

**“Fight for the Back of the Line” Mark 9:30-37 and 10:35-45**

(also in Matthew 18:1-6; 20:20-28 and Luke 9:46-48)

TODAY we mark the words of Jesus in Mark 9:35 where he says: **“If anyone wants to be first, he shall be last of all, and servant of all.”**

- 9:30 And from there they went out and began to go through Galilee, and He was unwilling for anyone to know about it.
- 9:31 For He was teaching His disciples and telling them, “The Son of Man is to be delivered up into the hands of men, and they will kill Him; and when he has been killed, He will rise again three days later.”
- 9:32 But they did not understand this statement, and they were afraid to ask Him.
- 9:33 And they came to Capernaum; and when He was in the house, He began to question them, “What were you discussing on the way?”
- 9:34 But they kept silent, for on the way they had discussed with one another which of them was the greatest.

**Fighting for the back of the line is: 1. SEEKING GREATNESS IN GOD’S EYES**

- 9:35 And sitting down, He called the twelve and said to them, **“If anyone wants to be first, he shall be last of all and servant of all.”**

**Fighting for the back of the line is: 2. EXALTING OTHERS’ VALUE & IMPORTANCE**

**Fighting for the back of the line is: 3. EXEMPLIFYING THE ROLE OF A SERVANT**

- 9:36 And taking a child, He stood him in the midst of them; and taking him in His arms, He said to them,
- 9:37 “Whoever receives one child like this in My name is receiving Me; and whoever receives Me is not receiving Me, but Him who sent Me.”

**Fighting for the back of the line is: 4. EMBRACING THE HELPLESS**

- 10:35 And James and John, the two sons of Zebedee, came up to Him, saying to Him, “Teacher, we want You to do for us whatever we ask of You.”
- 10:36 And He said to them, “What do you want Me to do for you?”
- 10:37 And they said to Him, “Grant that we may sit in Your glory, one on Your right and one on Your left.”
- 10:38 But Jesus said to them, “You do not know what you are asking for. Are you able to drink the cup that I drink, or to be baptized with the baptism with which I am baptized?”

**Fighting for the back of the line is: 5. SHARING IN JESUS’ SUFFERINGS**

- 10:39 And they said to Him, "We are able." And Jesus said to them, "The cup that I drink you shall drink; and you shall be baptized with the baptism with which I am baptized.
- 10:40 "But to sit on My right or on My left, this is not Mine to give; but it is for those for whom it has been prepared."
- 10:41 And hearing this, the ten began to feel indignant toward James and John.
- 10:42 And calling them to Himself, Jesus said to them, "You know that those who are recognized as rulers of the Gentiles lord it over them; and their great men exercise authority over them.
- 10:43 "But it is not so among you, but whoever wishes to become great among you shall be your servant;
- 10:44 and whoever wishes to be first among you shall be slave of all.

**Fighting for the back of the line is: 6. LEADING OUT OF HUMILITY**

- 10:45 "For even the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give His life a ransom for many."

**Fighting for the back of the line is: 7. DEDICATING MY LIFE TO GOD & OTHERS**

- *Matthew 18: 1-5 Disciples: "Who is greatest in the kingdom of heaven? Jesus: "Whoever humbles himself as this child, he is the greatest ..."*
- *Luke 9:48 Jesus: "Whoever is least among you, this is the one who is great."*

**2 ITEMS OF CONTEXT SET UP THE TEACHING ON SERVANTHOOD**

**1. JESUS: REVELATIONS ABOUT HIS ULTIMATE SACRIFICE (9:30-32)**

- *Mark 8:31 Emphasis on the NECESSITY*
- *Mark 9:31 (here) Emphasis on the CERTAINTY*
- *Mark 10:33-34 Emphasis on the INTENSITY*

**2. DISCIPLES: GREATEST IN THE KINGDOM**

- *All disciples discussing who is the greatest (9:33, 34)*
- *James and John (with mother) ask for special consideration (10:35-37)*

**Fighting for the back of the line is...**

**3. SEEKING GREATNESS IN GOD'S EYES Jesus: "if anyone wants to be first..."**

- *It is WRONG to seek greatness in man's eyes*
- *It is RIGHT to seek greatness in God's eyes*
- *"whoever would be great among you..."*
- *It was not wrong of the disciples to desire greatness in God's kingdom.*
- *They just needed correction on HOW to achieve that greatness*

**2... EXALTING OTHERS' VALUE & IMPORTANCE** "...he shall be last of all" Jesus wants us to be last-meaning we must put others first

- In Philippians 2:3 Paul tells us to "do nothing from selfishness or empty conceit, but with humility of mind let each of you regard one another as more important than himself."
- Whose opinions and person do you need to regard as more important?
- Whose value and importance have you diminished, rather than exalt?

