

Week 4: The Greatest in God's Kingdom

Series: Doing Church as a Team

Key Passage: Mark 10:42–45; Matthew 23:11; Philippians 2:5–12

Aloha and good evening/morning, family!

We're continuing in our series, *Doing Church as a Team*. How are you enjoying this series so far? Getting some fresh revelation?

Last week Pastor Glenn reminded us: *"There's no 'I' in team, but there is in WIN. And we don't use people to get the ministry done; we use ministry to get people done." Together we are better and that together in Christ we are victorious!*

That's powerful because it reminds us that serving God is about serving people. It's a team effort. And that's not always easy. It will be the best of times and the worst of times. It's in ministry that we will be stretched, challenged, and yes, even sometimes spanked. But that's how God, our Father, grows us.

The World's View of Greatness

This week, we're asking the question: *what does it mean to be the greatest in God's Kingdom?*

When you hear the word "greatest," who comes to mind?

- Muhammad Ali: *"I am the greatest."*
- LeBron James: called himself the greatest.
- Tom Brady: many call him the G.O.A.T. of football.
- Musicians: Michael Jackson, Beyoncé, Elvis, Beethoven — everybody has their G.O.A.T. list.

Here's the problem with the world's view of greatness: there will always be someone better. Someone faster, stronger, or more talented will come along. The world's version of G.O.A.T. is never secure because the definition is subjective and constantly shifting.

So the real question we need to ask is not "who's the greatest" but may be Am I chasing "greatness" – and if so, why?

- Is it because we want notoriety, personal fulfillment, or recognition?
- Or is it because God is positioning us so that we can use that platform to serve God, to serve others, and to glorify His name?

See, having success or even being the best in your field isn't necessarily wrong. But we must remember: **the reason we are there is to serve and bring glory to Him.** To serve God, His Kingdom, and His people.

That's why Jesus is the true G.O.A.T. — the Greatest of All Time. He humbled Himself, became a servant, and because of that God exalted Him. None better. No one greater.

DCAT Everywhere – Serve Everywhere

Earlier this week, Guy and I were running errands. As we were walking toward the entrance, a man in a yellow vest ran out to greet us.

“Hey, welcome! I’m the basket man. Can I get you a basket? Maybe a cart? A flatbed?”

We said no, but he wouldn't quit: *“Well if you need anything, I’m the basket man. Have a great time shopping!”*

At first, I was a bit taken aback, but what struck me was how much joy he had in serving. Moreso, he stood out even more because everyone else was just going through the motions. His zeal kept me grinning the rest of my morning.

And I felt the Lord whisper: *“Imagine if My people served with that same joy – not just at church but everywhere they go.”*

It reminded me of Guy and Charis. Many of you know he's recently retired. When he shops for the café, he looks for opportunities to help – lifting a heavy bag into a cart for someone, reaching for something off the top shelf, or swapping something out. My daughter picks up the baskets at Foodland check out and returns them to the basket area at the front of the store, so others don't need to do that.

That's Doing Church as a Team. It's not just what we do here on Sunday, but who we are out there - at work. on the field. In the store and in our neighborhood.

What would our community look like if we all served with that kind of joy?

The Bible cites several discussions with the disciples and Jesus about who is the greatest. See even they thought greatness was about recognition, titles, and status. But Jesus flipped the script and redefines greatness.

1. Greatness is Serving, Not Ruling (Mark 10:42–45)

James and John, the Sons of Thunder (you can look that one up) – wanted seats of honor. Jesus essentially asks are you up for the job? They said yes, but Jesus tells them those seats weren't His to give.

Then He gathered the disciples and said:

“You know that those who are regarded as rulers of the Gentiles lord it over them, and their high officials exercise authority over them. ⁴³ Not so with you. Instead, whoever wants to become great among you must be your servant, ⁴⁴ and whoever wants to be first must be slave of all. ⁴⁵ For even the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many.”

The world’s model of leadership looks like a pyramid: leader on top, people at the bottom holding them up.

Graphic

But Jesus flips the pyramid upside down. In His Kingdom, the leader serves from the bottom up.

Robert Greenleaf called this servant leadership: *“The servant-leader is servant first... it begins with the natural feeling that one wants to serve.”*

In God’s Kingdom, leaders don’t stand above people; they stand beneath, lifting others so the whole team thrives.

