

Do Something Great With Your Life

Session 2: The Greatness That Is Available to Everyone

Edited Transcript

Patrick Morley

Good morning, men. Welcome to Man In The Mirror men's Bible study. If you would, please turn in your Bibles to Matthew chapter 23, Matthew chapter 23. A couple of shout outs as we get going. One group that we would like to honor. We had an illustration last week if you were here about the life of Jim long. And Jim long is the director of Foundations For Life Ministries, a residential treatment facility for people with drug and alcohol problems, 20 beds. And for the last 23 years, there's been a group meeting down there.

And from time to time, they are with us doing a series, usually Nehemiah, and they're doing the Nehemiah series right now. So anyway, we want to do a shout out to them, the mighty men of the Foundations for Life Ministries. 10 to 12 guys. They do this on Wednesdays at 6:00 PM. Jim Long is the leader. These men are rebuilding their lives one day at a time with the understanding that God saved them for a purpose, and they aim to find it. What a great statement. And so I wonder if you would join me. Jim, just stand up where you are and let's give Jim as well the guys at the Foundations for Life, one, two three, Hoorah!

Welcome. Glad you're part of the group. All right. And then, a shout out today to a Man In The Mirror area director and regional director Rob Leonard in Central Indiana. He's located in Indianapolis. And Rob says, "Because of the story God built into my life, I love seeing marriages restored and families healed. As an area director, I have the opportunity to affect change on a much larger scale than I could possibly do on my own." So I wonder if you would also give a big shout out here and a round of applause to Rob Leonard. One, two, three. Hoorah! So thank you so much, Rob, for being part of the team.

All right. So the message today is called **The Greatness That is Available To Everyone**. And I may have the worst possible set of notes that I've ever constructed. I'm going to be going from here to there. I don't know if I'll be able to even get through this talk today, but anyway. How do we ordinarily think about greatness? Well, we think about people who can do something that no one else can do. So we think about Lebron James, we think about Tom Brady, Steve Jobs, Bill Gates, Elon Musk. And that is certainly, these men have done some of the greatest things that we have ever known about in our lives. But not many people are going to have that kind of spectacular greatness. However, the Bible describes an ordinary everyday kind of greatness that's available, whether you're rich or poor and no matter what your past looks like.

THERE ARE TWO KINDS OF GREATNESS

And that's what we're going to look at today. In Matthew chapter 23, we see that there are two kinds of greatness. There are two kinds of greatness. Beginning at verse one. "Then Jesus said to the crowds and

to his disciples, 'The teachers of the law and the Pharisees sit in Moses' seat. So you must be careful to do everything they tell you. But, do not do what they do, for they do not practice what they preach. They tie heavy, cumbersome loads and burdens, and put them on other people's shoulders, but they themselves are not willing to lift a finger to move them.'"

"Everything they do is done for people to see. They make phylacteries," little boxes that you put scriptures in. "They make their phylacteries wide and they're tassels on their garments long. They love the place of honor, at banquets, and the most important seats in the synagogues, the churches. They love to be greeted with respect in the marketplaces, and to be called rabbi by others." So there is this kind of recognition and status that some people aspire to as their definition of what it means to be a great person. And then Jesus continues, "But you are not to be called rabbi for you have one teacher and you are all brothers and do not call anyone on earth father, for you have one father, and he is in heaven. Nor are you to be called instructors for you have one instructor, the Messiah."

Now I told you I have this new four pound NIV Biblical Theology Study Bible, right? Well, guess what? It has something really good to say about those verses I just read, because they've always been a mystery to me. And I've got the Logos Scholars Bible on my ... but I've never read it quite as well as just the little note here in the Study Bible. So I'm going to read to you what it says, "Given the contrast with verse seven, talking about how the Pharisees liked to be greeted and called rabbi. The point is not that Christians can never use honorific titles." So please call me Dr. Morley.