**3... EXEMPLIFYING THE ROLE OF A SERVANT** "... he shall be ... servant of all." Is the servant's role natural or challenging for you?

- Are you likely to volunteer for the lowlier tasks?
- Perhaps an attitude adjustment is in order.
- Paul said in Philippians 2:4 "Have this attitude in you which was also in Christ Jesus ... taking the form of a bond-servant"
- Perhaps you rightly deserve some measure of recognition and status – so did Jesus. But with Him as your example, adjust your attitude to service – emptying your "right" and "entitlement" and humble yourself in willing and joyful service. We can all do this from time to time – the challenge is to do it naturally and consistently. 2 suggestions: (1) Ask for help! (2) Practice often

**4... EMBRACING THE HELPLESS** Jesus: "whoever receives one child like this..."

- Matthew 25:40 And the King will answer and say to them, "Truly I say to you, to the extent that you did it to one of these brothers of Mine, even the least of them, you did it to Me"
- The context of Jesus embracing the child and asking us to do the same, is the discussion of being great. The child is here a symbol of innocence and lowliness. The child does not tangibly give us anything. The child holds no status or hope of advancing our status. We usually tend to embrace those who can advance us or give us something we want or need. Jesus says that to be "great" we must embrace those who are helpless and needy – and that our greatness will not come from what they can give us, but from what we can give them. This was the greatness of Jesus – who gave to us bountifully with little hope of any reciprocation. This is unconditional love – what Jesus asks of those who would be great in His kingdom.

**5... SHARING IN JESUS' SUFFERINGS** Jesus: "are you able to drink the cup that I drink?"

- It is commendable that James and John were willing – and as it turned out, they were able, with the help of God. James was beheaded, and John was banished to the island of Patmos. So, we also should say, as it were, "I am willing." But do we know what we are saying?
- Paul, in Ephesians says, and challenges us to say, that gaining Christ is the utmost goal – including knowing the "*fellowship of His sufferings, being conformed to His death*" (Phil. 3:10)

- Each of us has a “cup” that God gives us – including much sorrow and trial. To “fight for the back of the line” means that we must bear that “cup” with the same resolve, character and attitude that Christ displayed in His sufferings.
- Just as Jesus gave us a Godly example to follow – so we are to give those who watch our lives a Godly example to follow, in the strength of God in us. This is “greatness” in His eyes.

**6... LEADING OUT OF HUMILITY** Jesus: “*whoever wishes to be first among you shall be slave of all*”

*Philippians 2:3-9 Do nothing from selfishness or empty conceit, but with humility of mind let each of you regard one another as more important than himself; do not merely look out for your own personal interests, but also for the interests of others. Have this attitude in yourselves which was also in Christ Jesus, who although He existed in the form of God, did not regard equality with God a thing to be grasped, but emptied Himself, taking the form of a bond-servant, and being made in the likeness of men. And being found in appearance as a man, He humbled Himself by becoming obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross. Therefore, also God highly exalted Him, and bestowed on Him the name which is above every name...*

*Jesus displayed his HUMILITY in His*

1. *lowly birth*
2. *taking on our nature*
3. *subjection to His parents*
4. *modest station in life*
5. *submitting to ordinances (circumcision, baptism, taxes, etc.)*
6. *becoming a servant to all*
7. *associating with the despised*
8. *exposing Himself to contempt and mockery*
9. *entry into Jerusalem on a donkey*
10. *washing the disciples’ feet*
11. *submitting to suffering*
12. *substitutionary death*

*The Philippians 2 passage teaches that we display our humility in our*

1. *selflessness*
2. *not being conceited*
3. *Proverbs 27:2 Let another praise you, and not your own mouth.*
4. *regarding others as more important*
5. *looking out for other interests, as well as our own*
6. *attitude of not grasping for a “position”*
7. *emptying ourselves of “rights”*
8. *taking on the role of “servant of others”*

9. *obedience to God's calling*

10. *willingness to undergo suffering for the sake of Christ*

- *Perhaps our embracing these words of the apostle Paul as our own is a good start to "fighting for the back of the line"*
- *1 Timothy 1:15 It is a trustworthy statement, deserving full acceptance; that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners, among whom I am foremost of all.*

**7... DEDICATING MY LIFE TO GOD & OTHERS** "... and to give his life a ransom for many"

*Our greatness is measured by the degree of our sacrifice for others.*

*THE ULTIMATE GREATNESS IS GIVING OUR LIFE TO GOD IN THE SERVICE OF OTHERS (10:45)*

*Have you done so? Would you today rededicate yourself to that great purpose?*

**May those of Oaks Bible Church be known as those who "FIGHT FOR THE BACK OF THE LINE"!**