

Servolution

I wonder what our city would be like if we had the greatest Christians in the history of the church walking around our streets today!

- 1) The greatness of the **apostle Peter** – His shadow passed over people and they were healed.
- 2) The greatness of the **apostle Paul** – He wrote two-thirds of the New Testament
- 3) How about the greatness of **Polycarp**?

He was the last living spiritual son of John the apostle. He was threatened to deny Christ or be burned at the stake. Polycarp said, "86 years have I served Him, and He has never done me wrong. How can I blaspheme Him, my King, who has saved me? I am a Christian." The crowd called for him to be burned, and he was burned at the stake **without ropes**.

- 4) **John Wycliff** was a great Christian.

John Wycliffe was born in England in 1320 and became an Oxford University Professor. He declared the Bible to be the only rule of faith, not the Church. He translated the Bible into English from Latin so that all could read it. He and his followers spread Bibles and his teachings all over England. A law was passed to burn his followers as heretics. Thousands were martyred, but God preserved him and protected him until he died in peace in 1384.

29 years later, a readable Bible led to a move of God. It made the corrupt Catholic church so mad that they dug up his bones and burned them in a heap for this heresy!

- 5) How about the greatness of **Count Von Zinzenforf**?

At age 22, he established a village in Herrnhut, Germany as a refuge for about 300 persecuted protestant Christians in the 1700's. There, God used him to start a movement among the Moravians. Incredibly, they set up a watch of continuous prayer that ran uninterrupted, **24 hours a day, for 100 years**. These believers were the first protestant Christians to seriously obey the Great Commission. They were in Europe in 1732; they were on ships sailing to the Virgin Islands preaching the gospel of Christ. In the 1740's, they focused on the British colonies in America. Then they began to evangelize the Native Americans, treating them as equals.

There are great people in the world doing great things for Christ and yet, we find that Jesus said greatness is not defined by the things a person does; greatness is defined by the condition of one's heart.

Mark 9:33-35 - *And they came to Capernaum. And when he was in the house he asked them, "What were you discussing on the way?" v.34 But they kept silent, for on the way they had argued with one another about who was the greatest. v.35 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."*

Jesus said it again in Matthew 20:26-28 when James' and John's mother was trying to manipulate Jesus to give her sons a high rank in His Kingdom. Jesus said to them...

"... whoever would be great among you must be your servant, v.27 and whoever would be first among you must be your slave, v.28 even as the Son of Man came not to be served but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many."

- It's hard to understand in our world how any servant can be the greatest isn't it?
Especially in a world where being loud, goal-driven, self-made, self-centered, powerful and wealthy is the key for greatness.
- To Jesus, greatness is not defined by what you accomplish in life, rather it is defined by the condition of your heart!

Katrina: This year marks the ten year anniversary of Hurricane Katrina. Being from Louisiana, I can remember the panic and pressure my family members were under during the floods in New Orleans.

My very own uncle had to cut himself out of his roof with an axe because his house had flooded. I have a cousin, a paraplegic, who was lost for several days and finally some family members found him safe having been rescued and evacuated to a hospital in Houston.

I also remember hearing stories of how several churches banded together to serve and support the hurting.

The need was so great! Church sanctuaries became emergency shelters.

It was in this traumatic setting that greatness of the Kingdom was awakened, especially in the churches. It was like a revolution of cooperation occurred.

This revolution of serving people became what one of the pastors called a **SERVOLUTION!**

A **SERVOLUTION** is where the greatness of the Kingdom arises because God's people **WEEP** over the things which break the heart of God.

A **SERVOLUTION** is where the greatness of the Kingdom arises because God's people are putting **OTHERS FIRST**.

A **SERVOLUTION** is where the greatness of the Kingdom arises because people of different backgrounds and distinctions **WORK TOGETHER** for the good of someone in need.

The church today doesn't need great Christians with great abilities and great wealth. What the church needs today is Christians with serving hearts... humble hearts that serve others. Then greatness will arise!