"The point is not that Christians can ever use honorific titles, but that they must not expect or demand them much less revel in them." Oh, I apologize. "To avoid this temptation, it is probably best to use them as little as possible." Now, that's an opinion, but it's a good opinion. So you have titles, honors and so forth. If you need to use them for business, if it helps you in business. On Amazon, all of my books are on Amazon, and there's an author page there and there is a description of the author. Well, you could say, "Oh, Patrick's this ... " It could say, "Well, Patrick's this ordinary guy that lives in ordinary life and doesn't know anything, but he still writes books."

That's not what we're talking about. And the purpose of the information on Amazon is to give people a sense of whether or not this person might have something to say to them. So you had to live in the common sense world here. So I think that that's a good note. And so when you're not ... It says, don't let anybody, nor are you to be called instructors, for you have one instructor. Understand that in the sense that it means for seeking recognition and status that isn't necessary to get you where you're supposed to be. All right. Then, that's one kind of greatness. And it's of course, the kind of greatness that is rooted in the pride of life.

Other kinds of greatness that we might find rooted in the pride of life besides wanting to be somebody would be maybe riches or power or influence over others. Now, is this a condemnation of high achievement? Absolutely not. This is not a condemnation of high achievement. This is a condemnation of wanting status and recognition that comes with high achievement for the sake of being somebody rather than doing what God wants to have done. And so the text is not at all saying bury your talents. In fact, the greatest person who ever lived in the history of the world according to Time magazine, Newsweek, Wall Street Journal, many, many others, the greatest person who's ever lived in the history of the world is who?

Jesus Christ. So Jesus Christ certainly had a life of high achievement. And so this does not mean for you to live an unremarkable forgettable life. If you can discover the cure for Alzheimer's disease, please do.

If you see a car with a family in it and the car is on fire, by all means do the heroic thing and go save them. Or if you can become a person who is the CEO or owner of a company whose products and services are really helping people, by all means do that. Or if you can become the president of the university, by all means do that. Or if you can get on the Supreme Court, by all means do that high achievement.

But, and now we're going to move to the second kind of greatness, do that as one who serves. And if you do receive recognition and status, give the glory to God. The next verse here says this. Verse 11, "The greatest among you will be your servant. The greatest among you will be your servant." Who is the greatest servant in the history of the world?

Jesus Christ. One of his titles or one of his roles is the suffering servant. He's also, we said, the greatest person who's ever lived, but he's also the greatest servant who's ever lived in the history of the world. And he says, "The greatest among you will be your servant, for those who exalt themselves, seeking status and recognition. For those who exalt themselves will be humbled, and those who humble themselves will be exalted." And so he said, "I am among you as one who serves and follow my example. I am among you as one who serves. Follow my example. The greatest among you will be the one who serves."

So we have these two kinds of greatness. How do we get this kind of greatness? How can you be a person who is highly recognized or a person that has no recognition? How can you do that and I find this kind of greatness that is available to everyone? Well, here's how. It's by embracing the gospel of Jesus Christ, and making him Lord of your life. Embracing the gospel of Jesus Christ and making him the lord of your life. And then everything you put your mind or your hands to, or any kind of action to, you do it for the glory of Jesus Christ. I'm going to give you the Big Idea now for the day. This is a question I've used it here before.

I have developed a handful of questions, I'm going to give you a few more of them in this series. But these are my go-to questions. So for example, I had to have some blood taken, they wanted to check my cholesterol. So I went to a lab and the phlebotomist, how many of you know what a phlebotomist is? The person who takes blood? Wow. That's pretty fancy title for someone who takes blood. Phlebotomist is a person who takes blood. Well, I'd been to this lab before because I had the cholesterol test done previously, so this was the retest. I changed my diet around and did all that kind of stuff, so I'm going back to see how I did.

The same person, the same lady took my blood. And so as we were in the room and she was doing the paperwork, standing at the computer, I said, "You know, I remember you. You helped me the last time and I remember you because I remembered how professional and kind and pleasant you were." And all of a sudden the whole meeting changed from being sort of humdrum, routine, another boring customer, and she lit up. And then we started to talk. And, not to carry this too far, but I asked her, I said, "Do you wear compression socks by any chance?" Well, I've just discovered compression socks for hiking. I was thinking about doing one of these obstacle course runs and I've decided against that because the Atlantic published an article that people are getting sick in the mud, so I decided not to do it.

