



Christ Served Us

Chris Groover – March 12, 2017

Good morning, church. How are you? My name is Chris Groover, and I'm the high school minister here at the Flower Mound Campus. It's my honor and privilege this morning to be able to spend this time studying God's Word with you and seeing what that has for us today. If you have your Bibles, we'd love to invite you to open up to Mark, chapter 10, verses 35-45.

As you're flipping open to the book of Mark, let me just set up our time together by giving you a little bit of background as far as where I am originally from. I am not a native Texan, but I am from the Southeastern portion of the United States. I was born in Atlanta, Georgia. Then I moved to Tampa, Florida, in fourth grade. Then I moved back to Atlanta, Georgia, going into my senior year of high school.

In fact, I went back to Georgia and went to a high school, for my senior year only, called Chattahoochee High School. I'm not making that up. There's an Alan Jackson song with the Chattahoochee in it. So I went to Chattahoochee High School, graduated from there, and then I went to college in South Carolina at Clemson University, home of the national title football team this year. I'll throw that out there as well.

Then after I graduated college, I moved back down to Tampa, Florida, and spent the rest of my time there until my wife and I moved out here to Texas about six years ago. So I am a Southeastern boy to the core. One thing you need to know about people from the Southeast or from the South region of the United States is that we have a massive amount of pride as far as us being from the South or us being Southerners.

I don't really know why that's the case. Maybe it's because Chick-fil-A started in the South, and perhaps that is what started the tradition, or Coca-Cola or the weather is good or it's inexpensive to live there or maybe the football is better in the South. I don't know. There are probably some reasons behind that, but for whatever reason, growing up in the Southeast, we just kind of stuck our

chests out a little farther, because we felt not that we were better than other people but that we were more blessed, that God in his providence blessed us to be able to be born a Southerner.

I never imagined that there would be another place or state or area of the country that could have potentially more pride in where they're from or who they are and where they live than the great country of Texas. Am I right? I never thought I would encounter this. Until we moved here six years ago, we had never been to Texas. We had heard of Texas. We'd read about Texas. We had seen Texas in movies.

We knew a little bit about Texas, but when we arrived to Texas, and as we began to have conversations with people who grew up here and loved Texas and saw Texas as the greatest place possible in the history of not just the US but the entire world we really began to understand the pride Texans have in this state.

Some of the things people would say to us as we began to meet people and get involved in the community here in the DFW area were things like this. Somebody one time said, "Hey, everything is bigger in Texas." That's a statement Texans say. "Everything is bigger in Texas." I remember thinking, "What does that even mean?" This one guy told me, "Well, the sky is bigger. The stars are brighter. The food is bigger. The buildings are bigger."

I'm like, "Wait. The food is bigger? What does that even...? Is your portion size bigger or is your food bigger?" It didn't really make sense to me, but apparently everything is bigger in Texas, which makes Texas great. "How 'bout them Cowboys?" is a phrase people would say all the time, and I didn't know if that was a question or like a... I didn't know what that was. Sometimes I'd be like, "Well, they're not that good. I don't know what to tell you." Like, "Oh! I'm supposed to say 'How 'bout them Cowboys' back. Okay, I gotcha. I'm slow here on that. I'm sorry."

Another phrase people would say is, "Hey, don't mess with Texas." I can say that I agree with that phrase. I will not mess with Texas too much here today. Or other things people would say to us that would let us know how great Texas is are things like, "You have to try the brisket. Have you tried the brisket yet? I mean, you really have to try the brisket, because it's way better than Southern barbecue." I have to say I think the brisket may be better than Southern barbecue.

Or other things like, "Hey, we invented Tex-Mex," or "Have you had Whataburger? Whataburger is amazing. That was started here. Yep. Willie Nelson? Yep, born in Texas. Dr Pepper? Uh-huh, that's

us too. Blue Bell ice cream? That's right. Texas. God bless Texas." That was the theme we would hear from people.

In fact, I had one guy who looked me dead in the face, wasn't trying to be funny, and said, "Hey, isn't DFW just beautiful?" I remember looking around, and I was like, "I mean, I guess, to each his own. Hey, bro, you need to travel a little bit more, because there's some comparison you need to see, some other places you need to see that perhaps are more beautiful than DFW. But, hey, to each his own, to each his own."

