The Most Pointless Debate in History

Disclaimer: this is an automatically generated machine transcription - there may be small errors or mistranscriptions. Please refer to the original audio if you are in any doubt.

Date: 09 July 2023

Preacher: Dr. Michael Staton

[0:00] This is the First Mustang Pulpit Podcast, a podcast of the weekly preaching and teaching at First Mustang.! Thank you for joining us. I love when John does mystery songs.

We could sing about the cross all day long.
Don't stop on my account, man. That's good stuff. That's good stuff. Make sure, if you would, that you look through your bulletin on the back especially.
There's lots of things going on this time of year. I know it's summer and there's vacations and travel and trips, all kinds of things. But it's also a very important time for us with summer ministries.
And also, as we gear up for the school year that starts here next month, lots of things coming up. Ladies ministry, men's ministry. We've got ways that we can serve in our quest ministry.
[1:11] Ladies on the theology next month. Lots of things in the back there. So, just take a minute this afternoon to look through that. Please be familiar with what's going on. We want you to be involved in a part of the life of our church.

We want you to be able to serve where you would enjoy serving. Also, let me just take just a brief moment before we jump into Mark 9. Just want to let you know, for me, the next couple of weeks, I'm going to be gone.
My schedule's changed just a little bit this week. I'm going to be going overseas to England and serving, representing the Master's Fellowship through the Master's Seminary as a partnership there of Grace Community Church in California.
And I've been asked to go and teach with pastors and families at a conference in London, actually in Jersey. So, we'll be in London for a few days, preaching at a church in London, then going over to Jersey, preaching eight sermons there, and then preaching at a different church there that next Sunday.
And so, opportunity for me to be able to represent our church and represent a couple of groups that I do some leadership with through the seminary and through the Master's Fellowship as well.
[2:31] What I'd ask you to do is, as the Lord brings out your mind, just to pray for us. Marcy's going with me. I called her. It's kind of a last-minute deal that's come up. And I said, they've called me and asked me if I can go to England and spend 10 days there.

And she said, why have you not said yes already? Why are we talking about this? And so, she has spent the last several days booking flights and hotels, and neither one of us have been to this part of the country.
And if you know us, I like organization. I don't mind making decisions. I don't mind doing things in leadership. But when it comes to travel, I just like to be told where to go, which is good because Marcy loves to tell me where to go.
And so, the way it works is I've got people in London telling me where to preach, what to do, who I'm going to be preaching to. And Marcy's going to help make sure we get to the right country and to a hotel.
And so, now, between now and the next few days, I've got 10 messages to get ready for that. It butts up against a week I was already going to be out of town preaching.
[3:43] And so, I'm going to be gone for a few weeks. Nothing is wrong. I'm not sick. I'm not mad. I'm just going to be preaching.

My feelings are hurt a little bit. But yesterday, I received in the mail, I think it was from my neighbor because it was from the AARP. And so, if you're saying you're just leaving the country to get out of all of the turning 50 jokes, there may be some truth to that too.
So, when I get back from London, Lord willing, we make it back and Marcy books a flight coming back. Maybe we'll have AARP insurance. I don't know.

Downloaded from https://yetanothersermon.host

But I didn't know that was 50. I found out. I looked it up because I thought, I wonder why they sent it to me so early. Now I know. But as the Lord brings us to your mind, I'd appreciate you praying for us.
Our pastors here on staff will be preaching in my absence. And you'll be well fed as always. It's always good for you to get to hear from them and get to benefit from their wisdom and their knowledge and their giftedness as well.
[4:50] And so, I look forward to being able to follow along from a distance for just a couple of weeks. Then we get back from that trip.

