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SERIES: Matthew (The King, His Kingdom And Me)

TITLE: Program 34 – Greatness Redefined

THURSDAY

OPEN

I want to ask you a question. Have you ever had a time when you dreamed of fame or glory or your moment of recognition? When you would sit there and say, “Now if it were me,” or “Maybe it could be me,” I’ve been there, I’ve done that. I think it’s a weakness of our flesh. We want to be the top. We’ll talk about it today.

PART ONE

We live in a body of flesh, and it is a battle, isn’t it, Beloved? Because our flesh dreams of and wants and desires its moment of glory, it wants power, it wants authority, it wants recognition, and this is what we see in Matthew chapter 20, verse 17, to the end of the chapter. We’re going to look at what happened with Jesus as He left the Galilee, as He approached Jericho, as He was preparing to go up to Jerusalem. Now when you got to Jericho, you were on your way up to Jerusalem. Now let’s turn to Matthew chapter 20,

verse 17. It says, **“As Jesus was about to go up to Jerusalem....”**

(Matthew 20:17) The Jews marked Jericho as where you started up to Jerusalem, so Jesus is somewhere approaching Jericho. Now the thing that we need to remember is, in that day, there were two Jerichos. So you could come into one Jericho, and then walk to the next Jericho. But in that Jericho area, you are about to go up to Jerusalem—to that holy, holy city. Now this is near the end of Jesus’ ministry. It’s near the end of His last three and one half years, and so you want to pay attention to what is happening here. You want to catch the full flavor of this event that God is giving us through Matthew, because he wants to stress several things. It says, **“As Jesus was about to go up to Jerusalem, He took the twelve disciples aside by themselves....”** **(Matthew 20:17)** Now, just imagine, He’s on His way up to Jerusalem, and as He’s on His way up to Jerusalem, He’s not alone. It’s not just the twelve. There is a crowd that is following Him. I mean, after all, this is the One that has done all these miracles. This is the One that has fed them by the sea several times. And so, they’re walking with Him, and as they walk with Him, what Jesus does is, He takes the twelve aside by Himself. He separates Himself and the twelve from the crowd because He wants to tell them something very, very important. Listen to what He says. He says, **“Behold, we are going up to Jerusalem; and the Son of Man will be delivered to the chief priests and the scribes, and they will condemn Him to death, and [they] will hand Him over to the Gentiles to mock and scourge and crucify Him, and...the third day He will be raised up.”**

(Matthew 20:18-19) Now I want you catch this because I think it’s understanding this and grasping this and seeing yourself there will help so much. Here is Jesus on His way up. He’s making, really, His final trip to Jerusalem, and as He’s going up He gathers the twelve and He’s telling them what is going to happen to Him. Now this was not the first time, Matthew tells us of other incidences, but He’s saying to them, “I’m going to be crucified.” He’s telling them that [He is going to be scourged, that He is going to be whipped, that He is going to be beaten. He’s telling them that He

is going to die. He's telling them that He's going to be raised from the dead.] (PARAPHRASE, Matthew 20:18-19) Now watch what Matthew shows us. It says they **"...will hand Him over..."** (Matthew 20:19) the Son of Man is going to be condemned to death. **"[They] will hand Him over to the Gentiles to mock and scourge and crucify Him..."** (Matthew 20:19) "I am going to be mocked, I am going to be scourged, I am going to be crucified. I'm not going to just die, but there is going to be humiliation, mocking, there is going to be shame and pain, scourging, and then I'm going to be crucified," which was the most torturous death that any man could endure. And then He says, **"...on the third day..."** He, the Son of Man, **"...will be raised up."** (Matthew 20:19) Now watch the next verse, **"Then the mother of the sons of Zebedee came to Jesus with her sons, bowing down and making a request of Him."** (Matthew 20:20) I think what we see is, and Matthew wants us to see, the immediacy of this. The immediacy of the fact that, here is Jesus who is going to be shamed, who is going to be in great pain, who is going to die, and then immediately, here's the mother of the sons of Zebedee, with her two sons, and it's like she intrudes on this conversation. Her sons are there because they are part of the twelve. The sons of Zebedee are James and John, and listen to what she says, **"[And] then the mother of the sons of Zebedee came to Jesus with her sons, bowing down and making a request of Him. And He said to her, 'What do you wish?' [And] she said to Him, 'Command that in Your kingdom..."** mark **"kingdom," "...these two sons of mine may sit...on your right [hand] and...on your left."** (Matthew 20:20-21) He's talking about death, He's talking about humiliation, He's talking about scourging, and she is talking about the kingdom that's going to come and she wants to make sure that her sons have their moment of glory. Many, many mothers get their moment of fame, their moment of glory through their children. Any way we can get it, we want it. And so it says, **"But Jesus answered, 'You do not know what you are asking. Are you able..."** and "you" is in the plural, **"...Are you able to drink the cup that I am about to drink?"**

