

The First Shall Be Last

1. The Desire for Supremacy

- A. *"In the regeneration, when the Son of Man sits on the throne of His glory, you who have followed Me will also sit on twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel"* - Mt 19:28. The apostles, thinking in earthly terms, argued over positions of power.
- B. Mt 20:20-24 - The selfish ambition of James and John (and ball-park mother):
1. Overestimated their ability; they were in "over their heads" - 20:22.
 2. Failed to understand nature of kingdom - 20:25-26.
 3. Inflamed jealousy in the others - 20:24.
- C. Jesus stresses humility, service - 20:27. Alternately, *"One is your Teacher ... and you are all brethren"* (Mt 23:8). The temptation to exalt self, lord over others:
1. Pushing of opinions, confusing personal views with doctrine, self as standard.
 2. Preachers lord it over brethren, often with brethren's blessing/encouragement.
 3. Cliques/favoritism develop within churches because people gravitate toward those who make them feel good, return invitations, pull them up socially - see Lk 14:12-14 - *"Invite the poor, maimed, lame, blind ..."*.

2. Jesus: Our Servant/King

- A. Last controversy over greatness: Passover. Jesus washes feet - Jn 13:12-17.
1. Jesus' own emotional needs were being neglected in a crucial time for the disciples were consumed with *themselves*.
 2. Jn 13:17 - *"If you **know** these things, happy are you if you **do** them."*
 3. To constantly expect others to serve our every need and satisfy our every whim is to be constantly frustrated and disappointed. "So-and-so didn't speak to me today." "I don't get anything out of Bible class." "Nobody ever comes to visit."
- B. *"Let this mind be in you ..."* - Phil 2:3-7. This is an **attitude**, mindset. How we choose to view ourselves and others.
- C. How arrogant to expect service when Jesus Himself came to serve - Mt 20:28.

3. An Active Principle

A. The passive principle: Rom 13:8-10 - “You **shall not** ... love does **no harm** to a neighbor ...”. This is the “fulfillment of the Law.”

1. Many judge their morality/spirituality by what they **don’t** do.
2. We cannot only be “anti” false doctrines/practices. We must be actively serving the Lord.

B. The active principle: Mt 7:12 - “*whatever you want men to do to you, **do** also to them, for this is the Law and the Prophets.*” This is exemplified in a number of specific commands:

1. “*through love serve one another*” - Gal 5:13.
2. “*bear one another’s burdens, and so fulfill the law of Christ*” - Gal 6:2.
3. “*let us pursue the things which make for peace and the things by which one may edify another ...*” - Rom 14:19.

C. How can we do this if we do not **know** each other or if our **self-interests** take a higher priority? Is this not the *sin of omission*? (Jas 4:17)

Conclusion: Life presents us with certain opportunities. When we let them go by, there may be other chances to serve, there may not be. “*Humble yourselves in the sight of the Lord and He will lift you up*” (Jas 4:10).