And shortly after that is our next Ladies Night of Theology. And looking forward to studying for that and kicking off our fall semester, which isn't that far away.
So, I'm grateful for your prayers as the Lord brings that to your mind. Mark chapter 9. We'll be looking at verses 34, 33 to 37.
I have a bit of a strange habit. Some of you know about this. Most of you probably don't. But one of the things I really enjoy doing is watching old debates on TV.
YouTube has really allowed me to waste much of my late evenings at times when I should be sleeping. But I love to watch old presidential debates. I love to watch old vice presidential debates.
[5:54] I enjoy hearing them present their viewpoints. I enjoy hearing them try to explain what they believe and try to articulate how they would seek to serve the country and what their ideas are.

If you enjoy that kind of a thing, it's funny because I'm really not into politics. Politics really isn't that interesting to me. But the debate side of it is. And if you've watched those debates through the years, you know there are some very memorable debates and certainly some very memorable moments in our nation's history since they've been having debates and on television the last several decades.
There's a few one-liners. I won't say them to you because I'm going to get your mind all distracted on who said it and you're going to be mad at me because I quoted this guy or that person or that lady.
And so, just ask me after the service. I'll tell you my favorite ones. But there's some memorable one-liners. There's some memorable zingers. There's some memorable blunders. Even some memorable sweating and some memorable sighing.
Some of you who have enjoyed these things know what I'm talking about. But my favorite response in a political debate actually isn't from American politics.
[7:19] My favorite line, I think, comes from Winston Churchill in July 1945, speaking of someone that was the prime minister of the United Kingdom at that time.

Churchill said of this political rival, He is a humble man with so much to be humble about.
You think it's a compliment and then you realize, I think he just kind of stung him. Political debates can do that.
You've got some people who get very loud and bombastic and some who stay kind of quiet and some who go on the attack and some who just kind of wait for their opponent to stumble and others who wait for just the one perfect moment.
But the most pointless debate does not come from American politics, doesn't come from politics overseas. The most pointless debate, I think we read about here in Mark 9.
[8:31] As we looked at just last week, Jesus has just once again foretold His coming cross work.

He's going to be delivered. He's going to be killed. He's going to rise again. So we looked at last Sunday in verses 30 to 32. And the next thing that Mark records for us is this conversation, this debate that breaks out among the apostles.
And the subject of the debate is quite staggering, particularly when you remember that Mark presents this right after he presents Jesus saying, I'm going to be rejected.
I'm going to suffer. I'm going to be killed. He's going to lay down his life. And right after this, the debate breaks out. The debate among the apostles is about who among them is the greatest.
It's a completely pointless debate. Which sinner is better than the other? Which misguided person is better than the other? They've all missed the boat so badly here.
[9:55] Christ has just talked about His ransom He's paying. He's just talked about His sacrifice on the cross. And the debate they want to fill their time with is which of them is the greatest among each other.

Downloaded from https://yetanothersermon.host

You read this and we just kind of think to ourselves about the sinful pride that's just so plainly put on display.
The truth is that the opposite of pride, our humility, is something that is hard to come by.
The lack of humility or the presence of pride rears its head in all kinds of different ways. When we think about pride, we typically think of boasting about our accomplishments, and that would be one form of pride.
But there's all kinds of forms that pride can take in our life. Sometimes pride is demanding your own way. Sometimes pride is insisting that everybody sees everything the way that you do.
[11:04] Sometimes pride is boasting of what you've done. Sometimes pride is trying to tear other people down. Sometimes pride is someone else tells a story and you don't even let them finish.

You've got to interject your own story to try to one-up what they've just said. And even in the moment, it may not feel like pride. It is that remnant of pride within us that wants the attention to be on us.
It's not new, of course. That's as old as the Garden of Eden. And to make it even worse, our culture today has never elevated pride more than it does today.
Humility is not something that our nation upholds. Our nation celebrates pride and celebrates arrogance, and those who are boastful and self-centered can become famous and wealthy and influential and quite powerful in our world today.
And yet, as we read in 1 Peter a few moments ago, we are called to be different. We are supposed to live differently than the world does.
[12:27] Look with me here in Mark 9, verses 33 to 37. It says, And they came to Capernaum, and when he was in the house, he asked them, What were you discussing on the way?