If you grew up in Texas, you get this Texas pride. You're like, "Hey, born here, raised here. I'm going to be buried here." You get it. Texas is the best place possible. It's the greatest state probably in your eyes. If you're like me and you moved here from another state, then you might say, "Well, Texas is a really good state. I enjoy it here. The people are nice. The food is good. Willie Nelson...that's amazing." You might think it's good, but you might not describe Texas as being great.

Or if you've ever had someone come from out of town and visit Texas who's from, say, Seattle or California, they might say, "Texas is okay. It's not bad. I just don't want to live there. It's just not for me." So there are a variety of opinions whether or not Texas is great. I just want to tell you right here (because I'm a people pleaser, and I don't want you to be mad at me, and I do fear Texas a little bit) that I am "Team Texas." I think Texas is amazing. It's great. I hope I die here as well. So hopefully you won't be mad at me after the service.

Where I'm going with this is not to determine, obviously, whether or not Texas is great, but rather this idea of greatness, this idea of what is great, whether that's a state, a profession, how your kids turn out, how much money you make. Whatever that category is for you, this idea of greatness is oftentimes so subjective and so based upon what you or I think or what a person thinks or believes greatness should be or look like.

As a Christian, this is important for us to understand. If you are in Christ and you would call yourself a follower of Christ, the trap we can fall into as a believer is that we can allow the culture we live in (so Texas culture, American culture), the family we grew up in, or the friends we run with in life, oftentimes, to determine and dictate for us what greatness looks like.

The dangerous thing for us as a Christian is we can begin to believe what the culture says we should do. We can begin to believe what our family taught us to do. We can begin to believe what our

friends are living out or saying, "Hey, here's how you should live," and by doing so, we can oftentimes neglect the very factors and things that God calls us to do and be and live as far as when it comes to us in the Christian life. Oftentimes, those very factors are contrary to what Christ calls us to do.

Even in the days of Jesus, this question of greatness was a conversation he continually was having with his disciples, his followers. We're going to jump into a story in a second in Mark, chapter 10, and we're going to see in this story that this desire for greatness, this desire for success in life is not a bad desire to have, but it can easily become a misguided desire if we put our hope and trust and understanding in what the culture tells us versus what the Word of God says.

If you have your Bibles, Mark, chapter 10. We're going to jump in at verse 35. Jesus is having a conversation with James and John, who are two of the three disciples who are the closest to Jesus. Jesus, if you don't know, had twelve disciples. Out of those twelve disciples, there was a top three, if you will. They were kind of like his posse that he ran a little closer with, walked with a little bit deeply, and who knew him a little bit better than the other disciples.

It says this in verse 35: "**And James and John...**" Two out of the big three in his core group of disciples. "**...the sons of Zebedee, came up to [Jesus] and said to him, 'Teacher, we want you to do for us whatever we ask of you.'**" If you're a parent in the room, you understand this question or where they're trying to go.

You have a kid, so you've probably had a moment, being a parent, where your child has come up to you and said, "Hey, Mom or Dad, I have a question for you. I have to ask you this question. It's really an important question, but before I actually ask you the question you have to go and say 'yes' to whatever it is I want to ask of you."

As a parent, you know that's a trap. You should automatically shut that down, say "No," send them to time-out, whatever it is you have to do, because you know that whatever it is they're about to ask of you is probably something they shouldn't be doing or something you do not want to give them. What they're doing here is James and John are trying to soften up Jesus.

In their heart of hearts, they know the question they're about to bring to their leader, the Son of God, is probably not an appropriate question and probably not the right question, so they soften him up. They say, "Hey, Teacher, we want for you to do for us whatever it is we ask of you." Here is

the question. Verse 36: **"And he said to them, 'What do you want me to do for you?' And they said to him, 'Grant us [James and John] to sit, one at your right hand and one at your left, in your glory [your kingdom].'"**

Essentially, the question they bring to Jesus is this question of position. They're saying, "Hey, Jesus, one day in your kingdom, when you establish your kingdom, can we be the top two leader positions in your kingdom? Can we sit at your right hand and your left hand?" They're coming to him with this motive, this idea of, "Hey, can you ensure for us that we can have these two most powerful positions in your kingdom?"

