

# UNSUNG HEROES

DAN OWEN // Mark 10:35-45

Greatness in the kingdom of God is not about the approval of other people. It is about the approval of God. Jesus contrasted true spiritual greatness with worldly greatness. Two of his disciples asked to be exalted above the others in his kingdom. Jesus said they did not understand what it takes to be great in the kingdom. Jesus required two things to be great. First, the willingness to suffer in order to do God's will. Secondly, the willingness to be a servant to others. The greatest, said Jesus, is the servant of all. This is the nature of the unsung heroes who will sit at the right hand and left hand of Jesus in his glory.

There are many unsung heroes in the pages of Scripture. Abigail was not a famous or exalted woman. Saddled with a mean husband, she apologized for his bad behavior and risked her life to encourage David to be a godly leader, and not to soil his reputation with violence and murder. Her courage and grace helped mold David as a leader for Israel. An unknown servant girl in the household of Naaman the Syrian general influenced the events of her day. She trusted in God and his servant Elisha. She spoke up when her pagan master was in trouble and pointed him toward the prophet in Israel and the God she served. As a result, the Syrian general found healing as well as a respect for the God of Israel! Dorcas was not front page news. She quietly served the widows and orphans of her day. She was so important to the Lord's work that the apostle Peter intervened to raise her back to life. She was one of God's heroes. Epaphroditus is not famous. He was a humble servant from Philippi who was plagued with illness. He stepped in to fill some urgent needs for Paul, while Paul was imprisoned. He served at the risk of his own life in a quiet, yet vitally important way. Paul said we should honor people like him! John Mark was a young man who wanted to help the mission of Christ. He was young and made mistakes. He was discarded as undependable by the great Paul, but Barnabas the encourager did not give up on him. He persisted in trying to serve God, learning and growing over time. Later in life, the same Paul who had once discarded him, requested him and said he was very useful in the ministry. The John Marks of the world are heroes in God's army whether they ever make the lecturership circle or not!

It is not those who do their righteousness to be seen of men that are great in the kingdom. The great ones in God's eyes are the quiet, loving, righteous encouragers like Abigail. They are the servant girls who speak up humbly about God in the moments that count. They are the loving and kind women like Dorcas who show kindness to the downtrodden. They are the sick people who do lots of little things that lift up their brothers and sisters, like Epaphroditis did for Paul. They are the John Marks who make mistakes but keep on trying to serve God in quiet ways and tell others about Jesus. You won't follow the righteous service of God's unsung heroes on Facebook. They will do things to serve God which you will never see or hear. God will reward them. We need unsung heroes like these. They are the very lifeblood of Christianity because their service and their devotion is real. These will one day be exalted by Jesus as the greatest in the kingdom! Thank God for you, if you are one of these!

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# TALKING POINTS

Abigail's courage and \_\_\_\_\_ kept David from \_\_\_\_\_!

The Israelite slave girl \_\_\_\_\_ Naaman.

Dorcas \_\_\_\_\_ helped the poor and the widows.

Epaphroditis \_\_\_\_\_ Paul even in his \_\_\_\_\_!

Philemon \_\_\_\_\_ the \_\_\_\_\_ of the saints!

\_\_\_\_\_, John Mark kept on \_\_\_\_\_!

Get Mark and bring him with you, for he is very \_\_\_\_\_ to me for

\_\_\_\_\_ (2 Timothy 4:11).

