

Believing For Greater Things: 3

Following The Master's Example

In this series we have already seen that

- God is greater than all
- God has magnified His Word above His name
- The Word must have first place in our lives.

John 13.16

“I tell you the truth, a servant is not greater than his master. A messenger is not greater than the one who sent him” (John 13.16, NCV)

We build our lives on the Word of God by giving it first place in our lives. We can only build by being obedient to the Word.

“But be doers of the word, and not hearers only, deceiving yourselves” James 1.22

If if we don't do or practice the Word we just get spiritually overweight and unhealthy – we deceive ourselves.

Listen to Jesus' words in Matthew 7.24-27 from Amplified Version

“So everyone who hears these words of Mine and acts upon them [obeying them] will be like a sensible (prudent, practical, wise) man who built his house upon the rock. And the rain fell and the floods came and the winds blew and beat against that house; yet it did not fall, because it had been founded on the rock. And everyone who hears these words of Mine and does not do them will be like a stupid (foolish) man who built his house upon the sand. And the rain fell and the floods came and the winds blew and beat against that house, and it fell--and great and complete was the fall of it”

The wise person builds his life by being obedient to the teachings of Jesus (the Word of God).

Let us look at the context from the chapter (John 13) where our text verse is found.

- Jesus has just sat down with His disciples and eaten the Passover meal (vs2)
- He gets up from the table, picks up water and a towel and begins to wash the feet of His disciples. (vs4-5)
- When finished He says to them “Follow my example – I have shown you what to do, now it's your turn to do as I have done” (my paraphrase) (vs14-15)

The Master Shows The Way

Jesus said that He had given them an example. The word employed here is *hupodeigma*, and it means 'to teach by showing something; a figure; a pattern; to illustrate a thing'.

Jesus taught His disciples something by His action and told them to do what He had shown them. I believe a key to understanding this is found in verse 17 - *“If you know these things, blessed are you if you do them.”*

Note verse 14, “If I then, your Lord and Teacher, have washed your feet, you also ought to wash one another's feet”. Good leaders will not ask something they are not prepared to

do themselves.

This was a pattern, an example for us. He is showing us the way that we should live for God – to do justly, love mercy, walk humbly (Micah 6.8)

- We are to live justly – do what is right, fair and proper
- love mercy – be merciful, loving and compassionate
- walk humbly – be humble before God

Jesus reprimanded Simon the Pharisee because he hadn't done what was right and expected of him (see Luke 7.44-46).

If You Want To Become Great, Be A Servant

God expects us to be compassionate and serve one another in love – being humble enough to serve.

Many people desire greatness, great ministries, great influence – become a servant, have a servant's heart – true greatness is in serving. Follow the example of Jesus.

Mark 10.42-45 (see also Matthew 20.20-28)

“But Jesus called them to Himself and said to them, “You know that those who are considered rulers over the Gentiles lord it over them, and their great ones exercise authority over them. Yet it shall not be so among you; but whoever desires to become great among you shall be your servant. And whoever of you desires to be first shall be slave of all. For even the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give His life a ransom for many.”

Matthew 10.24-25

“A disciple is not above *his* teacher, nor a servant above his master. It is enough for a disciple that he be like his teacher, and a servant like his master...”

Here Jesus states that a

- disciple (student) is not greater than his teacher
- servant is not greater than his master

But He went on to say that it is enough that they become like them – How is this achieved?

- by listening to what they say
- following the instructions they give
- following their example

It is enough for us to be like Jesus.

If you want to be great in the kingdom, or to see and do greater things then:

- listen to what God says
- don't be a hearer only, but be obedient to the Word of God
- follow the example of Jesus – who is greater than all.

Jesus Himself followed this same pattern - (John 8.28-29; John 12.49-50; John 15.15)

- He heard from the Father
- He said only what He heard His Father speak
- He did only what He His Father showed Him