But Jesus rebuked the unclean spirit and healed the boy and gave him back to his father. And all were astonished at the majesty of God.
But while they were all marveling at everything he was doing, Jesus said to his disciples, Let these words sink into your ears.
The Son of Man is about to be delivered into the hands of men. But they did not understand the saying, and it was concealed from them so that they might not perceive it.
And they were afraid to ask him about the saying. An argument arose among them as to which of them was the greatest. But Jesus, knowing the reasoning of their hearts, took a child and put him by his side and said to them, Whoever receives this child in my name receives me.
[2:38] And whoever receives me receives him who sent me. For he who is least among you all is the one who is great. Jesus answered, Master, we saw someone casting out demons in your name, and we tried to stop him, because he does not follow with us.

But Jesus said to him, Do not stop him, for the one who is not against you is for you. This is the word of the Lord. As humans, we obsess over the concept of greatness.
We pursue greatness and admire those whom we perceive to be great. For example, professional athletes openly strive to be the greatest of all time.
You guys have probably seen this debate rage all over the place, often shortened to G-O-A-T, GOAT, and posted on social media with this little GOAT emoji, of the actual GOAT, right?
And greatness is mentioned everywhere, but it's hard to find it defined clearly anywhere. It's an evasive concept because, at its heart, the concept, the worldly concept of greatness, is comparative and competitive.
[3:55] In order to be considered great, you need to be perceived to be superior to others in some kind of significant way. There is no objective level of achievement that qualifies you to being great.

You must achieve something that others have not achieved. As soon as everyone else reaches your level of wealth, success, fame, beauty, or power, you cease to be great.
Because greatness is essentially comparative and competitive, as the world perceives it. You're only great if you're better than somebody else. Everybody else, really.
The pursuit of so-called greatness is really, biblically speaking, an unbridled expression of human pride. Because it brings so much focus on the self and the public perception of the self, it produces deep anxiety, insecurity, and because it thrives on comparison and self-promotion, it erodes

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community and destroys camaraderie.
God's not impressed by such greatness. Psalm 147, 10 to 11 says this, His delight is not in the strength of the horse, nor his pleasure in the legs of a man, but the Lord takes pleasure in those who fear him, in those who hope in his steadfast love.
[5:19] We are deluded if we think that our human feats and accomplishments can impress God. A toddler might draw something for her dad, as often happens in my house, and present her artwork to him with beaming eyes and a wild smile on her face.

And the loving dad will surely do it on her and pay some lavish compliments for her artwork. But I can assure you that that dad is not then going to turn around and then frame that artwork and hang it on his living wall as if it's the masterpiece that it's not.
He's not impressed by the daughter's artwork. He's pleased by her love for him and the fact that she used her limited skills to draw something for him.
That pleases him. That impresses him. But the disparity between our heavenly father and us is far greater than the disparity between a dad and a toddler. So yes, God's pleased when we work hard for him, for his glory, when we write poems and novels for his glory, when we run fast for his glory, when we study diligently for his glory, when we compose and arrange songs for his glory, when we build houses for his glory, and when we explore nature and make scientific discoveries for his glory. He is pleased by all of that. He's not impressed by our great accomplishments themselves. Rather, he's pleased by the way we relate to him, by our desire to glorify him, by our humble orientation toward him.
[7:02] That's true greatness. And that's the greatness model for us here by the suffering son of man that we ought to pursue.

That's the main point of this passage, that we should pursue the greatness model for us by the suffering son of man. And first, we see the greatness of God and then the greatness of Christ and then the greatness of disciples.
First, let's look at the greatness of God. Despite Peter's desire to prolong the transcendent mountain-type experience, Jesus comes back down from the mountain with Peter, James, and John.
This fits the pattern we saw earlier in Luke 6, 12 to 19, where Jesus, as here, goes up to the mountain to pray, but then returns shortly thereafter to minister to the crowds.
Jesus does not retreat permanently into a secluded monastery like a monk. But always returns down from the mountain, down from his community with the Father to serve the people of God.
[8:07] And it says in verses 37 to 38 that a great crowd met him. And behold, a man from the crowd cried out, Teacher, I beg you to look at my son, for he is my only child.

