

Becoming the Least of These

by Brian Guerin

The sermon emphasizes the importance of humility and servanthood in the Christian life, using the story of Samuel's birth as a key example of God's transformative power through prayer and faith.

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Topics: "Humility", "Servanthood"

Description

Brian Guerin emphasizes the importance of humility and servanthood in his sermon 'Becoming the Least of These.' He illustrates how true greatness in the Kingdom of God is found in serving others and becoming the least, using the life of Samuel as a model. Guerin contrasts Samuel's humble beginnings and faithful service under Eli with the arrogance of Eli's sons, highlighting that those who seek to elevate themselves will ultimately fall. He encourages the congregation to embrace a mindset of service and to trust that God will exalt those who remain faithful and humble. The sermon concludes with a call to prayer for healing and spiritual growth.

Transcript

Excited to jump into the Word this morning. Man, and at the end, we'd love to open up prayer for any of you all that need prayer for anything. Could be healing in your body.

How many of you know God still heals today? Yes, Jesus. Pretty clear in Scripture. He's the same yesterday, today, and forever.

So you can be free in a moment, you know, anything that's been bothering you, infirmities, whatever. Prayer for anything in your home, family, just we love to see the Spirit moving, Jesus glorified. So let me think, any announcements I have.

I'm not sure. Oh, the Academy will probably do that during the offering. So I'll take up a quick Tithon offering and then we'll jump into the Word together.

So just want to encourage you guys as we typically do in being just a generous community and sort of casting vision. So we have a vision breakfast coming up towards the end of this month, kind of hinged on to our Glory Nights event. And it looks like pretty certain, many of you don't know this, our students do, but I had seen in prayer us likely shifting into that building before we even got started here.

And it makes now, as you can see, like every week, thank the Lord is a great problem, but we're kind of busting at the seams and have to add rows on the back walls. And soon we may have to start stacking you on the stage like we do at Glory Nights and just huddling around. But, and as you can see in the parking lot, we're full every week, people are parking in the woods and trees and just awesome, just awesome.

I got to tell you a funny story happened one time and Lord bless whoever this was, I know they meant well, but we got an email once and somebody, it's just, I don't even know, Christians can do some interesting things sometimes, man. We've been known to do some interesting stuff. Interesting is always a safe word, unique, interesting.

That's how you don't offend folks. But, so it's a funny story. I just thought about it in the moment.

We get an email and they're like, cause how many, you know, you can tell we're out in the woods. I love it. They're deer and man, it's, you know, that's about all that sets off our security cameras at the church, like deer crossing from this woods to those woods and possum or whatever.

So, uh, but we get an email to the ministry saying, Oh, Hey, there's a dead deer out front. There's, there's witchcraft on the property. I'm like somebody hit a deer, but that happens all the time.

So, so I'm like, Judah, you got to go up to the church, got to move a dead deer. And, uh, so, cause you know, there there's literally, I love Georgia, man. So, so you all know I'm from Louisiana and a lot of hunting and fishing down there.

Just love it. But man, I come up to Georgia's like, bro, they got overkill on deer. It's amazing.

They're everywhere. So there's signs everywhere that like watch for deers jumping out in the road, you know? And, uh, so I'm like, I'm like, Judah got to go move a deer, bro. Part of ministry.

And, uh, so he grabbed a couple of legs. I got a couple where I'm like on the count of three, sorry for the ladies, but, and we're like one, two on three, not after three on three, two, you know, three, chuck them off in the woods. Vultures get a free lunch.

It's just nature. Just how it works. And witchcraft is gone, you know, whatever.

So we're just funny, but we, uh, any who, I don't, how do I get there? I don't know. I'm all over the place. Oh yeah.

People are parking in the woods and stuff. So anyway, where we're going with it is, uh, look, man, in the end times, I'm looking for that road kill. I'm teasing.

You get them just fresh, get some backstrap, you know what I'm saying? I'm totally teasing. But anyway, um, yeah, as you can see, we're, we're packing out and so grateful that there's just a hungry bunch. And, and as you all noticed, I'm preaching some of the harder stuff, man, I'm proud of you guys.

You'd think the crowd would start thinning out, but there's just a hungry people. I believe in the earth and really wanting the things of the Lord, myself included. And I was told, which is interesting too, cause you know, we're learning a lot on the more of the pastoral church side, but apparently the statistics work the other way around.

I didn't know this, but from some pastor friends and things I've heard that in the summers, those are your lightest months. I didn't know that we're still kind of busting out. That seems I'm like, I was like, okay, but nothing got lighter like in the summer, which is encouraging.

People are hungry, but apparently the, from vacation and things that people plan, which makes total sense. I think it's awesome. Um, but again, the plans are to slowly shift over as the Lord enables and, um, you know, provides and we know he will, but just want to encourage you guys, especially just in life.

And those of you that watch our extended family online and across the world, obviously you'd want to tie that the house you're fed at and you're, you're under, we encourage that. And, um, but being a generous people just want to encourage you. And we're so grateful as well and pray the Lord dumps back on you, you know, opens the floodgates of heaven as a book of Malachi says.

So, so I think you should have your offering envelopes. You want to fill those out in a minute. We'll bring up the, we can go and bring them up the offering baskets on each side to where you can, um, bring them up front.

And also there's texts to give and you can give online. So, so let's pray. Jesus, thank you so much for the opportunity to, um, just be in your presence in the secret place, but also corporately, God, we thank you that we never neglect the coming together of the body, the strength, one and another, how you set this whole thing up so beautifully.

We need each other in you. Thank you for your presence. Thank you for your word.

Be pleased and glorified. And I pray, um, that you'd unlock the, the heavens over each and everyone's life as far as blessing provision abundance. God, thank you that you own the cattle on a thousand hills and the deer as well, because there's a bunch in Jesus name.

Amen. Awesome. You can come up front and, uh, oh yeah.

And we'll go ahead and roll our new academy video, but you can let everybody out in the aisle. If you want to bring the offering envelopes up front, I don't know if you know, we really need to adhere to a life that walks in the, uh, the word of course, but also the manifest presence of God. You know, the Bible says the letter alone kills, but the spirit brings life.