But they kept silent. For on the way, they had argued with one another about who was the greatest.
And he sat down and called the twelve.
And he said to them, If anyone would be first, he must be last of all and servant of all. And he took a child and put him in the midst of them.
And taking him in his arms, he said to them, Whoever receives one such child in my name receives me. And whoever receives me receives not me, but him who sent me.
At first, the whole issue of the child seems a bit strange. I mean, most of us know these words of Jesus about holding a child and needing to receive a child.
[13:43] But the context of which he says that on the heels of the apostles arguing over which of them are the greatest, it seems a bit of a strange place for Jesus to turn the attention to children.

We'll look in a few moments at why he does that and what he was communicating. But think with me this morning on this brief passage as we continue to trek through Mark 9 about what we learn.
Let me give you three things that we learn and show you where in the text we can understand this.
Number one, it's quite obvious here.
Pride flourishes around prideful people. Pride flourishes around prideful people. And what I mean by that is when you surround yourself around prideful people, your own pride, unless you're very, very attentive, is going to flourish.
We see this because in the conversation with the apostles, part of the reason why this debate happens is because you've got a group of prideful men. Now, let's be careful here because as I've said all throughout our study of this gospel, there are so many times I think that what we see, the weaknesses and the shortcomings in the apostles, just reflects what's true of us.
[15:17] I mean, just a couple of weeks ago, we looked at they were doing ministry and they were serving and doing what they had been called by the Lord to do, but Jesus calls them out and says the reason why your ministry is not effective here is because you're doing it without prayer.

Well, that's true of us too. And we can look at them and say, how could you be so foolish? How could you be so short-sighted? Why would you think you don't need to pray? But the truth is, it just reflects what is true of us so often.
And so when we look at the pride of the apostles, I don't want us to do so in a way that we elevate ourself above them, but instead that we can actually look at their mistakes and take an honest evaluation of our own life so that we can repent of the same sin in our hearts and prayerfully live differently.
It says they came to Capernaum and it says when he was in the house, he asked them, what were you discussing on the way? It's not that he didn't know, but he's got to deal with this.

Downloaded from https://yetanothersermon.host

So he tells the apostles, I heard a bunch of talk. I heard you debating. I heard you arguing. I heard you getting sharp with your tone and loud with your voice.
[16:34] What was the big debate that was going on? Verse 34 says, but they kept silent.

You can imagine they don't want to say anything, right? Jesus has just said to them, gentlemen, I want you to understand, I'm going to be delivered over, I'm going to be delivered over, and when I'm delivered over, I'm going to suffer many things, I'm going to be rejected, I'm going to be killed, but I'm going to rise again.
I'm going to go lay down my life as a payment for sin. And they start to walk down the road, and rather than thinking of the greatness of Christ and the glory of the Father and the awfulness of their sin and the holiness of God, instead, one of the apostles says, you know, I think I'm probably the best.
And somebody else says, you're the best? What are you talking about? Do you know how many works I've done? Do you know how many demons I've cast out?
Demons you've cast out? And it just goes from there. And the text tells us that they were discussing this on the way, that they were arguing over this along the way.
[18:06] Verse 34, he's the word arguing, and the context determines the meaning of the language here. The word can mean dialogue. It can mean debate. In this context, it's clear, this is a forceful debate, an argument that has broken out.

And yet, when they are called on, what were you arguing about? They quickly become embarrassed and ashamed of what they're saying. And verse 34 says, they stayed silent.
Here's why. Because on the way, they had argued with one another about who was the greatest. It's a pointless debate.
A bunch of sinners arguing over who is the greatest. It gives us some insight, though, into humanity, not just of the apostles, but of just humanity in general.
The reason why the debate was raging is because more than one was joining in. This is the way fights and argument works. It's very difficult to have a debate with someone who won't argue with you.
[19:18] It's very difficult to have a heated argument if the other person doesn't respond in kind. But if you get upset and somebody else gets upset, now the sparks fly.