And behold, a spirit seizes him and he suddenly cries out. It convulses him so that he foams at the mouth and shatters him and will hardly leave him. The seizures, the sudden cries, the convulsions, and the foaming lead many people to identify the boy's condition as a type of epilepsy.
And in a parallel account in Matthew 17, he actually uses the Greek word that is sometimes translated as epilepsy. But back then, it was more a name for a set of symptoms and not the technical medical term that the word is today.
The World Health Organization identifies two different types of epilepsy. The first type is symptomatic epilepsy, which has known causes, which is why it's called that. It has symptoms. It's caused by some kind of brain damage, brain defect, or brain tumor. And interestingly, there's a second type of epilepsy, which is the more common kind. It's called the idiopathic epilepsy, which literally means that it's an epilepsy without known causes.
[9:26] There's no way to discern from physical evidence for what's actually happening. And this is the more common type with no identifiable cause. It's certainly conceivable that some of these cases are actually instances of demonic oppression, though probably not all of them, as is the case in our passage.

So it's a terribly desperate situation. The father tells Jesus that this is his only child, which helps us get a sense of the man's desperation. And he further says that a spirit's oppression of his son shatters him and will hardly leave him.
These episodes of demonic oppression leave the boy completely broken. And it's not an occasional thing. When it happens, the evil spirit will hardly leave.

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The oppression is persistent. And then in verse 40, the father of the boy adds this, and I begged your disciples to cast it out, but they could not.
Since the crowds met Jesus as he was coming down from the mountain with James, John, and Peter, it's presumably the other nine disciples who were left behind that had tried to cast out this demon and boy.
[10:37] But to the father's disappointment, they were unable to exercise the demon, and so the father waited for Jesus to return from the mountain. And Jesus answers in verse 41, O faithless and twisted generation, how long am I to be with you and bear with you?

Bring your son here. So Jesus speaks generally about the entire generation, but there is certainly an implicit rebuke here for the disciples themselves, because earlier in chapter 9, verse 1, Jesus specifically called the 12 apostles and together and gave them power and authority over all demons and to cure diseases and to send them out to proclaim the kingdom of God and to heal.
So their inability to drive out demons here is a sign of faithlessness and twistedness, Jesus says. Faithlessness is a lack of dependent trust in Jesus.
They were commissioned with the power and the authority of Jesus himself, but they didn't exercise Jesus' power and authority through faith. But they sought in vain to exercise the demon in their own strength, their own power and authority.
The word twisted literally means crooked, being turned away from a straight path. So instead of following the straight and narrow path of God, the disciples and the generation at large had gone astray from God and his ways.
[12:00] And that's Jesus' assessment of why the disciples weren't able to exercise the demon. And the man tries to bring his son to Jesus. As the man tries to bring the son to Jesus, verse 42 says that the demon threw him to the ground and convulsed him.

But Jesus rebuked the unclean spirit and healed the boy and gave him back to his father. So the boy's convulsions, even on his way to Jesus, shows just how severely tormented he was.
But once he's with Jesus, there's no prolonged struggle, no fight, no resistance. Jesus simply rebukes the unclean spirit and heals the boy and gives him back to his father.
And after this, it says in verse 43 that all were astonished at the majesty of God. This verse really sets up the rest of the passage because the word translated here as majesty has at its root, the word that is translated great later in verses 46 to 48.
It's basically the noun form of the adjective great. All were astonished at the greatness of God. Surely if anybody is great, God is great.
[13:15] And here is the demonstration of his unparalleled authority and power. And all the crowds are astonished at the greatness of God.

That's the first point. And then we see the greatness of Christ. Instead of basking in the praise and adoration of the crowds, Jesus tells his disciples to settle down in verses 43 to 45.
Even though the disciples had failed to drive out the demon, through Jesus' success, they kind of feel a little vindicated probably. And it became their triumph. But Jesus does not let the disciples get carried away by people's admiration.
It says here in verse 43, but while they were all marveling at everything he was doing, Jesus said to his disciples, let these words sink into your ears.
The Son of Man is about to be delivered into the hands of men. Let the crowd's astonishment and marveling, let the admiration that they heap on you and on me, let all of that go in one ear and out the other.
[14:31] But let these words sink into your ears. The Son of Man is about to be delivered into the hands of men. Jesus is adjusting his disciples' expectation here.