And man, we need this presence, but sometimes you can get a little top heavy through knowledge and it starts to lack presence, tangible, intimate, relational presence. And may we always be a people that abide in him. Sometimes you get around people you're like, man, there's something on them.

And then you start to talk about Jesus and you're like, okay, I get it now. They abide deep in the vine. This bunch is like no other.

We're starting to see the Lord's for real raising up his bride for his son and they mean business, but yet it's so beautiful going deep in community together, both online and in person, deep in the word, the spirit falling madly in love with Jesus. Thank you so much, William. Yeah.

We'd love to invite you to come join us for our fall trimester. We'll be starting in September and it's open right now, um, through this month in August. And then we hit the ground running in September.

Going to be awesome. You'll, you'll jump into the graduation class of 2024 and, uh, just love it. If you're looking to take things just deeper in life, on a level of the word, the presence of community, I would love to have you.

So, okay, let's jump in together. I'm going to be in, um, going backwards this week at first Samuel one, two, and three. I'm going to be paraphrasing a bunch.

First Samuel, uh, chapters one, two, and three. How many of you love the B I B L E. Thank you Lord for the book, the book of life. Look, man, it, when it, you know, when it's all said done, this is all you need him in the, word mentioned, I live on bread alone, but every word comes out of the mouth of God.

So, yeah, so I'm trying to figure out which way I want to start on this. Maybe I'll, yeah, I'll paraphrase up to the main versus, because what I want to hit is these windows that the scripture takes us into over Samuel's early life that I think are very vital and we could glean from them and let them kind of marinate within us as well and become more like Jesus. But you see in, um, first Samuel chapter one, many of us know this account where a man named Elkanah, you know, has two wives, Penina, Hannah, and, uh, it ultimately leads ultimately leads to the birthing of Samuel.

Well, well, Elkanah, godly man, every year he'd go up to Shiloh with the Ark of God as Eli's the priest and all this and worship God and, and his wife, Penina, I love kind of picking out some of the prophetic stuff. Uh, her name means Pearl. Hannah means grace or favor.

And I love, you can see in this story, I'm going to go quick through this and cause really I'm trying to highlight Samuel, but I love in this story. Cause I think you can see that, you know, we all know Penina had children. Uh, Hannah was barren because of the Lord, actually.

I mean, sometimes the Lord will on purpose put you in barren seasons to birth something greater than anybody else around you. And sometimes the Penina's in life, they already have inherent worth, a Pearl. They have value in and of what they do.

And because of that, they don't cry out in a deep way for the deeper things of God that is only accessible through grace or favor, which is Hannah. And so you could see this mysterious storyline. Heaven was setting up to get Samuel into the earth.

Samuel to me is like a sleeper in scripture. One of my heroes that's not often talked about. He, uh, man, you hate to like rank them at all cause they all play a different part and they're all just amazing.

But one of the only three Nazarites in scripture explicitly where it's clear consecrated one only profits. You can find where it says no words fell to the ground. I mean, we're talking flawless resume and, uh, but to get him in the earth, he had to have a vessel that could not lean on its own inherent worth, but into the grace and favor of God.

And so, so Elkina is going up to Shiloh every year. This is where Eli was. I touched on him briefly last week, the priest and all this worship to God development.

And, uh, they'd go up every year and the Bible says Penina, she already had worth. I mean, sometimes people that have it all, it's harder for them to tap into the deeper things of God. Sometimes it doesn't have to be even Jesus has love and rich folks.

It's hard for them to even enter the kingdom. I got everything. And, um, but I believe you can find a healthy balance in our, our desperate need for him by the spirit.

So, but Penina has already got it all. She has children in the greatest value, basically asset of that day of anything you could ever want. And the culture was to bear children, to continue on the name and the family.

And it was a big, big, big deal. Whereas nowadays it's, it's totally backwards. We need to get back to the word.

And, um, so anyway, uh, Penina would, would, uh, um, ridicule Hannah sometimes to, you get it going on, you get a little, you know, you just kind of start to, it just sets in the wrong way, a little bit arrogant and, uh, would ridicule Hannah and she'd be distraught year after year. Cause she had no children. She was barren, but now he's got it all going on.

It looks great. But, but the whole time heaven setting up a checkmate to get his perfect will in the earth. So you, you go through a chapter one and, uh, Hannah and they go up one more time again this year.

And, uh, hello, welcome. How are you? Love your hat and gloves. So beautiful.

Um, yeah, come on up. We've got seats up here. Yeah.

Look, come sit right next to my daughter. If you want, we've got seats, VIP section. Hey, look, you wearing gloves and a hat like that.

You need to sit up front. So beautiful. Um, so, so they go up bananas, ridiculing her again.

And the Bible says, I'm paraphrasing, but says, uh, Hannah was super distraught and, uh, was beginning to just be really down in, in the Bible says Elkanah would always give the normal portions to banana her children, but double to Hannah. Cause he'd really loved her. He'd be like, look, you all get this.

He gives like two rib eyes to, to Hannah and the shit at the table on this occasion, Hannah doesn't eat. She's just so distraught. Doesn't want to eat.

I love one verse, just the humor side of me. I see, I see into it. It goes, he goes, aren't I like, what's wrong? Eat.

What was the problem? You know? Um, aren't I worth more to you than 10 sons? And it's just crickets. She doesn't say it's awesome. You got to read it in the word.

Like if they had cricket emojis, there'd be like three of them right there. It's like, it's that awkward, you know, she doesn't answer him, but he's a sweet, gracious man. He understood she was just in a heavy state, you know, but she just, in other words, she's like, doesn't answer.

And, uh, she passes on the two rib eyes. She's like, I just, I want a son Lord. What's going on? So she leaves it.

Oh, it says when they all ate, she hadn't eaten yet. She's fasting and, uh, they got it from the table and it says she was in bitterness of soul, wept in anguish and turned to the Lord with that though. That's where the men and boys separate.

If, if we can take those dire situations when it's hard and, and we all have, uh, been there and get it, but often if we're not careful, we turn away from the but you take that distraught situation that sometimes the Bible says the Lord had her barren. I don't believe that would apply in a new covenant lens, but figuratively speaking, he'll make seasons barren to have you hit this deep place of turning to him and making vows that nobody else will make. And man, those unlock Samuels that come in the earth.

