

Gal. 22:24 Now there was also a dispute among them, as to which of them should be considered the greatest.

22:25 And He said to them, "The kings of the Gentiles exercise lordship over them, and those who exercise authority over them are called 'benefactors.'

22:26 "But not so among you; on the contrary, he who is greatest among you, let him be as the younger, and he who governs as he who serves.

22:27 "For who is greater, he who sits at the table, or he who serves? Is it not he who sits at the table? Yet I am among you as the One who serves.

22:28 "But you are those who have continued with Me in My trials.

22:29 "And I bestow upon you a kingdom, just as My Father bestowed one upon Me,

22:30 "that you may eat and drink at My table in My kingdom, and sit on thrones judging the twelve tribes of Israel."

22:31 And the Lord said, "Simon, Simon! Indeed, Satan has asked for you, that he may sift you as wheat.

22:32 "But I have prayed for you, that your faith should not fail; and when you have returned to Me, strengthen your brethren."

22:33 But he said to Him, "Lord, I am ready to go with You, both to prison and to death."

22:34 Then He said, "I tell you, Peter, the rooster shall not crow this day before you will deny three times that you know Me."

March 15, 2026 Luke 22:24–34

Sermon Title: "Just as the One Who Serves Among You"

[From Today's Sermon]

"The kings of the Gentiles lord it over them, and those in authority exercise power over them." We tend to imagine that a king should be strong—reigning over others and exercising power. This image evokes a dictator who rules from above, issuing strict orders, imposing his will, and making decisions without consultation—someone who is intimidating and arrogant. The desire to be at the top is often linked to the belief that one's own opinion should be absolute. "On the contrary, the greatest among you should be like the youngest, and the one who leads should be like a servant."

A newcomer and the least experienced. If we call someone the "greatest," they are the final decision-maker, the leader, and the person in charge; yet, they are told to be the least experienced newcomer. Can an organization be united in this way?

The word "leader" is used here. Unlike the plural form referring to the Gentile kings

mentioned earlier, this is written in the singular. A single leader. Immediately, we think of Jesus. Is there any leader among the disciples who surpasses Jesus? Jesus is the one and only Leader, both now and in the past. To try to take His place is a temptation from Satan. We should always keep Jesus in mind and consider ourselves the youngest. And surprisingly, Jesus lived that way before God and before people. Here is the model of a leader.

March has flown by, and we're already halfway through the month. Though there was a brief flurry of snow, it has definitely started to feel like spring. With the temperature fluctuations these days, please take good care of yourselves.

Now, we have moved on from the Book of Galatians, which we have been reading recently, to a passage in the Bible that depicts Jesus as He approaches His Passion.

According to the Gospel of Matthew, Jesus foretold His death and resurrection three times, and afterward, the mother of James and John began to say, "Grant that these two sons of mine may sit, one at Your right hand and one at Your left, in Your kingdom." . It is written that "when the other ten disciples heard this, they were indignant at the two brothers."

However, it seems the disciples did not fully understand the meaning of Jesus' death or the meaning of His resurrection.

Matthew 16:22 Then Peter took Him aside and began to rebuke Him, saying, "Far be it from You, Lord! That must never happen."

16:23 Jesus turned and said to Peter, "Get behind me, Satan! You are a stumbling block to me; you do not have in mind the concerns of God, but merely human concerns."

16:24 Then Jesus said to his disciples, "If anyone would come after me, let him deny himself and take up his cross and follow me.

16:25 For whoever wants to save their life will lose it, but whoever loses their life for my sake will find it.

16:26 What good is it for a person to gain the whole world yet forfeit their life? Or what can a person give in exchange for their life?

Luke 24:9 They returned from the tomb and told all these things to the Eleven and to all the others.

24:10 These women were Mary Magdalene, Joanna, and Mary the mother of James. The other women who were with them also told these things to the apostles.

24:11 But the apostles thought this was a foolish tale and did not believe it.

Matthew 28:16 Then the eleven disciples went to Galilee, to the mountain where Jesus had told them to go.

28:17 And when they saw him, they worshiped him. But some doubted.

