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BIBLE ADVENTURES SCRIPT:

A1991 ~ Who is the Greatest?

Welcome to Bible Adventures. Help for today. Hope for tomorrow. Jesus is Lord of all.

In the 1970s, a world-famous heavy weight boxing champion proclaimed himself to be the greatest. In his sporting profession, he undoubtedly was! But there is more to life than our careers and achievements. In sport, champions grow old and their achievements become past memories. Recently that retired boxer was driven around a sports stadium in the United States at a baseball game. He's now aged 70 and shakes uncontrollably with a progressing disease he has fought for decades. His appearance today depressed his fans rather than inspired them.

Can greatness be expected to last longer than a sportsman's 50 years of acclaim and achievement? If we look at other fields of endeavour, we see that some writers have kept their fame in tack for at least 400 years. High school students remember the name of Shakespeare but with a groan. Some famous musicians like Mozart and Bach have had their compositions played yearly for a similar length of time.

Who then are the all-time famous and great people of the world? Can world rulers like Alexander the Great or Caesar Augustus of Rome be classed in this category? Although history records such people's brilliance, their glorifying achievements died with them. But how important is this greatness status anyway? Some people spend their whole lives chasing such fame while others have it thrust upon them when they were never looking for it.

The Holy Bible is the most sold and distributed book throughout world history. Many of its characters have become household names and mean something to those who know their Biblical story. The names of Adam and Eve, Noah and Abraham still have a current place and are common names in parts of the world. Yet while living, all these people had their faults and failings. Greatness, it has to be said, is measured in different ways by different people.

In today's Bible Adventure, let's see how the Lord Jesus showed the meaning of greatness.

DRAMA - [The Bible In Living Sound](#).

This incident is recorded in Chapter 9 of both Mark and Luke, and in Matthew, Chapter 18. Jesus totally reversed the accepted idea of greatness in society. Because Jesus looked at everything from an eternal perspective, His assessment of greatness was entirely different to that of His disciples. In the early stages of Jesus' ministry, John the Baptist was killed by Herod. Yet Jesus told the crowds listening to Him that John was greater than anyone who had ever lived. But Jesus also said that the person least in the Kingdom of Heaven is greater even than John!

Following the healing of the boy with a mute spirit, the disciples argued over who was the greatest among them. Jesus told them that whoever wanted to be first must place himself last of all and the servant of all. Those who are fully humble and self-denying are those who most resemble Christ and will be tenderly owned by Him. As a sign to the disciples, Jesus then took a small child in His arms and told them that whoever welcomes a child in His name as this one, will also welcome Him.

Jesus' ministry wasn't for adults only. In Matthew, Chapter 19, He said: "Let the little children come to Me, and do not forbid them; for of such is the kingdom of heaven."

Jesus also gave the disciples a warning about not causing a child to lose faith in Jesus. The person who turns a child away from trusting in Jesus will be punished severely by God. Jesus taught that children should not be looked down on or neglected. He explained that their angels in heaven are always in God's presence. Bad things done to children don't go unnoticed but are remembered at the highest levels of heavenly authority.

In Matthew, Chapter 23, Jesus warned the people that whoever makes himself great will be humbled, and whoever humbles himself will be made great. Greatness comes from humble service and not from trying to make ourselves look important.

This lesson on greatness didn't entirely convince the disciples. In Luke, Chapter 22, when the disciples were eating the final Passover meal with Jesus, Jesus again spoke about His betrayer being with them at the table and the miserable suffering that would soon befall him. Again the disciples wondered who would do such a terrible thing and argued further about who would become the greatest of Jesus' disciples.

Jesus made it clear to all of them that He followed the role of a servant and they must do so too. So what then is true greatness? The kingdom of heaven has its own standard of greatness, which is humility and servanthood.

How can anyone get into heaven in the first place? Jesus said that unless we change our attitudes and become like humble, trusting children, we will never enter into the Kingdom of heaven. Young children are willingly dependent on their parents and teachable. When an adult asks the Lord Jesus to forgive their sins and to be their Saviour, that person has many worldly habits and wrong ways of thinking to be changed to Christ's way. Christians need to be daily renewed in our minds and remember that we must become humble and willing to be the least of all.

