

Sermon Discussion Guide




“Greatness”

Matthew 18:1-14

Rev. Ray Cortese, March 7 & 8, 2015

Step 1: Reflect on the Text

Why do we do this first? We always want to start with the Bible. The goal is to meditate on the Word and read it with an ear sensitive to the Holy Spirit’s promptings. Look for words or phrases that stand out through logic, repetition, layout, etc.

-  Read Matthew 18:1-14. What stood out to you? What did you find interesting and/or important? What was challenging or caused you to have questions?

Step 2: Reflect on the Sermon

INTRODUCTION

- 1 What makes someone great? Have you ever met a great person? Why did Ray teach his kids never to get people’s autographs or take their picture?
- 2 Summarize the *Big Idea* of the sermon in *one phrase or sentence* (Note: this is not the same as listing the main points). In other words, if someone woke you up at 3am on Monday morning and asked, “What was the sermon about on Sunday?” what would you say in the midst of your sleepy haze?

TRAITS OF GREATNESS: HUMILITY

- 3 *Humble enough to enter the kingdom.* What did Jesus mean when he said you must become as a little child in order to enter the kingdom?
- 4 Why is it hard for Western people to admit their total need of Jesus? Ray said, “We’ve got all kinds of things other than Jesus.” What are those things?

- 5 *Humble themselves to serve in the kingdom.* How were little children viewed in Biblical times? What did Jesus say about those who serve and those who recline at table? Have you ever witnessed servant leadership, someone who cares more about others than they do about themselves? How might God be calling you to be this kind of leader? Why did the CEO sneak into the church early in the morning to vacuum the sanctuary?

TRAITS OF GREATNESS: REPENTANCE

- 6 Do you believe that you are the biggest sinner in your family, in your church, in your community, in the United States? How are you more vile than people you see in the news?
- 7 “The only people who are equipped to lead are those who repent as the biggest sinners. You kids should know just how weak you are, just how much you need Jesus.” How do these statements validate or contradict your own experiences?

TRAITS OF GREATNESS: WELCOME

- 8 “Little ones” and “children” are not identical in this passage. Who are the “little ones” Jesus is speaking about? True greatness engages with those at the bottom of the social ladder. Why do we instead like to name drop and associate ourselves with important people?
- 9 What is the difference between “the golden rule” and “the Jesus rule”?
- 10 Ray had some powerful words at the end about racism and racists. What did he say and how does it relate to the gospel?

Step 3: Final Reflections

- ✠ How has your understanding, appreciation, and love for Jesus and the gospel grown as a result of this study?
- ♥ In what areas of faith and practice are you feeling convicted by the Holy Spirit to act as a result of this study?