



## Defining True Greatness

### Luke 22:24-38

**Intro:** The shadow of the cross falls across the Upper Room. Jesus has just revealed that one of the disciples will betray Him (22:21–23).

Instead of sorrow and humility, the disciples fall into an argument over who is the greatest (24).

Jesus responds by

- a) teaching the true meaning of greatness,
- b) warning of their coming failure.
- c) preparing them for the trials ahead, and

Through it all, He promises His presence and strength.

#### **First: The Pride of Self-Importance (vv. 24–27)**

*A dispute also arose among them, as to which of them was to be regarded as the greatest. <sup>25</sup> And he said to them, “The kings of the Gentiles exercise lordship over them, and those in authority over them are called benefactors. <sup>26</sup> But not so with you. Rather, let the greatest among you become as the youngest, and the leader as one who serves. <sup>27</sup> For who is the greater, one who reclines at table or one who serves? Is it not the one who reclines at table? But I am among you as the one who serves.*

A dispute arises among the disciples over who should be regarded as the greatest.

This is not the first of these disputes: Just after Jesus told the disciples about his death for the 2<sup>nd</sup> time,

**Luke 9:46 - An argument arose among them as to which of them was the greatest.**

Dispute = GR = *love of strife / eager to contend* -

In the shadow of the cross, the disciples are “eager to contend” for the top spot in the kingdom.

This reveals:

- 1 – They still don't understand Jesus' mission
- 2 – They still don't have Jesus' heart

The disciples' argument also reveals how deeply the world's values had shaped them. When they thought about a kingdom, they thought about marching men, pomp, splendor, conquests, and iron rule. And they coveted such glory for themselves. They were more Roman than they would ever admit.

**Excurses:** Jesus himself had been tempted by such thoughts at the beginning of his ministry. Immediately after His baptism, Jesus, "*full of the Holy Spirit*," is led by the Spirit into the wilderness for forty days (4:1–2).

**Note:** Satan's temptation of Jesus proves that temptation is not a sin.

The Spirit's leading shows that this test is part of God's divine plan, not a diversion from it. The wilderness recalls Israel's forty years of testing and failure, which Jesus will now redeem through obedience.

Look at Jesus's three temptations in Luke 4.

#### 1. Temptation of Bread (vv. 3–4)

- Satan's Challenge: "*If you are the Son of God, command this stone to become bread.*"
- Meaning: The devil tempts Jesus to use His divine power for self-satisfaction rather than trust in God's provision.
- Jesus' Response: He quotes Deuteronomy 8:3 — "*Man shall not live by bread alone.*"
- Application: True sonship depends on obedience to the Father, not independence from Him.

Having failed to corrupt Jesus through hunger, Satan moves to tempt Him with power.

#### 2. Temptation of Authority and Glory (vv. 5–8)

- Satan's Offer: "*To you I will give all this authority and their glory, for it has been delivered to me, and I give it to whom I will. <sup>7</sup> If you, then, will worship me, it will all be yours*"
- Meaning: The temptation is to gain the crown without the cross.
- Jesus' Response: He quotes Deuteronomy 6:13 — "*You shall worship the Lord your God, and Him only shall you serve.*"
- Application: Jesus rejects idolatry and affirms that the kingdom comes by submission to the Father.

Denied, Satan tries one last approach.

### 3. Temptation of Testing God (vv. 9–12)

- Satan's Challenge: *"If you are the Son of God, throw yourself down from here,"* quoting Psalm 91 about angelic protection.
- Meaning: The devil demands proof of God's care, instead of trusting it.
- Jesus' Response: He quotes Deuteronomy 6:16 — *"You shall not put the Lord your God to the test."*
- Application: True faith rests in God's promises without manipulating them for self-assurance.

**APP:** Don't miss this. In the wilderness, Jesus demonstrates that victory over temptation comes through Spirit dependence, Scripture knowledge and obedience. He conquers by the *"sword of the Spirit"* (Ephesians 6:17). Knowing the Bible is essential to obeying the Bible.

1 – If you're not already using a devotional, use the one provided at the end of the sermon notes, available on the web site.

2 - Whatever ministries Heritage hosts, Scripture and prayer are key to our identity and success.

Having successfully endured Satan's temptations, Jesus corrects the disciples by contrasting worldly power with kingdom greatness.

