

## Children Of The King – Mark 9:33-37

The disciples longed for greatness, they evidently considered themselves to be on the cusp of it by being friends of Jesus and entertaining a debate about which of them ranked highest! There's something quite comical about this narrative and yet it is here in the Bible because from this embarrassing incident from the disciples' perspective came a powerful lesson from Jesus.

The first thing I want us to notice is what Jesus doesn't say! The disciples are not told that their desire for greatness is wrong, indeed it seems Jesus affirms it by saying '*if anyone would be first...*'

**Q. Why do you think Jesus didn't rebuke this aspiration in his disciples?**

**Q. What are some of the root needs in every person that were being expressed by the disciples here?**

**Q. What does 'greatness' in the kingdom of God look like?**

We all have insecurities and a deep-rooted need to 'be somebody'. We are all tempted to look to things outside of Christ to meet these needs, whether it be our careers, looks, education, popularity etc. for each of us there will be a particular area weakness. We have been designed by God to find our security outside of ourselves, and in Him, knowing God and being known by God – as long as you are looking outside of Him you are very vulnerable indeed.

The second thing to notice is what Jesus does to illustrate the lesson of humility that He is teaching the disciples (verses 35-36).

*"Whoever humbles himself like this child is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven"* (Matthew 18:4)

Jesus shows his disciples that the road to greatness is marked with humility, the kind of humility that children instinctively exhibit.

**Q. In what ways do children show us what humility is all about?**

**Q. Did Jesus have childlike faith?**

**Q. Can you think of some examples where Jesus modelled humility?**

A childlike faith:

- a) Believes – John 20: 24-29
- b) Dreams – Ephesians 3:20
- c) Asks – Matt 7:7

**Q. What can we learn from children in relation to the above?**

**Q. How can we put these qualities of faith into action?**

The third thing to notice is what Jesus expects his disciples to do in response to this call to humility in verse 37. Jesus' expectation was that the disciples would relate to others like him, to go to those who are marginal in society and love them. We can easily default into our social comfort zones, sticking to those who are 'like us' and not serving others as Jesus so often did. Philippians 2:3-11 wonderfully describes Christ's road to greatness and how this is such a wonderful example to us.

**Q. Read the Philippians passage together and discuss the various ways that you can imitate the example of Christ in your context**