

# Who is the Greatest?

Ով է Մեծագոյնը  
Sermon series: Watch and Pray

## Luke 22:19-30

Last Sunday badveli Kevin preached from the Gospel of Luke Chapter 21:34-38  
The Word of God is so clear:

**watch yourselves ... but stay awake at all times...**

I decided to call this coming month sermon series: **Watch and Pray**

In fact, as Kevin mentioned, we ended Ephesians with the Armor of God against the Devil, and part of the armor is prayer:

**Watch and pray.**

-We should pray with supplication խնդրուածքով

-We should pray and be ALERT. Soldiers are on alert. այս բանին վրայ հսկեցէք

-We should pray for all the people բոլոր սուրբերուն համար,

-We should pray to be bold in our testimony. բերանս բանամ համարձակութեամբ

Even Peter who will play an important role in this section says in his letter:

**Be sober-minded; be watchful. Your adversary the devil prowls around like a roaring lion, seeking someone to devour. <sup>9</sup> Resist him, firm in your faith.**

(1 Pet 5:8,9 ESV)

**Watch and pray.**

Our call to worship this Sunday was from Psalm 133

**How good and pleasant it is when God's people live together in unity!**

**Unity?** Disciples are around the dinner table. They have just had dinner with Jesus. They have just celebrated the Passover meal. During the meal Jesus redefined the symbol of the **Bread and Wine**. Jesus is becoming the new Passover sacrifice, the only and last sacrifice.

Let me read:

**“This is my body, which is given for you. Do this in remembrance of me.” <sup>20</sup> And likewise the cup after they had eaten, saying, “This cup that is poured out for you is the new covenant in my blood. (Luke 22:19-20 ESV)**

Just imagine with me, they are reclining and having a meal. Jesus is explaining the new covenant that God has prepared.

In the Gospel of John, we see that he washes their feet before this.

Then he finishes his speech with the word **BETRAYAL**.

<sup>21</sup> **But behold, the hand of him who betrays me is with me on the table.**

<sup>22</sup> **For the Son of Man goes as it has been determined, but woe to that man by whom he is betrayed!"** <sup>23</sup> **And they began to question one another, which of them it could be who was going to do this.** (Luke 22:21-23 ESV)

Can you imagine the agony of Jesus? Around his table, the shared meal, the breaking of bread together, one of his own is going to betray him.

The disciples are surprised, questioning within themselves who is the person who is going to betray the Rabbi?

I wonder, how did Judas feel in that time. What was going in Judas' mind?

-I asked myself as I was contemplating on this event. **Who is responsible for the death of Jesus?**

I am, you are, we are, they are, humanity and their sin. I hope you always put your name in the answer.

-Looking to the events that are occurring historically and theologically, let me ask this question: **Who handed over Jesus to be killed?**

Obviously one guy, **Judas**, who is called the betrayer.

Yet several others are involved:

-The chief priest **Caiaphas**,

-He also hands Jesus to Romans, namely to **Pilate**, (Matt 27:2);

-Pilate delivers Jesus back to the **Jewish leaders** (Luke 23:25)

*(by the way do you see strange political alliance between enemies when it comes to Jesus' death)*

Let us also answer this from theological perspective:

-**God the Father**, allowed this to happen: **He who did not spare his own Son but gave him up for us all** (Romans 8:32 ESV)

-**Jesus** himself allowed this to happen: **I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me.** (Gal 2:20 ESV)

**There is human responsibility and divine sovereignty: For the Son of Man goes as it has been determined...** (Luke 22:22)

-It reminds me the story of Joseph. There is a human evil action towards Joseph.

But also we see how God allowed this to happen, and we see His sovereign hand in leading the history of salvation.

Jesus is obeying God's plan.

**This is mystery of the gospel.** We witnessed this in the book of the Ephesians.

**-The second topic is about the disciples' discussion: (Who is the greatest?)**

-Today is a special Sunday for Football, called Super Bowl Sunday. Both teams are prepared to compete (fight) to win. **SF vs KS**

Imagine the Coach will prepare the team to enter to the football stadium ready to win. He explains the strategies, explains it is going to be a tough game. And suddenly there will be an argument within the group. What is the topic?

Who will be greatest among them? Who is the best player? Who is the best defense player? Who will take the trophy when they win?

**Seriously?**

**A dispute also arose among them, as to which of them was to be regarded as the greatest. <sup>25</sup> And he said to them, "The kings of the Gentiles exercise lordship over them, and those in authority over them are called benefactors. <sup>26</sup> But not so with you. Rather, let the greatest among you become as the youngest, and the leader as one who serves. <sup>27</sup> For who is the greater, one who reclines at table or one who serves? Is it not the one who reclines at table? But I am among you as the one who serves. <sup>28</sup> "You are those who have stayed with me in my trials, <sup>29</sup> and I assign to you, as my Father assigned to me, a kingdom, <sup>30</sup> that you may eat and drink at my table in my kingdom and sit on thrones judging the twelve tribes of Israel. (Luke 22:24-30 ESV)**

Seriously, your Rabbi is talking about his death and betrayal, and you guys are interested about who will be the greatest among you?

Imagine, Jesus faces his death and Judas engages in betrayal; the disciples worry about their status before Jesus. !!!!!!! This is crazy!!!!!!