- The world measures greatness by authority and control - 25
- Jesus measures greatness by humility and service – 26
- Christ's kingdom rearranges the greatness paradigm – 27

*Everything in him [Christ] astonishes me...Alexander, Caesar, Charlemagne, and myself founded empires. But on what did we rest the creations of our genius? Upon force. Jesus Christ alone founded his empire on love...*  
- Napoleon

**APP:** What motivates your service? Is it recognition, approval, reward, getting your own way, instead of love's sake?

Matthew 22:37-38 – *You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind.* <sup>38</sup> *This is the great and first commandment.* <sup>39</sup> *And a second is like it: You shall love your neighbor as yourself.*

So, the model for Christian service is first a love for God. Why? Because we want to be like Christ. We see him, love him, and desire to be like him.

And Jesus is the ultimate model for service.

Mark 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.*

Philippians 2:5–8 - *Have this mind among yourselves, which is yours in Christ Jesus, who, though he was in the form of God, did not count equality with God a thing to be grasped, but emptied himself, by taking the form of a servant, being born in the likeness of men. <sup>8</sup> And being found in human form, he humbled himself by becoming obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross.*

**Transition:** To encourage their servanthood, Jesus acknowledges their faithfulness during His trials and promises them participation in His kingdom.

### **Second: The Promise of Kingdom Reward. 28-30**

*You are those who have stayed with me in my trials, <sup>29</sup> and I assign to you, as my Father assigned to me, a kingdom, <sup>30</sup> that you may eat and drink at my table in my kingdom and sit on thrones judging the twelve tribes of Israel.*

**Thought:** Since Jesus said, “*You are those who have stayed with me in my trials...*” it is probable that Judas had left the Upper Room by that time.

Despite their blindness and pride, Jesus honors their imperfect loyalty.

- “*You are those who have stayed with me*” (v.28)
- “*I assign to you, as my Father assigned to me, a kingdom*” (v.29)
- “*that you may eat and drink at my table in my kingdom and sit on thrones judging the twelve tribes of Israel*” (v.30)

**APP:** We live the Christian life in the power of Jesus’s Spirit, not in our own power.

**Excurses:** Your service can be overlooked in many ways, even at the church.

1 - When you feel overlooked, remember that Jesus sees and values your service

Hebrews 6:10 - *For God is not unjust so as to overlook your work and the love that you have shown for his name in serving the saints, as you still do*

2 – Remember to serve Jesus and let serving people be the by-product of your service to Christ. If you do this, it will be okay to be overlooked or hurt.

**APP:** 1 - Take a moment this week to encourage someone who is serving.

2 – Are you serving?

Serving is more than filling a volunteer slot. It forms your soul.

- When you serve, you step into the pattern of Jesus Himself, who said, “*I am among you as the one who serves.*”
- Each act of service, whether teaching a child, greeting a stranger, or setting up a room, becomes a small reflection of His humility and love.
- Serving trains your heart to depend on God, connects you to others who share the same mission, and turns belief into action.
- It quiets pride, builds unity, and opens the door for joy.
- The surprising truth is that the more you give yourself away, the more you find that Christ is giving Himself to you.
- Serving is how faith matures, how love grows, and how the church becomes visible to a watching world.
- It forms you to live as a witness in the world

Luke does not record Jesus washing the disciples’ feet but it’s an integral part of how he loved the disciples and how he models service for us –

John 13:14-15 - *If I then, your Lord and Teacher, have washed your feet, you also ought to wash one another's feet. For I have given you an example, that you also should do just as I have done to you.*

**Transition:** At this point, Jesus turns His attention to Peter, and the failures of pride.

### **Third: The Soul in Peril. 31-34**

*Simon, Simon, behold, Satan demanded to have you, that he might sift you like wheat, <sup>32</sup> but I have prayed for you that your faith may not fail. And when you have turned again, strengthen your brothers.” <sup>33</sup> Peter said to him, “Lord, I am ready to go with you both to prison and to death.” <sup>34</sup> Jesus said, “I tell you, Peter, the rooster will not crow this day, until you deny three times that you know me.*

**Note:** This device of using a name twice is found at least 8 times in the Bible. It’s a great study.

1. **Abraham, Abraham** – *Genesis 22:11* - Spoken by the Angel of the Lord as Abraham is about to sacrifice Isaac. It halts his hand and confirms his obedience.  
*Significance:* A moment of divine intervention and covenant affirmation.
2. **Jacob, Jacob** – *Genesis 46:2* - God speaks to Jacob in a vision, reassuring him to go down to Egypt.  
*Significance:* Divine reassurance and guidance into a new chapter of salvation history.
3. **Moses, Moses** – *Exodus 3:4* - God calls from the burning bush.  
*Significance:* A prophetic call and commissioning moment.
4. **Samuel, Samuel** – *1 Samuel 3:10* - The Lord calls the young boy Samuel at night.  
*Significance:* The beginning of Samuel’s prophetic ministry.