[And] **they said to Him...**,” and this would be, of course, James and John, **“...‘We are able.’” (Matthew 20:22)** In other words, listen, even in John, and he’s the one in the gospel of John that says, **“...whom Jesus loved...,” (John 21:20)** he’s the one that leaned his head on Jesus’ breast at the Last Supper. (See John 21:20) I mean this is John and at the crucifixion of Jesus, Jesus is going to give his mother into the care of John. (See John 19:26-27) And yet what are they saying? **“...We are able....” (Matthew 20:22)** “We are able to drink Your cup.” Why? Because, in essence it seems, that they want to sit at His right hand and at His left, at the hand of power, at the hand of authority. Now watch what it goes on to say because I want you to catch the whole thing and then we’ll come back. **“[And] He said to them, ‘My cup you shall drink; but to sit on My right and on My left, this is not Mine to give, but it is for those for whom it has been prepared by [the] Father.’” (Matthew 20:23)** “You want your moment of fame? You want your moment of glory? I want you to know you will only get it, you will only get the “right hand” and “left hand” if the Father has deemed that you are to get the “right hand” and the “left hand.” And then it says, **“And hearing this, the ten became indignant....” (Matthew 20:24)** I mean, here’s two out of the twelve, and the other ten are really indignant. And it says, **“...the ten became indignant with the two brothers. But Jesus called them to Himself and [He] said, ‘You know that the rulers of the Gentiles lord it over them, and their great men exercise authority over them....”** It is not this way, **“It is not this way among you, but whoever wishes to [be] great among you...shall be your servant.” (Matthew 20:24-26)** Oh. Huh Hmmm. That’s something new to think about, isn’t it? “I want to be great. I have these dreams of glory, these dreams of grandeur sitting at Your right hand, sitting at Your left. But You’re telling me that greatness doesn’t come that way? Greatness comes through being a servant?” Yeah. That’s what Jesus says. It’s so opposite of what we think, isn’t it? We think of our moment of recognition, our moment of glory, our moment of fame, our moment of, of attaining to greatness and we dream

about it secretly, and we watch a movie and we're there. And we're in the role of the hero or the heroine, or that. And He's saying, **"...shall be your servant."** (Matthew 20:26) He says, **"And whoever wishes to be first among you shall be your slave; just as..."**, now listen carefully, "just as," here is a term of comparison and you don't want to miss the terms of comparison because they help you get the picture, **"...just as the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and...give His life a ransom for many."** (Matthew 20:27-28) He said, "Do you know why I came? I didn't come for greatness. I didn't come for glory. I came to **"...give [My] life [as] a ransom for many,"** (Matthew 20:28) as a payment for many." He's the **"...Lamb of God who takes away the sins of the world."** (John 1:29) [He's the One who is going to go up to Jerusalem. He's the One who is going to be mocked. He's the One that is going to be scourged. He is the One that is going to be humiliated, spit upon, brought down, in a sense, and demeaned by the spiritual rulers that desire the glory. And we're going to see that, especially when we come to Matthew chapter 23. He is the One who is going to be crucified. He is the One that is going to be buried. But He is the One that is going to be raised from the dead.] (PARAPHRASE, Matthew 20:17-19) He says, "Greatness? Greatness? Here it is." In other words, "It is the role of a servant." We'll talk about it more in just a minute, Beloved. But think on these things. Let your flesh absorb this truth.

PART TWO

This was not the first time, as I told you, that Jesus had told His disciples that He was going to die. In Matthew chapter 12, He alluded to His death in likening Himself, or His death and resurrection, to the sign of the prophet Jonah. But He didn't make anything terribly clear until Matthew chapter 16. And I want us to look at it, Matthew chapter 16, and it's verse 21. It says, **"From that time Jesus began to show His disciples that He must go [up]**

to Jerusalem, and suffer many things from the elders and chief priests and [the] scribes, and be killed, and be raised up on the third day.”