I've been in a man, I remember late Oh four Oh five. He put me in one and I, and I look back on, ah, you don't know when you're in them. You don't want to be in them, but they cause something in you.

And if you'll take that state and turn to him wholeheartedly, and if you dare make a vow there and keep it, Oh my gosh, Samuels come in the earth. And so she does that says, uh, Eli noticed her and said, may it be unto you as you wish it. She becomes pregnant with Samuel.

Beautiful thing, got birthed in that situation. But we, we fast forward, um, to into chapter two and three, and you see Samuel's upbringing. And this is what I want to highlight in the context of, uh, becoming the least of these super important and beautiful.

And I love that. Um, you know, hopefully we'll get this more and more just as we follow the Lord that how many, you know, the kingdom is totally backwards to the world. And I love Romans 12 too.

It says that, that we, how many of you are believers in here should be everybody now that, yeah, or somebody was disobedient earlier. I'm teasing. Uh, but according to you and I, Romans 12 too says, uh, we are not to be conformed to this world, but we're supposed to be transformed, meaning come out of the mold by the renewing of our mind.

And that's how you find the good, well-pleasing and perfect will of God. So like that, that word conformed there, it means it's like I had a container here, say a bottle of water and it's shaped a certain way. And you pour water into it.

The water is going to conform to that mold. Well, the renewal of the mind, the biblical true kingdom way, what it does is it, it transforms meaning it takes you out of that mold. And if we're not careful, especially in this current day and age and hour, you can easily be conformed to this world easily.

It's happening at a, at a pace we've never seen. They're trying to infiltrate it and everything. That's why I preach so much.

We've got to be very intentional about disconnecting from the mold. Watch what you watch, what you take in, who you hang around, what, you know, I would even encourage parents pray about your children. They're in a, they're in schools, not to go off down this trail, but they're in a school eight hours a day.

And so if you don't hear the Lord in that, sometimes you do, and I think it's awesome, but sometimes as well, there's a mold that had been put in eight hours and then you only have them for a few, four, they go to take a bath at night or whatever. And so just our life, everything decision-making in this hour, really key that we look for the transforming by the renewing of the mind, the kingdom's way. And it's totally backwards and I'm just loving it.

And I want to go more and more that way. So this is another one that is the way of the Lord. It's the pure way of life, the river of life and choosing to become the least of these not popular, but so popular in the kingdom is so beautiful.

And this is where life is at. And the enemy will never show you that. And so we see Samuel do it so, so beautifully, but I want to preface with some notes.

I had, I have here, uh, there's a major spirit of consumerism that has crept into the church where it has become all about us, uh, me, my, and mine, uh, what's in it for me. And get what I'm trying to do is cause we don't know it often. We can all, you know, if we were honest, we could admit like, Oh yeah, man, we, you don't mean to, but number one, sinful nature, plus society and the culture of the conforming of the world, it can start to creep in and it's just not Bible.

And if it's not Bible, it's not life. It's not Jesus. It's not freedom.

And I just don't want anything to do with it. And so, um, uh, when Jesus all along promoted and preached the exact opposite, he preached that our lives are for the purpose of being laid down for others. It's a different mentality and it's beautiful.

I'm trying to find that one. I'm trying to find that narrow path and a company that wants to go that way. Um, he, uh, he preached how the servants of all become the greatest of all in the kingdom that he runs modeling this his entire life while with us in the earth, even leaving us with the final example of washing the disciples feet before he would die and rise again.

I pray more and more that we would become so fulfilled in aligning with the true kingdom way and more and more empty when we find ourselves leaning toward the system of this world. You know what I mean? And it's a journey, it's a life. You're going to make mistakes.

No worries. We all do. But when we start touching the system, the conformity of the world that we touch it like, yeah, I remember that it's a bad taste, bad feeling.

There's no life there. Holy spirit's not there. My flesh likes that way.

But how do you follow the spirit? You don't gratify the desires of the flesh that they're totally different. And I want to keep going this way. And, uh, but I have here, if you want to be insignificant in the kingdom, look to be served, look to be above others.

This is the world system. If you want to be significant in the kingdom, look for each and every opportunity to serve and get under others. It's a totally backwards mentality, you know, in a, I want Jesus says, if you want to be significant in the world, that is paid by a broad path that everybody's going down, not knowing that it's in leads in death, look for people to serve you climb the ladder of self-prominence along with selfish ambition.

Make sure to approach. I'm just pulling the rug out from the world system. Cause I think sometimes it's healthy that we expose like, Oh yeah, whoa, this is, if I'm not careful, this will set in, this will start to get on my children and they'll miss the ways of life.

You cannot fulfill the will of God going this way. Uh, make sure to approach everything in life with this in mind, what's in it for me, or how is this going to benefit me? Or what will I get out of this? How will this better my personal existence? This is the world's mentality I have here. Uh, the more you focused you are, the less likely you are to hit the mark of God's perfect will.

The more him and others focused we become, the more likely we are to hit the mark of God's perfect will. You can hear in what's beautiful about this, this life of Samuel, there's so much there, but in a fresh way, I saw this narrative that there's, how many of you know, you can crack open the word one week in the same passage as the next week. They're just totally different.

And that's why the book's alive. We've got to meditate on his word day and night. And, uh, but you can see this total polar polar polar, sorry, opposite narrative on the sons of Eli versus Samuel floating right before you.

And so I'm going to give us some verses and then jump into his story, but watch this Philippians two, three through eight, Paul writes, do nothing from selfish ambition or conceit, but in humility, count others more significant than yourselves. Let each of you look not only to his own interests, but also to the interests of others. Have this mind among yourself, which is, uh, which is yours in Christ Jesus, who, who though he was in the form of God did not count equality with God, a thing to be grasped, but emptied himself by taking the form of a servant being born in the likeness of men and being found in human form.

He humbled himself by becoming obedient to the point of death, even death on the cross. Love this one, man. Basically Jesus had the pillar in heaven of all deity.