Now the issue with this is that right before this conversation took place in the section of Scripture we find in the book of Mark, Jesus had sat his disciples down for the third time and explained to them, right before this conversation happened, that he very soon was going to be going to Jerusalem, he was going to have to suffer on behalf of mankind, and then he eventually would go to the cross and give his life for them so they could have new life in him and so they could be saved and born again and have a relationship with the Father in heaven.

He sets this up right before this conversation happened, so you would imagine that coming off the heels of this devastating news that the leader of these disciples, Jesus Christ, the Son of God, is going to suffer and die on behalf of them and all of mankind... You would think the mindset of James and John wouldn't be about position, wouldn't be about power, wouldn't be about leadership, but you would think their thoughts would be with Jesus, that they would be concerned for him, that they would want to sit with him and weep with him and maybe pray for him and maybe even ask him more questions about what he just had revealed to them.

But their mindset was so self-seeking and so focused on their position and power they neglected to be there with their Savior in that moment. This would be like if your father, who maybe had been sick for a while, calls a family meeting. He brings all of the kids, and you arrive at your dad's house, and he begins to share with you that he has a month left to live. In the moment of sharing that, he gets the story out and he shares the news, and there's just devastation in the room as you hear this news about your father.

Then maybe your brother raises his hand and says, "Hey, Dad, before we keep talking about this and before we mourn over you and pray for you and minister to you and ask you questions and support you... Before we get there, can we talk about your will and your estate? Like, a month is just

not a long time. That's going to be here before you know it. Can we just make sure the majority of the stuff is coming to me? That business you own... Can we make sure that's in my name, so when you're gone it'll be seamless and I can flow and I can step into this great leadership position?"

It would be an extremely inappropriate thing to do. It would be an extremely insensitive thing to do. It would be an extremely unloving thing to do, but what we find James and John doing here in this story is a similar type of thing. Rather than being concerned about their Savior, concerned about Christ, concerned about their leader, they were simply thinking about their power, their position, their greatness.

Jesus is really nothing like you and me, because I think if I were Jesus, what I would do at this point is say, "Can we just start this whole thing over? Can we just get some new disciples? I think I'm done with you. Surely, there have to be another top three I could pull into my inner core. Surely, there have to be another twelve disciples out there who are more interested in me and my kingdom and not their agenda and their power and position." Rather, Jesus responds to them in grace.

He says in verse 38, "**You do not know what you are asking. Are you able to drink the cup that I drink, or to be baptized with the baptism with which I am baptized?**" When he mentions *cup*, or anytime *cup* is mentioned in the Scriptures, traditionally, the meaning of that is judgment from God or death. Jesus is just saying to James and John, "Hey, can you die in the manner that I will be dying in? Can you take and drink of the cup that I have to take and drink of?"

Then he also goes on and says, "Hey, can you also be baptized in the baptism that I have to go and be baptized into?" He's not referring to water baptism that we see here and celebrate here on Sunday mornings at The Village Church. Rather, what he's talking about is suffering. Jesus is saying to James and John, "Can you die in a manner that I need to go and die, and can you suffer in the manner that I need to go and suffer in for the sake of mankind? Are you able to do that?"

You would think the response from James and John would be like, "No way. I'm out of here. You're right, Jesus. You're God; we're not. We're sorry for asking for this position and not thinking about you and your kingdom and your death." Rather, they respond by saying simply, "**We are able.**" Why in the world would they say, "We are able" in that situation? Any sane person would be like, "No," and run away. They're like, "No, we can do this. We've got this."

It just shows you, again, a glimpse of the heart of James and John. They were so concerned with their position in the kingdom of God that they were like, "Yeah, we can do that. Do we have to die? For sure. Okay, we can do that. We can drink of that cup. We can suffer if that means we get the top two positions."

Jesus says this in response to their "We are able" comment: **"The cup that I drink you will drink, and with the baptism with which I am baptized, you will be baptized, but to sit at my right hand or at my left is not mine to grant, but it is for those for whom it has been prepared [in advance by my Father]."**

In this moment, when they say, "We are able," Jesus responds by saying, "Okay. If you're able, then guess what? Let me prepare your hearts for life after me, life after Jesus in the flesh, on the earth, because there will be a day when I'm no longer here, and, yes, you will suffer for my kingdom. Life will be hard. People will hate you, people will make fun of you, people will persecute you, and you will die a death that will be painful."

