



DISCUSSION GUIDE

Good Over Great – Part 2

Pastor Stephen Hayes

April 14, 2019

Main Idea – The pursuit of “greatness” is a quest that often leaves a trail of casualties. The pursuit of greatness is self-centered. The Bible does not teach us to pursue greatness; rather, we should work to have God’s goodness show through us. “Goodness” is focused on others.

Pursue God

- Modern day culture seems to encourage a thing called “greatness.”
- When an individual pursues greatness, often a trail of hurt is left in the wake of that effort.
- On the other hand, “goodness” is a virtue that focuses on other people. Goodness can lead to great things happening.
- Goodness is essential for God to move and work on the planet.

Goodness needs no further approval

- While greatness seeks others’ approval, goodness comes from God, and does not need approval. Goodness is already perfect because it is part of God’s character.
- When John the Baptist baptized Jesus, he did so because Jesus said it was the right/good thing to do. Jesus rejected greatness in favor of God’s goodness. God then affirmed and approved of the goodness Jesus demonstrated.
- **Matthew 3: 13-17 – Then Jesus came from Galilee to John at the Jordan to be baptized by him. And John tried to prevent Him, saying, “I need to be baptized by You, and are You coming to me?” But Jesus answered and said to him, “Permit it to be so now, for thus it is fitting for us to fulfill all righteousness.” Then he allowed Him. When He had been baptized, Jesus came up immediately from the water; and behold, the heavens were opened to Him, and He saw the Spirit of God descending like a dove and alighting upon Him. And suddenly a voice came from heaven, saying, *“This is My beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased.”***
- Jesus didn’t need others’ approval, because He already had it from the Father.
- God has, likewise, prepared good works for you to do, and thereby receive His approval. **Ephesians 2: 10 – For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand that we should walk in them.**

On Palm Sunday Jesus entered Jerusalem with humility

- **Matthew 21: 1-9** – Now when they drew near Jerusalem, and came to Bethphage, at the Mount of Olives, then Jesus sent two disciples, saying to them, “Go into the village opposite you, and immediately you will find a donkey tied, and a colt with her. Loose them and bring them to Me. And if anyone says anything to you, you shall say, ‘The Lord has need of them,’ and immediately he will send them.” All this was done that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by the prophet, saying: “Tell the daughter of Zion, ‘Behold your King is coming to you, lowly, and sitting on a donkey, a colt, the foal of a donkey.’” So the disciples went and did as Jesus commanded them. They brought the donkey and the colt, laid their clothes on them, and set Him on them. And a very great multitude spread their clothes on the road; others cut down branches from the trees and spread them on the road. Then the multitudes who went before and those who followed cried out, saying: “Hosanna to the Son of David! ‘Blessed is He who comes in the name of the Lord!’ Hosanna in the highest!”

The crowd laid down its self-identity in recognition of Jesus’ goodness

- When the people in the crowd laid down their clothing, they were removing their social identities in acknowledgement of Jesus.
- In that era, as like today, social status was often demonstrated by the quality of clothing a person would wear.
- In this particular situation, personal status was irrelevant. Everyone thereby looked the same before Jesus.
- Their need for Jesus was greater than their need of personal recognition.
- All potential personal recognition was laid at Jesus’ feet so that He would receive the glory. **Matthew 5:16** – **Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works and glorify your Father in heaven.**
- Your identity is not based on what you put on, but on what you are willing to lay down.
- Like the people in the crowd, be willing to lay down your entire identity (your skills, your personality, your knowledge, etc.) before God. Make it all available to Him.

Jesus made use of at least two animals that day

- Matthew’s account of Jesus’ entry into Jerusalem indicates Jesus used two animals – an adult and its young one – on His ride (see above).
- The use of multiple animals had been prophesied in Old Testament days through the prophet Zechariah. **Zechariah 9:9** – **Rejoice greatly, O daughter of Zion! Shout, O daughter of Jerusalem! Behold, your King is coming to**

you; He is just and having salvation, lowly and riding on a donkey, a colt, the foal of a donkey.

- Jesus used humble transportation for His needs. He rejected any show of greatness.
- God has need of you today. Don't be critical of the vehicle He is employing to use you.
- Your life's experiences – however humble or uncomfortable – are your vehicles that bring glory to God.
- Lay down your personal identity. Give all recognition and glory to Jesus. Rejoice in that He has chosen you for His work.

Reflective Questions for Good Over Great – Part 2

1. Why is it encouraging to know that Jesus always rejected the temptation to display “greatness”?
2. How does one go about receiving the “goodness” that was so much a part of Jesus' life? How will one know they have received it?
3. In order to receive goodness, why must one first lay down one's social status and self-identity?
4. Jesus used humble transportation on the way to his greatest moment. Can you identify the “vehicle” God is using to transport you toward your purpose for Him?