



WHO IS THE GREATEST IN THE KINGDOM OF GOD?

Today we will meet the disciples; they are arguing. What are they arguing about? To find out who is the greatest among them. Is it Peter, James, John? Who will have the best seat when Jesus is King?

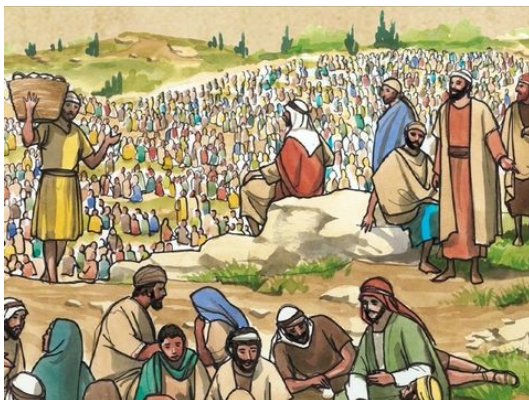
Of course they don't agree, they all want to be first. But in reality, it is the king who will choose. How will he make his choice? That's what we're going to see now as we listen to the story. Jesus is going to get them all to agree. Then you can answer this question: Who is the greatest in the Kingdom of heaven for Jesus?

You can read this story again in chapter 9 of Mark's Gospel.

EVERY WANTS FIRST PLACE

For months now, all over the country, people have been talking about Jesus; they tell of all the wonders he does. He is so successful that people are seriously thinking of making him king.

In fact, a long time ago, God promised that he would send a king called the Messiah. But which king? What would he be like? Where would he reign?



- It would certainly be Jesus! the people say.
- Yes, if he becomes our king, we would finally be free, we would be done with this evil king Herod and these Romans who rule over us and who crush us with taxes, we can't take it anymore!
- With Jesus as our king, our country would be at peace, we would lack nothing, neither us nor our children!
- Yes, the other day at the lake, you saw how he gave free food to everyone. Yet there were more than 5000 of us, not counting the women and children!

John, Peter, James and the other disciples heard everything the crowd was saying. They too think it would be great if Jesus soon becomes king. It would be a Kingdom of peace, happiness and wealth. And then... what would become of them then? Jesus is their hero. They have followed him from the beginning. They would see each other in a place of honor.



One day, while they were on their way, Jesus said to them:

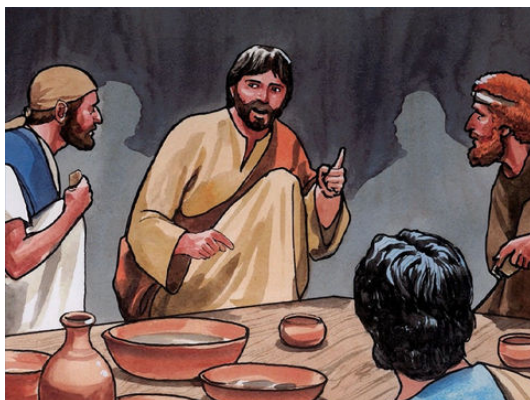
- Open wide your ears and remember what I am about to tell you: Soon I will be delivered into the hands of wicked men, and they will kill me, and three days later I will rise again.

The disciples understood nothing of what he had just told them, but did not ask him any questions.

Their minds were somewhere else. All along the way, they talked:

- When Jesus is king, I will be right beside him!
- Not at all, I'm telling you it's me!
- No, that's my place.
- You! But you weren't even there when we saw him with Moses and Elijah.
- It is rather me! It was in my boat that Jesus went up to speak to the crowd, so the first place is for me!
- Certainly not, I'm the oldest of them all!

Can you imagine, Jesus had just told them that he was going to die soon and they were there arguing about who was the greatest and who would have the first place with him!



There they were, they had reached their destination. They settled down, and then they all gathered around Jesus.

- What were you arguing about on the way? He asked them.

Suddenly it was so silent! No one opened his mouth, not even Peter. Yet he was often the first to speak.

They were ashamed. Jesus spoke again:



- If someone wants to take the first place, he must take the last place and become the servant of all the others.

They really hadn't thought of that! The first place... The last place... to be everyone's servant. It went round and round in their heads. Nobody flinched. We only heard a few footsteps. It was a little child passing by. Jesus beckoned him to come closer,

took him by the hand and placed him there, in the midst of the disciples. Then he said to them:

- Truly I tell you, unless you are converted and become like little children, you will not enter the Kingdom of God. Therefore whoever becomes small as this child, he will be the greatest in the Kingdom of Heaven. And whoever welcomes a child like this one, someone who is despised, out of love for me; it is as if he were welcoming me. The least among you all, well, he is the one who will be the greatest in the Kingdom of God.

1, 2 3, 4 AND YOU AND ME!



Do you understand what Jesus said to his disciples?

He told them that before wanting the first place, one must first enter the Kingdom of God, that is the starting point. How do you do that? Well, you have to see yourself as you really are before God, that is, as a little child. The little child, what can he give to his parents?

What can he do to deserve his bottle? With what money will he pay for his clothes? He depends completely on his parents who will give him everything he needs for his life. He trusts them and he simply receives what they give him. It is easy to understand, isn't it? Well, to enter the Kingdom of heaven, it's the same. Whether we are 8 years old, 15 years old, or 75 years old, what can we bring to God, everything belongs to him? What can we do to deserve to enter heaven? Nothing! We are like a little child, empty-handed. It is he who gives, and his greatest gift is Jesus. So, what do we have left to do? Well, quite



simply to tell Him that we believe in Him, that we love Him, to ask Him to come into our lives. He then becomes our king. He reigns in our lives.

Maybe you've already done it, if not you can do it whenever you want.

But now, let's see how it goes in the Kingdom of God. Is it like in the land where we fight, push others, sometimes mistreat them, to get the best places?

No! In this Kingdom, the greatest, the most important, is the one who does not place



himself above others, who does not despise them, who does not look down on them. He is not proud, but he helps, he takes care even of those who are unloved, who are unhappy, who suffer, he takes care of the little ones, the children. Because he loves Jesus, his king, he does like him, he does good, he brings help. And if no one sees him, no

one knows it, is it annoying? No, not at all, it doesn't matter since God sees him and do you know what he says?

- This little one, he is great in my Kingdom!

4, 3, 2, 1 AND WE PARENTS!



In this conversation with his disciples, Jesus sets the record straight about our relationship with God, our eternal salvation, our entry into the Kingdom of Heaven. All human beings are on the same level of equality, whatever their age, whatever their experience; they are all in this same situation of total dependence on His grace; like little children, they have nothing to claim. This being the case, it is up to each one to decide to believe and receive Jesus as his savior. Then, we are part of this Kingdom and it is up to us to live in a way worthy of its King. By seeing us live, our children understand better what it means to be the least. It is not the one who has to accept everything, always crashing down, but the one who respects others and makes himself respected.