If you go up to somebody after church today and whoever your favorite college football team is, you go up to a stranger and you say, you know what? I really think that whoever you like, I really think that my team is the best college football team in the world.
And the other person says, all right. Have a nice day. There's no heat. There's no argument. There's no debate. Because the other person isn't invested. They don't really care in your proclamation. If you go up to somebody after church and say, I really think that such and such candidate should be elected because he for sure is the best choice.
And the other person says, okay, it's over. But if the other person says, I don't think he's the best candidate, I think she's the best candidate. And you start to debate philosophy and politics and why it gets heated in a hurry.
[20:36] As the apostles are walking, if one of the guys says to the group, I am the greatest. Reminds me of Muhammad Ali. You guys remember Muhammad Ali? That's what he would always say, right? I am the greatest.

Well, if one of the apostles says, I am the greatest and everybody else says, what's wrong with him? The debate ends. For it to get heated, you've got to have somebody else take the other side. And it gives us some insight into the apostles but also into humanity that pride flourishes around prideful people. And it's why it's so important that as we read in 1 Peter 4, that we live a different way from the world, not only for the sake of our own sanctification, but also as a means to encourage other people to live godly lives.
If we are prideful, it's going to encourage other people to be prideful. If we are humble, we hopefully are able to help other people do the same.
So be the kind of person that leads others to humility, not pride. And we've got to be so careful here and it's why we've got to pray and ask the Holy Spirit to search our hearts and as the psalmist said, reveal any wicked way in me because pride is that kind of sin that we rarely can see in ourselves but so easily detest in others.

Downloaded from https://yetanothersermon.host

[22:14] I can see your pride long before I see my own and you can see my pride long before you're aware it exists in you. That's just the way it is.

It's so easy for us to get frustrated with the way that other people demand their own way. It's easy to get frustrated how other people want to tear others down. Other people want to thrust themselves into the spotlight but we so rarely see the very same sin in ourselves.
And one of the ways to help combat that is to surround yourself with people who are striving to live godly lives.
Because then what you see are the character traits of Christ's likeness in them and it inspires you with the Spirit's help to want to live like that. But if you surround yourself with people who argue and debate and fight and are hostile, your own pride will flourish in that scene.
So be careful because pride flourishes around prideful people. Secondly, make note of this. That as believers we are to be servants to all.
[23:36] We are to be servants to all. Go back to verse 34 for a minute. They kept silent because on the way they had argued with one another about who was the greatest.

Now, let your mind play out what this may have looked like here. Just picture the scene. Jesus, the leader, has just talked about going to the cross to die.
The apostles, who are supposed to be leaders, instead of meditating on spiritual matters, immediately get lost in this debate of which of them are better than somebody else.
And they get to the house and Jesus says, what are you talking about? And nobody wants to speak up. And so verse 35, speaking of Jesus, he sat down and called the twelve.
You can picture the scene in some way because if you're a parent, you know what it is when your kids have disobeyed and you've tried to talk to them and you're not getting any answers and so you say, it's time to talk.
[24:50] As a child, you know what it is when you've done something wrong and you thought you got by with it and your mom or dad says, we're dealing with this now.

They go silent. Jesus says, come to me. Pride for the apostles, just like for us, is not quickly conquered.
And so Jesus is going to slow it down and he's going to deal with this issue of pride. Jesus sat down and he called the twelve and here's what he said.
If anyone would be first, with just that phrase, he's hit on the very heart of the debate. They're arguing who's first place.
Who's the greatest among us? This isn't the first time this comes up. There's other examples where some of the apostles' mom comes to Jesus and says, in the kingdom, can my boys be right beside you?
[26:05] If you want to be first, they all perk up because they've just been arguing over who's the best.