He could just hung on to just stuck by that his whole life, but he let go of that. Didn't count that worthy to be grasped and hung on to. And he came down in human form, humbled himself to serve.

Totally. The world's not going to tell you this. They're like, no, no, hang on to what you got, put everybody else down, fight for yours, you and yours and your world.

And that way will not work in kingdom, uh, status or kingdom, the kingdom narrative. But not only that, Jesus came down as human form, but then in the human form, we went as low as possible seeking to be the least of these. It's doesn't make sense to, to match.

I'm telling you, we've got to renew our mind. Otherwise it will not come natural. This one does not cut.

You guys know what I mean? It does not come natural, but I'm finding life. It just, it, it intrigues me. I want to seek it more in, in becoming like him's desiring to be the least.

It's who God exalts. It's where the true greats are made and you can see it all throughout scripture. So that's what Jesus did.

He, he let go of deity hit the earth. Not only that, the Bible says he came just in normal human form. Like he wasn't even really amazing to look at.

He chose just the lowliest of the low. And, uh, but then death on the cross, humility to the point, the lowest you can go to serve and give his life up. Mark nine 34 through 35.

But the disciples kept silent for on the way they had argued with one another about who was the greatest. You know, you can just picture them on the path. They'll have fish way better than you, man.

I caught more fish last week, you know, but obviously in the status of the heaven and whether they're going with the Lord, but they're, they're arguing who's the greatest. That's just sinful nature. Who's better.

I'm better. I'm, you know, it's always, and it creeps in and the Bible says, and Jesus sat down and called the 12. He said to him, if anyone would be first, he must be last of all and servant of all.

This is the gospel. This is the story of the good news. Just Jesus.

It's his narrative. He literally sits them down. It says they were walking along the way, arguing who's greater.

And it was so important that the Bible says Jesus sat them down. He was like, no, we can't be just talking while we're all walking. I need him.

I need an eye contact. This has to land. This is very important.

Have you ever been talking with somebody and tell they're not listening? They're like looking off, you know, and, and, and, uh, I've done that plenty. And you're like, did you hear anything? I just said, you know, me and the kids, you know, it is just in life. It'll happen.

I'd be like, hold on, you know, and then, uh, and they're and then I'll do it a bunch. I'm like, I'm so sorry. Please.

You're going to hear a word. You said my mind was, you know, off somewhere. So the Lord's making sure that's not going to, he's like, let's sit down, boys, everybody looking at me, eye contact.

Okay. Listen to me. If you want to be great, I'm telling you it's backwards.

You've got to be the least servant of all. And I pray we'd find life there, comfort there. And it'd be a renewed mind thing.

Mark 10 42 through 45. I better move quick. And Jesus called them to him and said to them, you know, that those who are considered rulers of the Gentiles, Lord had over them and the great ones exercise authority over them, but it shall not be so among you.

Whoever would be great among you must be your servant. And whoever would be first among you must be slave of all that's go. Who was that? Somebody's with me.

One person for even the son of man came not to be served, but to serve and to give his life as a ransom for many. I love this even quick and acts 20 verse 35, Paul reminds the elders of the church of Ephesus. He goes, look, it's the words of Jesus.

He goes, it's, it's more blessed to give than to receive. That's the more it's more, a more blessed life to lay it down this way, to give instead of receiving. And if we're not careful where we're wanting what's in it for me, it's really strong, honestly.

Um, and we want to get out of that, that mold. So I have here before jumping the word on Samuel, Samuel became greatest by taking the doorway of becoming least. Meanwhile, Eli's sons were constantly seeking their own seeking to be served instead of seeking to serve, keeping themselves elevated and of utmost priority, which led to their own quick and final demise.

As far as the kingdom function, when we start to keep in mind what's in it for us first, your downfall is not far. You won't last long. You can see them.

It's it's, it doesn't last long, but the greats, they, they're always seeking to be the lowest and after the least. And it just doesn't make sense to, to the natural mind and intellect. You would think, no, I've got to stay in the light.

I've got to be seen and people need to know. And, and you hear it in conversations, people, if we're not careful, we want to hurry up and tell her by our resume and how much we keep climbing the ladder. But the people that are securing him, they know the Lord elevates when he wants, he exalts and do seasons.

And when he exalts anyway, it's permanent. It's the better way. And so it's like intentionally seeking to be the least is actually the great, this is what Jesus taught over and over again, you know, and it's so, so beautiful.

So I have five stages of Samuel's life that we can see. I'm just going to pull them out and, um, hopefully they, they land and, and, uh, bless us. But in first Samuel two 11, I love it.

Hannah just received Samuel, brought him back to, uh, Eli and devoted him. She kept her vow in the Bible. It says basically Samuel was reared in the presence of the Lord all the days of his life.

Incredible. But in first Samuel two 11, Elkanah says they, they went up that year, left Eli. They went back and it says, but the child ministered to the Lord before Eli, the priest.

So, so this first stage, because what you can see here, maybe you read it slower on your own time, but what you can see here, it's awesome. It's almost like they'll do in movies sometimes, which my only really gauge on that would be like cartoon stuff. But, but you know, sometimes there's like a scene going on and then another storyline and they're bringing you back and forth.

Um, that that's, what's happening here. And so it'll go on about Eli's sons, and then it pops you back into Samuel where he's at. And then it hops back over and it just lets us into these windows of Samuel's life as he's growing up.

Similar to the Lord at the age of 12, you pop in and then you pop out and come back in. And so this is the first one that says, but the child ministered to the Lord before Eli, what this basically means is Samuel is serving Eli. That's his whole role as a child.

He just starts to serve Eli. And by doing that, it's actually ministering to the Lord. This first stage, you know, scholars believe that he maybe could just light some candles.

Initially start to learn to play some instruments, like not much, nothing seemingly amazing. Number one, number two, he's just serving the purpose under somebody else. Very insignificant role seemingly, but heaven's going.

Yep. He's my, he's my guy. He's who I'm raising up.

Hoffman and Phineas are out of here. The Bible says literally the Lord just was waiting to remove them. And you can see Samuel there, they're being brought up together under Eli.