A Religious Spirit vs. A Servant's Heart

Luke 7:36-50 - One of the Pharisees asked him to eat with him, and he went into the Pharisee's house and reclined at the table. v.37 And behold, a woman of the city, who was a sinner, when she learned that he was reclining at table in the Pharisee's house, brought an alabaster flask of ointment, v.38 and standing behind him at his feet, weeping, she began to wet his feet with her tears and wiped them with the hair of her head and kissed his feet and anointed them with the ointment. v.39 Now when the Pharisee who had invited him saw this, he said to himself, "If this man were a prophet, he would have known who and what sort of woman this is who is touching him, for she is a sinner."

v.40 And Jesus answering said to him, "Simon, I have something to say to you." And he answered, "Say it, Teacher." v.41 "A certain moneylender had two debtors. One owed five hundred denarii, and the other fifty. v.42 When they could not pay, he cancelled the debt of both. Now which of them

will love him more?" v.43 Simon answered, "The one, I suppose, for whom he cancelled the larger debt." And he said to him, "You have judged rightly."

v.44 Then turning toward the woman he said to Simon, "Do you see this woman? I entered your house; you gave me no water for my feet, but she has wet my feet with her tears and wiped them with her hair. v.45 You gave me no kiss, but from the time I came in she has not ceased to kiss my feet. v.46 You did not anoint my head with oil, but she has anointed my feet with ointment.

v.47 Therefore I tell you, her sins, which are many, are forgiven—for she loved much. But he who is forgiven little, loves little." v.48 And he said to her, "Your sins are forgiven." v.49 Then those who were at table with him began to say among themselves, "Who is this, who even forgives sins?" v.50 And he said to the woman, "Your faith has saved you; go in peace."

1) Different Cultures but the Same Heart Conditions

a) Honor vs. Shame

- i) Our culture today puts a primary focus on money and time. In the ancient world, these may have been important but they were less significant than honor and respect.
- ii) Honor refers to the public acknowledgment of a person's worth, while shame would be avoided at all cost because it demonstrated a lack of worth.

(1) Children were raised from birth to seek honor and avoid disgrace.

(2) Insulting someone or disgracing them in any way publicly would have been far more serious than it is today.

b) The Religious Spirit

- i) This Pharisee, Simon, with his religious spirit, invites Jesus over for dinner and Jesus agrees to come.

(1) It was the guest's job to respect his host by removing his shoes when invited to dinner.

(2) It was the host's job to honor his guest by having one of his servants wash the feet or if he had no servants, the host would do it himself. At the very least, a host would provide water for the guest to wash himself.

(a) Foot washing was a gross job and so it was most often reserved for the lowliest person in the household.

(b) Jesus is an important and popular teacher so this would be the first thing Simon would have checked had he truly wanted to honor Jesus.

(3) In this culture, if you wanted to shame someone who entered your house all you would have to do was to make sure your servant did not wash their feet. They would then be forced to sit at the table with the shame of dirty smelly feet.

- ii) Watch out for this religious spirit!

(1) Simon may have wanted Jesus at his house, but he did not want to honor Jesus with a servant's heart.

(2) How often do we do the same? We want Jesus in our families. We want His power and His blessings but we often don't want Him to have control... to be first!

c) The Servant's Heart

i) I love Mary; she is making herself last, and in turn she demonstrating the **greatness** of the His Kingdom.

ii) She has died to her need to be honored; her only concern is the honor of Jesus.

iii) She brought cultural shame on herself to wipe away the shame and disgrace that had been put on Jesus by this religious spirit that says, "I am too good to stoop that low and wash another's feet."

2) By Serving Others, we Honor Jesus

a) One of the greatest acts of worship Jesus ever received was this sinful woman washing His feet with her tears and her hair.

One writer says, "Her concern for Him and total disregard for herself sang louder than all the choirs in all the churches of men put together."

b) We still have opportunities for great acts which worship Jesus today!

"Mother Teresa told a story of how one of their sisters had spent an entire day bathing the wounds of a dying beggar who was brought to them from the streets of Calcutta. Mother Teresa's voice dropped to a whisper as she told the hushed auditorium that, in reality, the nun had been bathing the wounds of Jesus. She insisted that Christ tests the love of His followers by hiding in grotesque disguises to see if we can still see Him."

A Servant's Heart:

i) A servant's heart sees Christ in the needs of others.

ii) A servant's heart loves Christ by loving the unloved.

iii) A servant's heart will suffer shame in the eyes of the world just so Christ Jesus is honored.

Jesus said in Matthew 25:35-36; 40...

When I was hungry, and you fed me. When I was thirsty, and you gave me a drink. When I was a stranger, and you invited me into your home. v.36 When I was naked, and you gave me clothing. When I was sick, and you cared for me. When I was in prison, and you visited me.

v.40 For when you did these things to least honored of those around you, you did it unto me!

The greatness of the Kingdom is not seen by great and magnificent accomplishments. In fact, it is insignificant people with magnificent servant's hearts who reveal the greatness of the Kingdom! Let's start a servolution! ...a movement that reveals His greatness!