He must be last of all and a servant of all. And in one sentence, he has diagnosed their sin, he has confronted their pride, and he shows them how to live differently.
Quit arguing about who's better than who and go serve people. Now there's a reason, I think, why this is what Jesus instructs them to do and it's because the only way to say, I will be a servant to all people is if you have a proper view of God and a proper view of yourself.
If you have an improper view of God, you will not be a servant to all people. You may be a servant to some. You might be a servant to those who you think it would be good for you.
You might be a servant to those who you think can repay you. You might be a servant to those you think are better than you. You might be a servant to those you think are above you. But if you don't have a proper view of God, you would never embrace this call to be a servant to all people.
[27:45] You also have to have a proper view of yourself because without a proper view of yourself, what you're going to do is size each other up, and you're going to say, you know what, I will serve them. I'm not serving them. I'm too good for them. Now, we wouldn't phrase it that way.

It's just the internal way that we measure things up in our heart. It happens all the time. Jesus is saying, you need to understand who God is, how holy He is, understand that human beings, all of us, are made in God's image, and yet all of us have fallen short of the glory of God. And if you want to spend your time arguing about who is the greatest amongst a group of sinners, you're engaging in a debate that's not even worth winning.

Downloaded from https://yetanothersermon.host

If me and my sons argued about who can jump the highest, I mean, one of the three of us, I guess, would win that. Who cares? None of us can jump. It's a pointless argument.
Well, so it is with the apostles talking about who among them would be the greatest. And Jesus says, you need to understand who God is and understand your own sinfulness.
And if you want a life of significance, which is what they've just been debating about, who's the greatest? Who's the preeminent one? Who's in first place? Whose life is most important?
[29:30] He says, if you want to have a life of importance, here's where you focus your attention. Be a servant of all. And now in verse 36, he took a child. There's a child there among them here in this house. He took a child and he put him in the midst of them. Now here's what you've got to understand. The way culture viewed children 2,000 years ago is very different than the way children are viewed today.

2,000 years ago, children had no power. They had very little status. They had no rights. They were often regarded even as insignificant, even in some cases as disposable.
It's hard for us to feel the full impact of what Jesus is doing because of the difference in our culture. In our world today, you go to the store and you see little kids screaming and yelling and talking back to their mom and you see children that are back talking to their teachers and you see players who are back talking to their coaches. I mean, that kind of stuff would have never happened 2,000 years ago. You go to the store and you see a little kid screaming and yelling at his mom and the mom, to try to get him to be quiet, offers to buy him something. Well, that's not happening in Palestine 2,000 years ago. It's just a very different world. Now, children should be protected.
Children should be honored. Children should be respected. Children should be safe. Absolutely.
But there was an understanding 2,000 years ago of the proper place of order in the home.
And all I want you to understand is the significance of what Jesus is saying here. That when you introduced a child into that discussion, it's not like this group of men where all of a sudden say, I wonder what the child thinks about this. That would have never entered their mind. Children had no status.
[31:53] And so, Jesus takes a child and puts him right in the midst of them and he takes the child in his arms.

He's showing a love and a compassion toward children that should be the case. A respect of children that should be present in every culture.
And then he says, whoever receives one such child in my name receives me.
How we relate to children, Jesus says, is directly connected to our view of God.
To these men who have been arguing about who's the greatest among themselves. Jesus says, let's get a proper view of God.
[33:00] Who he is. And the people he has made. And so, he takes a child, holds the child, and says, whoever receives one such child in my name.

Somebody who loves children for the sake of the name of Jesus. That person, Jesus says, is significant.
It's not about money or clout or respect or esteem. It's not about what even other leaders say about you.
Jesus says, if you want to be great, be a servant to all. Now, in our culture, it doesn't seem strange to think of us serving children.
But 2,000 years ago, this is a radical concept for these apostles to consider. That if you're answering the question of how do we become great, that you're going to tell us that the way to show that we really are significant is that we are a servant to children in the name of Jesus.
[34:17] And Jesus is helping these apostles understand that even the one that you think has no status, even the one who you think has no rank or no clout, is somebody made in the image of God and has intrinsic value because of that, and go serve them.