But anyway, I've got these compression socks that I'm using for hiking and everything like that, and I discovered them from a hospital worker. And so I asked her, I said, "Do you wear compression socks?" And she says, "You know, I used to do that when I worked at the hospital. And they were awesome." And so we had this incredible conversation. Here's the point, I made her day. I made her day. But guess

what, I made her day because of the Big Idea. I made her day because I asked this question when I was in that room, and this is the Big Idea today. A servant is not asking the question, "What do I want?" A servant is asking a different question. A servant, the greatest among you, is the one who serves. A servant is asking this question, "**What does the master need?** What does the master need in this situation?" And I do this all the time in the work that I do, when something's not ... Let's just say that, I'm busy doing some particular task and somebody calls me and they need me to drop what I'm doing and go do this other thing.

I ask the question, "Okay, well, I'm serving, so what does the master need?" And nine times out of 10, the thing that I am supposed to do, is drop what I'm doing and help that other person with their thing. All right. That's the Big Idea for the day. Now, let's talk a little bit about the mindset of or what is the mindset of a servant.

WHAT IS THE MINDSET OF A "SERVANT"?

We're going to look at a few scriptures to get there. Luke chapter 17, beginning at verse seven, is where I would like to take you. Luke 17:7, this to me is the essence of the mindset of a servant, The greatest among you is the one who serves. And the reason we, if you want to adopt this question, could you use this Big Idea, what does the master need is rooted in Luke chapter 17, beginning at verse Seven.

Jesus says, "Suppose one of you has a servant plowing or looking after the sheep, will he say to the servant, when he comes in from the field, 'Come along now and sit down to eat'? Won't he rather say, 'Prepare my supper, get yourself ready and wait on me while I eat and drink. After that you may eat and drink'? Will he thank the servant because he did what he was told to do?" Now, this is an illustration. This is not something that really happened. This was like a parable. And then in verse 10, "So you, when you have done everything you were told to do should say, 'We are unworthy servants, we have only done our duty'" When we serve other people, it's not like we do that so that we can get the appreciation and the recognition like the Pharisees wanted., you may get that, but that's not the reason that you do that.

You do that because Jesus Christ is the Lord of your life. He is your master and you are asking the question, "Okay, in my life, in this situation, what does the master need?" What does the master need? It is the essence. It says that, "Whoever exalts themselves will be humbled and whoever humbles himself will be exalted." This is the essence of what it means to live humbly, to not exalt yourself, but to exalt the Lord Jesus Christ and say, "Okay, well, what does the master need me to do in the situation?" And that's the greatness. That's the kind of greatness. The greatest among you will be the one who serves.

That's the kind of greatness that's available to all of us, to everyone, to be a servant of Jesus, not asking, "Okay, well, what do I get out of this?" But rather, "Yeah, what does the master need?" Maybe one more verse, we have many, many more. I have many, many more, but maybe John 15:18. John 15:18 says this, Jesus speaking, "If the world hates you, keep in mind that it hated me first. If you belong to the world, it would love you as its own. As it is you do not belong to the world, but I have chosen you out of the world, that is why the world hates you." Remember what I told you, a servant is not greater than his master, if they persecuted me, Jesus says, "If they persecuted me, they're going to persecute you too, buddy. If they had obeyed my teaching, they will obey yours also."

So we're following the example of Jesus. Maybe one more. A little earlier in Luke 9:23, in Luke 9:23, Jesus says this, I love my new Bible, I just can't find anything in it very quickly, but I will, I will get there. "Then he said to them all, whoever wants to be my disciple must deny themselves and take up their cross and follow me. Whoever wants to save their life will lose it, but whoever loses their life for me will save it." It's to become a servant. The Big Idea today is this, ask the question, "Because I am a servant, because I am denying myself, because I am humbling myself and not exalting, what does the master need from me in this particular situation?"

