

“True Greatness”

Luke 7:24-35

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I. Introduction

- A. The world has many standards by which it measures greatness
 - 1. Intellectual
 - 2. Political
 - 3. Military
 - 4. Scientific
 - 5. Wealth
 - 6. Fame
 - 7. Athletic skill
- B. For Christians, the question is, how does God measure greatness?
 - 1. “Concerning John the Baptist, there is not a greater prophet” (v. 28)
 - 2. The question is, what made John so great?

II. John’s Personal Character (Luke 7:24-25)

- A. He was a man of strong conviction (v. 24)
 - 1. John’s question in verse 20 might have led some to wonder about John’s commitment to Jesus as the Messiah
 - 2. Honest questions are not a sign of weakness
 - 3. With the disciples of John now gone, Jesus turned to the crowds of people and spoke words of praise for John (v. 24)
 - 4. John did not hear them nor His disciples
 - 5. Jesus asked three rhetorical questions

III. Jesus Asked the First Question (Luke 7:24)

- A. John was not like a reed easily swayed by the wind
 - 1. John was a man of unwavering convictions
 - 2. Illustration- He stood up to the Scribes and Pharisees
 - 3. Illustration- John Bunyan- points out in Pilgrim’s Progress that “Mr. Pliable” does not go to prison for the truth
 - 4. How about you? Does the truth matter?
 - a) It did to John. The reason he was great
 - b) John would rather suffer than be silent, and die than lie
 - c) He would not play to the crowd to win their approval
 - d) “Right is right even if everyone is against it and wrong is wrong even if everyone is for it.” – William Penn
 - e) “A double minded man is unstable in all his ways” (James 1:8).
 - f) “Tossed to and fro” (Ephesians 4:14)
 - 5. How do you become a person of conviction?
 - a) A love and fear of God
 - b) A hatred for sin

- c) A submission to Scripture (high view of Scripture)
- d) Our lives, like John's, must be marked by strong convictions

IV. Jesus Asked the Second Question (Luke 7:25)

- A. He was a man of consecration (v. 25)
 - 1. His whole lifestyle was a visual protest against self-indulgence
 - 2. John was a Nazarite
 - 3. What a contrast to this world. Lust of the flesh, lust of the eyes, pride of life
 - 4. For the child of God (our self-indulgent age)
 - a) (Colossians 3:1)
 - b) (1 Peter 2:11-12)
 - 5. Courage, conviction, consecration

V. John's Privileged Calling (Luke 7:26-28)

- A. In what way was John much more than a prophet (v. 26)
 - 1. His privileged calling (v. 27)
 - 2. "Born of women" (v. 28)
 - a) No greater prophet
 - 3. "The least in the kingdom of God is greater than he" (v. 28)
 - 4. The blessing of living in the Kingdom
 - 5. "All spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ" (Ephesians 1:3)
 - a) Chosen us (Ephesians 1:9)
 - b) Adopted us (v. 5)
 - c) Made us accepted in the beloved (v. 6)
 - d) Redeemed us (v. 7)
 - e) Forgiven us (v. 7)
 - f) Made known unto us His will (v. 9)
 - g) Sealed us with the Holy Spirit (v. 13)

VI. The People and the Counsel of God (Luke 7:29-30)

- A. What hardened the hearts of the Pharisees and lawyers that they would not repent?
 - 1. Familiarity
 - a) Christians today in church
 - 2. Shallowness
 - a) Satan works hard to keep you from thinking too deeply about sin
 - b) "He that hath slight thoughts of sin never had great thoughts of God" – John Owen
 - 3. Self-righteousness
 - a) A shallow or forgotten understanding of sin is a road of self-righteousness. Like the man who came to the preacher after the sermon and said, 'I can't swallow what you say about depravity.' Fortunately, the preacher had his wits and responded, 'That's all right its already with you.' Self-righteousness leaves people sitting in their pews, hearing preaching but never being moved to do anything in response.
 - 4. Sin's grip

- a) You don't want to forsake your sin
- b) They put themselves outside the blessings of God by rejecting God's counsel. They would not give Jesus an open hearing when He came.

VII. The Parable of the Children (Luke 7:31-35)

- A. Jesus is profiling his rejectors (v. 31)
 - 1. "Fast or feast, funeral or wedding, John or Jesus, nothing and no one pleased them" – William MacDonald
 - 2. We must give up the idea of trying to please everyone
 - 3. "The truth of the messages of John and Jesus should be seen in your life" (v. 35)