2. Greatness is Humility, Not Status (Matthew 23:11)

It is in Matthew 23 that Jesus speaks to the crowds and His disciples about the hypocrisy of the teachers of the law and pharisees. How they load burdens on others but won’t lift a finger themselves. They wanted recognition, but He said it was all just “shibai” – only show.

Then He said: ***“The greatest among you will be your servant.”***

Titles don’t impress Jesus. Showmanship doesn’t impress Him. Humility does.

See the world says being “the greatest” means being on top. But Jesus says true greatness is about serving.

I’ve invited a couple to share with us their heart on why they serve. Would you welcome:

- Saturday: Beth and Mario Higa

- Sunday @ 8 am: Grace and Wayne Dijos

Martin Luther King Jr. said it like this, *“Not everybody can be famous but everybody can be great, because greatness is determined by service.”*

He was pointing us right back to Jesus' words – that greatness isn't about fame or recognition, but about serving others.

Can we be satisfied with being great? Great in His Spirit, for His good pleasure to make an eternal difference.

What's one way you can choose to be great this week – by serving?

3. Greatness is Laying Down Self (Philippians 2:5–12), NIV

Paul writes:

"In your relationships with one another, have the same mindset as Christ Jesus: Who, being in very nature God, did not consider equality with God something to be used to His own advantage; rather, He made Himself nothing by taking the very nature of a servant ..."

Here, Paul isn't just describing who Jesus is – he's calling us to take on the same mindset, the same heart. To become a servant.

Jesus is the true GOAT — the Greatest of All Time. Not because He demanded recognition, but because He laid everything down in obedience. And we, His followers, are called to walk the same path — to shine as His light in a dark and broken world through humble service.

Fall Festival example:

In a few weeks we will host our annual Fall Festival, I believe we have been hosting this for about 22 years. Each year it takes approximately 100 volunteers who come out to prep and serve and last year we estimate about 1200 or so people were blessed that night.

And it wasn't just the people on stage or in the spotlight who made it a success. It was the team – the donors, the builders, the greeters, the cooks, the activity leaders, candy runners, and yes, the clean-up crew. :

Greatness wasn't found in one person being recognized. It was found in the whole team serving together for God's glory.

Imagine if our whole community saw the church as not a place to consume, but as a people who serve with joy. What would change in our communities if we lived this out?

That's DCAT in action..

Reflection:

- Am I chasing recognition, or am I chasing service?

- If I'm pursuing success, is it for my glory or God's glory?

This is critical. Studies show the pursuit of being the greatest ain't all that great. In fact, we live in a culture chasing success as never before and yet burnout, anxiety, depression is at all-time highs. Maybe that's proof that we were never meant to carry the weight of being "the greatest," because that seat is already taken by Jesus.

Practical steps:

Step into a role of service this week. Come be a part. But I don't know how, come be a part. But where do I begin? Just let a leader know. But what if I mess up, come be a part.

Celebrate someone else on the team.

Choose one "Basket Man" moment — serve with joy wherever God places you.

Closing

Family, the world says greatness is about climbing higher, being first, being recognized. But Jesus says greatness is about kneeling low, serving others, and lifting them up.

The world crowns its GOATs in sports, music, and culture. But the true GOAT — the Greatest of All Time — is Jesus.

And He calls us to follow His example: to lead by serving, to humble ourselves, and to use whatever influence or platform we have not for our glory, but for His.

So don't stay on the sidelines. Step in. Serve. Be part of the team. Because in God's Kingdom, true greatness is found not in being served, but in serving together.

Let's pray: Struggle to give our lives away – we pray against that. Help us to surrender it all. *Lord, thank You for calling us into Your family and onto Your team. Shape us into servants like Jesus, the true Greatest of All Time. May our lives reflect His humility and bring glory to Your name. Amen.*

Small Group / Reflection Questions

1. Who comes to mind when you hear “the greatest”? How does that compare to Jesus’ example in Philippians 2?
2. Why do you think the disciples argued about greatness? Where do we do the same?
3. Why are you personally chasing greatness? Is it for recognition or is it for God’s purposes?
4. What role has God given you on His team? Are you living in it?
5. What’s one practical way you can serve with joy this week, following Jesus’ example?