



CORNERSTONE REFLECTION GUIDE

MARCH 15, 2026

Title: Who Is the Greatest?

Preacher: Alex Johnston

Scripture: Matthew 18:1-9

We live in a world obsessed with greatness, which is measured by success, influence, recognition, and achievement. Whether through social media, career status, or personal accomplishments, we are constantly evaluating where we stand compared to others. Like the disciples, we often ask, “*Who is the greatest?*” or, more personally, “*How can I be great?*”

In Matthew 18, Jesus responds to this question in a way that challenges our assumptions. Instead of pointing to power or prestige, he places a child in their midst and says that **true greatness begins with humility**. In Jesus’ day, children had no status, no power, and no influence. They were overlooked and dependent. Yet Jesus says that unless we “turn” and become like them, we cannot even enter the kingdom of heaven (Matthew 18:3-5).

In God’s kingdom, greatness isn’t found in climbing higher but in going lower—serving others, especially the vulnerable and overlooked. At the same time, Jesus warns that chasing worldly greatness can leave a trail of wounded people behind. True discipleship requires a radical reorientation that sees others as image-bearers and reshapes how we think, act, and relate.

Ultimately, Jesus points to the cross as the clearest picture of greatness. He did not grasp for power but gave himself away in sacrificial love. To follow him is to take up our cross by laying down our crown, embracing humility, and becoming people marked by sacrificial love.

LITANY OF HUMILITY

O Jesus! Meek and humble of heart, hear us.

From the desire of being esteemed, deliver us, O Jesus.

From the desire of being loved, honored, or praised deliver us, O Jesus.

From the desire of being preferred to others, deliver us, O Jesus.

From the desire of being consulted or approved, deliver us, O Jesus.

From the fear of being humiliated or despised, deliver us, O Jesus.

From the fear of being forgotten, deliver us, O Jesus.

From the fear of being ridiculed or wronged, deliver us, O Jesus.

That others may be loved more than we, Jesus, grant us the grace to desire it.

That others may be esteemed more than we, Jesus, grant us the grace to desire it.

That, in the opinion of the world, others may increase, and we may decrease; Jesus, grant us the grace to desire it.

That others may be chosen and we be set aside, That others may be praised and we go unnoticed, That others may be preferred to us in everything, Jesus, grant us the grace to desire it.

That others may become holier than we, provided that we may become as holy as we should, Jesus, grant us the grace to desire it. **Amen.**

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. What stuck out to you about this sermon? Was there an idea that was particularly meaningful or challenging for you?
2. Read Matthew 18:1-5. Why did Jesus use the example of a child to define greatness, and how does this challenge our understanding of greatness?
3. Who are the “lowly” or overlooked people in our everyday lives? What would it look like to intentionally welcome and value them?
4. Read Matthew 18:6-9. Jesus speaks about removing anything that causes us or others to stumble. What patterns of thinking (eye), habits (hand), or ways of living (foot) might need to change in us?
5. What are some practical ways we can take up our cross and lay down our crowns?

WEEKLY PRACTICE

[Lent](#), the season between Ash Wednesday and Easter Sunday, is traditionally a time for self-reflection and examination—for thinking. These 40 days are often marked by a commitment to fast from certain foods, abstain from particular habits, or adopt new spiritual practices, all with the desire to prepare our hearts for the coming of Easter and the promise of new life.

Week Four: Pray on Your Knees

Kneeling is a physical reminder that we are not self-sufficient—that we come before God dependent, surrendered, and open. It places our bodies in alignment with the posture Jesus calls us to: not striving to rise above others, but willingly lowering ourselves before God. As followers of Jesus, we're called not just to learn about God but to be with God. Our faith is first and foremost a relationship with our Creator, and just like any relationship, it requires time and intentionality. One of the ways we spend intentional time with God is through the practice of prayer. This week, begin and end each day by physically getting on your knees to pray if you are able. This is a great practice to do with your family or on your own. At the end of the week, reflect on your experience: Did changing your posture during prayer change the way you prayed?