

THE BIG IDEA: LET US NOT THINK TOO LITTLE OF OURSELVES, NOR TOO GREAT, & ABOVE ALL, LET US THINK OF UNITY.

The Takeoff

A brief introduction to the world of The Lord of the Rings:

- J.R.R. Tolkien (WWI soldier, Oxford Professor, master linguist, believer in Jesus)
 - The Silmarillion (a new English mythology)
 - Enter *The Hobbit*
 - Enter *The Lord of the Rings* trilogy
 - 3 parts: “The Fellowship of the Ring,” “The Two Towers,” & “The Return of the King”
- Read Romans 12:3-18 and the Big Idea (themes prevalent in Tolkien’s works)

// Clip 1: Opening monologue to *The Fellowship of the Ring*

1. Let us not think too little of ourselves...

- “*Even the smallest person can change the course of history.*” ~Galadriel
- If anyone ever felt small and unseen, it was Hobbits (“Halflings”): No one gave them any thought, most were surprised to meet them throughout the journey, and some had never even heard of them before.
- The fate of the world was literally at stake, and the Creator (*divine will was a major theme in Tolkien*) called and empowered those least likely to do something about it.
- The God of real life does the same, so If you feel small remember that in your weakness He’s made strong: **2 Cor. 12:9-10**
- If you feel insignificant, remember you have purpose: **Rom. 12:6**
- If you feel unworthy remember ALL have fallen short: **Rom. 3:23**
- If you feel less than remember you’re equally children of God in Christ: **Gal. 3:26-29**
- If you feel powerless remember the same Spirit in YOU raised HIM: **Rom. 8:11**
- ***If you’re tempted to downgrade someone else to “small” or deem them insignificant, remember: **1 Cor. 12, especially verses 18-27**
- **You are valuable and necessary to the ministry of the Church and must refuse to listen to or believe anyone who says otherwise.**

// Movie Clip 2: Aragorn, Boromir, and the shards of Narsil

2. Let us not think too little of ourselves, nor too great...

- “Song of Aragorn” poem
- If anyone could have thought too much of himself, it should have been Aragorn:
 - Rightful King of Gondor, Gandalf’s right-hand man, valiant and skilled, raised by elves, Dunedain, Ring of Barahir, girlfriend was a 3000 year old elf!

- Aragorn was surrounded by people who thought too much of themselves:
 - **Isildur**, Boromir, Saruman, Denethor, etc
- Aragorn embraced humility and meekness and rejected pride and arrogance
- **Aragorn realized if he was great, it was because Illuvatar began a good work in him, gifted him for it, and was big enough to see it through Phil. 1:6**
- **Prov. 11:2** *When pride comes, then comes disgrace, but w/ humility comes wisdom*
- **Prov. 16:18** *Pride goes before destruction; an arrogant spirit before a fall*
- **Prov. 18:12** *Before a downfall the heart is proud, but humility comes before honor*
- When you feel proud remember that it's not you, it's Christ IN YOU! **Gal. 2:20**
- **1 Peter 5:5** calls us to "*clothe ourselves with humility.*"
- **Phil. 2:3** says: "*Do nothing out of selfish ambition or vain conceit. Rather, in humility, value others above yourselves.*"
- **God consistently calls us in Scripture to LOWER ourselves and ELEVATE others. Jesus demonstrated this throughout life and perfected it on the cross.**
- Read **Mark 10:35-45**
- **God doesn't elevate people so they're easier to be SEEN, but so it's easier for JESUS to be seen as they fall to their knees as servants of all.**

// Movie Clip 3: The Council of Elrond

3. **Let us not think too little of ourselves, nor too great, & above all, let us think of unity.**
 - "*Faithless is he that says farewell when the road darkens.*" -Gimli
 - **A right view of ourselves naturally leads to a right practice of unity.**
 - There was no Unity at the Council but a GIANT task at hand.
 - Frodo (*the least important person there...*) made a great sacrifice, volunteered to be the ring-bearer, and initiated the unification of the Fellowship of the Ring.
 - Then all the "great ones" humbled themselves to serve him and join the journey!
 - Unified, they accomplished the mission, no-one less vital than another.
 - Look back at **Romans 12** one more time. Read **Rom. 12:16-18**
 - Paul begs the Corinthian church to be united and not allow division (lit. splitting in two pieces) **1 Cor. 1:10**
 - Paul tells the Ephesian church to "*Make every effort to keep the unity of the Spirit through the bond of peace.*" **Eph. 4:3**
 - Paul tells the Colossian church to "*Bear with each other and forgive one another if any of you has a grievance against someone. Forgive as the Lord forgave you. And over all these virtues put on love, which binds them all together in perfect unity.*" **Col. 3:13-14**
 - **Unity was vital to the mission of the Fellowship of the Ring, and it's equally vital to the Mission of the Church!**

The Landing

- *All have sinned and fallen short of the glory of God {Rom. 3:23}*, and by those sins were separated from Him *{Isaiah 59:2}*
 - Jesus became the atoning sacrifice on the cross so that all the sins of the world might be forgiven, and ANYONE who believes in Him might have *everlasting life {John 3:16}* and be restored to relationship with their Creator.
 - By that GRACE (or gift of God through Jesus) through FAITH you have been saved. *{Eph. 2:8-9}*
 - This is the Good News, the “Gospel” of Jesus
 - **The Gospel is the great equalizer: Jesus created a body of believers in which no one is insignificant, no one is great of their own making, and all are of equal importance to the mission of the Church. He founded an amazing family!**
1. So if you’ve not confessed Jesus as Savior and Lord, come do that today and join this Christian fellowship we’ve been talking about!
 2. If you’re in Christ, and you feel small, remember you’re an essential part of our church and community! Trust in God’s promises and pray for wisdom to serve your church and community in confidence! Maybe your altar call is to the **Next Steps** table in the back!
 3. If you struggle with arrogance and pride and thinking too much of yourself, humble yourself at the altar and pray God would soften your heart and make you like Jesus. Pray like John the Baptist that “Jesus would increase and you would decrease!”
 - **You can make too little of yourself and at other times too much.**
 4. If you lack unity with believers at the Gathering or other areas of life, remedy it now! Forgive, ask for forgiveness and/or engage in healing conversations.