And I can promise you, Eli's sitting there going, man, this is the son I wish I had that I never did have in Hoffman and Phineas. He should have rebuked them the harder, but I feel like he had a second chance in Samuel. And, uh, but what's beautiful, I think the way that the script, the word depicts it is in this first window, you just see the child.

It was accounted as ministering to the Lord, but he served Eli. So this first stage is when you find yourself serving someone else with no initial apparent status of notoriety. He's just a child, not even named.

Didn't he give him a name right there? Hannah knew his name. She named him. It was like just profound.

But when it was given over to the stages of walking out God's perfect will, sometimes you can find yourself in these seasons where you're not even noticed. People barely know your name. You have no identity.

You're just serving somebody else's vision, you know? And, um, and we never really leave this place, which is beautiful. That's why I want us to love these things. Just get over the flesh, love the word, love the Lord's way.

But it says serving someone else with no initial apparent status of notoriety or identity of your own that is actually seen as truly ministering to the Lord. I have here, this is where a lot of people fall off and never even advance past stage one. They can't handle serving someone else's vision or call without being seen or recognized without any true self notoriety or recognition in the now.

And this is why we've got to get over us. We can't go into things. And again, kingdom, if you're in the world, man, go make a million dollars and be miserable the rest of days of your life and hope you make it into heaven.

Seriously. Uh, man, go for it. I don't want anything to do with the world system and the Lord blesses.

Don't get me wrong. You make a, you may make a million following the Lord. Praise God on that too.

But there's a big difference. The Bible says the Lord blesses and adds no sorrow with it. The blessing of the Lord as no sorrow, the world kind of date myself plus back before Jesus, you ever heard that old rap song, no money, no problems or whatever.

That's what it is in the world. And that's guaranteed going to happen. Sorry, we got a little unsanctified there.

Please forgive me. Uh, but, but in the world, the blessing may come, but sorrow is going to come with it. I don't care how many doctors you've got behind your name.

Who's who you may think you are. You know, you're miserable. You need the Lord.

Jesus is a void, a hole deep in the heart of man. That's always going to be there until Jesus comes in. Always man.

I remember we were preaching to the gangs and, um, Oh Salvador. And, uh, I remember Jocelyn had a powerful word of knowledge. One of their backs got healed.

But I'm thinking, man, we've got to keep it basic, simple. And through the interpreter, I would just went that route. I said, there's a hole in every man's heart.

I tried to commend them on the loyalty honor them as we got on the door, but there's an emptiness until Jesus is there. And, uh, but we've got to go into this thing because if any of that's still in us, it's, it, it won't sustain through time and God can't raise up his greats, but he takes us through these seasons and it's so beautiful to then mold his greats. And that's why I pray early on.

We just find attractive again, the things, the ways of the Lord that are very counter to the flesh, very anti-world anti-world system. Don't make sense. People are going to think you're crazy.

Why are you always deferring others? And it's the kingdom way. Why are you seeking to be the least and the last and picking up the trash over there that nobody sees or cares about? Cause I just love him. And so this is where Samuel, this is all Samuel knew.

He aced this thing. He's under Eli, never really had parents. So he didn't know any otherwise long, long hair, never cut his hair.

He was in Nazarene and he goes, okay, Eli, this is my call. This is what I'm here for. Got it.

You say, jump. I say, how high I'll light candles. Nobody ever know me why, you know, Hoffman and Phineas are getting all the rewards of whatever it may be.

I don't care. And so this stage though, if we go into it, any slight crack in the door of what's in it for me, you'll fall off. You'll never make it.

And I've seen it happen time and time again. If we're not careful, people that have an incredible call, it'll just never be fulfilled. I heard a minister say one time, um, one of the, I'm going to botch it probably, but one of the greatest places you can find unused potential kingdom wise is a graveyard.

Meaning there's many people that, that pass on and they never fulfilled what God called them to. And these are some of the things that if we don't yield into now in a healthy way, we can, we can miss it. And, um, but I have here, uh, Oh yeah.

Joseph aced this, uh, Joshua knocked us in and out of the park under Moses, Elisha under Elisha, Daniel. He was in our government system. Paul, even Timothy to Paul, Jesus above all, any of the greats, you can see this.

They mastered this. They're like, okay, where's the doorway of becoming the least that's my door. I know everybody else is running off to the doorway of the greatest and the good positions and this, that, and the other.

No, no. I know kingdom greatness is the least. I'll never forget.

I love, um, John Paul Jackson. You all know, amazing man. I've got he, uh, his, his video when he released the father's blessing and went on, he went back to a little bitty door.

Y'all saw that in the end. If you ever saw that video, it may still be on YouTube. Really just thought about that.

But, um, stage two, first Samuel to 18, it's another pocket. We look into Samuel's life in each one, just so you know, for the sake of time, I'm just hitting Samuel, but you pop out and it goes on about Hoffman and Phineas and Eli, not raising them, right. And things like this.

And then it shows you into Samuel, how he's doing it, right. But for Samuel to 18, but Samuel, he gets a name. Now he gets identity.

You start to see the growth, but Samuel ministered before the Lord, even as a child. So you see the growth here. It's at first, it says the child, no identity.

No, he just, he's on the scene. His mom loved him, knew him, but now he's just in the temple and they're like, we'll check him out. We'll see.

It just takes time. It takes time. We need to be in this thing for the long haul, but he goes and he serves Eli and that's accounted as ministering to the Lord.

Fast forward, he's getting older. Scholars say that when it says child to the rabbis and those that really studied out, it could, it could have went all the way up to he's 15 years old. If you read further, it says Eli blessed them when they kept coming back year after year, his mom would make him a little robe, but Eli gave him an ephod from when he was young.

Like a, it's like Eli favored him, gave him his own little ephod like the priest would wear and I believe he had great, great favor, but they would come in and he blessed Hannah to have even more children. I think she had five more children, which is a number of graces. Well, her name means grace.

We see Samuel grow in favor, but Samuel ministered before the Lord, even as a child. So now before he's serving before Eli first stage, right? Just serve it. Nobody knows you.

Nobody cares. That's how it feels. A lot of people don't get by this stage.

If you go into what's in it for me, you will never last. That's why the kingdom, the Lord's like, no, sit down, boys. Listen to me.