5. **Martha, Martha** – *Luke 10:41* - Jesus gently rebukes her for being anxious and distracted.  
*Significance:* A personal correction motivated by love and pastoral care.
6. **Simon, Simon** – *Luke 22:31* - Jesus warns Peter that Satan has demanded to sift him like wheat.  
*Significance:* A tender yet urgent warning and promise of intercession.
7. **Jerusalem, Jerusalem** – *Matthew 23:37; Luke 13:34* - Jesus laments over the city's rejection of Him.  
*Significance:* A cry of divine grief and longing.
8. **Saul, Saul** – *Acts 9:4* - Jesus confronts Saul on the road to Damascus.  
*Significance:* A conversion and redirection of purpose.
9. **Lord, Lord** – While not a name repetition in the same sense, this occurs several times (e.g., *Matthew 7:21–22; 25:11; Luke 6:46*) and carries similar weight, expressing urgency or false familiarity.

In summary, this double-naming:

- Is always used by God or Christ (directly or through an angel).
- Is always marks a moment of divine encounter, rebuke, or commissioning.
- Always signifies intimacy, emphasis, and compassion in which is God addressing not just the person's ears, but their heart.

Here -

- Jesus uses Peter's "old" name because Jesus knows the "old man" (Eph 4) is still in Peter.
- Peter must have been shocked but Jesus' point was to get his attention
- He warns Peter of Satan's desire to sift him like wheat yet promises to pray for him.
- Jesus then reverts to "Peter" (34) to remind Peter that even on his best day, he is insufficient to win life's spiritual battles.

Peter's confidence in himself blinds him to his weakness. Jesus exposes his vulnerability but also gives him hope.

- Satan's aim: destruction ("*sift you [plural] like wheat*") – 31
- Jesus' action: intercession "*I have prayed for you*" – 32a
- Peter's calling: restoration and strengthening others - "*when you have turned again*" – 32b

**App:** Overconfidence and dependence on the flesh leads to collapse.

- Satan – "*Your heart was proud...*" - Isaiah 14:12-15; Ezekiel 28:17
- Adam and Eve – "*you will be like god...*" - Genesis 3:5-6

- Pharaoh – “*Who is the LORD that I should obey his voice?*” – Exodus 5:2
- King Uzziah – “*But when he was strong, he grew proud, to his destruction*” – 2 Chronicles 26:16
- Nebuchadnezzar – “*Is not this great Babylon, which I have built?*” – Daniel 4:30
- Peter – “*Lord, I am ready to go with you to prison and to death*” – Luke 22:33-34

Pride turns our souls inward on ourselves, shrinking us into smallness. Humility turns our souls outward to God and others.

**Transition:** To refocus the disciples away from internal bickering and external pressures, Jesus refocuses them on their future mission.

#### **Fourth: The Preparation for Mission. 35–38**

*And he said to them, “When I sent you out with no moneybag or knapsack or sandals, did you lack anything?” They said, “Nothing.”<sup>36</sup> He said to them, “But now let the one who has a moneybag take it, and likewise a knapsack. And let the one who has no sword sell his cloak and buy one.<sup>37</sup> For I tell you that this Scripture must be fulfilled in me: ‘And he was numbered with the transgressors.’ For what is written about me has its fulfillment.”<sup>38</sup> And they said, “Look, Lord, here are two swords.” And he said to them, “It is enough.”*

Jesus recalls their earlier mission (Luke 9–10) when they lacked nothing but now warns them of hardship ahead. The key words are “*But now...*” (36).

A new stage in salvation history is dawning. The world that once welcomed them will soon reject them.

- Past provision (35) gave way to future danger (36–37).
- The “sword” is symbolic of readiness and sober realism, not violence.

Jesus is the model for this. Can you imagine it? Jesus, the perfect person will, according to Isaiah 53:12, be “*numbered with the transgressors...*” = a law-breaker or someone who sins.

**APP:** Discipleship demands readiness, courage, and trust. The cross changes everything; the world is no longer neutral ground.

