

The Upside Down Path to Greatness

Luke 22:24-30

Ben Deaver @ Tallgrass Church & College Heights Central Gathering on December 30, 2018

Don't forget:

- How many will be at the fellowship meal next Sunday, January 6, 2019?

Welcome to College Heights Baptist Church and Tallgrass Community Church!

Kids, have you ever had an argument with your brother or sister? What do you argue about?

Here are some typical arguments in the Deaver household between Kate and Maddox:

- Who gets to choose what show on Netflix
- Which Legos belong to who
- Whose stuffed animals are whose
- Whose turn it is to light the Advent candles

Which is the greatest?

- Ford or Chevrolet
- Hulu or Netflix
- Apple or Android
- Google Home or Amazon Alexa
- Democrat or Republican
- 5 or 3
- LeBron or Jordan

This morning we're going to peek in on an argument that's recorded in the Bible. Want to know who's involved in this argument? It's the 12 Apostles, the disciples Jesus chose to deeply invest His life in! Not 100% sure if Judas Iscariot is still there or not. You can find out exactly who the 12 Apostles are in Luke 6:12-16.

Kids, you can work on this Apostles coloring sheet!

Read Luke 22:24-27

PRAY!!!

Big Idea: King Jesus teaches us, then shows us the upside down path to greatness!

This morning, this message is for us each as individuals but also for both of our churches, College Heights Baptist Church and Tallgrass Community Church.

College Heights' desires to be great...and that's great!

When's the last time you read the History of College Heights Baptist Church on your website? I just read the history of this great church the week before Christmas. I just wanted to highlight a few bullet points as reminder of your legacy for those of you from College Heights and to give those of us from Tallgrass Church a bit of your history and to help us dream about what could be for us:

- College Heights began as the Central Baptist Mission in December, 1953 as a home fellowship that met on Tuesday nights at 420 Colorado St. The average attendance was seven. The first meetings were held in a second-floor hall at the intersection of Third Street and Poyntz.
- The mission constituted on August 31, 1954 and the church had 48 members. The services during the first two years were held in the Seventh-day Adventist building at Sixth and Laramie.
- The first building on the present property was completed in 1957. The building, consisting of a 230 seat auditorium, a fellowship hall, and a kitchen, was completed in April, 1967.
- In 1975 the church changed the name to College Heights Baptist.
- During the 1980's, College Heights established three new missions, each of which has since been constituted as a self-sustaining church: one of those is New Hope Community Church, September 8, 1991. That's where Tallgrass Community Church came from. So, in a sense, we, Tallgrass Church, are your grandchild! Church planting—that's awesome!
- Since 1982, College Heights Baptist Church has sponsored Conversational English classes with hundreds of students from all over the world having participated in the program. These Conversational English classes are going very strong. Such an encouragement! Those classes began when I was one year old.
- Remaining focused on the objective, "To lead lost people to a saving knowledge of Jesus Christ and to lead Christians toward spiritual maturity" College Heights has recently embraced a new vision to be a spiritually active community which regularly doubles itself. College Heights is in the beginning stages of reaching that vision and looking forward to seeing the process of spiritual multiplication continue to take place.

This church, College Heights Baptist Church, desires to be great! And that's great thing. So the big question for you is, "What's the path to greatness?!?!"

Tallgrass Church desires to be great...and that's great!

Our story begins very similarly to yours.

- Tallgrass Church began on April 8, 2018. Tallgrass Church met at College Heights Baptist Church on Sunday evenings until...
- Who knows what the rest of our story will be?
- How will we love our neighbors as ourselves?
- Will we plant churches?
- Will we change our name in 22 years, in 2040, like the Central Baptist Mission did?
- Will Jesus return before then?
- Who knows what the rest of our story will be?
- Who knows what the rest of your story will be?

One thing's for sure, College Heights will forever be a part of the Tallgrass Church story, whatever it becomes.

- We're so thankful to you all for your hospitality to us.
- Thank you for an awesome lease to use these great facilities every week and even throughout the week!
- Thank you for inviting us to join up with you on these two Sundays!
- Thank you for inviting us to join with you in a couple specific service projects.
- Thanks for your hospitality next week for lunch.
- Thank you for being Kingdom minded, College Heights! Thank you for serving us, College Heights!

We planted a new church because we long to do great things in the Kingdom of God, just like you. And that's a great thing. So the big question for us is, "What's the path to greatness?!?!"