All this public acclaim surrounding Jesus is feeding the disciples' egos and making them think that Jesus will soon declare himself to be the king of the Jews and overthrow Roman oppressors.
That was the popular expectation of what the Messiah would do. But Jesus tells them, the Son of Man, the one who has come to represent humanity and to save humanity, that Son of Man is about to be delivered into the hands of men.
The expression, delivered into the hands of men, refers to being subjected to men's authority and power, being left to their cruel discretion. It's an echo of what Jesus predicted earlier in Luke 9, verse 22.

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The Son of Man must suffer many things and be rejected by the elders and chief priests and scribes and be killed and on the third day be raised. This was so contrary to the popular expectation that it says in verse 45, they did not understand the saying and it was concealed from them so they might not perceive it and they were afraid to ask him about this saying.
[15:52] I mean, it doesn't mean that they didn't understand the words that Jesus was saying. The words are perfectly clear. The Son of Man is about to be handed over to these men. They understand that, but he's the messianic king.

He's the one that should be welcomed and hailed as king by the Jews. Instead, he will be rejected by the Jewish elders, chief priests, and scribes. He's the one that should victoriously vindicate God's people, but instead he will be killed by them and handed over to their power.
The Son of Man will be killed by the men whom he came to save. That's the greatness that he's redirecting his disciples' attention to.
In Mark 10, 42 to 45, when his disciples were at another point bickering again over who will be more improminent in the kingdom of God, Jesus said this to them, You know that those who are considered rulers of the Gentiles lord it over them, and their great ones exercise authority over them.
But he shall not be so among you. But whoever would be great among you must be your servant, and whoever would be first among you must be a slave of all.
[17:07] For even the Son of Man came not to be served, but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many. That's the true greatness that Christ modeled for us.

And that's why Paul uses the example of Christ to teach us in Philippians 2, Do nothing from selfish ambition or conceit, but in humility count others more significant than yourselves.
Let each of you look not only to his own interests, but also to the interests of others. 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, taking the form of a servant, being born in the likeness of men, and being found in human form, he humbled himself by becoming obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross.
If anyone in human history deserved to look out for his own interests, it was Jesus. He was the messianic king.
He was sinless. He deserved all the praise and admiration that people heaped on him, and more. He also had every right to strike dead on the spot anyone who opposed him, because he was the perfect son of God, the king, and wicked men deserved to be punished for their rebellion.
[18:34] If anyone was entitled to anything, it was Jesus. Jesus is the second person of the Trinity, and he had every right to count himself as God the Father's equal.

But instead, Jesus submitted to the Father and obeyed him. He emptied himself by taking the form of a servant, being born in the likeness of men.
And still further, he humbled himself even to the point of death, death on the cross. Instead of selfishly seeking his own interests, Jesus sought the interests of others.
Instead of letting sinners die and be consigned to hell as their sins deserved, Jesus died to bear the penalty for their sins, so that he might save them and give them eternal life.
That's true greatness. Christian pastor and author, C.J. Maney, puts it this way in his book entitled, Humility, True Greatness.
[19:37] As sinfully and culturally defined, pursuing greatness looks like this. Individuals motivated by self-interest, self-indulgence, and a false sense of self-sufficiency to pursue selfish ambition for the purpose of self-glorification, contrast that with the pursuit of true greatness as biblically defined.

Serving others for the glory of God. This is the genuine expression of humility. This is true greatness as the Savior defined it.
We are so easily seduced by the world's perverted definition of greatness. And my prayer is that we, as the church, will be captivated and consumed by the greatness that Christ modeled for us.
God's word does not teach us to count others as significant as ourselves. God's word teaches us to count others more significant than ourselves. Because that's what Jesus did for us.
When your child is nagging you and testing your patience, count her more significant than yourself.
When both you and your spouse or both you and your roommate are exhausted, but there's still a mountain of household chores to be completed, count others more significant than yourself.

