Introduction:
A. A paradox is a statement that on the surface may seem absurd or contrary to conventional wisdom, but is actually a profound expression of truth.
   1. John Clark - "A paradox is truth standing on its head to get attention."
   2. Matt. 20:20-28 is a paradox
   3. Read and exegete

I. “Whoever Desires To Become Great Among You, Let Him Be Your Servant”
A. Matt. 20:25-26 - Conventional wisdom
   1. The great ought to be those with the best pedigree, education, capabilities, etc.
   2. The servant appears to lack these qualities
   3. In worldly terms, one would not want a servant ruling - Prov. 30:21-22
B. In the spiritual realm, the servant has the essential qualities of leadership
   1. Every Christian is subject to the Lord; therefore, even if they reach the peak of authority, they still are servants
   2. Concern for pleasing the master is characteristic of the servant that makes him the best kind of leader
C. Qualities of the servant
   1. Matt. 24:45-51 - the contrast between the wise and foolish servants
   2. Matt. 25:14-30 - servants and talents; the good servants take the Master's goods and increase them; the unprofitable servant does nothing with the Master's goods
   3. Luke 17:7-10 - Servants do not think that they deserve the good life for doing their job; they consider themselves unworthy, doing only that which was their duty
D. The greatest in the kingdom
   1. Is always attentive to his Master's will even when He is not around
   2. Is always working for the Master's benefit
   3. Does not consider himself to be anything

II. "Whoever Would Be First Among You Must Be His Slave"
A. Matt. 20:27 - Stronger language
   1. Servant is diakonos, one who serves another by choice
   2. Slave is doulos, one who is lowest on the social scale of humans
   3. A servant had the freedom to choose to serve a certain person; a slave did not have that freedom, and his life was at the mercy of the master
B. The idea that one would willingly become a slave is incomprehensible in worldly terms, but in spiritual terms it is necessary
   1. Phil. 2:3-4 - We choose to serve others at our own expense
   2. Rom. 6:16-23 - We choose to serve the Lord and righteousness
   3. 1Cor. 7:22-23, 6:19-20
III. “Even As The Son Of Man Came Not To Be Served But To Serve”
   A. Matt. 20:28 - A fitting paradoxical statement
      1. 1Cor. 11:1 - We are to imitate Christ, as He is the ultimate servant
      2. Phil. 2:5-11 - Jesus’ great humiliation led to His great exaltation
      3. John 13:3-16 - Jesus washed the feet of His disciples, work reserved for the most menial of slaves
   B. Contrast this with what the Jews expected of the Messiah - Matt. 20:25-26
      1. 1Sam. 8:5
      2. The Messiah was to overthrow any power oppressing Israel and would rule the world from Jerusalem and would be the ultimate king
      3. Ancient kings did not act as servant to anyone, and did not even serve themselves
      4. Everything was done for them
   C. Humility, meekness, compassion -- often run contrary to the exercise of authority
      1. Whether at the individual or national level, any sign of humility, apology, or meekness would be understood as weakness and vulnerability
   D. Jesus came to rule over a spiritual kingdom - John 6:15, 18:36
      1. Jesus did overthrow the spiritual powers of darkness
      2. He is the ultimate king, and He became so by serving others to death

Conclusion:
   A. Matt. 11:28-30
   B. The greatest rulers of men depend on power to rule ineffectively, which ironically makes them arrogant
   C. The greatest in the kingdom of heaven depend upon service to lead extraordinarily, which paradoxically makes them humble