None of you needs to seek to be great to be great. You need to seek to be the least it's backwards. And it's so fulfilling actually, after a while, when you start to realize the Lord's there, but now it's starting.

Samuel is called by Samuel. He's got a little identity coming in and it's seen as he's actually ministering before the Lord. Meaning now it's before the Lord, the Lord's recognizing him.

Of course, the Lord always knew him, but he's, he's getting recognized. I have right here. Now this is the step where the Lord himself begins to recognize you as you were actually beginning to serve him and or be acknowledged as ministering before him.

This is where identity also starts to kick in. Samuel is called by name still as a child and young in the second stage. Watch this.

I have this right here. This is where many as well, if we're not careful, will become derailed from staying the course because they start to realize they can not only begin to minister before the Lord in their own right, but also start to become recognized by him, gaining their own identity and start taking on the assumption that there is no longer a need to serve under or alongside somebody else. Did you guys get that? I know it was a lot, but it's super important because I've seen this so many times.

If we're honest, we've all faced this and dealt with it. But if you're not careful, just our fleshly nature will want to get out of the true way of God too soon. And it flies like a rock.

I've seen it. Whereas God's true way often it's a steady long course of faithfulness and steady to where he called you. And I've just seen it too much.

When, when the recognition comes in, identity comes in, people want to step out. God's calling you. And, uh, and you can miss it early stage three, first Samuel two 21, uh, first Samuel two 21.

Meanwhile, the child Samuel grew before the Lord. So there's growth here. I believe this speaks of not only physically, but also in maturity as we see it is also still in recognition as before the Lord.

At this stage, we have to be careful as we're not only going deeper in our status of being recognized by the Lord, but simultaneously taking on growth and maturity, which can quickly begin to get to our head and be the second trap after the power stage where identity begins to set in accompanied by even more recognition and growth. Stage four. There's a big one.

I love this one. First Samuel two 26 and the child Samuel grew in stature and in favor, both with the Lord and men. I have here.

This is where the majority, if not careful fall off. If they are even able to make it through stages one through three, because once favor kicks in, listen to me, I've seen it over and you're like, Whoa, Whoa, it's, it's so prominent. And what happens is there because Samuel passes all the way through.

Cause he never cared. Nothing was ever in it for him. Favor is like, praise God.

Anyway, where's Eli? What am I doing again? Where am I serving? Where is the least of these? Where's that doorway? That's where I'm comfortable. He didn't fit in long hair. Nazarites were just totally lived in obscurity from the world.

And, um, but I've seen it favor will kick in, which you need to know when favor kicks in from the kingdom standpoint, your call is near. Always. It kicks in for that purpose, for the call to be engaged.

And if you read in here, it says when favor hit Samuel, the very next versus a man comes to Eli and says, your sons are gone. All of y'all are gone because Samuel is now ready to go into his call. Right? But as you read further and step five, Eli's actually still back at this place.

He always was. He never got out of it. And may we never just see, cause if we're, if we're not careful, again, it creeps in.

We're always looking for like, like the grass to be greener on the other side or something. And it's not, I'm telling you, it's not don't do it. And again, if the Lord speaks, I get seasons transitioning by the voice of the Lord, but I'm talking about where the enemy derails people because it's something in us that's not seeking to be the least.

We want to be greater. I should be doing more. I need it.

People need to know what's on my life, what I can do and how the Lord is seeing me. Now I minister to him. I'm called by name and it'll pull you and get you outside out too early.

And I've seen it, this, it crashes way to me. And then they're just off. I've seen this over and over again.

And you have to then create a machine that is then fueled by whatever you, you have to keep it fueled the whole time because the Lord was never in it. He meant for you to stay the course. And so watch this.

I have here, um, uh, what most people do and, and, uh, is sense and recognize the favor and use that to then ride off of or slingshot off of the initial position that originally brought the favor to being within the first place. I added that, that actually gets them out of God's perfect will for their life. It just felt right to put in there.

Um, but you know, I remember I was talking to a pastor recently and he goes, Oh yeah, the slingshot thing. I mean, you just see it so much. Sometimes people get near where they're supposed to be by call, but the favor comes with it.

And then they'll use that as the slingshot off of it and jump out because I gotta be greater. There's more in it. There's something I'm going to do.

Mighty things for the Lord. Oh yeah. He does mighty things.

He loves it, but also he does it through the least of these. So it's a healthy balance you find in Jesus. He's like, nah, deity, not a thing to be grasped.

I must hit the earth as a lowly one to the point of death. Pull my life out. This is who he raised up.

Peter crucified upside down. You know why he felt not worthy to be crucified the same as the Lord Jesus Christ. He told him, he said, no, flip me.

I'm not worthy to hang on a tree the same way. My Lord did lowly bunch, man. I want to say, was it Andrew X shaped crossed? All of them gave their life, man.

All of them except John. John was bold alive, started getting to the modern stuff, but I just love it. And people that are willing to die for the gospel that it's not in it for me.

I'm not looking for a door of greatness. And in that you become great in the kingdom. It's backwards.

It's just awesome. So I have here, they aren't patient enough in these stages of serving under and alongside others. So they jump out, get their own URL and just all this other kind of stuff, which again, if the Lord speaks to you, I love that I can actually help, but I'm meaning that the deal that is pulling people outside of the, the real greatness of the kingdom, you know, in my journey looked a little different, but you can find it with all of them.

All of them check them. Michael will tell you, my dear friend, Michael, he carried the Bible over his father-in-law for years. Uh, Daniel was, he was at the lowest of the low in the bookstore, climbed up through time.

People see now, um, me and my, my father, I built houses a decade, but way before that in the faithfulness, when you heard that, then I got into building custom homes with my father for 10 years and, and served him mastermind at custom homes and, and finally got to a place where I was building my own. And, uh, you know, so, so even if it's marketplace, whatever it is, I remember, um, we, we, he taught me and trained me really well. I knew I knew remodeling before that, but when we got into custom homes one year, he'll tell you, we were building, I want to say it was 12 homes in one year, customs running, man.

And, uh, these are like exquisite detail. It's funny. I just bring you a person has nothing to do with the message.