Into this conversation about how our churches can be great I risk mentioning that it's easy to get tripped up and pulled into the world's approach to greatness. Back to our story in Luke.

Luke 22:24 A dispute also arose among them, as to which of them was to be regarded as the greatest.

- Desiring greatness is ok. In fact, it's GREAT to want to be great! We should want to be the best version of ourselves possible. Or as LeBron James says, "Strive for greatness!"
- LeBron wants to be GREAT individually. He also wants his team to be great!
- We want our church to be great! Why else would we plant a new church, but to be a great church? Why else would you continue to invest in College Heights, but to be a great church? Why else would we do church every week and throughout the week, but to be great?
- Jesus says, "Let the greatest among you..." This means someone gets to be the greatest among the disciples of Jesus. In the gospel of Mark, Jesus says, "Whoever would be great among you..."
- The problem is that the disciples are comparing themselves to one another and debating about who is the greatest.
- Comparison among disciples of Jesus is extremely damaging and counterproductive. Comparison among church is also damaging and counterproductive.
- The disciples' dispute sure seems childish when we look back on it in light of what we now know about the nature of the Kingdom of God...but we have similar disputes going on between believers, between churches, and within ourselves even.
- Keeping up with the proverbial Joneses is exhausting. The phrase applies to our lives individually and also to the lives of our churches. How do we keep up with the fictitious Joneses?!?!
- How does my life stack up when compared to my neighbor's life? How does my church stack up when compared to the church next door?
- Of course we don't have these disputes so publicly and right in front of Jesus. We're much more subtle and internal with these disputes, but they're there nonetheless.
- It's not like we're going around to our neighbors and arguing with them about who's better. Or having disputes with other churches about who's greater. But the comparison is often there in the heart. How can we be great? I'm looking around at all the established churches and all the new church plants and I'm wondering, "How can our church be great? What's the standard of greatness? How will we know if and when we've achieved greatness?" The questions go on and on. This internal dispute is ongoing and exhausting and distracting to the task at hand.
- One thing that's struck me as we've planted this new church is how common the concerns we're facing are for older, more established churches. I talk with church leaders of new church plants AND older established churches and everyone's wrestling with very similar questions, "How can we grow? How do we reach new people? Will there be enough financial provision? Should we buy a building? What should we do with our building? Do we renovate it? Or build something new? What do we do about people leaving the church? How do we get our name out there? How should we use Facebook or Instagram? Wait, Snapchat? Churches are using Snapchat now too? What even IS Snapchat? What kind of music should we do? What are they doing over there for Advent? Wow! That's awesome! Should we do that too? What new program can we implement to stay relevant?" The questions go on and on. Comparison either leads to self-righteousness if we're keeping up, "Wow! We're really growing. We really are great...compared to everyone else..." Or despair, "Wow. We're not really growing. We aren't that great...compared to everyone else..."

Big Idea: It's into this chaotic internal dispute that rages within us individually and often as a church corporately that King Jesus speaks with clarity and conviction, teaching us, and then showing us the path towards greatness. He is, after all, our Great Shepherd. Let's listen to the voice of Jesus as He speaks to College Heights Baptist Church and Tallgrass Community Church on this Sunday, December 30th, 2018. We reflect on our past as we head into the New Year, the 66th year of College Heights and the 2nd year of Tallgrass Church.

The World's Path to Greatness

Luke 22:25, 27a ²⁵ And he said to them, "The kings of the Gentiles exercise lordship over them, and those in authority over them are called benefactors. ^{27a} For who is the greater, one who reclines at table or one who serves? Is it not the one who reclines at table?"

- We understand the world's path to greatness. It's driven by power, self-seeking, competition, greed, get as much as you can, as quickly as you can. All about the bottom line. Having people under you. How much money is enough? Another dollar!
- Jesus asks the question and gives the OBVIOUS answer from the world's perspective. Who is the greater, the one who is chillin' and relaxin' at the table? Or the one who serves? Of course it's the one reclining at the table....or so it really seems in our materialistic world in which we live and work and play.

King Jesus' Path to Greatness

Luke 22:26, 27b ²⁶ But not so with you. Rather, let the greatest among you become as the youngest, and the leader as one who serves. ^{27b} But I am among you as the one who serves.

- **Kids, you can work on this Upside Down Path to Greatness coloring sheet!**
- This is truly the upside down path to greatness!
- "The disciples are interested in titles; Jesus offers them towels instead." –Garland, p. 867
 - Consider the story of Jesus Himself washing the disciples feet in John 13.