People are astonishingly insensitive to the meaning of the Lord's salvation through Jesus' death on the cross, as well as to the victorious resurrection that followed—all part of God's profound providence. And despite three warnings, people flounder, hang their heads, doubt, and are bewildered.

Matthew 9:19 Jesus replied, "Oh, you faithless generation! How long must I be with you? How long must I put up with you? Bring the boy to me."

9:23 Jesus said to him, "Do you say, 'If it is possible'? Everything is possible for one who believes."

9:24 Immediately the father of the child cried out, "I do believe; help my unbelief!"

Luke 22:42 "Father, if you are willing, take this cup from me; yet not my will, but yours be done."

22:43 Then an angel from heaven appeared and strengthened him.

22:44 And being in agony, he prayed more earnestly; and his sweat became like great drops of blood falling to the ground.

22:45 When he had finished praying, he stood up and went to the disciples, and found them sleeping from grief,

22:46 and said to them, "Why are you sleeping? Rise and pray, lest you enter into temptation."

Mark 14:33 He took Peter, James, and John with him, and as he began to be deeply distressed and troubled, he said to them,

14:34 "My soul is overwhelmed with sorrow to the point of death. Stay here and keep watch."

14:35 And going a little farther, he fell on his face and prayed, saying, "If it is possible, let this cup pass from me." Then he said, 14:36 "Abba, Father, all things are possible for you. Take this cup from me. Yet not as I will, but as you will." 14:37 Then he came and found them sleeping, so he said to Peter, "Simon, are you asleep? Could you not keep watch for even a moment? 14:38 Watch and pray so that you will not fall into temptation; the spirit is willing, but the flesh is weak." People are weak and insensitive; they are captivated only by what lies within their own field of vision and quickly forget the words of the Lord, their Teacher. Yet,

even without fully understanding the Lord's death and resurrection, they slyly and shrewdly engage in a struggle for succession. How calculating human beings are! 22:24 Then a dispute arose among them as to which of them was the greatest. Who is the greatest? To be the greatest means to occupy the top seat, to become a person of power. It is not enough simply to be part of a group that is great and respected; one must climb to the very top and become the greatest, and then do as one pleases. This, too, is a very human way of thinking. And so we even cast God out of our hearts, desiring to be the greatest ourselves.

22:25 Then Jesus said, "The kings of the Gentiles lord it over them, and those who exercise authority over them are called benefactors.

Just as it is said, "The kings of the Gentiles lord it over them and exercise authority," the disciples who desired to be "the greatest" were similar to them.

"To reign and exercise authority" means "a dictator who rules from above, issues strict orders, imposes his will, gives orders without listening, and makes decisions—an intimidating and arrogant person." That is what it means. That is what the kings of the Gentiles are like. The greatest. Only the one who possesses overwhelming power over others, the one who is number one and sits at the top, can possess such dominion and influence. Therefore, one must be at the top, not second. To have things done exactly as one wishes, one must be in the top position.

22:26 But it shall not be so among you; rather, the greatest among you must be like the youngest, and the leader must be like a servant.

"But it shall not be so among you."

These are the words of Jesus, who sees right through all the disciples' thoughts.

"A dictator who rules from above, issues harsh commands, imposes his will, gives orders without listening, and makes decisions unilaterally—an intimidating and arrogant person"—do not imitate the kings of the Gentiles; never do that. Not among you. Not among you in the church I redeemed with my blood. Not among you, my beloved disciples—it must not be so.

"Rather, the greatest among you must be like the youngest, and the leader must be like a servant."

The greatest, the most outstanding among you, must be like the youngest, the junior, the novice, the newcomer—and you must be leaders and rulers who serve as servants.

Earlier, it was stated that the kings of the Gentiles are “dictators who rule from above, issue harsh commands, impose their will, and make arbitrary decisions—intimidating and arrogant people.” The word “kings” is written in the plural form. The kings of the nations are, without exception, such arrogant and insolent rulers, and Jesus’ words here express His desire that His disciples not join their ranks. However, here it says, “The one who leads must become a servant, just as the youngest among you,” and the word “leader” is written in the singular, referring to a single person.

Do not follow the example of arrogant kings; rather, as the one who leads, “become a servant, just as the youngest among you.” Yes, that is unmistakably the image of our Lord, Jesus.

