

Mark 10:44

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

And whosoever of you will be the chiefest, shall be servant of all.

Analysis

Jesus intensified His teaching: 'whosoever of you will be the chiefest, shall be servant of all' (ὁς ἂν θέλῃ ὑμῶν εἶναι πρῶτος, ἔσται πάντων δοῦλος). If 'great' requires being 'minister/servant' (v. 43), being 'chiefest' (prōtos, πρῶτος, first/foremost) requires being 'servant of all' (doulos pantōn, δοῦλος πάντων, slave of all). Jesus escalated from diakonos (minister) to doulos (slave/bondservant)—lowest social status. The 'chiefest' Christian serves everyone, considering themselves slave to all. This is radical humility and comprehensive service. Paul exemplified this: 'though I be free from all men, yet have I made myself servant unto all' (1 Corinthians 9:19). The principle applies universally—in church, family, workplace. Those in authority serve those under them. Parents serve children; pastors serve congregations; employers serve employees. This inverts every human hierarchy, establishing Christ's upside-down kingdom.

Historical Context

Slavery was ubiquitous in Roman Empire—estimates suggest 1/3 population were slaves. Slaves had no rights, owned nothing, existed to serve masters. Calling oneself 'slave' was ultimate self-abasement. Yet Jesus commanded that aspiring leaders become 'slaves of all.' Paul frequently identified as 'slave of Christ' (doulos Christou, Romans 1:1; Galatians 1:10; Philippians 1:1; Titus 1:1). Early Christian communities practiced mutual service—"through love serve one another" (Galatians 5:13). This created counter-cultural community where social distinctions mattered less (Galatians 3:28; Colossians 3:11). Church history shows ongoing tension

between servant-ideal and hierarchical reality. Jesus' teaching remains radical challenge to every generation.

Related Passages

James 2:17 — Faith and works

Romans 1:17 — The righteous shall live by faith

Matthew 25:31 — Final judgment

Romans 2:1 — Judging others

Study Questions

1. How does Jesus' requirement that the 'chiefest' be 'slave of all' radically invert every human conception of greatness and authority?
2. What would Christian communities look like if leaders genuinely practiced slavery to all rather than expecting service from all?

Interlinear Text

καὶ	ὃς	ἂν	θέλῃ	ὕμῶν	γενέσθαι	πρῶτος	ἔσται
And	whosoever	G302	will	of you	be	the chiefest	shall be
G2532	G3739		G2309	G5216	G1096	G4413	G2071
πάντων	δοῦλος·						
of all	servant						
G3956	G1401						

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