

WEDNESDAY, APRIL 15**The Greatest Offense**

- Imagine walking w/ Jesus = wake up near Him / eat meals w/Him
 - hear Him pray / when no one else is listening
- Watch Him touch lepers/ forgive sinners / silence storms / raise dead
- Crowds press in everywhere you go—and out of all those people
 - **He chose UNDESERVING you** = to be one of the Twelve
- That kind of closeness to divine love / divine righteousness
 - should impact person's character = w/ positive change
- Yet / at one of most sacred moments = of Jesus' earthly ministry
 - **on very night / Jesus is preparing / to give His life**
 - something shocking happens
 - disciples break into argument over **STATUS**

Luke 22:24 “Now there was also a dispute among them, as to which of them should be considered the greatest.”

- You would think that after years of walking w/ Christ
 - pride would have been uprooted
- Instead /grew insidiously = quietly / gradually / in subtle way
 - but w/harmful effect
- Each man = measuring himself against the others
 - wondering **WHO** mattered most
- And how does Jesus respond?
 - He does not shame them / He does not raise His voice
 - He **REDEFINES GREATNESS**

Luke 22:25–26 ²⁵And He said to them, “The kings of the Gentiles exercise lordship over them..., ²⁶**But not so among you**; on the contrary, he who is greatest among you, let him be as the younger, and he who governs as he who serves.

- Heart of His message = “But not so among you.”
- World says greatness means = being noticed
 - Jesus says greatness means = being lowered
- World says greatness means authority

- Jesus turns understanding of greatness upside down
 - says greatness means service

Luke 22:27 “For who is greater, he who sits at the table, or he who serves? Is it not he who sits at the table? Yet I am among you as the One who serves.”

- Greatest One in room = Creator of heaven/ earth = the Servant

Philippians 2:5–7 “Let this mind be in you which was also in Christ Jesus... who made Himself of no reputation, taking the form of a servant.”

- Servant leadership = heart of Jesus
- Servant leadership = greatness in God’s kingdom
- Yet / if we are honest = this is where struggle lies
- Pride is subtle = doesn’t always announce itself = often hides behind
 - spiritual language / religious activity / even leadership
- Disciples were debating **status**
 - Pride whispers = “I matter more.”
 - Self-sufficiency says = “I don’t need help.”
 - Comparison says = “At least I’m better than them.”
- And Scripture warns us = this is no small issue

Christ’s Object Lessons, p. 154 “There is nothing so offensive to God or so dangerous to the human soul as pride and self-sufficiency. Of all sins it is the most hopeless, the most incurable.”

- Why is pride so dangerous? Because = **pride blinds us**
- Keeps us from seeing = our true condition
- Convinces us that we are fine = when we are not

Revelation 3:17 describes tragic self-deception: “You say, ‘I am rich, have become wealthy, and have need of nothing’—and do not know that you are wretched, miserable, poor, blind, and naked.”

- Pride avoids self-examination = resists repentance
- Pride keeps us from = kneeling before God

James 4:6 “God resists the proud, but gives grace to the humble.”

- Pride does not just weaken our relationship w/ God = it **blocks it**
- Hard truth = **We often cannot see our own pride**
- May be busy serving / busy teaching / busy doing good things
 - Yet inwardly = **self** sits on throne of our hearts

Matthew 23:12, Jesus said, “Whoever exalts himself will be humbled, and he who humbles himself will be exalted.”

- True humility = does not come from = trying harder
 - comes from surrendering deeper
- We must stop long enough / to self-diagnose
- We must ask God to reveal / what we cannot see

Psalms 139:23–24 “Search me, O God, and know my heart... and see if there is any wicked way in me.”

- GOOD NEWS = if you recognize / you cannot remove pride on your own = **you are already on = path of humility**
- God never asks us to fix ourselves = asks us to surrender ourselves

CHRIST’S OBJECT LESSONS, P. 159 powerful prayer: “Lord, take my heart; for I cannot give it. It is Thy property. Keep it pure, for I cannot keep it for Thee. Save me in spite of myself, my weak, unchristlike self. Mold me, fashion me, raise me into a pure and holy atmosphere, where the rich current of Thy love can flow through my soul.”

- Prayer of someone who understands / gospel =
- Not “Lord, look how strong I am,”
 - but “Lord, I cannot do this without You.”
- Not pride /but humility= not self /but surrender
- **Luke 22:26 = NOT so among you**
- Not greatness / as world defines it = but greatness / as Jesus lives it
- Jesus = greatest of all = knelt / washed feet
 - He touched / lowest = He served to / point of death
- Now = He invites us to walk / same path
- May God give us eyes to see / hearts to yield
 - and lives that reflect **our Servant King**