

Matthew 20:26

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

But it shall not be so among you: but whosoever will be great among you, let him be your minister;

Analysis

Jesus declares 'it shall not be so among you,' contrasting kingdom leadership with worldly power structures. Instead of exercising dominion, Christian leaders serve: 'whosoever will be great among you, let him be your minister.' The Greek 'diakonos' (minister/servant) indicates one who serves others' needs. Reformed church government emphasizes servant leadership, not hierarchical domination. Greatness in Christ's kingdom is measured by service, not status; by humility, not power.

Historical Context

This teaching follows James and John's request for chief positions (20:20-23), revealing continuing worldly ambition among disciples. Jesus contrasts Gentile rulers who 'exercise dominion' and 'exercise authority' with kingdom values. The Roman Empire's hierarchical power structure provided the negative example. Jesus' own ministry modeled servant leadership.

Related Passages

Revelation 20:12 — Judgment according to deeds

Romans 2:1 — Judging others

Study Questions

1. How does your leadership reflect service versus status-seeking?
2. What worldly power dynamics have infiltrated church leadership?
3. How can you measure ministry success by servanthood rather than influence?

Interlinear Text

οὐχ	οὕτως	δέ	ἔσται	ἐν	ὑμῖν	ἀλλ'	ὃς	ἐὰν	θέλη
not	so	But	be	among	you	but	G3739	whosoever	will
G3756	G3779	G1161	G2071	G1722	G5213	G235		G1437	G2309
ἐν	ὑμῖν	μέγας	γενέσθαι	ἔστω	ὑμῶν	διάκονος			
among	you	great	be	let him be	your	minister			
G1722	G5213	G3173	G1096	G2077	G5216	G1249			

Additional Cross-References

Mark 10:43 (Parallel theme): But so shall it not be among you: but whosoever will be great among you, shall be your minister:

Mark 10:45 (Parallel theme): For even the Son of man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to give his life a ransom for many.

Mark 9:35 (Parallel theme): And he sat down, and called the twelve, and saith unto them, If any man desire to be first, the same shall be last of all, and servant of all.

1 Peter 5:3 (Parallel theme): Neither as being lords over God's heritage, but being ensamples to the flock.

Luke 18:14 (Parallel theme): I tell you, this man went down to his house justified rather than the other: for every one that exalteth himself shall be abased; and he that humbleth himself shall be exalted.

1 Peter 4:11 (Parallel theme): If any man speak, let him speak as the oracles of God; if any man minister, let him do it as of the ability which God giveth: that God

in all things may be glorified through Jesus Christ, to whom be praise and dominion for ever and ever. Amen.

Matthew 25:44 (Parallel theme): Then shall they also answer him, saying, Lord, when saw we thee an hungred, or athirst, or a stranger, or naked, or sick, or in prison, and did not minister unto thee?

Hebrews 1:14 (Parallel theme): Are they not all ministering spirits, sent forth to minister for them who shall be heirs of salvation?

John 18:36 (Parallel theme): Jesus answered, My kingdom is not of this world: if my kingdom were of this world, then would my servants fight, that I should not be delivered to the Jews: but now is my kingdom not from hence.

2 Corinthians 1:24 (Parallel theme): Not for that we have dominion over your faith, but are helpers of your joy: for by faith ye stand.