This is how you conquer pride. Be a servant to all. That's how you conquer pride.
Don't let there be people in your life that you overlook because you think you're better than them. Don't make distinctions of who you will serve based on earthly categories of who you think has higher value.
And so, at first, the inclusion of children here seems a little strange, maybe even a little out of place. But now I think we understand the very point Jesus is making.

Downloaded from https://yetanothersermon.host

These children who in that culture can't pay you back at all. They can't further your campaign at all. He says, go serve them.
[35:39] Remember when Jesus in other places of the Gospels talks about, invite the outcasts to your party because they can't repay you.

Go serve people because you know how great God is, because you understand every human being is made in the image of God, and that alone gives them intrinsic value and worth because they were formed by the hand of God, and there's nobody that you're too good to serve.
There's no one who's beneath you that you can't serve them, and that when you serve in the name of Jesus, the Lord himself is glorified and magnified through your service when you do it for the sake of his name, not for anything else you get in return.
This is Jesus' response to the apostles who have just been debating who is the greatest among us. You want to be great?
Go be a servant. You want to be significant? Go be a servant to all. You want to live a life of meaning? Go find people who can't repay you, who can't help you, who can't do anything for you in a political, economic sense like children in this culture, and just go love them.
[37:04] Jesus says that loving children and serving children, those who can't pay you back, is worship that is pleasing to God when it's done in the name of Jesus.

Jesus says that loving children and serving children, the smallest task that nobody sees when done for the sake of the name of Christ brings glory to his name.
Let's think of this very thing that Jesus is teaching here, and let's bring it into our church for a moment. There are ministries in our church that are public.
There are ministries in our church that everybody sees. There are people in our church that because of their calling or gifting or their responsibility, people know them. And there may be respect given to those people.
There may be at times criticism given to those people. There may be greater earthly rewards. There may be more earthly pressures, all those kinds of things. But just understand that the way we are to live in the church is simply this, to bring glory to Christ doing precisely what he's gifted and called us to do.
[38:25] And some do things publicly. That's what God's called them to do. But so many in our church spend their time serving those who can't repay them, serving those who can't even at times say thank you.

If you are in our preschool ministry and you're taking care of babies and one and two-year-old, I hope if you do that, I hope you enjoy it.
I hope you're blessed by it. But here's the reality of it. Those two-year-olds aren't going to tell you thank you so much for your ministry. Those two-year-olds aren't going to get together and say, you know what we should do?
We ought to make a collection and give a special gift to our Sunday school teacher at Christmas this year. And the smartest two-year-old organizes this little offering campaign and then presents it to them.
That's not going to happen in the preschool area. You're not real likely to teach any age group where people know all of your sacrifice.
[39:37] And if you're doing ministry so that everybody knows your sacrifice, then your focus is on yourself, not the Lord. That's his whole point here. I mean, every single Sunday, this is true here.

You look around the room, we've got about 150 extra chairs set out. Somebody had to set those out. Somebody's got to clean this place.
Our church is used all throughout the week, week after week after week, all throughout the year. Someone's got to make that ready. It's behind the scenes. People don't see that. We've got kids camp coming up tomorrow.
Someone's got to get transportation and drive the buses. And men and women have to take off work to go be sponsors at camp and be with our children. People have to serve as, or don't have to, but they serve as greeters, opening doors and helping people who are new to our church connect with the Sunday school class to go to.
And people take those who visit. And throughout the week, they follow up with them and take bread to them and welcome them to our church and see how we can serve them. Their names aren't known.

