



This Sunday we continued with our new topical series at Magdalen Road, looking at the counter-cultural 'shape' of the Christian life – especially that 'the way down is the way up'. Why is it that God says we must be weak to be strong, foolish to be wise, go through suffering to enjoy glory, be slaves to enjoy true freedom? We will, each week, be seeking to challenge our 'natural' thinking processes, asking God to help us to think more and more as he does – and trust him that what he says is best.

This week, as it was Dan's induction we were thinking particularly about leadership and greatness, and how, to be a Christian leader we might remain humble. We began our time together chewing over the fact that from the management book 'Good to Great' one of the findings was that many truly great leaders of achieving companies are self-effacing and humble.

The foundation for the Christian Life

For our first point we zoomed in on 10v45 – a key verse for Mark's gospel as we seek to understand both the identity and mission of Jesus. We noted that the Son Of Man title is an interesting one, drawing in different ideas from the Old Testament. In Daniel 7 it pictures a powerful apocalyptic ruler, whilst in Ezekiel (described as Son of Man), he is a servant who suffers: a prophet rejected for speaking God's word.

Jesus, the Son of Man didn't come to be served (as he could have), but rather to serve others. He came to serve by giving his life as a ransom for many. We noted that the ransom terminology assumes we are in some way slaves, or in debt. We noted that the bible talks of us being in debt to God as we don't treat him as he deserves. Because of our debt, his love and goodness, Jesus came to die. We noted that this truth is a daily truth, and truth that keeps us humble.

The Foundation for Christian Leadership

10v45 comes because Jesus has been engaging with his disciples who want the top seat. They are thinking like the gentiles – wanting power, influence, respect, authority. They want to be great. Jesus re-defines greatness by calling them to humility. Walking the path that he walked and pouring out their lives as he did.

Here are just a few questions that might get things going, please feel very free to ignore / adapt for your group:

Describe some leaders you know! Whether from work or church or other areas of life.
What characteristics do you see in good leaders?
What about bad ones?
Why is leadership hard? Why do you think it's given a bad name?

Read 10v32-45

Do you blame James, John and the 10 for their desires?
Why / why not?

Why do you think Jesus uses the 'Son of Man' name here?
Why didn't he come?
Why did he come?
What does he mean by ransom?

So, how does Jesus re-define greatness?
What does it mean to be a servant?

Where do we struggle with this?
Why?
How can we help each other?

Is this idea of leadership replicable into a 'secular' work-place?
Why / why not?