

Series - Jesus' Passion For Us -1

Date/s - 06 Mar 2016

Topic - God's Way To True Greatness

Speaker/s - Pastor Lionel Goh

**Welcome** [15 min]

You may want to look up the following websites for *icebreakers* suitable for your cell.

[www.thesource4ym.com/games/](http://www.thesource4ym.com/games/)

[www.christianitytoday.com/smallgroups/articles/icebreakersbeyond.html](http://www.christianitytoday.com/smallgroups/articles/icebreakersbeyond.html) < go to LEAD, click on ICEBREAKERS >

**Worship** [15 min]

You may select songs like "How Great is Our God" or "We Bring A Sacrifice Of Praise"

**Spiritual Objectives**

At the end of the cell discussion, cell members will:

1. Understand the contrast of the world's and God's perspectives of greatness
2. Aspire to follow Jesus to achieve true greatness.

**Word** [45 min]

Ps Lionel started by sharing that we all aspired to fulfill our potential and in a sense, to achieve some degree of greatness. We want others to have high regards for some of the things we achieved. Ps Lionel gave examples of men and women whom many looked up to and have great respect for. People like Prime Minister Lee Kuan Yew, Mahatma Gandhi and even Mother Teresa left behind great legacies that are admired by many. The Bible indicates that we too can become great through Jesus. Jesus set the benchmark for ultimate greatness. He healed, performed miracles and even raised Lazarus from the dead. At that time, His fame and greatness spread and many began to believe that He was the Messiah.

In John 12:12-33, Jesus came into Jerusalem cheered by tens of thousands of people, who waved palm leaves and welcomed Him. Ps Lionel shared that at that very moment, the disciples felt vindicated after giving up all they had to follow a great man. It was their moment. Their Master was greeted by many followers and many influential and rich people wanted to commune with Him. They, through their Master, would also be respected by the multitudes.

They were brought back down to earth when Jesus remarked about His death in V23 to V26: "The hour has come for the Son of Man to be glorified. Very truly I tell you, unless a kernel of wheat falls to the ground and dies, it remains only a single seed. Anyone who loves their life will lose it, while anyone who hates their life in this world will keep it for eternal life. Whoever serves me must follow me; and where I am, my servant also will be. My Father will honor the one who serves me." Jesus' way to greatness was very different from how the world perceived greatness to be. According to Jesus, when one aspires to be great, he must:

- 1) die to self
- 2) hate one's life
- 3) serve and follow Jesus.

The disciples missed the point. Jesus' idea of greatness meant that He had to give up His life so that many would be saved. Such "Greatness" would then be honored by God. However, such glorious greatness had a price. It entails what Jesus had to go through:

- 1) Physical pain and death
- 2) Emotional shame and rejection
- 3) Spiritual separation from the Father

Ps Lionel concluded that if we aspire to be great in the sight of God, it means walking the same path that Jesus walked. It entails that we deny ourselves, take up the cross and following Him daily. Jesus was willing to endure the cross:

- 1) He was passionate in glorifying God His Father (V28, John 3:16)
- 2) He was passionate in saving the people from their sins (V27, 1 John 4:9-11).

In the end, God exalted Jesus and His own name above all (V28, Phil 2:6-11). The cross is a symbol of dying to ourselves. The Greatness of Christ will last through eternity. Ps Lionel asked the congregation this question: Do we want to be great for here and now or do we want to be great eternally? When one takes the path of true greatness, it takes sacrifice but the reward is eternal life in Christ Jesus. Ps Lionel shared about the life of Jim and Elizabeth Elliot and how the death of Jim Elliot caused the conversion of almost an entire tribe of savages in Ecuador. Jim Elliot died so that many found eternal life in Christ Jesus. This is true greatness. Jesus' life had shown us a greatness that God, and not men, truly honored. What is your choice?

**Discussion Questions**

1. **Share with the group which part of the sermon strike strikes you most and why?** [10 min]

**Leader's Notes:** *This is a warm up question. Recap, share openly and help members to settle into the discussion.*

2. **a. What is GREATNESS? Why do you think many want to be GREAT?** [10 min]

**b. Read John 12:12-33. What does the GREATNESS that Jesus talks about entails? What might be the contrast with the worldly GREATNESS that many in this world pursue?** [10 min]

**Leader's Notes:** *a. GREATNESS has multiple facets and this relate question allows members to share their understanding of this word. Many want to be great because it brings them good repute, thus opening doors that can bring him to a higher level of greatness. Some want to achieve greatness because they want recognition while others look for the benefits attached to it. Benefits can include financial gain to break out of poverty cycle, to carry on a family's business success, to fulfill a loved one's aspiration etc. Some wants to be liked and respected. Some achieve greatness through their insecurity as they are never satisfied with their achievement. Such people will continue to push on insatiably, and not realize that they could have "arrived".*

*b. The greatness of Jesus requires huge sacrifices of not only time and sometimes financial resources but can also ultimately be giving up one's life as in the story of Jim Elliot or even Jesus Himself. Both thought of God and others. Both sacrificed time and effort. Both can be hated for their causes. Ultimately, it also costs their lives. Contrast of the two types of GREATNESS are as follows:*

<b>GREATNESS of Jesus</b>	<b>GREATNESS of the World</b>
<i>Deny any reputation for oneself</i>	<i>Bring glory unto oneself</i>
<i>To satisfy the needs of others</i>	<i>Cater to own needs</i>
<i>Understand the spiritual needs of others</i>	<i>Limited or no concept of spirituality</i>
<i>Willingness to sacrifice for others</i>	<i>Sacrifice to achieve one's goal</i>
<i>In the process, benefit others</i>	<i>In the process, might harm others</i>

Points towards God	Points towards oneself
Offers abundant life now and eternal life forever	Offers benefits for the present but not eternity

3. **Read Philippians 2:6-11. In contrast with the world’s perspective on greatness, Jesus modelled for us humility and was obedient to death – even death on a cross. In God’s kingdom, God will exalt those who die to self and walk the same path of sacrifice as what Jesus did. Share with the Cell an area in your life that God is telling you to let go and to die to self.** [10 min]

**Leader’s Notes:** *This is a response question. From Philippians 2:6-11, cell members are encouraged to focus on Jesus’ model of True Greatness and to reflect on an area of their lives that God is showing them to let go of their self-pride and to surrender to God. Cell members can in turn share what this area is and commit the matter to God in prayer. This is so that God can empower them in this journey to True Greatness.*

**Works** [10 min]

Let’s pray:

1. In your cell, share that greatness in God’s sight can be made up of little things like bringing others to the saving knowledge of Jesus quietly without much fanfare or promotion. Ask God to reveal a person in mind and pray for that individual. Seek for an opportunity to reach out and build the bridge between this person and God.
2. Pray for all baptismal candidates who will be getting baptized this Sunday 13 Mar. Pray also for their family members, relatives and friends who will offer support and come to witness this significant moment.

**Announcements**

1. Church Camp registration starts this Sunday 13 Mar till 17 Apr. Approach the Camp Counter at Fellowship Atrium this Sunday for more details.
2. Precept in Riverlife opens registration for Topic 2 (T2): “Being a disciple – Counting the real cost” from 13 Mar – 10 April. A six-week Tuesday night (19 Apr – 24 May) course from 8 – 10pm. No homework. Register at Cell Connection counter or [www.riverlife.org.sg](http://www.riverlife.org.sg) with payment of S\$11.
3. 1<sup>st</sup> Baptism Service in 2016 at Victory Chapel this Sunday 13 Mar at 2.30pm.