



## Lessons for Disciples - The Upside-Down Kingdom

### Key idea:

Disciples must understand the upside-down nature of the kingdom of God, for God's Kingdom is established through the death of the King, and true greatness is found in being the servant of all.

### Key text:

Mark 9:14-29

They left that place and passed through Galilee. Jesus did not want anyone to know where they were, <sup>31</sup> because he was teaching his disciples. He said to them, "The Son of Man is going to be betrayed into the hands of men. They will kill him, and after three days he will rise." <sup>32</sup> But they did not understand what he meant and were afraid to ask him about it. <sup>33</sup> They came to Capernaum. When he was in the house, he asked them, "What were you arguing about on the road?" <sup>34</sup> But they kept quiet because on the way they had argued about who was the greatest. <sup>35</sup> Sitting down, Jesus called the Twelve and said, "If anyone wants to be first, he must be the very last, and the servant of all." <sup>36</sup> He took a little child and had him stand among them. Taking him in his arms, he said to them, <sup>37</sup> "Whoever welcomes one of these little children in my name welcomes me; and whoever welcomes me does not welcome me but the one who sent me." Mark 9:30-37

### Key points:

1. Jesus purposefully tried to remain hidden as they traveled through Galilee on their way to Jerusalem so that He might be able to privately teach the disciples.
2. Jesus taught the disciples that He must die on three separate occasions. In all three statements there are three key components to His prediction:
  - a. As the Son of Man Jesus will be rejected
  - b. He will be put to death
  - c. He will be raised after three days
3. As they travel, the disciples argue over which of them is the greatest. Jesus then teaches them the nature of true greatness in the Kingdom of God - serving others.

### Questions for discussion/application:

1. What part of Sunday's teaching stood out most to you? Why?
2. Why does Jesus think it is important for Him to give the disciples private instruction at this point in His life and ministry?
3. Jesus predicts His impending rejection, death, and resurrection in Mark 8:31; Mark 9:31; and Mark 10:33-34. What is common in these three predictions? What is unique or stressed in each one?
4. What is ironic about the disciples arguing over their own greatness at this point in the Gospel? How is it out of line with the previous incident in the Gospel? How is it tone deaf to Jesus' pronouncement of His impending rejection and death?
5. In Mark 8:34-35, Jesus taught the paradox of the Kingdom of God (to save our life we must lose it). Yet the disciples clearly still do not understand the nature of the kingdom. Why was this so hard for them to grasp?
6. Before studying this passage, how would I define greatness? How is it defined in my culture?
7. How do I think the modern American church defines greatness? What examples can I give to show this?
8. How is the Spirit calling me to serve others this week? What specific actions will I take to serve others? How can I make this a habit and disposition rather than an occasional action?
9. Who can I reach out to this week to share the Gospel or strengthen their faith?