Even further than that, Jesus said in Luke, Chapter 14, that if we want to be His disciples, we must love Him more than our immediate family. Our families, especially if they are non-Christian, believe that they should come first in our lives. When there's a clash of convictions and Christians choose to remain committed to Jesus and His Biblical standards, often family conflicts arise.

If we want to be in Christ and full of Christ, we must accept that He has the right to make the decisions in our lives. What He says goes, even if our loved ones disagree.

Why must this be so? Christians often find it difficult to learn to trust Christ. We say we love Him but in truth, often struggle to completely trust Him. According to one famous preacher, the middle verse in the Bible is Psalm 118, Verse 9, which says: "It is better to trust in the Lord than to put confidence in princes."

As servants of Christ, we need to trust our Master to do what is right. We can say we trust Him but then try to negotiate with God in prayer over what we think is best. We may also come to God believing He rewards those who earnestly seek Him, but then insist on being rewarded in the way we think we deserve.

If trust means anything, it means coming to God and saying, "Whatever You think is best is fine with me." In this position, we remain content with whatever He wants us to do. God doesn't often show us what He is planning for our future. He simply says, 'Trust Me.' A good verse to remember when we are lacking trust is Matthew, Chapter 6: "Look at the birds of the air; they do not sow or reap ... and yet your heavenly Father feeds them."

Having first established our trust in Jesus, we then need to balance it with the actions of 'doing'. Sometimes people pray to God for Him to act while they sit idly by, waiting for the results. A pastor went to a new church and found the congregation disheartened. They'd prayed and prayed for new people to come to their church without any results. But they hadn't considered that they themselves could go out in Jesus' Name to ask someone to come along to a service.

On a personal level, a person can wait for God to work a miracle for them while God is waiting for them to put in some serious effort or discipline towards reaching their desired goal. A man came to his pastor one day and said he'd been out of work for a few weeks. Would the pastor please pray for him? The pastor gladly agreed but first asked the man what he had done to find a job for himself. "Nothing," was the reply. "I'm waiting for God to find me work."

A writer once said, "God gives every bird its food but He doesn't throw it into the nest." Sometimes, God provides for Christians in amazing ways, even if our faith and actions are weak. But at many other times, God asks us to work at those things that we can achieve with the help of the Holy Spirit. He equips us as we work along. A famous preacher summed up the needed balance by saying, "We pray as if it all depended on God, and then we work as if it all depended on us."

Work can be divided up into physical tasks and spiritual opportunities, such as speaking to someone about God. Some people are serious about building up their experience of God but then very slow in sharing their learning and insights with others. 'Giving out' is as important as 'taking in.'

Some people find giving out harder to do and need to pray for strength to discipline themselves to make an extra effort. A good starting place for any Christian is to share something we have learnt from our personal devotions with other Christians, especially those that we know to be mature and kind.

Those who are taking in spiritual food but never giving any out, tend to become stale in their spirituality.

God has both a life purpose for us as well as the power to enable it to happen. God wants us to love Him and to do His bidding out of that love, in response to the greatest love ever known towards us. When we ask Jesus to do His work in us, the power of the Holy Spirit gives our life an overflowing quality and becomes the source of all our joy.

One preacher in the 1970s emphasised that a Christian student must understand that it is sin for him to be lazy, for mental laziness is a sin. If a student has a brain capable of earning a grade of an A, it is a sin for him to get only a B. If he is capable of earning a B, it is a sin for him to get only a C. If this is true in our mental life, it's also true in our spiritual life. Spiritual laziness is usually the cause of spiritual defeat.

Another famous preacher in the 19th Century once said: "We have plenty of people nowadays who could not kill a mouse without publishing it in the Gospel Gazette. Samson killed a lion and said nothing about it; the Holy Spirit finds modesty so rare that He took care to record it. Say much of what the Lord has done for you, but say little of what you have done for the Lord. Don't utter a self-glorifying sentence."

Being a servant of Christ means being unselfish with whatever He has given us.

The servanthood of Jesus Christ can be summed up in 1 Peter, Chapter 3, Verse 8b, which says: "Love one another, and be kind and humble with one another."

The drama is from The Bible In Living Sound.

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