"They are concerned with their role in any future kingdom Jesus brings in. Power, not service, dominates their thinking."**1**

**HAPPENS among clergy (biggest church, biggest salary, biggest political influence ...)**

Luke says: there is a **dispute**  $\upsilon\lambda\tau\acute{\alpha}$ ... there is a disagreement... each one wants to be the greatest.

Seriously, we are facing the world. Our fight should not against each other, we need each other to face the WORLD. (the word **TOGETHER** from Ephesians)

The answer of Jesus is very strong.

-They need to be different and not endorse the way the world implements leadership.

- **“Kings and rulers”**, the people serve the kings and rulers.

- **“Benefactors”**, in our society this term is a positive term, benefactors help people for a good cause.

In Roman days, **benefactors** were self-seeking and self-promoting people.

Jesus is very clear: **But not so with you...**

*Please always examine your motive why you serve the LORD.*

**Rather, let the greatest among you become as the youngest, and the leader as one who serves. <sup>27</sup> For who is the greater, one who reclines at table or one who serves? (26,27)**

Jesus is not just teaching by words how to be a servant-leader. NO, HE is the example of a servant-leader. The one who humbled himself and became a servant to all. (Phil 2)

Well, the question, will the disciples be given authority? (*Yes, Remember Acts*)

- Jesus is not against giving authority (which means responsibility) to his disciples.

**I assign to you, as my Father assigned to me, a kingdom, <sup>30</sup> that you may eat and drink at my table in my kingdom and sit on thrones judging the twelve tribes of Israel. (Luke 22:29-30)**

“God the Father has assigned Jesus a kingdom, so Jesus appoints his disciples to a role in it. Two benefits emerge from the appointment: They will sit at the banquet table when the victory is gained, and they will sit on thrones judging the twelve tribes of Israel.<sup>2</sup> This marking out of authority over the twelve tribes shows that Jesus is forming a new community from his disciples. Their authority is not only for this era, but for the one to come as well. These disciples have a central and unique role in God’s plan.”<sup>3</sup>

**-Another parable in Luke is The Parable of the Wedding Feast**

When you are invited for wedding, don’t jump and sit at the head of the table.... **For everyone who exalts himself will be humbled, and he who humbles himself will be exalted.” (Luke 14:11 ESV)**

-The parable of **Pharisee and Tax collector** (Luke 18:9-14) who goes to temple to pray. One exalts himself (showoff to God) and the other beats his chest recognizing how sinful he is.

What is Jesus teaching?

It is an attitude of humility, knowing who we are, Knowing our Christian identity. Therefore, being watchful and praying, and ready to serve are important traits of our Christian character.

be watchful and be ready to serve, the Master comes any time:

**“Stay dressed for action and keep your lamps burning,<sup>36</sup> and be like men who are waiting for their master to come home from the wedding feast, so that they may open the door to him at once when he comes and knocks.<sup>37</sup> Blessed are those servants whom the master finds awake when he comes. Truly, I say to you, he will dress himself for service and have them recline at table, and he will come and serve them...(Luke 12:35-40 ESV)**

Do you recognize the themes?

stay dressed... keep your lamps burning...wait for the master...open the door when he comes... the master finds the servants awake...the master will dress himself to serve them...

**Watch and Pray...**

-In Matthew 20:20-28 we read another strange request from the mother of James and John, the sons of Zebedee, asking Jesus that her sons sit one at his right side and one at His left. Jesus explains what it means to be his followers. Are they ready to drink from the same cup that he will drink?

Then Jesus says the same message:

**“You know that the rulers of the Gentiles lord it over them, and their great ones exercise authority over them.<sup>26</sup> It shall not be so among you. But whoever would be great among you must be your servant,<sup>27</sup> and whoever would be first among you must be your slave,<sup>28</sup> even as the Son of Man came not to be served but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many.” (Matt 20:20-28 ESV)**

### **Application:**

What Jesus is asking is not easy. We like to be noticed. We want to be noticed. Amazing, someone said, it is amazing how much Christians can do if they don't care who gets the credit.

"Self" comes forward and knocks the ego door. And that ego needs nourishment, recognition. That is dangerous.

**Do nothing from selfish ambition or conceit, but in humility count others more significant than yourselves. <sup>4</sup> Let each of you look not only to his own interests, but also to the interests of others. Phil 2:3,4 ESV)**

We learned in Ephesians to submit to the Lord, which is the key to be humble. Which is the key to be the head of the household as a father, to be the wife, to be a child, to be an employee, to be in this new covenant family.

Eugene Peterson warns church leaders:

It is in our virtuous behavior that we are liable to the gravest sins. It is while we are being good that we have the chance of being really bad. It is in this context of being responsible, being obedient, that we most easily substitute our will for God's will, because it is so easy to suppose that they are identical. It is in the course of being a good pastor that we have the most chance of developing pastoral *hubris*—pride, arrogance, and insensitivity to what Jesus called "the least of these my brethren." <sup>4</sup>

1. Darrell L. Bock, NIV Study Bible Commentary Luke, P 559

2. On the throne imagery, see Marshall, *Commentary on Luke*, 818; Tiede, *Luke*, 387. Note also 1 Corinthians 6:2; *1 Enoch* 62.

3. NIV 560

4. Eugene H. Peterson, *Under the Unpredictable Plant: An Exploration in Vocational Holiness*. P14, 31.