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[20:57] When another church member is hurting and needs your care and needs your prayers, look out for her interests more than your own interests. Set aside your time and resources to help her.

That's the path of service. That's the path of sacrifice. That's the path of love and carrying our cross as Jesus carried his cross for us. That's the way to true greatness.
That's the greatness of Jesus Christ. And that brings us to our final point, the greatness of the disciples. In light of the true greatness that Jesus demonstrated, this is what his followers ought to pursue and this is what they should look like.
Read verses 46 to 48 with me. An argument arose among them as to which of them was the greatest. But Jesus, knowing the reasoning of their hearts, took a child and put him by his side and said to them, whoever receives this child in my name receives me.
And whoever receives me receives him who sent me. For he who is least among you all is the one who is great. It's not a little ironic that immediately after Jesus speaks to them about the kind of greatness that will lead him to the cross that his 12 apostles are arguing about their relative greatness.
[22:21] And they got into an argument about it. Luke omits the details, the embarrassing details, but it's not hard to imagine their arguments for greatness.

I'm the greatest because Jesus called me first. I'm the greatest because I'm the best preacher. I'm the greatest because I'm the best organizer.
I'm the greatest because I cast out that demon. Remember in that town? Oh yeah, I healed the lame person. Well, I opened the eyes of the blind.
And then you could hear James, Peter, and John saying, well, while you guys had trouble casting out that demon, we were beholding the glorious Son of God on the mountaintop.
Their Lord is on his way to die on the cross to save them, to save his people as the ransom price for their freedom.
[23:21] But the 12 are embroiled in petty arguments about who among them is the greatest. And Jesus doesn't need to hear them arguing out loud. He knows their thoughts.

It says that he knew the reasoning of their hearts. And so he takes this opportunity to teach them patiently. And he uses a child as an object lesson. Children are the least in any given society.
They contribute the least to society. And they have yet to accomplish anything worthy of note. in terms of their ability to contribute to the economy, they're just not there yet.
They haven't arrived. They're cute. And that's a good thing because otherwise they might be even more neglected.
And especially in the ancient world where mortality rates among children were much higher than now, many people simply didn't consider it worth their time to deal with children.
[24:23] So in Judaism, children under the age of 12 could not be taught the Old Testament law. So spending time with them was considered spiritually unfruitful and wasteful.

For example, in the Mishnah, which is the collection of Jewish oral commentary, on the scriptures, it says, morning sleep, midday wine, chattering with children, and tearing in places where men of the common people assemble, destroy a man.
Chattering with children was considered beneath the station of dignified men. But Jesus brings a child to his side. And he tells his disciples, whoever receives this child in my name receives me, and whoever receives me receives him who sent me.
For he who is least among you all is the one who is great. This is a remarkable statement. It's often misunderstood. Jesus is using the language of representative authority.
According to Jewish custom, a messenger functioned with the full legal authority of the sender whom he represented. And using this analogy, Jesus takes a child who has literally zero status or esteem in their society and says that even this child, should he belong to Jesus and represent him, will carry with him the full dignity and authority of Jesus himself.
[25:50] Whoever receives this child in my name receives me. And since Jesus is himself sent by God the Father as his authorized messenger, he continues, and whoever receives me receives him who sent me.

This is a wonderfully liberating teaching. Jesus is telling us that greatness does not reside within us. Greatness does not come from our own attributes or our own accomplishments.

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Greatness comes from Christ who is our Lord and Christ what he has done for us. If you are a child of God, you might be the least in this world.
The world might falsely accuse you, persecute you, and save all kinds of evil against you because of Jesus. People might ignore you. They might snub you. But Jesus is telling us, don't you mind what they say about you.
Your heavenly Father will have a word with them. The King of Kings will deal with them. The Lord of hosts, the Lord of armies, say this about you, that you are a child of God.
[27:03] And those who receive you receive Jesus himself. And those who receive Jesus receive God himself. And those who reject you then, when you stand with Christ and speak for him, are rejecting God himself.