In this moment, Jesus is preparing their hearts. I feel like the disciples probably have no idea that he's really preparing their hearts. It's probably going over their heads. Then he ends his little response by saying, "By the way, if it even came down to me being able to determine this position, the Father has not given me that power or that platform, so I don't even have that authority to make you the right hand and the left hand in the kingdom. That is up to God the Father in heaven."

The other ten disciples at this point in the story begin to hear rumblings that James and John had gone to Jesus and made this request of Jesus, this request to be in these two top power positions in the kingdom. It says in verse 41, **"And when the ten heard [that James and John had gone to Jesus], they began to be indignant at James and John."** They were upset with James and John. Why? They were upset because they didn't get the chance to go to Jesus first.

They weren't upset because James and John went and asked this question of Jesus, but the other disciples also wanted the very same positions James and John were seeking. So the twelve disciples who are walking with Jesus, the Son of God, in the flesh, are sitting here and having conversations and bickering and fighting and talking behind each other's backs. Why? Because they all wanted the two power positions in the kingdom.

Jesus overheard this. He saw this, and he brings them together in verse 42. He calls them together, it says in the Scriptures, and said this to his twelve disciples: **"You know that those who are considered rulers of the Gentiles lord it over them, and their great ones exercise authority over them. But it shall not be so among you. But whoever would be great..."**

"If you want to be powerful in my kingdom, if you want to have the two top positions in my kingdom, if you want the Father to look down from the heavens and say, 'Well done, good and faithful servant,' if you want to be great, you must be a servant, and whoever wants to be the greatest servant, whoever wants to be the first amongst you as my disciples, must become a slave to all."

Jesus, again, responding in grace to his disciples, sits them down. I picture it this way. He sees the infighting. He sees the bickering. He calls the twelve disciples over to himself. They sit down around him, and he begins to essentially answer this question for them and clarify for them what it means to be great, what it means to be successful as a follower of him.

The answer he gives them is an answer they were not expecting, because the answer they were expecting was power, status, prestige, position, but Jesus says, "No, no, no. In my kingdom it's different. I see greatness as you being a servant." This picture of a servant in the New Testament is a picture of a waiter or a waitress.

When you go to a restaurant, a waiter or waitress comes and serves you. They fill up your glass. They bring you your food and take your food away. They continually come back and say, "Hey, is there anything else I can do for you? Is there any way I can serve you?" They do essentially everything for you to make that experience a good experience.

He's saying, "Hey, look. You need to look at people not as objects, not as a means to get ahead in life, but you need to see people for who they are: souls made in the image of God. By doing so, you will begin to see your role as a servant, to love them in such a way that you serve them. If you want to be a servant but you want to be the greatest servant, then you need to lower yourself down to the lowest position possible, which is a slave to all."

In that society (really, in *any* society), a slave is the lowest of the low status positions one can have. When you're a slave, you're constantly looking up at other people. You're constantly seeing these other people above you who have these better positions and different status level in life. He's

saying, "When you lower yourself down to the status of a slave, what begins to happen is you begin to see people for who they are, and you begin to see them for value and worth and significance. So if you want to be great, you serve people. If you want to be great, you'll become a slave to all mankind for my name's sake."

What we have here is Jesus making it abundantly clear (this is good news, church) that greatness in the eyes of God isn't based on power, is not based on position, is not based on prestige or assets or how big your house is or how nice your car is or how well your kids turn out to be or what college they go to or how athletic you are or how smart you are, but greatness, according to Jesus, is simply this: living the Christian life with a desire to demonstrate love to thy neighbor by serving them for the sake of the gospel.

Greatness isn't even how many times you come to church a month. We're glad you're here, but that doesn't determine you as a great follower of Christ. Greatness isn't how much theology you learn. Greatness isn't how much Bible you memorize. Greatness isn't how many mission trips you've gone on in your lifetime. Those are all good things. Let's just be clear about that. But we study theology and we come to church to worship God and we memorize Scripture and go on mission trips...

We do all of those things because we want to grow in our faith and our dependence on the Lord and our knowledge of the Lord. The goal in that is never just to store up information or become better Christians but to take what God is doing inside of you, the process of sanctification in you, and the outflow of that, naturally, should be that you are driven to love people by serving them.

