

The G.O.A.T.

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[0 : 00] Hallelujah. Lord Jesus, we realize. Father, Son, Holy Spirit, we realize.

When we're sane, when we are thinking rightly, we realize that our only true help comes from you, the living God, the one who has called us and chosen us before the foundation of the world.

Who has set his love upon us. Who has written our names in the palms of his hand. Who rejoices over us with singing. We realize that you are our help.

You are our help. Oh, Father, help us. Oh, help us to see. Help us to truly see that you are our strength.

That the joy of the Lord is our strength. That you are the rock beneath our feet. That you are our hope in the darkness, in the pain.

[1 : 07] Oh, Lord, when the waves roll over us, oh, you teach us to serve. Oh, God, thank you.

Thank you. Thank you for being with us.

Thank you for not leaving us. You promised, Lord Jesus, you would never leave us nor forsake us. Lord, we believe it. We believe it.

So come. Even in this worship service, touch your people. Touch your sheep. Your sheep need to feel your arms around them.

Lord, we need to know. We need to know that we know that our help is present help. You are present help. Not just a future help.

You are right now help. And we need you. So many are hurting in this church and throughout this country. So many are hurting.

[2 : 01] But we, your people, call upon you. Our rock is not like the rock of the world. You are the rock that is stable and firm and will not shift or move.

You don't change. They trusted in you, Father. They trusted in you in the Old Testament. They trusted in you in the New. And we can trust in you today.

So help us to do it. Grant us the faith. Grant us the grace. Oh, Lord. Bless your people.

May this word go forth. May we see Jesus in all of his glory. And be drawn to him and strengthened in him. He is the greatest of all time.

No one. Great is the Lord and worthy of praise. That's it, Lord. Help your servant to preach that greatness now.

[3 : 09] That Jesus. Oh, that we may get our eyes on Jesus. The offer and perfecter of our faith. Amen. His name we pray. Amen.

Amen. John chapter 8. Verses 48 to 59. As we return to our series in this great gospel of John. Hear now the word of the Lord. The Jews answered him. Are we not right in saying that you are a Samaritan and have a demon?

Jesus answered. I do not have a demon. But I honor my father and you dishonor me. Yet I do not seek my own glory.

There is one who seeks it. And he is the judge. Truly, truly, I say to you, if anyone keeps my word, he will never see death. The Jews said to him, now we know that you have a demon.

[4 : 14] Abraham died as did the prophets. Yet you say, if anyone keeps my word, he will never see death. Are you greater than our father Abraham who died? And the prophets died?

Who do you make yourself out to be? Jesus answered. If I glorify myself, my glory is nothing. It is my father who glorifies me.

Of whom you say he is our God. But you have not known him. I know him. If I were to say that I do not know him, I would be a liar like you.

But I do know him and I keep his word. Your father Abraham rejoiced that he would see my day. He saw it and was glad.

So the Jews said to him, you are not yet 50 years old. And have you seen Abraham? Abraham? Jesus said to them, truly, truly, I say to you, before Abraham was, I am. [5 : 16] Amen. So they picked up stones to throw at him.

But Jesus hid himself and went out of the temple. That is the word of the Lord. Please be seated. Wow. Wow. Someone has said that Americans love creating idols.

But then they also said, we also love tearing them down. We look for dirt on folks. And if we can't find it, we make it up.

Greatness makes us uncomfortable. Maybe it makes us feel less than. What have we done with our lives, right?

[6 : 23] But true greatness lifts others up. It gives us something to shoot for. It makes us dream of the possibilities.

Jesus is the greatest of all time. He is truly the goat. But his example humbles us.

For we know if we truly see him, that we can never attain to his height. But he uses his greatness. Not just to make a name for himself. But to save those of us who are not great. Those of us who realize that the opinion of us that matters most is not people's opinion.

But God's opinion. So let me ask you a question. Are you being humbled daily by the greatness of Jesus? Are you really seeing his greatness?

[7 : 37] And is it humbling you and giving you hope? Jesus' greatness is seen by the attack of sinful people in this passage, verse 48.

Here, in this passage, the religious leaders of the Jews express their disrespect for Jesus.

Remember, he had just said to them in verses, in verse 44, the beginning of verse 44, that you are of your father the devil, and your will is to do your father's desires.

He said it again in verses 45 to 47, because I tell you the truth, you do not believe me. Which of you convicts me of sin?

If I tell you the truth, why do you not believe? Whoever is of God hears the words of God. The reason why you do not hear them is that you are not of God.

[8 : 41] This is the context. You are not of God. Jesus, oh Jesus, he was preaching the word of God to them, but he was not their favorite preacher.

He was not preaching what they wanted to hear, nor was he preaching what they wanted to hear in the way they wanted to hear it. They were not listening for God's voice.

