Text Luke 22:24F He that is greatest among you, let him be as the younger, and he that is chief as he that doth serve.  

Introduction—Many would affirm that men reach their highest level of productivity under competitive conditions.

(1) Show how the principle applies in practical affairs (in school seeking a grade)
(2) Show how our whole economic structure is built up it.

Now Jesus himself saw the power that competition held over men. He did not ignore it. Yet he does something with the conception of competition that hadn't been done before. He takes the conception which has been used for lower purposes and recues it from many of its dangers, by suggesting a higher method of its use. This is how he applied the term to his disciples. He saw them in danger of using it for low purposes. They wanted to compete for reputation and position—"which of them should be accounted greatest?" Jesus say No. If you must use the power of competition, if you must compete with one another, make it as noble as you can by using it on noble things. Use it for a fine unselfish thing."He that is greatest among you shall serve." Use it for human good. Who shall be the most useful? Compete with one another in humility. See which can be the truest servant. It seems that Christ says "Use it, but use it for higher and holier purposes. Use it not to surpass one another in esteem, but use it to increase the amount of usefulness and brothr-help.

I. Such conceptions of competition lead to the surprising and enobling position that there can be competition without hate and jealously. Behold! you can struggle to beat and yet rejoice to be beaten. What is abolished is not competition, but the object of competition is altered.

(A) Suppose this teaching of Jesus should be accepted by all of this great world of competing men. Here are these rival hearts all eager to outstrip each other. But now the object is different. Not now who shall be right, richest, or who shall have the biggest car, or who shall be the most powerful or learned—but who shall be most absolutely devoted to the good of fellowmen.

(B) Imagine the change that would come about if the Churches applied this truth. Now we are bogged not in competitive denominationalism which is destroying the warm blood of the Protestant Church. "Which of them shall be accounted greatest?" Let the churches stop trying to outstrip each other in the number of their adherents, the size of its sanctuary, the abundance of wealth. If we must compete let us compete to see which can move toward...
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the greatest attainment of truth, the greatest service of the poor, and the
greatest salvation of the soul and bodies of men

If the Church entered this kind of competition we can imagine what a
better world this would be

(C) Suppose the teaching of Jesus should be accepted by the competing
nations of the world, particularly Russia and America. They would no longer
compete to see which could make the bigger Atom bombs, or which could
best perpetuate its imperialism, but which could best serve humanity. This
would be a better world

AD CSKC Sermon file, folder 50, Sermons Not Preached

"The Danger of Mis Guided Goodness"

1948-1954

I Int

A One of the basic functions of the Christian Church is to keep alive a certain
degree of moral sensitivity. See the Church must of necessity urge men to
be good, to be sincere, to be conscientious. There are basic moral principles
But they are not enough. To say of a man that he is conscientious and
means well, important though that is, does not cover the ground. Not only
must we be good, but we must be intelligent. Quote Socrates. One of the most dangerous forces
in the world is misguided goodness

B Some of the most shameful tragedies of human history have been committed, not by bad, people, but by good conscientious people who didn't know what they did

1) those who made Socrates drink the hemlock
2) The crusades
3) the people that threatened Galileo [Galileo Galilei]
4) The trial of Joan of Arc

1 Harry Emerson Fosdick, The Hope of the World, p. 223. "To say of a man there that he is conscientious and means well, important though that is, does not cover the ground. He must not be stupid."
2 King may be citing a paraphrase of a speech by Socrates found in Plato's Apology 38a. "The unexamined life is not worth living."
3 The Crusades were military campaigns carried out by European Christians intermittently between 1096 and the late thirteenth century to conquer and convert non-Christians and recapture Jerusalem and the Holy Land
4 Jeanne d'Arc (1412-1431) led French troops during the Hundred Years' War but was later tried and burned at the stake for heresy and witchcraft. Fosdick, The Hope of the World, p. 223. "The Athenians who made Socrates drink the hemlock, far from being bad, were among the most earnest, conscientious, religious people of their day. So, in intention, the crusades were not so much wicked as stupid, the people who threatened Galileo with torture were not wicked but stupid, the judges at the trial of Joan of Arc were not bad but senseless, and over the most shameful tragedies of history, as over the cross of Christ, the judgment stands 'They know not what they do.'"