



Matthew 20.²⁵⁻²⁸— meditation

²⁵But Jesus called them unto him, and said, "Ye know that the princes of the Gentiles exercise dominion over them, and they that are great exercise authority upon them. ²⁶But it shall not be so among you: but whosoever will be great among you, let him be your minister; ²⁷And whosoever will be chief among you, let him be your servant: ²⁸Even as the Son of man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to give his life a ransom for many."

Jesus' is fully aware of the threats. He is assailed by his disciples' pleas that he not go up to Jerusalem. He is fully aware of the rejection, suffering, and death that await him there. Nevertheless, guided by his abiding love of Father and of us, Father's children, Jesus sets his face steadfastly toward the holy city. As he walks, he listens to his disciple's vain conversations. They are arguing about who will be the greatest. Patiently, he turns and instructs.

"Ye know that the princes of the Gentiles exercise dominion over them, and they that are great exercise authority upon them. But it shall not be so among you: but *whosoever will be great among you, let him be your minister*; And whosoever will be chief among you, *let him be your servant*: Even as the Son of man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to give his life a ransom for many."¹

A week has passed now. Jesus sits with his disciples in an upper room. He breaks bread, pours wine and speaks of his broken body and spilt blood. But, again, the disciples speak of preeminence and which of them will enjoy it. Unexpectedly, Jesus removes his robe and clothes himself in a slave's garment. He kneels and begins to wash the disciples' feet. The apostles are offended. They feel that Jesus is acting below his dignity. Peter even resists the Savior's service. Patiently, Jesus insists that he be allowed to complete his service. He assures them that they will understand...later. Finishing his service, he faithfully teaches,

"Know ye what I have done to you?

Ye call me Master and Lord: and ye say well; for so I am. If I then, your Lord and Master, have washed your feet; *ye also ought to wash one another's feet*. For I have given you an example, that ye should do as I have done to you.

Verily, verily, I say unto you, The servant is not greater than his lord; neither he that is sent greater than he that sent him. *If ye know these things, happy are ye if ye do them.*"²

In serving and ultimately dying, Jesus was doing more than revealing his own character. He was also revealing Heavenly Father and the kind of Being He is. Because Father feels intimately and joyfully connected to us, He lives to serve us. He lives for the advancement of his entire creation, especially his beloved children. And because we are his children, some of him is in us.

¹ Matthew 20.²⁵⁻²⁸

² John 13.¹²⁻¹⁷

As children of God, we are invited to follow Father and Son. We are invited to grow in every divine attribute, characteristic, and disposition. We are invited to join them in the greatest of all divine works: loving service for the advancement of others.

Jesus has shown us the way already. But he is not finished. From his seat at the right hand of God, he helps us. And with his help, of what are we not capable in our service of others?

“He that believeth on me, the works that I do shall he do also; and greater works than these shall he do.”³

Even so, come, Lord Jesus!

(edition: November 21, 2024)

³ John 14.¹²