They were listening for something else. And so he exposes them for being sinful, self-centered people who appeared to believe in God.

But he saw them as hypocrites. They believed themselves, of course, to be righteous. So they respond to his statements in self-righteous indignation.

Their argument is again, and they've been doing this, we've been seeing this, ad hominem. See, they can't win against Christ's relentless biblical logic, so they therefore attack his person.

[9 : 54] They try to attack his character. They refer to him as a Samaritan. The Samaritans, as you know, were half-breed Jews whose religion was a twisting of biblical faith.

To call him a Samaritan was a racial slur. But also they were calling him a traitor to the Jewish people. You're not really one of us.

You don't fit here. You're not really one of us. But then they called him demon-possessed. This is the Lord Jesus that they're talking about.

They called him demon-possessed, which is saying, by saying the words which he speaks and the works that he is doing are coming from Satan and not from God.

In reality, they were also saying, you crazy. You cray-cray, we would say. Greatness can be intimidating.

[11 : 01] But holiness makes people angry. And Jesus is both. He's both great. I love the angel's words.

When he came to Mary, he told her, you're going to have this baby. He said, he will be great and be called the son of the most high.

Yes. Yes. Great. But he's also holy. Moral, perfect, total moral purity.

Unlike us. That's scary. That's scary. But Jesus uses his greatness and holiness to welcome sinners who feel the weight of their sins and the brokenness of their lives.

We've been looking, I've been referring to it time and time again. I hate to do it, but I don't hate to do it, but I do it. The woman caught an adultery earlier in the chapter is a perfect example of how the

greatness and the holiness of Jesus combine to bring her to him.

[12:19] He doesn't push sinful people and brokenhearted and broken people away. His greatness pulls us in.

But his greatness is also seen that many will hate him and want him gone from their consciousness and lives.

Don't talk to me about Jesus. Today we'll even say, don't talk to me about church. Churches have never been perfect.

I don't know why we, I don't know what was going on that somehow we think churches are supposed to be perfect. Read the New Testament. Read about the Corinthian church.

Churches, all of the churches, they all are full of imperfect people who are seeking to follow Jesus with everything they've got. Weeds, Jesus said, let the wheat and the tares grow, I'm sorry, let the wheat and the tares grow together.

[13:32] That is, the tares look like wheat and they're all in the church. Some folk ain't saved. And do great harm. Shame on you.

Make grave mistakes. Why are people... And you cannot separate Jesus from his church.

To reject the church, you end up, be careful, you end up probably rejecting Jesus too. He is the head of the body.

We want Jesus gone. Sometimes it's just an excuse. We want Jesus gone from our lives. Can you imagine living with someone who always tells the truth about everything and doesn't make mistakes?

You should ask my wife. She knows all about that. I mean, think about that person.

[14:38] That person would give the appearance of being a brown noser or a suck up. Mr. Perfect. Can you imagine growing up with Jesus? I think about this last night.

I'm sorry, y'all. I had to get a good laugh. I mean, you think about that. I mean, you know, as a parent, you walk... I can see Mary walking into the kitchen. Cookies gone.

All right. Who took them? Remember, Jesus had half siblings. James being one of them, the writer of the book of James. I can see.

And she called in the kids in the room and said, all right, who took the cookies? Who knows? So one of you knows who did it. And everybody, James and his two brothers, I think it was three.

I think it was three brothers and a sister. And they all sitting there going... And she knows if she asks Yeshua. Yeshua? That's Jesus, by the way.

[15:39] Who took the cookies? Jesus. And not because he's a tattletale.

Not because he's mean and nasty and has a brown nose and trying to get points. No, but because he's truth. He's truth.

He can't lie. Can you imagine living with that? You would hate him growing up. Don't you see? His siblings...

We saw this already in John. They didn't believe in him. Remember? They didn't believe in him. I wonder why. Just saying. Until the resurrection.

Then James, they got light. The same will be true for those who follow Jesus, even though we are certainly not perfect. But as agents of biblical justice, we seek to treat all people fairly, especially those who are being mistreated.

[16:46] You will be opposed too. Because you follow the great one. If they opposed him, they will oppose you.

Bishop J.C. Ryle once said, once let a man take up the cross and follow Christ, and there is no lie too monstrous, no story too absurd for some to tell against him, for others and for others to believe. But let him take comfort in the thought. He's only drinking the cup, which his blessed master drank before him. Greatness.

The greatness of Jesus was opposed. It's still being opposed. And if you follow him, you too will experience that opposition.

Is there enough evidence to convict you of following Jesus? Second, Jesus' greatness is seen in not seeking his own glory.

[17:54] That's powerful, because you would think that one person in all of history who deserved to seek his own glory is Jesus. And yet that's not what he does.

In verses 49 and 50, he says, I don't have a demon, but I honor my father, and you dishonor me. I do not seek my own glory. There is one who seeks it, and he is the judge.