We study theology so we can serve people better. We learn about God so that God can change our hearts and sanctify us so we can love other people better, so that we can share that same good news of the gospel with them. Our service to others is something that, oftentimes, reveals our love for God. Now, if you have grown up in the church, you've probably heard countless talks on, "Be a servant. The church needs people to serve. Hey, we're struggling in kids' ministry. We're struggling in student ministry. We're struggling in the worship ministry. We need you to sign up to serve."

So I think there's a tendency when you hear a sermon preached on service to do either one of two things. You can kind of check out and say, "I've heard this. I get this. I already serve in many capacities," or maybe you could be on the other end of the spectrum and almost talk yourself out of this idea of serving.

You can begin to make excuses for yourself, like, "I'm busy. Chris, if you only knew my life and how much stress I have and the demands of my family and my wife or husband and my kids and my boss at work. If you only knew how many hours I work a week. My kids are in every sort of sporting activity that's even imaginable in this area. I barely even have an hour a week to myself. There's no possible way I could serve and give of myself in the way Jesus is calling me to give of myself."

Whether you are kind of complacent or too busy or just don't want to do it, here's what Jesus says in verse 45 to end his teaching to the disciples. Jesus says in reference to serving and becoming a slave to all, **"For even the Son of Man came not to be served but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many."** For even the Son of God came to serve you and me.

The good news of the gospel is that Jesus, second part of the Trinity, in heaven with the Father, left glory, left the heavens, came down, was born in a manger (humble beginnings), took on flesh, took on blood and bones, and walked a life on this earth that was perfect, without sin, blameless. In doing so, he was doing that all with a heart to serve you and me.

He does that, and then he eventually gets to the spot in his life where people hated him, and they rebuked him and mocked him and eventually began to persecute him. As he was on the road to Calvary, he began to get beaten and scorned, and people threw things at him and did horrific things to him, all the way to putting him on the cross and putting nails in his hands and feet. We even see this picture on the cross of Jesus suffering in agony and pain.

He cries out in that moment to the Father in heaven. He says, "Father, forgive these people, for they don't know what they're doing right now." People at that time, and even us today... We oftentimes see Jesus as this horrific guy. They saw Jesus as the enemy, yet Jesus' intention in coming to earth was never to establish this kingdom where he sat in his ivory tower and lorded his power and position over people. Rather, he came with a posture of grace, with a humility, with a humble heart.

The Scriptures say he came to serve. That's amazing. Jesus, God, came to serve you and me. We don't deserve to be served. Right? What do we do? How did we earn that? God in his infinite goodness and grace chose to come, chose to leave heaven, chose to leave a place where he was not hated, where the angels were worshiping him, the heavenly host was proclaiming his goodness and his greatness, and come down here to earth so you and I could experience new life in him.

Because of Jesus, we are forgiven. Because of Jesus, we have new life. Because of Jesus, we have been given the gift of the Holy Spirit. Because of Jesus, we can walk in pure joy and purpose in life. Because of Jesus, we can spend our eternity with God the Father in heaven worshipping Christ.

The amazing thing about the gospel and the amazing thing about verse 45, this idea of the Son of Man coming down to serve, not to be served, and to give his life in a service as a ransom for many, is simply this. The call from Jesus is not to hear the gospel and then say, "Hey, God, now I need to repay you back. You served me by giving your life for me. Now I need to go and try really hard for you. Now I need to go and just do all of these good things to pay it forward and make it even."

The call of the gospel is not necessarily to serve Jesus but to be served continually by Jesus via the Holy Spirit, and as that happens in our lives, as sanctification takes place on a day-in, day-out basis, we are compelled to serve others for the sake of the gospel, for the glory of God, with the hope that one day those very people will, too, be served by Jesus. Or maybe better said this way: Christ served us so we serve others with the hope that they will be served by Christ one day too.

For a second, I want you to imagine, wherever you live in this community around The Village Church, as you begin to have conversations with your neighbor or a coworker or the people you run with who potentially do not go to The Village Church... Imagine if our reputation as a body of believers wasn't built upon, "Have you heard of Matt Chandler?" or how great our theology and teaching is or how great our kids' ministry or student ministry or Connections ministry or Rob Daniels is. (Have you met him? He's pretty amazing.)