Downloaded from https://yetanothersermon.host

[40:56] Their faces aren't publicized. They're serving behind the scenes. But they're just using the gifts God's given them. And that's the point Jesus is making here is that what we want to be are servants and servants to all people.

So today, if we get eight families that are first-time guests, then we've got a team that's going to respond to them and they're going to take them a loaf of bread and they're going to just welcome them to our church and just send them a note.
Tell them that we're glad they came. If we can help you, let us know. What should never happen is you look at a list of who visited and you think, you know what? I wonder what neighborhoods they're in.
I wonder how big these houses are. And maybe we ought to follow up on the people in the big house and the people in the small house. We don't need to worry about them. You say, well, surely no church would be that foolish.
I hope not. But what the apostles are fighting about is who's the greatest on the heels of Jesus and I'm about to lay my life for you. Pride can surface in strange ways at strange times.
[42:13] And the way to overcome that is to have a proper view of God and a proper view of yourself and a proper view of other people and understand that our life is to be lived as a servant to all.

A servant to all. Every single week, there are a few people who exercise their spiritual gifts in front of hundreds of people, but most in our church exercise their gifts in front of just a few.
Some use their spiritual gifts with no audience at all. Some in our church, praise God for them, see themselves as their primary way to serve the church is to be faithful prayer warriors morning after morning after morning after morning praying where nobody sees, praying where nobody knows, praying where they don't get any earthly credit at all, but they're on the front lines of ministry using their gifts, serving the church by praying for the needs of the body of Christ.
And they get zero earthly reward for that. They do get eternal reward protected by Christ.
Jesus says, if you want to argue about being great, your focus is on the wrong person. But if you want to live a life of significance that's pleasing to the father, he picks up a child in his lap and says, this child who can't repay you, who can't help your business, this child who can't help your social standing, serve this child in my name.
[44:09] And by being a servant to all, you bring glory to the father. Pride flourishes around prideful people.

Number two, we're to be servants to all. And then a third thing I want to show you, this comes from Matthew's gospel. Matthew records this same event in Matthew chapter 18, verses 3 and 4, adds something that Mark did not include.
Matthew 18, 3 and 4 says, truly I say to you, unless you turn and become like children, you will never enter the kingdom of heaven. Whoever humbles himself like this child is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven.
So write down thirdly, that humility is required for repentance. Repentance is realizing your own helplessness. It's seeing your own failure. It's turning to God in faith, like a child who runs to his parents in repentance.
We run to our father, knowing he alone can save us. Now this is why Jesus is holding a child. Because these men, who have for some reason, become so impressed with themselves, need to be humbled.
[45:37] And while they're arguing about who's the greatest among them, Jesus picks up a child and says, to be greatest in the kingdom, Matthew 18, 4, you need to be as this child.

Not telling us to be childish, but telling us to have a child-like awareness of our need for our father. Maybe in a similar way, if you had a group of young little boys spinning out of the house, and they were wrestling and arm wrestling, and they were arguing about who's the strongest, who's the biggest, who's the baddest of us all, and then a really, really big storm breaks out, everybody wants to be with mom and dad.
Or you get a group of third grade boys together, and they're arguing about who's the biggest, baddest guy of all, until the sixth grade boy comes down and wants to pick a fight, and now all of a sudden, they're running for big brother, running for dad.
These pointless debates, like who's the strongest third grader in the world? Who cares? Because when they get to be fourth graders, they're not going to be real impressed with a third grader

Downloaded from https://yetanothersermon.host

anymore.
[47:13] And whoever the best athlete is in middle school, I mean, good for you, but wait till you go to high school next year, you're not so bad. And whoever the great high school athletes are, wait till you go to college, and you find out there's a lot of people a whole lot better than I, and it just keeps going on and on.

