

Have you ever been afraid to ask a question? I can honestly say that there have been some questions that I asked that I felt were pretty dumb and if I would have stopped to think about it, I would have figured things out and never would have asked the question. But I also feel like there is only one stupid question and that is the question that is not asked.

In our gospel reading, the disciples had some questions for Jesus but they were too afraid to ask him. Jesus had been telling the disciples about how he was going to be betrayed, killed and then rise again and they just did not understand that. And to be honest with you, if any one of us would have been in their place, I don't think we would have understood him either. But instead of asking questions to better understand, the disciples began to argue with one another.

Now they were not arguing about what Jesus was saying. They didn't understand that and so they moved on to a subject that was closer to their heart. They were arguing about who was greater among them. They were arguing about who was best.

As we work through what the disciples were doing, I need some volunteers to come forward. I need a youth, a young adult, a middle aged person and a senior aged person. We have four people up here and I would like you to share a little bit about yourself and what you do as far as school or work.

Obviously the youth will talk about having to go to school and doing homework. They may be involved in some type of sports or music program. Their life pretty much revolves around school at this point in their life.

The young adult could be in college, just finished college or is starting out on their own. I think they tend to have a lot of dreams of what their future holds. The possibilities are endless as their adult life begins.

The middle aged adult tends to be pretty well established in life and job. They may be looking forward to retirement and could be financially stable for the rest of their life. They may be enjoying grandkids and taking some extended vacations as life's demands lessen a little bit.

And then there is the senior. They tend to have lived a full life and are supposed to enjoy the golden years that are not always all that golden. Health issues tend to pop up that must be dealt with. Vacations are nice, but not everyone enjoys traveling anymore. For me, one

of the biggest positives is thinking back and remembering all of the good times that were had.

So out of those four groups of people, which one is greatest? It is a pretty stupid question isn't it. Each group of people has some things that are very positive and some things that are very negative. I do not believe that one group or one person is better than another.

That is why Jesus had to sit the disciples down again and talk to them about what makes them great. Greatness has nothing to do about who you are but rather it has to do with what you do.

"Whoever wants to be first must be last of all and servant of all." Serving others is what makes us great. All the different things that make up our life are good and makes us who we are but the thing that makes us great is service. Helping others as we are able makes us great.

Jesus then picked up a child and placed it among them and said, "Whoever welcomes one such child in my name welcomes me, and whoever welcomes me welcomes not me but the one who sent me." Instead of arguing about who is the greatest, Jesus tells us to welcome all in his name.

What is Immanuel's mission statement? "Welcoming All, Growing Together in Faith, Sharing Christ's Love." That is what we are called to do. We welcome all as we grow together in faith by sharing Christ's love. You did notice that by welcoming all, we do not have any exclusions.

As we live according to this mission statement, we are made great. Our greatness has nothing to do with what we do for a job or how much we make. It has nothing to do with where we are at in our life. It has nothing to do with the status we put on our life.

Our greatness has to do with welcoming others in Jesus' name and serving them as we are able.