V 38 – “*And they said, “Look, Lord, here are two swords,”* once again misinterprets Jesus’s intent.

**IMP:** “*It is enough.*” – You overestimate yourselves and underestimate the battle.

There are three failures in this chapter:

- a) Unreliable disciples – 39-46 – praying with Jesus in the Garden
- b) Deceitful Judas – 47-53 – leading the arrest of Jesus
- c) Cowardly Peter – 54-62 – denying Jesus at the high priest’s house

2 Corinthians 10:4 - *For though we walk in the flesh, we are not waging war according to the flesh. <sup>4</sup> For the weapons of our warfare are not of the flesh but have divine power to destroy strongholds.*

**Transition:** The Upper Room closes with faith, not fear. Jesus' words steady trembling hearts. They will fail, but they will return, because He will serve, pray, and sustain them.

**Conclusion:**

Jesus knows His disciples' weaknesses, yet He entrusts them with His mission.

- Their pride will become humility.
- Their fear will become faith.
- Their failure will become the foundation for the church.

The same Savior who served, prayed, and prepared them does the same for you.





### **Observation**

(What does the text say?)

1. What situation sparked the argument among the disciples in verse 24? Why might that have been especially ironic given the timing of this conversation?
2. According to Jesus, how does the world define greatness, and how does that differ from His definition (vv. 25–27)?
3. What does Jesus promise His disciples in verses 28–30? What does this reveal about His attitude toward them even after their failure?
4. How does Jesus describe Satan’s desire to “sift” Peter (vv. 31–32), and what does His response teach us about His care for His followers?
5. In verses 35–38, Jesus gives new instructions to the disciples. What shift in their mission is He preparing them for?

### **Interpretation**

(What does the text mean?)

6. Why do you think pride and comparison are so persistent, even among Jesus’ closest followers?
7. How does Jesus’ statement “I am among you as the one who serves” reshape our understanding of leadership and ministry?
8. What does Jesus’ prayer for Peter tell us about His role as our intercessor?
9. Why does Jesus tell the disciples to be prepared for opposition in verses 35–38? What does that reveal about life in His kingdom after the cross?

### **Correlation**

(How does this truth connect with the rest of Scripture?)

10. Read Philippians 2:5–8. How does Paul’s description of Jesus’ humility expand on what Jesus says here in Luke 22?
11. Compare Jesus’ words in Luke 22:27 with His actions in John 13:1–15. How does the foot washing scene illustrate the same principle?

12. Read Hebrews 7:25. How does this verse about Jesus' ongoing intercession relate to His prayer for Peter?
13. Read Matthew 16:24–25. How does Jesus' call to “take up your cross” connect to the readiness He describes in verses 35–38?

### Application

(How should this change us?)

14. Where do you find yourself struggling with pride or comparison in your service to Christ or others?
15. What would it look like for you to practice greatness through humility this week in your home, workplace, or church?
16. How does knowing that Jesus prays for you give you confidence when your faith feels weak?
17. In what ways is following Jesus costly for you right now? How can your group pray for courage and perseverance as you continue to walk in His way?



Friends, please note that the questions for CGs remain *Observation, Interpretation, Correlation and Application* but *The Daily Devotion* template has changed to *Think, Reflect, Apply and Pray* (TRAP). They are different headings, but each principle is the same. *TRAP* is a little study tool I recently created for you and me.

This devotional follows the same *TRAP* pattern I use for the *CG Leader Guide* in *The View from My Study* each Monday. That way, whether you're a Community Group leader or a Heritage member receiving the *Sermon/CG Notes* on Thursday, we're all walking through the same passage and using the same approach to daily devotion.

Together, we're asking God for the “*word of Christ to dwell in us richly*,” so that we may “*teach and admonish one another in all wisdom, singing psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, with thankfulness in [our] hearts to God*” (Colossians 3:16). My hope is that this format becomes something you can make your own and use to study God's Word for the rest of your life.

### **Monday, Nov 10<sup>th</sup>.**

Read Luke 22:24-27 about the greatness of serving

Think – On the evening of Jesus’ death, a dispute broke out among the disciples about who was the greatest. Even in the upper room, just after Jesus had washed their feet, they argued over rank. It was a mindset that needed immediate correction: *“Let the greatest among you become as the youngest, and the leader as one who serves”* (26).

