

Who's Number One?

Promise: Jesus promises the way up is first going down with him...

Pastor Timothy A. Duesenberg

Jeremiah 11:18-20; Psalm 54; James 3:13-4:10; [Mark 9:30-37](#)
(Seventeenth Sunday after Pentecost, 9/19/21)

And he said to them, "If anyone would be first, he must be last of all and servant of all." – v. 35

Lead In – A favorite childhood game was called “King of the Mountain”. At recess in elementary school we actually used the *Dome Whirl* playground equipment anchored on asphalt to play this game. What could possibly go wrong with this? And of the course the point was clawing your way to the top. To be number one. To be the greatest. To sit on top of the world. And to get there you had to pull down the current occupant, and then to out wrestle all the rest of the aspiring contestants for the vaunted position. There was nothing coy about this as children. Of course as adults we have learned to refine such games in life...

I. We Know Why the Disciples Tone Deaf

- 2nd of 3 foretelling coming after good Confession...
- Peter would have forbid the Lord...
- And James and John would have called down fire!

II. What Were The People Looking for In a Messiah?

- For a clear number one, the greatest, on top...
- For the enemies of the Anointed broken in pieces...
- For the Son of Man to have everlasting dominion...

III. It's A Good Thing We Know Better Now? NOT!!!

- What place do we wish to have at the table?
- To serve, or to be served and catered to?
- What constitutes a great congregation or ministry?

Parting Shot – Jesus demonstrated none of the signs we usually associate with greatness. He invited and did not command. He endured insults and ridicule. When he went to the capital it was not to be lifted up in the temple or a palace on the throne, but on the wood of the Cross. Instead of taking riches to himself, he poured out his precious life-blood. Instead of reclining on a royal bed, he was laid to rest in a tomb, planted as a seed in the earth. And now, after his resurrection, is there any doubt about Who's Number One? Is there any doubt of our path in light of this?

Mk 8:29 And he asked them, “But who do you say that I am?” Peter answered him, “You are the Christ.”

Mk 8:32-33 And he said this plainly. And Peter took him aside and began to rebuke him. But turning and seeing his disciples, he rebuked Peter and said, “Get behind me, Satan! For you are not setting your mind on the things of God, but on the things of man.”

Lk 9:53-54 But the people [of Samaria] did not receive him, because his face was set toward Jerusalem. And when his disciples James and John saw it, they said, “Lord, do you want us to tell fire to come down from heaven and consume them?”

Ps 2:2, 4, 9 The kings of the earth set themselves, and the rulers take counsel together, against the LORD and against his anointed ... He who sits in the heavens laughs; the Lord holds them in

Mark 9:30-37 ESV

Jesus Again Foretells Death

³⁰They went on from there and passed through Galilee. And he did not want anyone to know, ³¹for he was teaching his disciples, saying to them, “The Son of Man is going to be delivered into the hands of men, and they will kill him. And when he is killed, after three days he will rise.” ³²But they did not understand the saying, and were afraid to ask him.

Who Is the Greatest

³³And they came to Capernaum. And when he was in the house he asked them, “What were you discussing on the way?” ³⁴But they kept silent, for on the way they had argued with one another about who was the greatest. ³⁵And he sat down and called the twelve. And he said to them, “If anyone would be first, he must be last of all and servant of all.” ³⁶And he took a child and put him in the midst of them, and taking him in his arms, he said to them, ³⁷“Whoever receives one such child in my name receives me, and whoever receives me, receives not me but him who sent me.”

derision. ... [God's Son] shall break them with a rod of iron and dash them in pieces like a potter's vessel.

Da 7:13-14 I saw in the night visions, and behold, with the clouds of heaven there came one like a son of man, and he came to the Ancient of Days and was presented before him. And to him was given dominion and glory and a kingdom, that all peoples, nations, and languages should serve him; his dominion is an everlasting dominion, which shall not pass away, and his kingdom one that shall not be destroyed.

Lk 14:7 Now he told a parable to those who were invited [to the Wedding Feast], when he noticed how they chose the places of honor...

Mk 10:45 For even the Son of Man came not to be served but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many.

Jn 13:5 Then [Jesus] poured water into a basin and began to wash the disciples' feet and to wipe them with the towel that was wrapped around him.

The Mustard seed of Mk 4:31 and the Church in Philadelphia in Re 3 that is small and his little power – but they have kept Christ's word and have not denied his name!

Ph 2:8-9 And being found in human form, he humbled himself by becoming obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross. Therefore God has highly exalted him and bestowed on him the name that is above every name.

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