Rather, imagine if the reputation of The Village Church was built upon how well we love and serve the people God has placed in our lives. Imagine if the first thought that came to the mind of someone who lived in Lewisville or Flower Mound or Highland Village wasn't those very things but was, "Man, I don't know that I believe in this guy named Jesus. I don't know that I really fully believe in the God you worship, but, man, I'm intrigued by him because of the way your body of believers loves this community and serves them so very well."

I don't think Jesus... This *could* be you, but I don't think Jesus is saying, "Hey, tomorrow I want you to quit your job, get rid of all the youth sports in your family, and with 12 or 15 hours a day just begin to serve the people around you in your life." I don't necessarily think he's calling the majority of us in the room to do something like that. I don't think he's saying, "Hey, do something drastic or crazy." I think the call Jesus is really giving to us as believers, as followers of Christ, is this:

"Will you allow me to minister through you via the Holy Spirit and will you walk with me in such a way every single day of your life that you are open to the possibility of me using you in your workplace, in your family, maybe here in the church, maybe on the soccer team you coach, maybe with your neighbor... Are you willing to allow me to use you in such a way to love them and serve them so that potentially you have an opportunity one day to actually share the gospel with them?"

I think he's calling us to a simple, small, day-in, day-out step of obedience, walking with him, allowing the Spirit to do the work inside of us to compel us to go and love and serve the people God has placed in our lives well for the sake of the gospel.

This past weekend, our student ministry had Spin Weekend, which is always an amazing time. It's one of the pinnacle events we do in our student ministry across all campuses at The Village Church. What we've been doing the last couple of years is we take all of our kids on charter buses... Way back in the day it was school buses. Like, no AC. I feel like I'm really old by saying that. Back in the day it was really difficult, but now we have charter buses for them. It's not too bad of a ride out to Pine Cove in East Texas.

About a week ago this past Friday, we got all of our students on the buses. We gathered them up, they signed in, and we sent them out to Pine Cove. Typically, the way a student ministry-type retreat works is that you expect for the Holy Spirit to begin to work in the service, so you begin to pray... "Hey, let's just pray for the speaker, for the band," and you anticipate that when Saturday night rolls around...

That's typically when the kids have been there long enough. They're de-plugged enough from their typical life that they're open to the Spirit doing a work in their life and in their heart, and that's really where the life change begins to take place. The fascinating thing about this past Friday night when we were going down to Spin Weekend was that ministry took place on the bus.

Typically, when you're on a bus ride to camp, the things that are happening are: Kids are sleeping. Kids are listening to music, putting their earbuds in. They're maybe doing other things, just talking, messing around, having a good time. But on this bus ride it was a little bit different, because we had a freshman boy who was coming to Spin for the first time, not really involved in the student ministry here at The Village, and he was just nervous.

He began to talk to the kid next to him. He was like, "Hey, man. I'm nervous. I don't know anybody who's going to Spin. In fact, I don't really even want to be here. My mom signed me up, so I had to come. I tried to get out of it last second, but she said, 'You have to go,' so I'm here. Not only am I here, but I don't know that I even believe in God. Not only do I not want to be here, I don't feel like anyone knows me, I feel like I'm not going to have any friends this weekend and I'm going to be extremely lonely, but I don't really even want to learn about God."

This kid was just being super honest and vulnerable and transparent, and in the moment there was a kid behind him, a junior student, who overheard this conversation taking place. The junior student didn't do what you would think maybe you or I would do or maybe a typical high school student would do, where they would maybe hear that and say, "Well, let me pray for them" or "Man, let me just go back to sleep" or maybe, "Let me just put my earbuds back in. That's a sad story, but I can't really do anything to help this kid." That would be the typical response you would think would happen in that moment.

Rather, this junior boy, listening to the Holy Spirit, heard this boy lamenting how nervous he was and how he felt like he wasn't a part of the family and how he didn't even believe in the Lord, so he stood up, sat down across the aisle from this freshman student, and he simply looked at him and said, "You know what? I'm glad you're here. You know what? I want to be your friend. You know what? I want you to be part of this family. And guess what? I want to tell you about the gospel and tell you about this guy Jesus whom I worship and follow who has saved me from my sin."