(Matthew 16:21) Now, did it pass over them, like it seems to pass over them? We have no response in Matthew 20 when Jesus talks about being mocked and scourged and crucified and raised. But did it pass over the disciples head? (See Matthew 20:18-19) Did they not hear what Jesus was saying? Well in Matthew chapter 16 we know that Peter heard, because it said, “[He] **took Him aside and began to rebuke Him, saying, ‘God forbid it, Lord! This shall never happen to You.’**” (Matthew 16:22) And remember, this is the time when Jesus says, “**...Get thee behind me, Satan....**” (Matthew 16:23, KJV) Why “Get thee behind me, Satan”? Why does Satan want, in a sense, to kill Jesus, but yet, wants to stop Him from doing His work? Because, if Jesus does not serve, if He does not “**...give His life [as] a ransom for many,**” (Matthew 20:28) then you and I are lost; you and I are lost. Now we see this talk of the crucifixion and the resurrection again in Matthew chapter 17, in Matthew 17:22. It says, “**...While they were gathering together in Galilee, Jesus said to them, ‘The Son of Man is going to be delivered into the hands of men; and they will kill Him, and He will be raised on the third day....**” And it says, “**...And they were deeply grieved.**” (Matthew 17:22:23) Now have they just, in a sense, become anesthetized to this fact that Jesus is telling them again in Matthew chapter 20 that this is what’s going to happen to the Son of Man? I don’t know. We don’t know. But we know that Matthew wants us to see something. Matthew wants us to see the contrast between the Son of Man and the son of Adam, the sons of Adam—the sons of men—because the “Son of Man” is what you and I are to be. Now listen to me carefully. We were to be without sin. Jesus was without sin. (See Hebrews 4:15) When we were created in Adam we were created without sin. But “**...by one man [Adam] sin entered into the world....**” (Romans 5:12, KJV) So Jesus comes to demonstrate to us what it is like to walk in union and communion with the Father. And when He demonstrates this to us, one of the things He

shows us is: if we are to walk in union and communion with the Father, if are **“...not [to] walk according to the flesh...” (Romans 8:4)** that desires its moment of glory, then we are to walk as a servant. He says, [“Those that will be great among you are to serve the others.”] (PARAPHRASE, Matthew 20:26) We’re to become their slaves. He says this is true greatness, but we miss that don’t we? We miss what true greatness is. And you and I, Beloved, in this program today need to see that you are your very greatest when you are like the Son of Man. **“...The Son of Man did not come to be served, but [He came] to serve....”** He came **“...to give His life a ransom for many.” (Matthew 20:28)** So that when you lay down your life for others, you are being great. One of the things that I make it a habit to do is, when I am with someone that is taking the role of a servant, and it may be in the restroom at an airport, and there is a woman, and she’s got her cart, and she’s cleaning our bathroom. She’s cleaning the bathroom that we use, and I make it a point to stop and to thank her for her service to us, and tell her how much I appreciate what she is doing and what a fine job she’s doing. A servant, a waiter, but when you’re sitting there and thinking, “I deserve to be served,” then you’re thinking the flesh. You’re not thinking like the Son of Man. And so, in this passage, that we’re looking at today, we’re seeing Jesus as the Son of Man, the One who came **“...to give His life [as] a ransom for many.” (Matthew 20:28)** I want you to look at Matthew chapter 20, verse 22. Jesus said, “You’re asking to sit on My right and My left.” **“...‘Are you able to drink the cup that [I’m going] to drink?’ [And] they said...‘We are able.’”** Now watch what it says in verse 23. **“[And] And He said to them, ‘My cup you shall drink....’ (Matthew 20:22-23)** Because you’re identified with Me, you’re going to drink My cup. My cup is a cup of suffering. And you and I need to know this, Beloved, that every time we’re like Jesus, suffering is going to happen. The more Christ-like you become the more that you are going to suffer. And He says, **“...My cup you shall drink...” (Matthew 20:23)** And I would write “Acts 12, verse 1 and 2” here, because it tells about James being put to death by the hand of Herod.

(See Acts 12:1-2) And so, yes he did drink that cup. All the disciples suffered. John the Apostle was immersed in a cauldron of hot oil. They all died. They all suffered. And you and I need to know that God has called us to suffer. Well when we come down to verse 29, “[When] **they were leaving Jericho...**,” they’re going up to Jerusalem, “**...a large crowd followed [them]. And...two men sitting by the road, hearing that Jesus was passing by, cried...‘Lord, have mercy on us, Son of David!’**”

(Matthew 20:29-30) Now what Matthew is letting us see, He’s letting us see Jesus as the Son of Man, in this passage. He’s letting us see Jesus as the Son of David, the One who was going to sit on the throne. The Son of Man’s going to suffer. The Son of David is going to mount the throne of David and fulfill the Davidic Covenant, and here He is, Son of Man, Son of David. And what’s the bridge between the two, Beloved? The bridge between the two is the cross, serving God, laying down our life, putting the flesh to death. And it says, “[And] **the crowd sternly told them to be quiet, but they cried out...**,” and they cried out again, and they said “**...all the more, ‘Lord, Son of David, have mercy on us!’ And Jesus stopped and called them, and said, ‘What do you want Me to do for you?’ [And] they said to Him, ‘Lord, we want our eyes to be opened.’ [And] moved with compassion, Jesus touched their eyes; and immediately they regained their sight and followed Him.**” (Matthew 20:31-34) Here they were: the lowest of the low. The blind usually became beggars. And here they were, receiving their sight. O Beloved, when we humble ourselves, when we go to God, then you and I, in turn, in the process of becoming like Jesus as we follow Him. [Those that come after Him, remember, must deny themselves, take up their cross and follow Him.] (PARAPHRASE, Matthew 16:24) The day of glory is yet to come, and come it will.