Introduction

Being a servant is a quality God wants to develop in all of us.

- Become like a child – Matthew 18:1-4
- Be a servant – Matthew 20:26-27

I. JESUS CHALLENGES OUR ASSUMPTIONS ABOUT GREATNESS AND SUCCESS. MATTHEW 20:17-23

For the third time, Jesus tells them exactly what is going to happen to him in Jerusalem.

It is shortly after this that the mother of James and John comes to Jesus with her bold request.

Jesus’ rebuke is gentle. He doesn’t reprimand her for asking. But he does question their understanding.

“Can you drink the cup I am going to drink?”
“You will drink it.”

- James will be beheaded by Herod. Acts 12:2
- John will be exiled on the island of Patmos. Revelation 1:9

“It is often ignorance that seeks leadership, power and glory. To ask to reign with Jesus is to ask to suffer with him.”
D. A. Carson
When the 10 hear about this they are upset. Sensing the tension, Jesus uses this as an opportunity to teach about greatness in the kingdom. World rulers do not provide an example of the kind of leadership God desires in his kingdom. Instead, whoever wants to be great among you must be your servant – your slave. They were the two lowest positions in society.

Don’t worry about your rank or position or reward. Follow Jesus.
- In sports – How do we handle winning and losing?
- In business – Level 5 Leadership – Jim Collins
- In marriage – Imagine husbands and wives serving each other.
- In the church – Where does Jesus want you to serve?

Leadership in the kingdom is servant leadership.

He is our example. “He came not to be served, but to serve and to give his life as a ransom for many.”
- Ransom – lytron – the most commonly used word for the purchase price of freeing a slave.
- For – anti – means “in place of or instead of” the many. Jesus understood that his death would be a substitutionary death.
Jesus didn’t have to lay down his life for us. He chose to become a servant and die in our place; and because of his obedience, God has exalted him to the highest place. Philippians 2:5-11

If you want to be great in God’s kingdom, be a servant.

Conclusion
When you get right down to it, it all comes down to basin theology.

• Pilate called for a basin and washed his hands of the whole thing.
• Jesus called for a basin and knelt to wash the disciple’s feet.

Which will we choose?