2 Corinthians 8:7 Now, just as you excel in everything—in faith, in speech, in knowledge, in complete earnestness, and in the love we have for you—see that you also excel in this act of grace.

8:8 I am not saying this as a command, but I want to test the sincerity of your love by comparing it with the earnestness of others.

8:9 You know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that though He was rich, yet for your sake He became poor, so that you through His poverty might become rich.

1 Peter 2:16 Live as free people, but do not use your freedom as a cover-up for evil; instead, live as servants of God.

2:17 Honor everyone, love the brotherhood, fear God, and honor the king.

2:18 Servants, obey your masters with all respect, not only those who are good and considerate, but also those who are harsh.

2:19 For this is commendable before God: to endure suffering when you are being unjustly treated.

2:20 For what credit is it if, when you do wrong and are beaten for it, you endure it? But if you suffer for doing good and you endure it, this is commendable before God.

2:21 For to this you were called, Christ also suffered for you, leaving you an example, so that you might follow in his footsteps.

2:22 Christ committed no sin, and no deceit was found in his mouth.

2:23 When he was reviled, he did not revile in return; when he suffered, he did not threaten, but entrusted himself to the one who judges justly.

2:24 Furthermore, he was crucified to bear our sins in his own body, so that we might die to sin and live for righteousness. By his wounds you have been healed.

2:25 You were like sheep going astray, but now you have returned to the Shepherd and

Overseer of your souls.

Isaiah 53:1 Who has believed what we have heard? To whom has the arm of the Lord been revealed?

53:2 He grew up before him like a tender shoot, like a root out of dry ground. He had no form or majesty that we should look at him, no beauty that we should desire him.

53:3 He was despised and rejected by men, a man of sorrows and acquainted with grief; and as one from whom men hide their faces, he was despised, and we esteemed him not.

53:4 Surely he has borne our infirmities and carried our sorrows; yet we esteemed him stricken, smitten by God, and afflicted.

53:5 Yet he was pierced for our transgressions, he was crushed for our iniquities; the punishment that brought us peace was upon him, and by his wounds we are healed.

53:6 We all, like sheep, have gone astray; each of us has turned to our own way; and the Lord has laid on him the iniquity of us all.

53:7 He was oppressed and afflicted, yet he did not open his mouth; like a lamb led to the slaughter, and like a sheep silent before its shearers, he did not open his mouth.

53:8 He was taken away by a cruel judgment. Who among his contemporaries would have thought that he was struck down for the transgressions of my people and cut off from the land of the living?

53:9 He committed no violence, and there was no deceit in his mouth; yet he was assigned a grave with the wicked, and with the rich in his death.

53:10 Yet it was the will of the Lord to crush him; he has put him to grief. When he offers himself as a sacrifice for sin, he will see his offspring and prolong his days, and the will of the Lord will prosper through him.

53:11 By the suffering of his soul he will see the light and be satisfied. My righteous servant will justify many by his knowledge, and he will bear their iniquities.

53:12 Therefore I will make him a portion with the great, and he shall divide the spoil with the strong; because he poured out his soul unto death, and was numbered with the transgressors; yet he bore the sin of many, and made intercession for the transgressors.

Philippians 2:1 Therefore, if there is any encouragement in Christ, any comfort from love, any participation in the Spirit, any affection and compassion,

2:2 make my joy complete by being of the same mind, having the same love, being in full accord and of one mind.

2:3 Do nothing out of selfish ambition or vain conceit, but in humility consider others better than yourselves.

2:4 Each of you should look not only to your own interests, but also to the interests of others.
2:5 Let this mind be in you which was also in Christ Jesus.
2:6 Who, being in the form of God, did not consider equality with God something to be grasped,
2:7 but emptied Himself, taking the form of a servant, being made in human likeness. He appeared in human form,
2:8 and humbled himself by becoming obedient to the point of death—even death on a cross.
2:9 Therefore God exalted him and gave him the name that is above every name.
2:10 So that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, in heaven and on earth and under the earth,
2:11 and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.
2:12 Therefore, my beloved, just as you have always obeyed—not only in my presence but now much more in my absence—work out your own salvation with fear and trembling.
2:13 For it is God who works in you both to will and to act according to his good pleasure.

