

Greatness

Who is a great _____ and why?

Who is great in God's Kingdom?

1

Greatness
Matthew 18:1-14
ref.ly/Mt18;niv



2

Matthew 18:1

At that time the disciples came to Jesus and asked, "Who, then, is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven?"

The disciples are seeking greatness
→ *in the Kingdom of Heaven*

3

Matthew 18:2-4

² He called a little child to him, and placed the child among them.

³ And he said: "Truly I tell you, unless you change and become like little children, you will never enter the kingdom of heaven."

⁴ Therefore, whoever takes the lowly position of this child is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven.

God only accepts the lowly → and He honors them

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Matthew 18:5-6

⁵ And whoever welcomes one such child in my name welcomes me.

⁶ "If anyone causes one of these little ones—those who believe in me—to stumble it would be better for them to have a large millstone hung around their neck and to be drowned in the depths of the sea.

5

σκανδαλίζω = skandalizō

to cause someone to stumble or to be offended

John the Baptist was confused
because Jesus was not what John expected

He wondered if Jesus wasn't the Messiah

Jesus said: "Blessed is anyone
who does not stumble on account of me."

Matthew 11:6

6

σκανδαλίζω = skandalizō

to cause someone to stumble or to be offended

Jesus described a plant (follower) with no root that doesn't survive trouble

"When trouble or persecution comes because of the word, they quickly **fall away**."

Matthew 13:21

7

σκανδαλίζω = skandalizō

to cause someone to stumble or to be offended

In Jesus' hometown, they didn't believe in Him.

"And they **took offense** at him."

Matthew 13:57

8

σκανδαλίζω = skandalizō

to cause someone to stumble or to be offended

To reject or turn away from Jesus

To cause someone to reject Jesus
or turn away from Him

9

Matthew 18:5-6

⁵ And whoever welcomes one such **child** in my name welcomes me.

⁶ "If anyone causes one of these **little ones**—those who believe in me—to **stumble**, it would be better for them to have a large millstone hung around their neck and to be drowned in the depths of the sea.

Not welcoming the lowly (causing them to stumble)
brings the worst imaginable punishment

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Matthew 18:7-9

⁷ Woe to the world because of the things that cause people **to stumble!** Such things must come, but woe to the person through whom **they** come!

⁸ If your hand or your foot causes you **to stumble**, cut it off and throw it away. It is better for you to enter life maimed or crippled than to have two hands or two feet and be thrown into eternal fire.

⁹ And if your eye causes you to stumble, pull it out and throw it away. It is better for you to enter life with one eye than to have two eyes and be thrown into **the fire of hell.**

Stumbling or causing stumbling (falling away) is worse than death

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¹⁰ "See that you **do not despise** one of these little ones. For I tell you that their angels in heaven always see the face of my Father in heaven.

¹² "What do you think? If a man owns a hundred sheep, and one of them wanders away, will he not leave the ninety-nine on the hills and go to look for the one that wandered off? ¹³ And if he finds it, truly I tell you, he is happier about that one sheep than about the ninety-nine that did not wander off. ¹⁴ In the same way your Father in heaven is not willing that any of these little ones should perish. **God pursues & rejoices with the lowly**

12

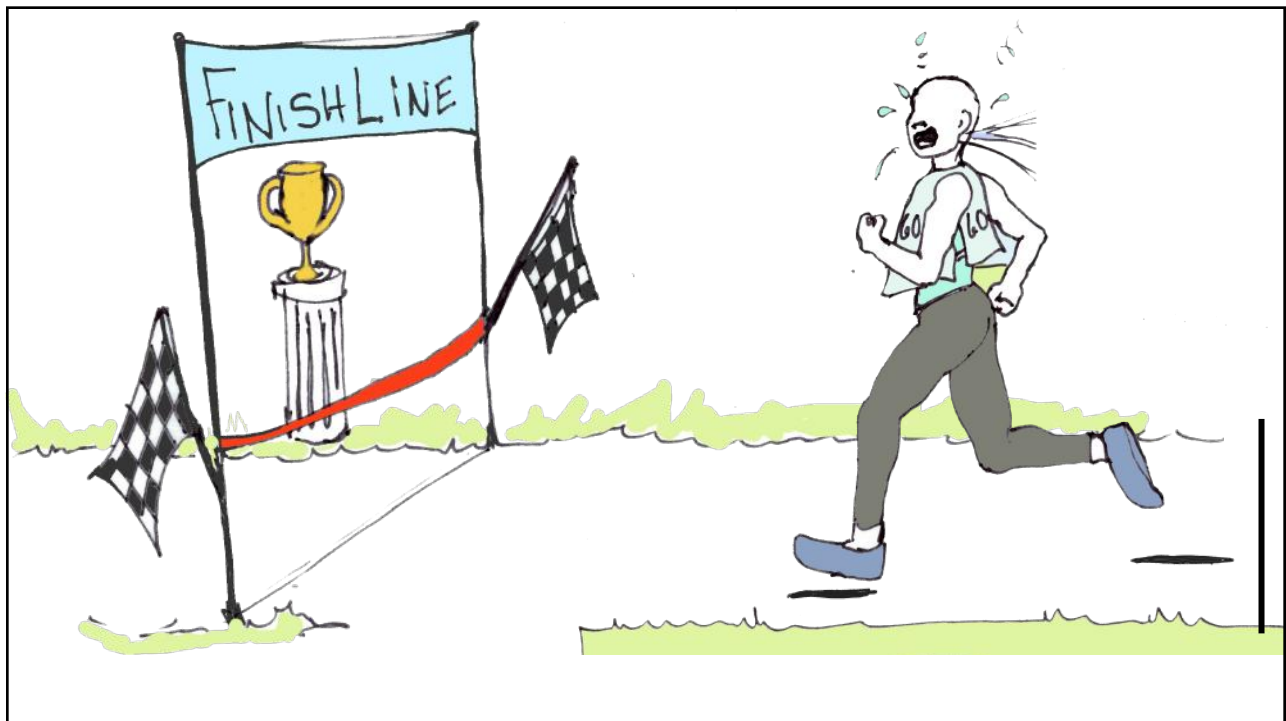
The Main Point

God requires lowliness
God pursues & rejoices with the lowly

The only kind
of disciple there is

So must we

13



14



15

The Main Point

God requires lowliness
God pursues & rejoices with the lowly

So must we

16

Application

Put to death pride and status

- What motivates you?
- What do you carry with you into the Church community?
- Jesus “made himself nothing...becoming a servant...humbled himself...to death”
- What does it look like for you to follow Him?
 - In the Church
 - In the world

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Application

Value and rejoice with “the lowly”

- First century: orphan and widow
- Who are “the lowly” today?
- Individually, in households, at work & school, in politics, in small groups, in the church community
- Because we all are “the lowly”

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Application

Find and remove “stumbling blocks”

- Anything that hinders us or others from genuinely finding and following Jesus

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“But God chose the foolish things of the world to shame the wise; God chose the weak things of the world to shame the strong. God chose the lowly things of this world and the despised things—and the things that are not—to nullify the things that are, so that no one may boast before him. It is because of him that you are in Christ Jesus, who has become for us wisdom from God—that is, our righteousness, holiness and redemption. Therefore, as it is written: ‘Let the one who boasts boast in the Lord.’”

1 Corinthians 1:27-31

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The Main Point

God requires lowliness
God pursues & rejoices with the lowly

So must we

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*And Jesus said: "Truly I tell you, unless you
change and become like little children,
you will never enter the kingdom of heaven.
Matthew 18:3*

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