From *Charity and Its Fruits: Christian Love as Manifested in the Heart and Life* by Jonathan Edwards, p. 184

- "If you are selfish, and make yourself and your own private interests your idol, God will leave you to yourself, and let you promote your own interests as well as you can. But..."
- "...if you do not selfishly seek your own, but do seek the things that are Jesus Christ's, and the things of your fellow human beings, then *God will make your interest and happiness his own charge*, and he is infinitely more able to provide for and promote it than you are."
- "The resources of the universe move at his bidding, and he can easily command them all to subserve your welfare. So that, not to seek your own, in the selfish sense, is the best way of seeking your own in a better sense. It is the directest course you can take to secure your highest happiness." (p. 100)
 - This is the upside down path to greatness...serving others' interests above our own!

In a nutshell, "It is more happy to give than to receive!" This was said by Jesus, the Upside Down King, and quoted by the Apostle Paul in Acts 20:35.

Luke 22:28-30 ²⁸ "You are those who have stayed with me in my trials, ²⁹ and I assign to you, as my Father assigned to me, a kingdom, ³⁰ that you may eat and drink at my table in my kingdom and sit on thrones judging the twelve tribes of Israel."

- Talk about greatness! Eating and drinking at Jesus' table in Jesus' Kingdom is truly a picture of greatness.
- Jesus' Table is one that everyone is invited to. You simply receive His Kingdom as a child climbs into the lap of his or her father.
- **Luke 18:16-17** ¹⁶ But Jesus called them to him, saying, "Let the children come to me, and do not hinder them, for to such belongs the kingdom of God. ¹⁷ Truly, I say to you, whoever does not receive the kingdom of God like a child shall not enter it."
- I see wonderful Good News here when Jesus says to these argumentative disciples of His, "You are those who have stayed with me in my trials..." Why do I see Good News there? Because the disciples actually fled from Jesus during His upcoming trials. They had made it so far with Him but at a certain point they just broke down and took off. And yet, Jesus' body was broken for them too.
- The pressure is off. Jesus truly does the heavy lifting of sacrificial service. Then He assigns us a Kingdom. We don't have to go off trying to fight for our own kingdom. Jesus assigns us a Kingdom. We can just relax, receive, and then in response...serve our King...without disputing over who's the greatest!

Application:

- The path to individual greatness is humble service. The path to church greatness is humble service.
- What's a scary step of faith you can take individually? As a church?!?!?

Romans 12:10-13 ¹⁰ Love one another with brotherly affection. Outdo one another in showing honor. ¹¹ Do not be slothful in zeal, be fervent in spirit, serve the Lord. ¹² Rejoice in hope, be patient in tribulation, be constant in prayer. ¹³ Contribute to the needs of the saints and seek to show hospitality.

- Let's see who can outdo one another in showing honor! Who can be the greatest in this way? I've got so much room to grow here.
- The church doesn't exist to keep up with other churches, or to pad our pews and pockets, to add to our nickels and noses. The church is here to serve the harassed and helpless, shepherdless sheep...and there are so many that fit that description in our community!
- God's always up to something. It seems that He's up to something special in our community right now. Lentz and I are both involved with a Tuesday morning pastor's prayer time along with about 15-20 other pastors. This group of pastors in Manhattan, KS are trying to discern what God is up to here, beyond each of our individual churches. Whatever it is, it's got to be related to serving one another. Or joining forces in some way to serve the community at large.
- This is how the watching world will know we are Jesus' disciples, by our love for one another.
- Thank you for serving us, College Heights! We want to serve our community alongside you!

I mentioned that King Jesus teaches us the upside down path to greatness and then He shows us. How does He show us the path? There's a similar story in Mark where Jesus tells us with more detail just HOW He serves us.

- **Matthew 20:28; Mark 10:45** For even the Son of Man came not to be served but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many.

Remember the upside down birth of the King of kings that we just celebrated at Christmas?!?!
Now let's consider His path to enthronement.