Sorry. But it was, I was like, dad, what? Cause we'd have these meetings every week and the people, the clientele we were getting was like, they're very OCD. Everyone a hundred percent.

I'm like, this is the odds. How this is like a lottery ticket. I was, how is this happening every time? I mean, if the screw was off a 16th of an inch, you know, just, but you see, if you, I remember one, one lady we're building and they, these are like pretty higher end customs.

So they, so 12 years getting it. I mean, we were, I never saw him this year we were running. And, uh, but I remember one client we had, uh, I was over this one and she, she called me over.

She was like, yeah, the paint on the wall, you can see these, these kind of things in it. I had a, at a certain angle on the wall. And I'm like, so I go over there.

I was like, they're not there. She's like, well, you have to wait 5 p.m. When the sun comes through the, you can, you know, and I'm like, man, just from five to five Oh five. Don't look at the wall, you know? And, uh, like go eat, eat, eat dinner or something.

So, but no, I'll never forget. I'll me and my, my dad were talking. Then I was like, I'll finally like the spirit of wisdom and revelation came.

I was like, dad, I got it. A light bulb went off and we were a great team actually. Cause his strengths are not mine.

And I had a few that hopefully helped and we would just do really great together. But it light bulb went off. I was like, dad, I get it.

If they're coming to us to build a custom home, meaning it's never been built before it's custom. There is no blueprint for them. They're they've never been done.

And that was the other problem because you never get like a repeat button. It's always like, wait, this new, you know, and then, uh, I'll never forget some of the architects would put the famous VOJ on, on the plans. It means verify on the job.

Like you figure it out. And there's like the complicated roof lines and, and the, but I was like, oh, I get it. If they're coming to us and they want a custom home, that means they've searched thousands and they can't find the exact one that's just so how they want it.

You know? So when they're coming in the door, mega OCD is like, it finally went off. So then we just hung up. We're like, all right, this is our MO in life.

Like we're going to get all the, you just embrace it. But, um, but you know, 10 years there and, and, and, and whatever. And then ministry, you know, uh, been in now for really, I started preaching Oh six, but been a nonprofit since, I don't know, 2011, something like that going into 11 years traveling.

I leave again this weekend to Indiana. What you're doing is, is serving others. And I love it.

I want to go lower. I want to do be better at it. So like this weekend, I'm going into it, never preached there before, but I just want to find out what can I do to serve, lay my life down.

I'm not trying to come in there and say, look at me, what all we're doing, uh, you know, what's in it for me. I'm like, what's in it for this pastor? How do I, how do I compliment and serve and find his vision and strengthen? And you want to get low and the Lord looks down and goes, there's greatness. I can exalt them and elevate them.

So this is what Samuel did a time and time again, he kept passing these tests. And, uh, but when favor comes again, it's a, it's supposed to happen. It's going to, if you stay the course, but if we're not careful, we'll jump out too soon and short circuit, the real greatness for what God's trying to take us into.

And I pray whatever that look looks like, you know, it looks very different from person to person. But what I love this is watch stage five. You through all these like windows, we're getting to see Samuel in his growth.

It goes back and shows you that actually Samuel was doing the same thing the whole time. He never left his position. First Samuel three one.

Now the boy Samuel ministered to the Lord before Eli. Seems like that's what he was doing in stage one, meaning he never left. It never sought to leave it.

He was comfortable there. You even see after this, because favor kicked in the calls prominent. Now when favor comes up, I'm a God favor with God and man, your call is, is ready to be engaged.

But that's where you don't want to jump out too early. Let the Lord blow, seek to be low. So right after that, remember God calls Eli, sorry, Samuel, Samuel, Samuel.

Remember Samuel runs the Eli. He's still, he's like stuck in that thing. Like no Eli, what do you need? What do you want? He's serving him three times on the fourth time.

Eli finally is like, look, God's calling you. But he was so comfortable in that place. And look, when you're there, when you constantly seek to be the least, greatness is inevitable.

Like heaven will find him. You know, heaven can exalt you. He does not have a problem with that.

His only hang up is, are we ready? You know, but he can find you trust me, especially, um, those that seek to be the least, they stand out. You can see them there. They're like the only fish that's swimming upstream because nobody else is doing this.

It's not the comfortable way. It's not what the world's going to tell you. And, uh, but the kingdom is this way.

And this is who Jesus produces and raises up. But I have here, we actually see all along that although Samuel was increasing in his growth, both administering to the Lord and in stature accompanied by favor, that he never left that first initial place of serving someone else's vision and positional role. But now he is named as he clearly has his own identity, but still maintains the servant's heart of deferring others over his will and desire.

Clearly having deep roots in this area of true kingdom maturity. These are the ones that God exalts in permanent positions of true kingdom status. Even if it is ultimately its own position of leadership and vision, or like Timothy to Paul being a major strength and support under and alongside someone else.

And, uh, is both are vital and biblical. Look, I heard this story one time was awesome. Actually, um, uh, that Chris Valentin shared, if you all know him, he's, he's a Bethel.

Yeah. And I don't keep up with a lot, a lot of it, but I'd heard this. It was, it blessed me big time.

It was awesome. Uh, I think they're amazing. So, but listen, he apparently, when they first started together, Chris and bill, they, their personalities were totally clashing.

Probably still do at times is anything can happen. And Chris apparently was given, uh, and an opportunity to take over this church, big, big church in some other nearby city. And, uh, he went after the Lord big time, and then he goes into a dream.

He really wanted to go to the other one of greatness instead of serving alongside or under somebody else. And again, sometimes the serving puts you in a place of leadership, but you never leave serving. Like I just told you guys this week, and I'm going to, I love it.

How can I get low? How can I support? And you know what I mean? And, and again, don't mishear me sometimes Jesus and, and your place of the call puts you in a place where you've got to still stay in that role too. Meaning acts chapter six, verse four, it says, um, disciples, the apostles are going about kingdoms exploding and the widows are being neglected. So the apostles in acts six, four, they say, look, we've got to stay about our call of, uh, prayer and ministering the word.

We can't leave it. Cause then we'll be in disobedience. It wasn't like they're like better than it's just the call.

