

## Rethink

**Part 6:** Why do Christians think they are better than everyone else?

**Matthew 20:20-28**

### **WE:**

Christians are weird.

- Believe God became a man and died and rose under his own power
- Believe that his death and resurrection give us the ability to be forgiven of the pain we've caused others and to give us a perfect relationship with God now and forever
- That there is nothing we can do to earn or deserve relationship... Opposite of most views of karma etc... it's a completely free gift accepted through faith/trust in him...
- Jesus will come back end pain, suffering, death.

Whether believe those things are true or not would probably agree b/c of these beliefs.. **Christians should be the happiest and most humble people in the world...**

- Happy: Believe they are loved, forgiven, and free, have true purpose, hope for end
- Humble: Has nothing to do with what we've done.

**...but somehow our relationship to Jesus often makes us feel superior to others.**

We think that our status as "Believers" earns us the right to have authority over our society. To tell others what they are supposed to do... Earns us the authority to "know better" in a whole list of areas.

Interesting... 1st Jesus followers were weird too... same beliefs but didn't feel "superior", didn't fight for power and authority.

They didn't think their relationship to Jesus gave them a higher status... in fact seemed to be the opposite...

Characterized (even mocked) by their beliefs but also humility and love.

What's the difference between the 1st century and 21st century JF?

Took Jesus seriously...accepted the truth that **Jesus Followers do not exist to get great authority but to give great service**

**GOD:** Want to share a story that was retold wherever the story of Jesus took root (Matt 20:20-28)

Paraphrase request and response.

J&J have mom ask Jesus if they can be on right/left- have most authority in new Kingdom.

2/3 of closest (maybe trying to edge Peter out)...

“Let’s solidify this. We’re close to Jesus. We deserve authority... We’d be good rulers” (Why? Fishermen?)

Assumed Jesus’ kingdom was just like the other kingdoms in the world (we still do this)...

**Jesus-** You don’t really know what you are asking. Being great in my kingdom comes with a huge price tag... suffering.

**J&J-** we can **Jesus-** You will, but not up to me who sits where

Then the other disciples catch wind of what was going down...

**V. 24** Indignant- That’s not fair. Mad they didn’t think of it first. (Matthew one of them)

**V. 25** Called them together... “Boys, come here.”

“Yes, that is how the rest of the world works... you’ve experienced it from birth from the religious leaders, from the Romans... all of human history tells the same story...

Everyone trying to lord authority over everyone else... Prestige, power, glory.” (Matthew probably knew better than most)

We see it all around us too... **The source of most of our problems** in our society/churches **is our desire to be better than others.**

- Consumed w/ Self-importance (why its so easy to be offended)
- Insatiable desire to be noticed and respected (social media anyone?)
- Wanting to control others behavior to be more in line with how you want the world to be
- Not something we have to teach either- My kids fighting over EVERYTHING
- Racism
- Politics
- I’m a Xian. My morality is better so do what I say

All born out of insecurity and pride... most prideful people are also most insecure (from personal experience).

**V. 26-27** But among you it will be different... Flips the human experience for all of history on its head.

“True greatness isn’t what everyone else thinks it is.”

Think about it... If there is a God, a true high king of all of reality, then he would be the definer of true greatness right?

So what amount of authority/prestige/power over others in this small span of time on this small spot in the universe would actually be anything?

It'd be like some kid in rural Spain thinking he's hot stuff and greater than you b/c he's the fastest runner in his third grade class.

Who cares, kid?

But we all are trying to be better than our classmates. Trying to prove we're the fastest, smartest, prettiest, richest, most moral/holy/righteous.

And God is like, "Who cares, kid? Why would that impress me at all? Why are you wasting your short life on such ridiculousness? Why are you fighting so hard to be better than them?"

Let's be real... **There is always someone "greater" than us**-- Always someone smarter, richer, nicer, prettier, gifted, a "better Xian" whatever that means, or a better preacher on youtube than us.

Even if reach the TOP doesn't last

- You know who this is? (Pic of Genghis Khan)
  - Largest Empire in history of world. **Show Name Genghis Khan**- how do you pronounce it... G-engis? J-engis? wrong. Chingus.
  - Reached the top of human authority... Most of us don't even know how to pronounce his name
  - In the end died just like everyone else.
- William the Conqueror: Body looted even before buried. Then exploded b/c too fat for casket.