Although the Lord Jesus was rich, “He, being in the form of God, did not consider equality with God something to be grasped, but emptied Himself, taking the form of a servant and becoming like a human being. And being found in human form, He humbled Himself and became obedient to the point of death—even death on a cross.” Herein lies love. The Lord humbled Himself to that extent, becoming a baby and being born. Born as the weakest and most vulnerable, He did not use God’s power for His own benefit. No matter how hungry He was, He did not turn stones into bread for Himself, nor did He leap from the temple and have angels catch Him; instead, trusting completely in God’s protection, the Lord pressed on. And serving from morning till night, He poured out His very blood and life on the cross, giving everything He had. This was the result of Him taking upon Himself all our misfortune, sickness, sin, and curses. Jesus absorbed it all like a sponge.

1 John 4:7 Beloved, let us love one another, for love is from God; and everyone who loves has been born of God and knows God.
4:8 Whoever does not love does not know God, for God is love.
4:9 God sent his only Son into the world so that we might live through him. In this way, God’s love for us was revealed.
4:10 It was not that we loved God, but that God loved us and sent his Son as an atoning sacrifice for our sins. In this is love.
4:11 Beloved, since God loved us in this way, we also ought to love one another.
4:12 No one has ever seen God; but if we love one another, God abides in us, and his love is

perfected in us.

4:13 By this we know that we are in God and God is in us, because he has given us his Spirit.

4:14 And we have seen and testify that the Father has sent his Son as the Savior of the world.

4:15 Whoever confesses that Jesus is the Son of God, God is in him, and he is in God.

4:16 We know and believe the love God has for us. God is love, and whoever remains in love remains in God and God in him.

4:17 Since we live in this world as he did, we can stand with confidence on the day of judgment. This is how love is perfected in us.

4:18 There is no fear in love. Perfect love casts out fear, because fear involves punishment, and the one who fears has not been perfected in love.

4:19 We love because he first loved us.

4:20 Anyone who says, "I love God," yet hates a brother or sister is a liar. For whoever does not love a brother or sister whom they have seen cannot love God, whom they have not seen.

4:21 Whoever loves God must also love their brothers and sisters. This is the commandment we have received from God.

"On the contrary, the greatest among you should be like the youngest, and those who lead should be like those who serve."

Jesus alone is the greatest. Without a doubt, Jesus is the greatest. He is the most noble, wonderful, and magnificent Being in all of creation.

Though He is magnificent, full of power and authority, and noble, He did not "reign over the people or exercise power." The Lord became the youngest, placing Himself second or third in line, and became a servant—a servant who always supports from below. Herein lies our model.

22:27 Who is greater, the one who sits at the table or the one who serves? Is it not the one who sits at the table? Yet I have made Myself like one who serves among you.

Jesus is the only One of His kind. No matter where you look, you will find no one else as noble as He is. You will never find anyone like Him anywhere in the world. Yet that is exactly who Jesus is. Jesus is the greatest person in all of world history. And yet, He chose to act in this way.

22:28 You are the ones who have endured with me to the very end during my trials.

Jesus was constantly undergoing trials. 24 hours a day, 365 days a year, the enemy's hand

reached out to Him, constantly attempting to thwart His noble work through temptations like those in the wilderness. From His prayer in Gethsemane right up until the moment He gave His life on the cross, Jesus was constantly undergoing trials. It was as if He were continuously taking a test from God the Father regarding His life on earth—much like an exam at God’s seminary.

Matthew 3:16 As soon as Jesus was baptized, he came up out of the water. At that moment, the heavens were opened, and he saw the Spirit of God descending like a dove and alighting on him.

3:17 A voice from heaven said, “This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased.”

Mark 9:7 Then a cloud came and overshadowed them. And a voice came out of the cloud, saying, “This is my beloved Son. Listen to him.”

Matthew 11:25 At that time Jesus raised his voice and said, “I praise you, Father, Lord of heaven and earth, because you have hidden these things from the wise and learned, and revealed them to little children.

11:26 Father, this was indeed your good pleasure.

