

**SERMON SERIES:** Big Questions

**Title:** Who is the Greatest?

**SPEAKER:** Jason Epperson

**DATE:** February 18, 2018



## Key Line

- Why do you want to be the greatest? To make *God* known or to make *yourself* known?

## Introduction

- Think about different sports. Who do you think is the greatest player in each of those sports?
- Do we ever hide our own arrogance with false humility? Saying we look bad so other people will tell us that we look good?
- Churches focus on who is the greatest, usually based on how many people attend and how much money is given.
- The temptation of Adam and Eve was a temptation to be the greatest--to being as great as God.

## Seek the Word

### Mark 9:30-37

“They left that place and passed through Galilee. Jesus did not want anyone to know where they were, because he was teaching his disciples. He said to them, ‘The Son of Man is going to be betrayed into the hands of men. They will kill him, and after three days he will rise. But they did not understand what he meant. They came to Capernaum. When he was in the house, he asked them, ‘What were you arguing about on the road?’ But they kept quiet because on the way they had argued about who was the greatest. Sitting down, Jesus called the Twelve and said, ‘If anyone wants to be first, he must be the very last, and the servant of all.’ He took a little child and had him stand among them. Taking him in his arms, he said to them. ‘Whoever welcomes one of these little children in my name welcomes me; and whoever welcomes me does not welcome me but the one who sent me.’”

## Talk About It

- The disciples thought Jesus was the kind of Messiah they expected, that he was about to lead them to triumph, but instead he predicted something that sounds like a terrible defeat. What great things are we expecting Jesus to do for us, what happiness and comfort are we expecting in this life? Are we still willing to follow him if he leads us to something very different: to suffering, to sacrifice, to pain and deprivation?
- Jesus had just predicted his own death, yet immediately afterward the disciples are arguing over something petty and selfish. What are some examples of similar petty concerns we as individuals and as a church may occupy ourselves with? What might be

some examples of more significant issues that Jesus is concerned about today, in your life, church, community, and world?

- In Jewish culture children were not considered very significant, yet Jesus uses them as examples of what is greatest and most significant. Can you think of anything that is considered insignificant in our culture that may in fact have a great lesson to teach us? Think not only of things our non-Christian culture may consider insignificant, but things we as Christians may also disregard. (Group leader: possible examples to discuss: people with disabilities; the elderly; prisoners; animals or nature).

## Apply It

- Consider this week keeping a list of things that happen to you that do not meet your expectations--perhaps even unpleasant and difficult things that happen, things that bring you distress. Practice praying through those things, acknowledging that Jesus is walking with you through them, and looking for what you might learn from those situations. Share your insights with the group next week.
- Would you practice this week asking Jesus what is troubling *his* heart in the world, listen and observe what he shows you, and praying deeply for those situations? How might your personal relationship with Jesus be affected if you make this a practice?
- How about choosing one of the so-called “insignificant” people or things we identified in the “Talk About It” discussion, and looking for opportunities to observe and interact significantly with them or with it? Have a discussion or do an activity with a child, an elderly person, a handicapped person, or others. Observe and listen closely, asking God to draw to your mind to spiritual lessons that are well-illustrated by this person or situation.