

Sunday 19th September 2021

Trinity 16

The least is the greatest

Today's Gospel reading is from Mark's gospel (chapter 9, verses 30-37)

They went on from there and passed through Galilee. Jesus did not want anyone to know it; for he was teaching his disciples, saying to them, 'The Son of Man is to be betrayed into human hands, and they will kill him, and three days after being killed, he will rise again.' But they did not understand what he was saying and were afraid to ask him.

Then they came to Capernaum; and when he was in the house he asked them, 'What were you arguing about on the way?' But they were silent, for on the way they had argued with one another about who was the greatest. He sat down, called the twelve, and said to them, 'Whoever wants to be first must be last of all and servant of all.' Then he took a little child and put it among them; and taking it in his arms, he said to them, 'Whoever welcomes one such child in my name welcomes me, and whoever welcomes me welcomes not me but the one who sent me.'

🤔 What does it take to be the best? This is a question that might arise when we are thinking about sports stars or musical stars who are very well known or who are top competitors in their chosen sport. What makes these people so awesome? Usually we recognise these figures as "heroes" because they have won a lot of awards or games. To get where they are, they have probably worked hard and practised a lot. We honour people who have risen to the top and become the "greatest".

Yet in this Gospel passage, we see that God has different ideas about greatness. Jesus tells his disciples that to be great requires thinking less of ourselves and recognising who is truly in control of our lives.

What do you think it takes to be great as a disciple of Jesus? This is something that the disciples of Christ were asking. In fact, they were arguing about it! Jesus had been teaching and describing things that would happen to him. Those of his disciples who were arguing might have been trying to figure out how to identify the "best" among them. But Jesus turned their conversation upside down. He told them that to be first, they must become last.

What does this mean? Jesus wants his disciples to be humble. Striving to be "the best" is not always best. Greatness in God's kingdom does not depend on power or talent, but on putting others first. As followers of Jesus, we should serve one another and help each other.

Jesus also wanted to remind his disciples (and us) that we depend on him for all we have. While he was talking, Jesus picked up a small child. Back then, children were not seen as very important, and people often did not pay much attention to them, but Jesus told his followers that if they welcomed children, and gave attention to them and to other people who did not have much status and esteem, they would truly be doing his work. Welcoming children would be like welcoming Jesus himself.

In a way, we are like children, because we depend on God for all we have. We might think of ourselves as "great" sometimes, or try to become that way, but all that we have and all of who we are is in

Christ. We aren't great because we are famous, or can score goals or win tennis matches! We are great in God's eyes when we follow him and recognise his greatness. We can pray for strength, and recognise that it comes from the Lord.

A prayer for this week:

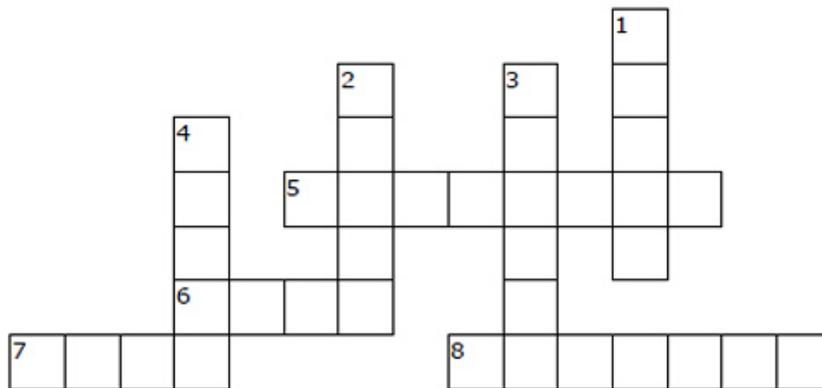
Dear God, you are truly the greatest.
 Help us to think less of ourselves and more of you
 and to serve one another,
 in Jesus' name, Amen.

(With thanks to "Sunday School Works")

Who Is the Greatest?

Sitting down, Jesus called the Twelve and said, "Anyone who wants to be first must be the very last, and the servant of all." Mark 9:35

Puzzle is based on Mark 9:30-37



ACROSS

5. A person or thing of the highest quality or character
6. The one coming after all others
7. A public way for the travel of vehicles, people, and animals
8. Someone who is employed to perform services for others

DOWN

1. A building where people live, especially a family
2. The one coming before all others
3. Small in size
4. A very young person

LITTLE ROAD	LAST FIRST	SERVANT CHILD	GREATEST HOUSE
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Who Is the Greatest?

Sitting down, Jesus called the Twelve and said, "Anyone who wants to be first must be the very last, and the servant of all." Mark 9:35 (NIV)

Each number represents a letter of the alphabet. Substitute the correct letter for the numbers to reveal the coded words.



W	Y	Q	M	B	D	Z	R	U	V	K	H	C	A	L	J	N	I	S	E	P	F	G	O	T	X
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26

1. 22-18-8-19-25 _____
2. 15-14-19-25 _____
3. 8-24-14-6 _____
4. 15-18-25-25-15-20 _____
5. 13-12-18-15-6 _____
6. 12-24-9-19-20 _____
7. 23-8-20-14-25 _____
8. 19-20-8-10-14-17-25 _____
9. 14-8-4-19 _____
10. 17-14-4-20 _____

NAME	SERVANT	ROAD	GREAT	HOUSE
LAST	LITTLE	FIRST	ARMS	CHILD

A picture to colour:

