

The Least

by Gareth Evans

True greatness in God's kingdom is measured in terms of being willing to be the least, letting others have the honours and acclaim.

Scripture: Matthew 6:1, Luke 9:46, 1 Corinthians 1:28, 1 Corinthians 15:9, 2 Corinthians 10:17, Ephesians 3:8, Philippians 2:7, Philippians 3:14, 1 Timothy 1:15

Topics: "Humility", "Greatness In God"

Description

Gareth Evans preaches on the concept of being 'the least' in the Kingdom of God, emphasizing that true greatness is found in humility and being willing to be unnoticed, contrary to the world's pursuit of recognition and honours. He warns against using honours for manipulation, citing Jesus' teachings in Matthew 6:1-2 about seeking earthly rewards versus heavenly commendation. Evans highlights the apostle Paul as an example of embracing being 'the least,' acknowledging his weaknesses and allowing God's grace to work through him despite his shortcomings.

Transcript

"And an argument arose among them as to which of them was the greatest ; "for he who is least among you all is the one who is the greatest" Luke 9: 46-48

No prizes go to the least. There is no competition where the goal is to be the least. Those who are the least are not there for the glory it offers.

It is only possible to be willing to be the least if you are comfortable with yourself and who you are. If it is injurious to 'lose face' you will never be willing to be the least. If we have an unhealthy need for recognition and applause, we will not easily go in the direction of 'least'.

Many pastors have found rewards and honours a good way to manipulate people to do what they want. Even Bible Colleges offer honorary degrees to get man 'on board' in order to give the college some better standing. We have often compromised ourselves for the sake of temporary honours and acclaim. - How unlike Jesus who made Himself, "of no reputation". (Phil.2:7)

How we can ignore the warnings of Scripture and continue to use honours for manipulation is a dangerously unanswered question.

Jesus speaks very clearly to us about those who seek and need honours: Matt 6:1 - 2. They have their reward but no commendation in the Kingdom of God. Greatness in His kingdom is measured in terms of being willing to be the least. There is only one prize that we should seek, "the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus, (Phil 3: 14) and only one thing that we can boast in. Paul writes in 2 Cor 10: 17-18, "Let him who boasts boast in the Lord. For it is not the man who commends himself who is approved, but the man whom the Lord commends."

We struggle to be at the top; in the inn called fame and fortune, but we find the place is filled. There are so many others vying for the same honours and position. No one wants to be left out. However, many go through life, feeling inadequate and unimportant as the world passes them by. They never make it to the inn - but there is always plenty of room in the stable, not many people are willing to be there, the place of being the least.

Being the least is not the same as being the lowest of the indolent, lazy, useless people. Instead, it is a willingness to let others have the honours and acclaim even though you have done the work and made the effort. It is a willingness to lift others up and to be unnoticed in the effort.

Such people are "great in the kingdom of Heaven".

As I look for Bible examples of 'the least' I think of the apostle Paul who wrote, "I am the least of the apostles and not worthy to be called one because I persecuted the church" (1 Cor 15:9).

Also, "I am the least of the saints" (Eph 3:8) and the chief of sinners (1 Tim 1:15). Even his name is significant. King Saul of the OT was chosen to be king because he stood 'head and shoulders' above his fellows in the eyes of men. Maybe the apostle Paul was named after king Saul but when he became an apostle, his name was changed from Saul to Paul - meaning 'little one'. He would acknowledge his weakness in speech and the thorn in the flesh. (1 Cor 2:3 and 2 Cor 12:7). However, he was quick to recognise the grace of the Lord that lifted him up and gave him such a ministry.

Throughout his (second) letter to the Corinthians he sets himself before his readers as one who in himself is utterly weak and worthless, but through whose weakness the grace and power of Almighty God are magnified.

God's toolchest is made up of weak and foolish things, low and despised things, things that are the least, but He choose them to shame the wise and the strong. (1 Cor 1:28)

Source: <https://sermonindex.net/speakers/gareth-evans/the-least/>

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