11:27 All things have been handed over to me by the Father. And no one knows the Son except the Father, and no one knows the Father except the Son and those to whom the Son chooses to reveal him.

11:28 Come to me, all you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest.

11:29 For I am gentle and humble in heart, and you will find rest for your souls if you take my yoke upon you and learn from me.

11:30 For my yoke is easy and my burden is light.”

22:28 You are the ones who have stood by me to the very end during my trials.

Is that really true? Are the disciples truly “those who have endured with me to the very end”? I have my doubts. Yet the Lord says so. The Lord acknowledges it. It is grace beyond measure. This is completely different from a world where one is recognized only by keeping the law. Here, there is only mercy and grace. It is not a system of penalties or deductions based on whether you did this or failed at that. The Lord takes our tiny, tiny good deeds and our good intentions, and magnifies them greatly through a microscope to praise us. Just as He praises a child’s messy drawing by saying, “That’s really good! It’s the best!”—so the Lord praises, encourages, and strengthens us. Therefore, even when we find ourselves in difficult

circumstances, when the suffering before us looms large and overwhelming, even we are crushed by reality and lose hope, and the Lord seems as small as a speck of dust in the distance; even in the midst of a storm of pragmatism, when everyone says, “It’s meaningless unless I knock others down to stand on top—this is war,” let us take that God we have made so small and, using a high-powered telescope of faith, magnify Him greatly before our eyes (as in the Magnificat), and let us always praise the Lord.

22:29 Therefore, just as my Father has entrusted the rule of the kingdom to me, I entrust it to you,

22:30 and you will eat and drink at my table in my kingdom, and sit on thrones to judge the twelve tribes of Israel.

Joy awaits in heaven. And it seems that great roles are also prepared for the Lord’s disciples in heaven.

22:31 “Simon, Simon, behold, Satan has asked to sift you like wheat.

22:32 But I have prayed for you that your faith may not fail. And when you have turned back, strengthen your brothers.”

It is Satan. Satan is an utterly arrogant being. Satan is the very symbol and embodiment of “a being who reigns and wields power, who rules from above, issues harsh commands, imposes his will, and dictates and decides without listening—a dictator, intimidating, and arrogant.” Satan proclaims himself to be superior even to God; like a serpent, he approaches people, telling them to listen to his voice rather than God’s teachings, and he is a thief who seeks to snatch people away from God. His mouth is full of lies.

John 8:31 Jesus said to the Jews who had believed in him, “If you remain in my word, you are truly my disciples.

8:32 You will know the truth, and the truth will set you free.”

8:33 So they said to him, “We are descendants of Abraham and have never been enslaved to anyone. How can you say, ‘You will be set free’?”

8:34 Jesus answered them, “Very truly I tell you, everyone who sins is a slave to sin.

8:35 Now a slave does not remain in the house forever, but a son remains forever.

8:36 So if the Son sets you free, you will be free indeed.

8:37 I know that you are Abraham’s descendants. Yet you are trying to kill me because my word has no hold in you.

8:38 I speak what I have seen with my Father, but you do what you have heard from your father.”

8:39 They answered Jesus, “Our father is Abraham.” Jesus said to them, “If you were Abraham’s children, you would do the works of Abraham.

8:40 Yet now you are trying to kill me, a man who has told you the truth that I heard from God. Abraham did not do such things.

8:41 You are doing the works of your father.” They said to him, “We were not born of sexual immorality; we have one Father—God.”

8:42 Jesus said to them, “If God were your Father, you would love me, for I came from God and am here. I did not come on my own, but God sent me.

8:43 Why do you not understand what I say? It is because you cannot hear my word.

8:44 You are of your father, the devil, and you want to carry out your father’s desires. He was a murderer from the beginning and does not stand in the truth, because there is no truth in him. When he lies, he speaks his native language, for he is a liar and the father of lies.

8:45 Yet because I speak the truth, you do not believe me.

This Satan sifts people like wheat, and they are blown away as light as chaff—weak and insubstantial. Satan rejoices, thinking, “I told you so.” It even seems as though the Law has become a convenient tool for Satan, a means by which he declares us disqualified.

