

## **The Sermon - In 10 Sentences or Less**

### Countercultural (Week 1) - Humility, Not Greatness:



1) This new series is derived directly from the first chapter of our summer book, "Surprise the World!" - over the next four weeks we'll be asking how we as Christians can live distinctly in 2021 America and as such "shine like stars" (Phil. 2.15) and evoke questions from those around us.

2) First, we took a deep dive into a short yet extraordinary text in the gospels about greatness - Matthew 18.1-5.

3) Jesus' disciples were arguing about who would be the greatest in the kingdom of heaven - almost assuredly they were thinking of "greatness" in culturally-defined ways, be it Roman "greatness" (unrivaled power, irresistible authority; see Mk. 10.35ff.) or the "greatness" of the Pharisees (prestige, honor, being the most influential voice in the room; see Mt. 23.1ff.)

4) They were also envisioning "greatness" as a kind of zero sum game: that is, if I'm greatest, then you can't be.

5) In this way of defining greatness, it is inherently competitive, or as Nietzsche would label it, "the will to power" (either you have power, or you want it).

6) Jesus used a simple object lesson to upend their understanding of greatness: He brings a child into the center of their discussion, and says the great in His Kingdom will emulate the humility of this child (Mt. 18.4).

7) And Jesus makes it clear that the greatness of childlike humility will require a "change" (a turning of directions) from what's usual for adults (Mt. 18.3).

8) True humble childlike greatness is easily overlooked, just like the children in that crowd while the disciples argued amongst themselves.

9) True humble childlike greatness also trusts and responds, just like that child who without hesitation came to the Jesus he or she did not know to be used as an object lesson; the late Mike Yaconilli calls this trait "spiritual abandon."

10) Thus, to experience and share the kingdom of heaven we who are adults must rediscover what children inherently do better than us - their imaginations are more unfettered, they ask more questions, they ask for help more readily, they make less assumptions about people and thus form friendships more easily, and they laugh far more often, for example.

## Recommended Resources

1) This is the book Pastor Chris mentioned during the sermon yesterday, a great and easy read about childlike faith - [Dangerous Wonder \(with Discussion Guide\): Yaconelli, Michael](#)

2) Interested in the science of what children do better than adults? There's a lot out there on the internet, here's one article that packs a lot of research into one short piece - [What Humble Kids Have in Common](#)