Reflect - The world celebrates power and position, but Jesus redefines greatness as humility. He stands among His disciples as one who kneels to serve, even as He prepares to die for them in the ultimate act of service. True leadership in His kingdom is not about who gets noticed but who gives themselves away.

Apply - Ask yourself if and where pride still lingers in your service. Are there areas in church, home, or work where you want to be in charge and/or crave recognition? This week, choose one place to serve quietly, without expecting thanks, remembering that Jesus sees the unseen act.

Pray - Lord Jesus, teach me to follow Your example. Replace my desire for praise with a heart like yours that finds joy in serving before an Audience of One. Amen.

### **Tuesday, Nov 11<sup>th</sup>**

Read Luke 22:28-30 about the promise of a kingdom.

Think - Despite their selfishness, Jesus commended His disciples: *“You are those who have stayed with me in my trials”* (28). He then promised them a place at His table and a throne in his kingdom.

Reflect - Grace always surprises us. The disciples were weak and wavering, yet Jesus affirmed their loyalty and promised to share his kingdom with them.

Apply – Faithfulness matters. God assigns Jesus a kingdom and he assigns the disciples to a table and a throne (29). Remember today that the same Christ who welcomed imperfect disciples welcomes you. Don’t let the hope or demand of perfection keep you pleasing the Lord.

Pray - Father, thank You for Your faithfulness even when I falter. Keep me close to Jesus and fix my eyes on his kingdom, his table and throne. Amen.

### **Wednesday, Nov 12<sup>th</sup>**

Read Luke 22:31-34 about the battle for faith

Think - Jesus warned Peter, *“Satan demanded to have you, that he might sift you like wheat. But I have prayed for you that your faith may not fail”* (31). Peter, confident in himself, replied, *“Lord, I am ready to go with you to prison and to death”* (33).

Reflect - Peter's courage was sincere but shallow. The real battle was not in his circumstances but in his humble faith. Jesus knew the test ahead, and His prayers secured Peter's restoration. Our hope is not that we hold on tightly to Christ, but that He holds tightly to us.

Apply - When you face spiritual conflict, remember that Jesus is praying for you (Hb 7:25). It's important that you prepare, but rest in Jesus for your success in any endeavor. Today, think about one area where your faith feels weak and ask Christ to strengthen you there. Then, live prayerfully.

Pray - Lord, thank You for praying for me. When I am sifted, sustain my faith. Let my failures drive me back to You and not away. Amen.

### **Thursday, Nov 13<sup>th</sup>**

Read Luke 22:35-38 about the cost of following

Think - Jesus reminded His disciples that when He sent them out before, they lacked nothing. But his upcoming cross will evidence the world's growing hostility. He told them to prepare, even saying symbolically, "*Let the one who has no sword sell his cloak and buy one*" (36).

Reflect - The "sword" was not a call to violence but to readiness. The disciples were moving from days of favor to days of opposition. Following Jesus would no longer bring popularity but persecution. But the servant's path always leads through hardship before glory.

Apply - Count the cost of discipleship for yourself. Are you prepared to follow Christ when it is costly? Pray for courage to remain faithful in a culture that resists Jesus. True readiness is not about self-protection but from trust in the crucified King. (Pray for me as I write a book titled, *Disappointed: Learning to Follow a Crucified Savior*).

Pray – Father, strengthen me to follow Jesus even when it costs me comfort or approval. Teach me to trust Your power more than of others or even my own. Amen.

### **Friday, Nov 14<sup>th</sup>**

Read Luke 22:24-38 about strength for the journey.

Think - Throughout this passage, Jesus serves, prays, and prepares His disciples for what is ahead with the words, "*For I tell you that this Scripture must be fulfilled in me: 'And he was numbered with the transgressors'*" (37). Imagine that. A king, crucified. Whatever happens, wherever you go, Jesus has gone before you, preparing the way. And he is with you on the way even if it leads to a cross.

Reflect - The way of the cross turns worldly values upside down. Power gives way to humility. Failure meets forgiveness. Weakness becomes the point of grace. Jesus forms you and me, not through triumph but through trust. The mountains are beautiful, but the valleys are transformative.

Apply - As you look back on the week, how you have seen Jesus teaching you humility, perseverance, and readiness. What did you learn? How did Christ meet you there? Reflecting on this or those events, would you now trade that experience for a throne?

Pray - Lord Jesus, you are the servant, the intercessor, and the faithful Shepherd. Teach me to walk in Your way of humble strength. May Your kingdom come in me as I daily follow you. Amen.