some of us frequently experience existential crises. Everything we say and do, it seems, is to validate our own identity and to justify our existence.
We want to prove ourselves to our parents, to our peers, to those who didn't see our potential, to the world. We don't feel successful enough, so we are always looking to beef up our resume, to go shopping for status symbols.
We don't feel beautiful and desirable enough, so we do diets, get plastic surgery, and look for someone to date. We do and say things to make ourselves look good.
We want to attain greatness. We're like Harold Abrams in that Academy Award winning film, Chariots of Fire. Abrams is a talented Olympic sprinter who runs for his own glory and desperately fears losing and he's consumed with being the fastest sprinter in the world and he plays literary foil, a contrast to Eric Little who is a Christian Olympic sprinter who runs for God's glory and therefore runs with great freedom rather than fear.
[28:36] In a reviewing dialogue before one of the last races in the movie, Harold Abraham says this, And now in one hour's time, I will be out there again.

I will raise my eyes and look down that corridor four feet wide with ten lonely seconds to justify my whole existence. But will I?
He runs hard to justify his existence. He fears losing. He fears that he will be mediocre, just average. He fears that he will be a nobody.
Some of us live our lives this way. But if you have renounced your sins, if you've repented of your sins, you've turned to Jesus with faith and you believed in him, his life, death, and resurrection on your behalf for your salvation, you are an adopted child of God.
God. You don't need to justify your own existence. For Christ has justified you. You have been united with Jesus by the Spirit of God.
[29:44] He is your right to existence. He is your worth. Dietrich Bonhoeffer comments on this in his book, Life Together.

This question of the greatest, it is a struggle of the natural man for self-justification. He finds it only in comparing himself with others, in condemning and judging others.
Self-justification and judging others go together. As justification by grace and serving others go together. those who are secure in their identity in Christ don't need to engage in one-upmanship in their conversations.
They don't need to measure themselves up against everyone around them because they have already the full measure of Christ as their possession. Instead of using other people to elevate themselves, they can now freely serve others without worrying about how they're perceived because they are fully secured in their identity in Jesus Christ.
That's what I would hope for all of you. A Christian pastor whom I have the privilege of knowing, Dave Harvey, wrote a book called Rescuing Ambition. He says this in his book, my search for approval is over.
[31:04] In Christ I already have all the approval I need because Christ's righteousness has been transferred to me all the time and energy I once squandered trying to be life or praised or to achieve something to validate my existence can now be redirected toward doing things for God's glory.

I no longer live for approval. I live from approval. That's why Jesus says at the end of verse 48, he who is least among you all is the one who is great.
If you try to attain greatness for yourself apart from Christ by how smart you are, by how athletic you are, by how talented you are, by what college you went to, by how many degrees you have, by how much Bible you know, by how moral you are, by how much money you earn, by how many social

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media followers you have, by what people say about you, by how many good works you have done, then you will never attain to your greatness.
And you always feel like a fraud, like you're falling short. But if you become like a child, if you become the least, if you renounce all your pretensions and boast of nothing but Christ crucified, then you will be great.
because the greatness of Christ is now fully yours. That's what that means. For he who is least among you all is the one who is great.
[32:49] And notice Jesus intentionally doesn't say the least among you is the greatest. This is not yet another competition to try to become the lowliest. There is no competition.

There is no comparison because if you are in Christ, you are great in him. The least among you is great. There is no longer need for these horizontal comparisons to others because of our vertical connection to Jesus.
And this truth has far reaching implications not only for how we perceive ourselves and how we live but also for how we view our Christian brothers and sisters because this means every church member is united with Christ and is his representative.
what you do for the least of us what you do for the least accomplished among us what you do for the poorest among us what you do for the smallest among us what you do for the least likable among us all of it you do for the one no one less than Jesus Christ himself Christ sees it all no one else might notice it Christ sees it all and he will without fail reward you that's what Matthew 25 31 to 46 is talking about it says that at the final judgment of Christ the king will say to those on his right come you who are blessed by my father inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world for I was hungry and you gave me food I was thirsty and you gave me drink I was a stranger and you welcomed me I was naked and you clothed me I was sick and you visited me I was in prison and you came to me then the righteous will answer him saying Lord when did we see you hungry and feed you or thirsty and give you drink and when did we see you a stranger and welcome you or naked and clothe you and when did we see you sick or in prison and visit you and the king will answer them truly I say to you as you did it to one of the least of these my brothers you did it to me those who have God as their father will love and serve their Christian brothers and sisters and what you do for them the king himself will reward as if you have done it directly unto him that's the privilege but this lesson of true greatness is not easily learned and right after Jesus teaches them to receive even the least of
[35:38] God's people in his name the disciples tell him well actually we just kind of excluded one of God's people from ministry John answers Jesus in verse 49 master we saw someone casting out demons in your name and we tried to stop him because he does not follow with us this is not a pagan exorcist that's in view John says clearly that this man was casting out demons in Jesus name he is a follower of Jesus but the twelve still tried to stop him because he does not follow with them this is an example of elitism we are the twelve apostles and he is not one of us this is also an example of exclusivism Jesus commissioned us with authority and power to cast out demons so he should not be doing it there is rivalry here and possibly envy too since this man was doing successfully exactly what the disciples couldn't do earlier for the boy with an unclean spirit but