**Our version of "great" is a fleeting and insignificant mist.**

"But you will be different"

- You are MY followers
- So why waste your time on silly/puny/ temporary efforts at being great in the world's eyes when you can experience true greatness that lasts forever.

God- "When you serve the children created in my own image... that's when you are truly great. A greatness that will last longer than this puny school, society, country, planet."

**True greatness comes from making others better.**

Remember that Spanish 3rd grader? What if she put together a recycling drive to help pay for your kid's new glasses?

You'd think she was pretty great wouldn't you?

It's true whether Jf or not... great bosses see their role as helping employees.

It's a sweet and nice idea but in reality day to day... Sounds exhausting right?

What is the difference for a JF?

**V. 28** Our motivation. "Just as Jesus came..." Think through why we do what we do

Why did Jesus come to earth? For power and glory? To prove he is the best and greatest? To get all the money he could and impress people with his wealth?

Ransom for many... all of us.

God came to earth as a human man.

- A poor, ancient middle eastern peasant.
- Spent his life including those everyone else had rejected
- Touching people others were repulsed by
- Serving and being misunderstood and taken advantage of...
- Ultimately dying by a torturous and humiliating public execution.

And if it stopped there I'd say... "Oh yeah Jesus was a cool role model, wise teacher, I'll add some of his stuff to my life but I mean we also have to be realistic and look out for ourselves by trying to get ahead and whatnot..."

But eye-witness testimony, the explosion of the early church, a changed world prove it didn't stop there...

He rose from the dead like he said he would.

Proving he is the God of the universe... the truly Great One.

Proving he really did pay the ransom for us... really did take the punishment, suffering, disgrace we earned from our choices... really did defeat death for us.

Which means He is the definition of GREAT.

So if we want to be truly great we need to be like him... A servant to all.

We are here to bless... not to judge/purify/feel superior/or exercise authority.

The happiest and greatest people in history have never been heard of and probably never saw themselves as GREAT... b/c they were too busy serving others.

**When we focus on serving others there isn't enough room to focus on our own insecurity and pride.**

Find your freedom by becoming a servant to those around you.

Only the person who is secure in who they are in Jesus. Bases their self-worth on Him and not what they do.. Is free to truly serve without trying to prove their importance

## **YOU:**

“Whoever” Available to everyone!

Jesus offers this freedom from insecurity/pride... having to constantly fight to be “great” to everyone/anyone. Offers to free us from having to focus on ourselves so we can focus on others.

Just have to choose to trust him.

Trust him with your forgiveness. With your life. With your identity.

## **If you want to accept his offer:**

“I want to follow you. I want you to love through me. I choose to trust you with everything else... my sin, my future, my life.”

## **Ready to be great?**

**Read: Matthew 5:14-16 and Ephesians 2:8-10**

**Ask: Who has Jesus freed me to serve?** Serve how they need... not how you want (mission trips painting schools)

Side: Tired of the hate in this world... do something about it... It's hard to hate someone you choose to serve.

**Join: Participate in and give financially toward For Salem Opportunities** (How we as a community try to be a blessing together)

## **WE:**

We need to rethink what it means to follow Jesus in the 21st century.

**Jesus Followers do not exist to get great authority but to give great service.**

It's time for a lot of us to simply shut up and serve...

People don't care what cause you are fighting for, what “truth” you have, how important you think you are, how “right” you are... but they do care if you serve them.

**The mark of a Jesus Follower is not how much you are but how much you serve.**

First JFs got it... why xianity exploded in ancient world

When plagues hit cities... they would stay and care for the sick, often dying themselves

Would adopt abandoned babies on the side of the road

Chose to love their neighbors and honor and pray for the emperor instead of picketing the bathhouses and gladiator matches.

The world was changed forever... It can happen again.

You can change your world both within and without, and the world of those around you.

**Following Jesus in the 21st century means choosing to serve like Jesus**

### Questions

1. How have you seen God working in your life and sphere of influence this past week?
2. Who is someone you or others generally consider "great?" What makes them stand out? How would they compare to Jesus' definition of great?
3. Read Philippians 2:1-11. What would be the difficulties and benefits from thinking and living this way daily?
4. Who has God put in your life for you to serve? What steps can you take to start/continue serving them and how can your group pray with you in that?