So sometimes the call will have you there. So like, man, select some guys full of the spirit wisdom to bust the tables. Basically that's where Steven and them come out of.

Jesus says, look, we've got to pay taxes. Y'all go catch the fish. So it doesn't mean you run yourself ragged and start getting outside of your call either.

You guys know what I mean? But it's that heart is what I'm addressing that we seek to be the least. And, uh, but anyway, so Chris goes into this dream and, uh, he said, he, he was looks into that church packed out thousand or so. He's the leader.

And the Lord spoke to him. He says, if you leave bill, you'll never have that. Like the dream started off like amazing.

He's looking through and he goes, yeah, if you leave bill, you see all that. You'll never have that. It'll be empty and you'll be nothing.

Like basically that's where you'll stop. And I think even with Orpah Ruth and you see these installments, Barnabas, when he had a schism with Paul, you see it. A lot of us think, Oh God, sorry.

And it's going to happen. No, it's his goodwill. Well, please again, perfect.

I mean, it's perfect. Will is birth through the door of becoming the least it's awesome. But so he goes, Oh my gosh.

So the funny part is apparently he told Billy said, uh, he goes, bill, after that dream, the Lord showed him like, yeah, go ahead. You can have that, but you won't have what you're thinking. It's going to be, it's going

to fool you instead of serving laying your life down alongside bill.

So it's funny. He said that he was in a long car ride, like the next day or soon with bill. And he, he says, bill, I just want to let you know, I'm making a covenant with you and I'll give you, give him my entire life to you.

He says, bill doesn't talk a lot. Bill's like, okay, sounds good. I love that.

Then he just drove the whole way awkward, you know? And then he said like, like weeks later, bill's like, Hey, remember the thing you told me or something like that? And Chris goes, yeah. He goes, I like that or something, you know, something super short and sweet, but, but it's, you know, if we're not careful and again, however that looks like though, our journeys look very different, but you can see it in all of their lives that we choose. That's a safe place.

It's a Bible way. It's a Jesus way seeking to be the least of these. And, um, and it produces greatness.

And then you see in first Samuel three 19 and I'll land it. So he, he passes through all five stages of just staying the course. Who cares what's in it for me? That's not the point, you know? Um, first Samuel three 19.

So Samuel grew and the Lord was with him and let none of his words fall to the ground. I have her, this is the last and final stage where now the Lord is with you and keeps you in your call. But steps one through five are absolutely vital for the maturation process of rearing a true man or woman of God to step through the hallway of then entering into the other side where the Lord is now with you and lets none of your words fall to the ground.

We then see in verse 20 that all Israel knew that Samuel had been established as a prophet of the Lord. Samuel did not need to promote this, proclaim this, keep reminding everyone, uh, when the Lord is with you, it will be evident to those that need to know what your identity is all for the glory of God. And far too often, we're just constantly just jockeying for position and making sure people know.

And we, we, greatness is like, it's way more freeing to just to count all that. It look, man. Okay.

Really? There's a path called the least of these. I can find that door and heaven takes care of the rest. Oh yeah.

That's the Bible way. And when heaven takes care of that rest, it's permanent. You can't get these people off, off the position.

Heaven has them as greatness. They're all there and they get tried. This is just Samuel's, um, storyline, but they all look different.

Joseph, all of them, he takes them through it and it's so, so beautiful and powerful. So I have here kingdom greatness is always found in becoming the least of these. So, um, you know, I love it.

You see it. And so sure enough, uh, Hoffman and Phineas fall off and, uh, Samuel comes on the forefront. You see it similar with David and Saul, even after Saul was gone, there's a very peculiar verse that says the house of Saul and the house of David were in a battle for a very long time.

There was just a collision between the two houses for a long time. If you read further, it says the house of Saul grew weaker and weaker, but the house of David grew stronger and drunk stronger. So Porter was

singing that David had after God's own heart.

And these are the Samuels. They don't care. Saul is a picture of what's in it for me.

And how do I keep my position and keep me first? And instead of inquiring of God and caring what God cares about, whether that looks like prominence or has an amazing outlook in the initial or not, or anybody knows me or not, it's not about that. And these are the people that grow stronger and stronger that the Lord elevates. He just has a way of doing it.

So, um, you guys don't stand. We'll pray. Thank you, Lord.

Let's just pray together. Jesus, thank you so much for your word, your spirit, your ways. We love your ways.

We love the narrow path. We love your word. God, I pray you renew our mind spirit.

Um, why don't you just lift your hands to heaven to just receive God. I pray for a fresh grace to come upon the house and each and every one across the world online that we'd seek to be the least of these, that we'd love the lower path of humility and deferring others, preferring others as, as better than ourselves seeking to be low, at least how can we serve and pour our life out to God through first love first and then others and help us just stay the course, whatever that is, whatever it looks like, let us just stay, stay and comfortable in the position of the least of these. And you define greatness, God, in whatever season you want to display that.

However you want to turn the page in whatever chapter you'd be pleased and glorified. Make us like Jesus. Make us like Jesus.

Thank you. Holy spirit. Thank you for your sweet presence.

Thank you for this journey. We have with you step-by-step transform us. I pray in Jesus name.

Um, the prayer team could come please. That'd be great. I want to welcome you up to pray here in a second.

Yeah. This is Porter and Missy just lead us back into the river, the presence of the Lord. I want to invite you to come.

If you need prayer for anything, it could be any and every reason you may need prayer for. We'd love to let the Holy spirit touch you, minister to you healing. Yeah.

These are all students actually of the academy, powerful men and women of God. Prophecy, heal the sick filled with the Lord. So you can come now and come out into the aisles, come up for prayer.

We'd love to bless you and be a support of life to you. Thank you Lord. Yeah.

And I just pray corporately as well. And across the, the world online, the Lord bless you and keep you make his face shine upon you. I thank you for healing to flow right now, corporately that you'd be healed in your bodies.

Spirit of God move, liberate people. I pray bring life into homes, a unity, spirit of unity and peace back into marriages. Love.

Once again, be pleased and glorified. Be the central focus of all that we do. Lord Jesus.

We love you in Jesus name. Amen.

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