The Enthronement Ceremony—Jesus the True Benefactor

- The enthronement ceremony of the upside down King begins with all the prominent leaders of the area— Pilate, Herod, chief priests, and the rulers of the people (Luke 23:13). Everyone's there to see the crowning of the King!
- Jesus was dressed to impress. They stripped Him and put a scarlet robe on Him. They twisted together a crown of thorns and jammed that on his head and put a reed in his right hand as a scepter (Matthew 27:28-29).
- They knelt before Him, mockingly saying, "Hail, King of the Jews!"
- Above the cross there was an inscription saying, "This is the King of the Jews (Luke 23:38)."
- Surely these disputing disciples, who not long before were arguing about who was the greatest among them, remembered Jesus' words to them not long before, "And I, when I am lifted up from the earth, will draw all people to myself (John 12:32-33)."
- What a crazy event, the enthronement of King Jesus! Should we cry because our Jesus is crucified or should we cheer because our King has achieved His greatest victory? This path doesn't fit the world's path to greatness so we aren't sure what to feel about it. We want to weep but because it fits the upside down path to greatness we should celebrate. That's what the Lord's Supper is all about, celebrating the great victory of King Jesus.

The Lord's Supper

At Tallgrass Church we've done the Lord's Supper together every 5th Sunday. And guess what! Today is a 5th Sunday so we're going to take the Lord's Supper together! Michael and the band will play some music while everyone who's taking the Lord's Supper comes forward and we will serve you the bread and juice.

Ricky, Dave, and Maris can come forward now.

As we approach the Lord's Supper together, I want us to think of two things:

1. First, the Lord's Supper is a CELEBRATION of the life and death and resurrection of the upside down King of kings, Jesus Christ. What we could not do for ourselves, God has done for us in Christ! This is a CELEBRATION, it's a feast remembering what God has accomplished! One way we've tried to shift our engagement with the Lord's Supper slightly towards celebration is by taking it with mini red Solo Cups that in our culture are associated with partying. We are CELEBRATING together the ultimate victory of the upside down King and His upside down path to greatness—the cross!!! The victory has already been won.
2. Second, we take the Lord's Supper TOGETHER, with ONE ANOTHER! Anyone who is a brother in Christ or a sister in Christ is welcome to take the Lord's Supper this morning. Your sins are already forgiven. As you come forward to take the bread and juice, be present with one another. This isn't just about you and Jesus, this is about Jesus and His Body, the Body of Christ, which is His great masterpiece. Let's take the Lord's Supper TOGETHER! Come forward and take the Lord's Supper with whomever you came with. Or find someone close by who looks friendly. Take the bread and juice back to your seat and one of you just briefly give thanks to King Jesus, for taking the upside down path to greatness so that we can be in relationship with our heavenly Father.

The Lord's Supper account in Luke is right before the passage we were just in. Luke clearly connects the Lord's Supper as a reminder of the path that Jesus took on our behalf.

Luke 22:14-20 ¹⁴And when the hour came, he reclined at table, and the apostles with him. ¹⁵And he said to them, "I have earnestly desired to eat this Passover with you before I suffer. ¹⁶For I tell you I will not eat it until it is fulfilled in the kingdom of God." ¹⁷And he took a cup, and when he had given thanks he said, "Take this, and divide it among yourselves. ¹⁸For I tell you that from now on I will not drink of the fruit of the vine until the kingdom of God comes." ¹⁹And he took bread, and when he had given thanks, he broke it and gave it to them, saying, "This is my body, which is given for you. Do this in remembrance of me." ²⁰And likewise the cup after they had eaten, saying, "This cup that is poured out for you is the new covenant in my blood."

Come forward and take the Lord's Supper with whomever you came with. Or find someone close by who looks friendly. Take the bread and juice back to your seat and one of you just briefly give thanks to King Jesus, for taking the upside down path to greatness so that we can be in relationship with our heavenly Father.

Chopping Block:

Scripture Reading

Psalm 113

¹ Praise the LORD!

Praise, O servants of the LORD,
praise the name of the LORD!

² Blessed be the name of the LORD
from this time forth and forevermore!

³ From the rising of the sun to its setting,
the name of the LORD is to be praised!

⁴ The LORD is high above all nations,
and his glory above the heavens!

⁵ Who is like the LORD our God,
who is seated on high,

⁶ who looks far down
on the heavens and the earth?

⁷ He raises the poor from the dust
and lifts the needy from the ash heap,

⁸ to make them sit with princes,
with the princes of his people.

⁹ He gives the barren woman a home,
making her the joyous mother of children.

Praise the LORD!