Jesus responds in verse 50 do not stop him for the one who is not against you is for you Jesus reasoning is pretty straightforward there are only two sides in this world either you are for Christ or you are against Christ there is no neutral ground and in this case this man was casting out demons in Jesus name and apparently successful in doing so and shows that therefore they were on the same team as the twelve apostles so instead of trying to stop him they should have encouraged him and exhorted him and they should have appreciated what he was doing so this is actually a good diagnostic test for us for determining whether or not we are serving and ministering in pursuit of our own greatness or with the greatness of Christ in our possession do you get envious when others are successful or recognized in their service to God are you envious of the spiritual gifts that others possess if your answer to that is yes then you are still pursuing your own greatness not serving out of the greatness of
Christ because the worldly greatness as I said at the beginning of the message is essentially comparative and competitive you begrudge others gifts and successes because their successes dim your own chance of attaining greatness but if you already have Christ's greatness in your possessions then you can genuinely enjoy other successes and bless them because you're happy as long as God is being glorified this is an important lesson for us corporately as well as the whole

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church when we launched our public services for the first time two and a half years ago we were the only gospel preaching church in East Cambridge now there are at least two others that I know of and as this area continues to get built up and as the population grows there will be more and more that come plant churches here and that join but other believers and churches that are serving around us they are not our competitors they're teammates now by that
I don't mean that we should be uncritical in how we partner with every kind of ministry and church there are important theological philosophical and methodological differences among various Christian groups and it's important to safeguard those things but still when we find another Christian or a church ministering and serving in what we deem to be a less helpful way we shouldn't stop them or dismiss them we should encourage them and exhort them we should do what Priscilla and Aquila did in Acts 18 26 when they took Apollos who was preaching and took him aside and explained to him the way of God more accurately he says Acts 18 26 because we want them to be successful I love our church I'm very proud of so many things that we do well and love all of our members but this is not about us it's not about
Trinity Cambridge Church it's about Christ and his glory we can't live like this through the exercise of sheer willpower the disciples of Jesus clearly failed over and over again and we will too and that's why Jesus reminds them again of this lesson before his death but after Jesus death and resurrection and ascension and after Pentecost when the Holy Spirit descends on his people with power there is a decisive shift the disciples are no longer seen posturing and jockeying for position amongst themselves instead each of them embraces the life of a Christian disciple and carries his cross to follow Jesus and many of them die shameful inglorious deaths Peter is crucified upside down James is stoned to death the world discarded them like refuse but they were the great ones because they were pursuing the greatness modeled by the suffering son of man and my hope and prayer is that we see how glorious
[41:34] Christ is when we see with our eyes of faith what Christ has done for us how precious he is if we get our sense of value and self worth not from what we're doing and what we accomplish ourselves but in what Christ and what God the father said because what he gave to save us speaks to our true worth and value and he gave his most precious son Jesus Christ his beloved son to adopt us as his own if we derive our identity from that from Christ and it is then and only then that we can live in freedom we conclude with a verse from one of my favorite hymns Jesus I my cross have taken says Jesus I my cross have taken all to leave and follow thee destitute despised forsaken thou from hence my all shall be perish every fond ambition all

I've sought or hoped or known yet how rich is my condition God and heaven are still my own

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