In Mark 10:29, Mark 10:29, Jesus says, "Truly, I tell you, no one who has left home or brothers or sisters or mother or father or children or fields for me and the Gospel will fail to receive 100 times as much in this present age, homes, brothers, sisters, mothers, children and fields, along with persecutions, and in the age to come, eternal life." So when we ask this question, what does the master need? There is something that comes back to us, it probably doesn't come back from the person that we're actually serving at that particular time, it might. But, Jesus says that, when we do the work of a servant, when we do deny ourselves, take up our cross, that he's going to take care of us.

WHAT DOES BEING A SERVANT LOOK LIKE IN PRACTICE?

In this life, there will be persecution, but also in the life hereafter, eternal life for us. Now, what does being servant look like in practice? Robertson McQuilkin is an incredible example of the life of a powerful leader who accomplished much. He started as the headmaster at Ben Lippen School. He then was a missionary in China for 12 years and then became the President of Columbia Bible College, which today is Columbia International University. And Robertson McQuilkin is credited with, among other things, helping to pioneer the work to understand how to reach unreached people groups, unreached people groups.

He developed many tremendous programs at Columbia International University in Columbia, South Carolina. Grew the university tremendously. But then in the 1980s, something happened, his wife Muriel, started to become confused about things. And this is Muriel. So at the height of his career, at the height of his power, at the height of this influence, Robertson McQuilkin decided that what he needed to do was to resign his position and take care of his wife who had contracted Alzheimer's disease, at a very young age. And so in 1990, he performed an act of the greatness that is available to everyone. And what I would like to do is, I would like you to hear the words of Robertson McQuilkin resignation speech, but I want you to hear them in his own words. And so we're going to play a little video right now. Listen in.

Robertson McQuilkin: "I haven't in my life experienced easy decision making on major decisions, but one of the simplest and clearest decisions I've had to make is this one, because circumstances dictated it. Muriel now in the last couple of months seems to be almost happy when with me and almost never happy when not with me. In fact, she seems to feel trapped, becomes very fearful, sometimes almost terror. And when she can't get to me, there can be anger. She's in distress. But when I'm with her, she's happy and contented. And so, I must be with her at all times. You see, it's not only that I promised in sickness and in health till death do us part, and I'm a man of my word, but as I have said, I don't know with this group, but I have said publicly, it's the only fair thing, she sacrificed for me for 40 years to make my life possible. So if I cared for her for 40 years, I'd still be in debt. However, there's much more. It's not that I have to, it's that I got to. I love her very dearly, and you can tell it's not easy to talk about. She's a delight, it's a great honor to care for such a wonderful person. "

Patrick Morley: Robertson McQuilkin, for all of his accomplishments, he's not remembered as the President of Columbia International University, he is a legend in the evangelical world, all around the globe because when his wife needed him, he was there. He performed that kind of greatness that's available to every one of us. He looked at his wife, he looked at the situation, and he was asking the question that a servant asks. He wasn't asking, what do I need? He was asking the question, which is our Big Idea today, **what does the master need?** What does the master need? This is the kind of greatness that is available to everyone. Let us pray.

Heavenly father, thank you so much for your scripture. Lord, some of us here might be single and for us, greatness would be to find a woman that we can give ourselves to and settle down and have a family. For some of us, Lord, greatness, some of this might be newlyweds. I know we have a few, and so greatness is figuring out how to get the marriage off on the right foot. Lord, some of the men here and I'm in line of course too, are husbands and fathers with children, some young children, some teenagers, and trying to figure out how to execute the responsibilities of being a dad and a husband. Others are owners and many are employees and are trying to figure out, what does it mean to be faithful, to be found faithful?

Some of us have made mistakes and maybe have been involved in drugs or alcohol or infidelity, and we're trying to figure out, how can we do something with their lives that will make a difference? Lord I pray that you would help each man who hears this message to understand that there is a greatness that is available to everyone and it's the greatness that comes by making ourselves a servant. Jesus said, "The greatest among you is the one who serves." And we can execute that vision that he has for us by looking around and whenever we have decisions to make, asking this question, "Okay, what does the master need? What does the master need? Not what do I need, but what does the master need?"

Lord, I pray that you would let this be something that would sink down into our hearts and our minds and become part of who we are. And we ask this in your name, Jesus. Amen.