What's Best Next: How the Gospel Transforms the Way You Get Things Done

By Matt Perman

- “When most people hear the term *networking*, they think of the networking jerk—the guy who doesn’t care about other people, is just looking for what you can do for him, and is, frankly, boring.” (p. 96)
- Quoting Keith Ferrazzi in his book *Never Eat Alone*: “I learned that *real* networking was about finding ways to make *other* people more successful. It was about working hard to *give* more than you get.” (p. 96)
- “What Ferrazzi says about networking is a good summary of what the Bible teaches about all of life: everything we do, including our work, is to be done for the sake of others.” (p. 97)
- “He also argues that you will be more effective and successful this way: ‘I came to realize that first semester at business school that Harvard’s hypercompetitive, individualistic students had it all wrong. Success in any field, but especially in business, is about working *with* people, not against them. No tabulation of dollars and cents can account for one immutable fact: Business is a human enterprise, driven and determined by people.’” (p. 97)
- Quoting Keith Ferrazzi: “Bottom line: It’s better to give before you receive. And never keep score. If you interactions are ruled by generosity, your rewards will follow suit.” (p. 97)
- “We see this not just in networking but also in every single area of our work and community lives...” (p. 97)

College Heights Baptist Church has a rich history. "Through It All" could be our theme song. Our prayer is that "Through it all we've learned to trust in Jesus, we've learned to trust in God and we've learned to depend upon His Word."

Our church has weathered a number of changes over the years and we have depended on God through each one. We began as the Central Baptist Mission in December, 1953 as a home fellowship that met on Tuesday nights at 420 Colorado St. The average attendance was seven. The first meetings were held in a second-floor hall at the

intersection of Third Street and Poyntz. The mission constituted on August 31, 1954. Wayne Flory was the pastor and the church had 48 members. The services during the first two years were held in the Seventh-day Adventist building at Sixth and Laramie. The first building on the present property was completed in 1957. The concrete slab and basement for the second unit were poured in November, 1959. The ministry of the church began to flourish with the addition of a number of KSU faculty and staff families. Undeterred by its poor financial history, the church voted in 1966 to issue bonds and build the present sanctuary. The building, consisting of a 230 seat auditorium, a fellowship hall, and a kitchen, was completed in April, 1967. In 1975 the church changed the name to College Heights Baptist.

During the 1980's, College Heights served as a vibrant influence in the community while being particularly missions conscious. The home church established three new missions in those years, each of which has since been constituted as a self-sustaining church: Ogden Baptist Church August 4, 1991; New Hope Community Church September 8, 1991; Crossroads Baptist Church October 2, 1994.

Since 1982, College Heights Baptist Church has sponsored Conversational English classes with hundreds of students from all over the world having participated in the program. These classes are taught entirely by volunteers. The goal of the program is to make the international student's time in the United States more enjoyable by helping them with their spoken English. Each week (September through April) students attend classes where they make new friends, both American and international, and learn everyday American speech designed to help them learn to communicate in an American culture and give them an opportunity to hear the Good News about Jesus. Our prayer is that it will continue to reach people with the gospel for years to come.

In 1987 a special planning committee was set aside to write a mission statement and goals which would guide the ministry of the church.

Goals of College Heights Baptist Church:

- To develop a spiritually vital church membership.
- To share Christ with unbelievers.
- To perform Christ's ministry in the community.
- To extend our church's ministry throughout the world.
- To renew our church's life through improved operations.

Missions activity has been, and continues to be, a special part of our ministry. Over the years we have sponsored a number of missionaries and continue to support this activity diligently.

Remaining focused on our objective, "To lead lost people to a saving knowledge of Jesus Christ and to lead Christians toward spiritual maturity" we have recently embraced a new vision to be a spiritually active community which regularly doubles itself. We are in the beginning stages of reaching that vision and look forward to seeing the process of spiritual multiplication continue to take place at College Heights.

Luke 22:7-13 ⁷Then came the day of Unleavened Bread, on which the Passover lamb had to be sacrificed. ⁸So Jesus sent Peter and John, saying, "Go and prepare the Passover for us, that we may eat it." ⁹They said to him, "Where will you have us prepare it?" ¹⁰He said to them, "Behold, when you have entered the city, a man carrying a jar of water will meet you. Follow him into the house that he enters ¹¹and tell the master of the house, 'The Teacher says to you, Where is the guest room, where I may eat the Passover with my disciples?' ¹²And he will show you a large upper room furnished; prepare it there." ¹³And they went and found it just as he had told them, and they prepared the Passover.