And we have all these pointless debates over who's the best of us, when in reality, we ought to understand we're way too impressed with ourselves. So how do you fight that?
Well, you've got to have a proper view of the holiness of God, a proper view of humans made in the image of God, and the proper view of your own sinfulness, and you show your love for God, and you fight your own pride by being a servant to all.
And in the sense of repentance, you have to become like a child. When you look at someone with a new baby, you look at that baby, and that baby can be beautiful and handsome and sweet and precious and all these things.
But if you lay that baby down and walk away, that baby can't do anything. That baby's completely dependent on somebody else for survival.
[48:51] And Jesus says to the apostles, while you're arguing about who's the greatest among you, let me tell you what repentance is.

It's being completely dependent like a child and running to your heavenly father, acknowledging you need somebody else completely.
It's the complete antithesis of pride. It's recognizing your total inability to save yourself.
And with that childlike dependence and that childlike trust, you run to the father.
And in this brief conversation, Jesus confronts them of their pride, corrects them of their sin, honors the value of a child, honors the value of hidden sacrifice, of that kind of service and ministry that people don't see and that people don't necessarily recognize.
[50:14] But God the Father sees and says that if you want to be great in the kingdom, it's only going to happen by dedicating your life to the greatness of His name, not your name.

And in this brief conversation, Jesus is inviting the apostles to repent of their sin.
He is inviting them to care about those who are overlooked. He is inviting them to live their lives by serving all people unto the glory of the Lord.
And so I want to close our time of worship by offering those same invitations to you. First, I invite you to repent of your sin just as Jesus in Matthew 18 told them.
Turn from your sin and run to the Father. confess your need for a Savior and your own sinful guilt and cling to the grace of the Father.
[51:32] I invite you who are Christians to recommit your life to be people of service, to be servants to all, using your spiritual gifts in the body of Christ for the glory of Jesus.

and some of you, your gifts have you teaching classes and people know you and see you and recognize you and others of you are teaching small classes and some of you are teaching adults who can tell you what they're learning and others of you are teaching young children who can't even express that yet.
Some of you are teaching people who are so grateful for your ministry and others of you are teaching people who you think that they don't even care if you're there or not. But stay faithful. Keep serving. It's not about your name. It's about Christ's name. And don't ever think that you're too good to serve somebody else.
That's Jesus' whole point here. I invite you to dedicate your life to be people of service. And then finally, I invite you this morning to live all of your life as an act of worship before the Lord.
[52:45] all of your life as an act of worship before the Lord. If we don't do that, we're going to be prideful people.

And we're going to engage in pointless debates like which of us is the greatest. who cares? Worship's not about our name. Ministry's not about our name. It's about His. Lord, so all things for His glory by being a servant to all as a way of living all of our life as an act of worship for the good of each other and the glory of Christ.
Lord, let's pray. Lord, we thank You for Your Word today and pray that it would be used by Your Spirit to give us understanding.
we pray that we would respond with obedience to Your invitation for sinners to repent, for Christians to serve, for us to use our life for the kingdom, not ourselves.

Downloaded from https://yetanothersermon.host

[54:13] Give us a deep love and passion for the sake of Your name, not our own. We're grateful for the patience You have with us.

May we be patient with each other. And when we see the apostles engage in such silly things rather than us being quick to condemn, may it drive us to seek to fight that very same sin in our own heart so that because of the work of Your Spirit, Your Son, the Lord Jesus, could be magnified in our life. Let that be our heart's passion. Let that be true of our congregation. Let that be true of our congregation. Let that be true of our congregation.
Let that be true of our congregation. Let that be true of our congregation. Let that be true of our congregation. Let that be true of our congregation. Let that be true of our congregation. Let that be true of our congregation. Let that be true of our congregation. Let that be true of our congregation. Let that be true of our congregation. Let that be true of our congregation. Let that be true of our congregation. Let that be true of our congregation. Let that be true of our congregation. Let that be true of our congregation.
Let that be true of our congregation. for our congregation. for our congregation. for our congregation.

Downloaded from https://yetanothersermon.host