22:32 “But I have prayed for you that your faith may not fail. And when you have turned back, strengthen your brothers.”

“But.” Jesus is constantly praying for us—disciples who are unworthy of the name, who are disqualified. The reason our faith has not failed to this day is solely by the Lord’s mercy. It is not because we have faithfully kept and practiced it.

22:33 Simon said, “Lord, I am ready to go with you even to prison and to death.”

22:34 Then Jesus said, “I tell you the truth, Peter, before the rooster crows today, you will deny me three times.”

Human zeal, too, is in vain. There is no one righteous—not a single one. All have failed, fallen into ruin, and succumbed to sin. Not a single person stands by the Lord’s side. Yet the Lord has fully endured every trial.

Mark 14:38 “Watch and pray so that you will not fall into temptation. The spirit is willing, but

the flesh is weak.” Just as His words say.

How pitiful the Lord is… all alone. Fighting a lonely battle; when He looks back, His disciples are nowhere to be found. Satan laughs triumphantly. What was it that Jesus had been teaching His disciples? Will all those hardships come to nothing, vanishing like a bubble? No, that is not the case.

Amid the raging storm of human sinfulness, even among the Lord’s precious disciples, a bitter struggle—no different from the world—has arisen over who is the greatest. Satan laughs heartily, saying, “I told you so.”

22:32 “But I have prayed for you that your faith may not fail. And when you have turned back, strengthen your brothers.”

You will rise again. And you will strengthen your brothers. Enough of trying to be number one, or saying “I am beneath you”—enough of bringing others down to make them your servants. Look at me. And know my prayer. You were protected by me. But I will disappear. Without a backer, without certainty, you will be like scattered sheep.

Mark 14:22 While they were eating, Jesus took bread, gave thanks, broke it, and gave it to his disciples, saying, “Take it; this is my body.”

14:23 He took the cup, gave thanks, and gave it to them, and they all drank from it.

14:24 Jesus said, “This is my blood of the covenant, which is poured out for many.

14:25 I tell you the truth, I will never again drink of the fruit of the vine until that day when I drink it anew in the kingdom of God.”

14:26 After singing a hymn, they went out to the Mount of Olives.

14:27 Then Jesus said to his disciples, “You will all fall away because of me. ‘I will strike the shepherd, and the sheep will be scattered.’”

14:28 “But after I am raised up, I will go ahead of you to Galilee.”

“I am going to die, but I will rise again and go ahead of you to Galilee, where I will meet you. And I will encourage you: ‘Behold, I am with you always, even to the end of the age’” (Matthew 28:20).

How great are the Lord’s love and protection! It is enough for us to look only to Jesus. Jesus is the greatest. It is not us. If we want to be great, we draw near to Jesus. We humble ourselves

and become servants. We forgive, serve, pray, and encourage. And we love. This is the way of life for the greatest person.

John 15:13 Greater love has no one than this, that someone lay down his life for his friends.

15:14 If you do what I command you, you are my friends.

15:15 I no longer call you servants, for a servant does not know what his master is doing. I have called you friends, for everything that I have heard from my Father I have made known to you.

15:16 You did not choose me, but I chose you and appointed you so that you might go and bear fruit—fruit that will last—and so that whatever you ask in my name the Father will give you.

15:17 I give you these commands so that you may love one another.

“Don’t Forget” — “Let’s Sing, My Friends” No. 51 — Lyrics and Music by Shuichi Yamauchi

1. Don’t forget—Jesus is always

watching over you

So never let it fade

the smile in your heart

2. But someday, a fierce storm

will blow away your smile

So never let go of the Word within your heart

3. Don’t forget— that nights of sorrow

will turn into a tomorrow of hope

So quickly regain

your usual smile

◇Prayer: **Heavenly Father, we thank You for today’s worship service. We reflect once again with wonder on how Jesus, though equal with God the Creator of heaven and earth, was born as the youngest of infants, treated with contempt by all as if He were a stranger, and submitted even to death on the cross as one who serves both God and humanity. You alone are the true Leader. Please lead all who suffer into God’s salvation and peace. Bless our families and the people in our community. Use us for Your purposes. We pray in the name of the Lord Jesus. Amen**