He literally on the bus began to share the gospel with this freshman boy. So we have a junior student sharing the gospel with a freshman boy student on the bus ride, in the dark, to Pine Cove, East Texas. Before we even got there, before the real ministry began to happen, we have ministry happening on the bus ride. The amazing thing about that story was the fact that this junior student was sensitive enough to the Holy Spirit that he heard this other student who was upset, who was nervous, who didn't necessarily believe in the Lord yet...

He heard that, and he didn't just stop and put his earbuds back in. He didn't just turn over and take a nap. He stood up in confidence in his faith, and he began to esteem this boy, to encourage the student. He shared the gospel with this student, and because of that kid and his faithfulness to the gospel and his faithfulness to serve this freshman student, that freshman boy went and had a great time. He had an amazing trip. He met friends. He got engaged into biblical community. He hasn't

necessarily given his life to the Lord yet, but he's open, more so than ever before. You see the work of the Spirit happening inside of his heart and in his life.

That all happened because a junior student was willing to be great. He was willing to say, "You know what? This trip isn't about me. I'm going to serve this student where he is. I'm going to lower myself down. I'm going to go and listen to him, encourage him, and hopefully have this opportunity to one day share the gospel with him, because I've been served by Christ. I've experienced the grace of Christ. I've experienced the forgiveness of Christ.

I've experienced new life in Christ, so I want this boy to experience the very same thing. The way I can do this, the way I can live out my faith, the way I can be great in the eyes of Jesus in this very moment is I can stand up, in all confidence in the gospel and who God is and who he has created me to be and how he has redeemed me, and I can go and take this step of obedience and love him by becoming his friend. I can love him by serving him."

For the Christian, greatness (we should be encouraged by this) is not what you do. It's not who you know. It's not how popular you are. It's not how good you are at sports. It's not how much money you make in your lifetime. Rather, greatness is solely dependent on the work of Christ in you, the fact that Jesus Christ, the Son of God, came down and served you by giving his life as a ransom for you so that you could have new life.

He did that, and he gives you the Holy Spirit. He does all these things so you can then turn, out of the overflow of the Spirit's work in your life, and look around to your neighbors, to your family members, to your friends, to your coworkers, to your boss who maybe you don't even enjoy being around, and you can pray and ask the Lord to help you serve them and love them in a manner that one day they, too, would receive the gift of salvation from Christ. Let me pray for us.

Father, we are humbled by the fact that you sent your Son for us. Jesus, we are taken aback by the truth of your gospel, that you came and left heaven, you left glory to come down to serve people who didn't want to be served, who mocked you and beat you and put you on the cross. You did all that, Lord, because you loved us so much.

You did all that to make a way for us to have faith. You did all that to make a way for us to have redemption and forgiveness so we could communicate to the Father, that we could be given eternal life, that we could have new life even in this earthly life that we have right now. You did all that with

a posture of a servant. God, you are a different God. You're an amazing God, because there's no other God like you who would come down and serve people who were sinful and broken.

You're the only God who does that, and we're amazed by that, and we want to just acknowledge that this morning. We love you for that, and we're taken aback by that, God, and we want to worship you because of that. We want to really live our lives as believers oriented around the fact of you and your forgiveness driving us to love other people well in return and serving other people well so they can have the very same hope we have in you.

Holy Spirit, we just pray right now for moments and opportunities in our lives. We pray for friends, for neighbors, for family members who don't know you, that you could just bring their names to our minds right now, God, that we can see them even right now, where they're at, and that we could begin, via your Holy Spirit and the help of you, God, to consider what it would look like for us to serve them and love them well. Not to do that to earn any sort of approval, God, but, rather, to do that because you've called us to do that, and that by doing so we will have a chance to eventually share the gospel with them.

We're humbled, Father, that you've loved us enough to do these things for us. Jesus, we're humbled by your sacrifice on the cross for us. We're humbled by the fact that you've given us the Holy Spirit. We ask for your Spirit's help, that you allow all of us in here in this body of believers to have conversations with people who are far from you, that we can share the hope we have in Christ, and that we can serve them with the hope that one day they will be served by you by accepting the sacrifice of Jesus for the forgiveness of their sins. We pray this in your name, Jesus, amen.