He's speaking of his father. Our Lord did not seek the limelight in order to make a great name for himself. He was not full of ego and insecurity like us and needed constant validation. He didn't heal people and do miracles to build up his need to be seen and loved. Jesus' goal was to honor his father by obeying him.

What he did, he did it because it was his father's will. John's already been telling us that. In John 5.30, Jesus says, I can do nothing on my own. As I hear, I judge.

[18 : 57] My judgment is just because I seek not my own will, but the will of him who sent me. John 6.38, For I have come down from heaven not to do my own will, but the will of him who sent me.

Jesus is always giving himself over to the father's will and therefore for the father's glory. He's the new Israel, actually.

He is the faithful son. He is the new Israel who keeps covenant with God. The Jewish people have rebelled against God time and time again.

God was so frustrated, as it were, with them. And I'm using that word very loosely. Nothing frustrates God. His will won't be done. But he says in Ezekiel, my name is profaned among the nations because of you.

He said, you're making me look bad. Jesus lived to make the father's name great again. If Jesus honors the father and they dishonor Jesus, this means they are also dishonoring the father they claim to want to honor.

[20 : 09] So listen, saints, any faithful religion that seeks to minimize Jesus walks away from God, not toward God. Where the nation of Israel failed, he has succeeded.

He's the very opposite of our fallen cultures today, isn't he? We're told constantly to seek our own glory.

You are always, you and your children are barraged, have a barrage of stuff coming at you constantly in the media to seek your own glory.

I saw one motivational expression recently. It said, you are all the help you need. That was a motivational book.

We make our own praise glorious instead of making his praise glorious. That's what we're being inundated with and we're told that's good.

[21 : 21] Speak up your brand. Get your name out there. Magnify yourself. Let me ask you a question.

In your work, in your schooling, in your life, whose glory are you pursuing? That's an important question, believe it or not.

Because you are pursuing someone's glory. Whether you're raising children or working in the bank or working at Walmart or in school, you are always pursuing someone's name, someone's glory. You are always seeking to magnify someone. Who is it? Do you do what you do that you will be praised?

Or do you do what you do in all of life as a platform to exalt Jesus in his kingdom? Do you do your work for the glory of God?

[22 : 29] You see that? Whatever your work is, as long as you're not a drug dealer, you know, whatever your work is, you are to do it as unto the Lord. For he is king of the kingdom and the kingdom covers everything.

There is not an inch in all of creation where Jesus does not say, mine. And that includes all of our lives. That's why he preached the gospel of the kingdom.

The gospel of the kingdom. He is reigning over all things. That's good news. And we have been brought into the kingdom via this message and the work he accomplished on the cross so that now we can live lives.

We go, and in a sense, we go back to the garden and we recognize that we are to go into all the earth, subdue it for his sake, for his glory.

We were created to image him into all creation. Now in Christ, we've been recreated to image him in all of creation that his praise might be glorious.

[23 : 40] Jesus came seeking the Father's glory. The cross is about the Father's glory. And the Father in return glorifies the Son.

Hallelujah. Isn't it beautiful? Listen, saints, as you seek the glory of Jesus, exalting him, he, at the proper time, will exalt you.

Seek your glory. Listen, seek your glory and you might get it, but not from him. And be careful.

Remember, we love to create idols and we love to tear them down. So if you seek your own glory, yeah, you might get it, but there'll be knives out to carve you up and bring you down. And that fall will be painful. seek his glory. Because you were saved for that purpose.

[25 : 00] Jesus' greatness is also seen in him and knowing who he is. I mean, we talk about being self-aware today, right? Isn't that a good expression we use? Are you self-aware?

Do you know who you are? Jesus was the most self-aware being who's ever lived. He knew exactly who he was. In verses 51 and 55, he knew exactly.

And here's a funny thing about this. Many scholars, not, thank God, not the ones who believe the Bible, but there are many even biblical scholars or other scholars who believe that Jesus never claimed to be God.

You've heard, hey, may you hear that? I see you're not. Thank you, brother. People, if you talk to people who are somewhat educated, they'll tell you things like, he never claimed to be God. Even someone, even people who don't even know, they heard someone say it, they'll say it.

It's the craziest thing, really, because he makes two statements in this text, alone, alone, that point to his self-awareness of his deity.

[26 : 08] Truly, truly, verse 51, I say to you, if anyone keeps my word, he will never see death. Oh, really? I mean, really?

If that's not a statement of somebody either crazy or they somebody we need to know. Keeps my word, we'll never see death.

Who can say that? And their response is really beautiful. I love their response. Now we know you crazy. Demon possessed. Now we know you have a demon.

Now, we thought you did before. We weren't, it's like they were saying, we weren't sure, but now we show. They are looking at Jesus like he got two heads.

They thought he was speaking physically, of physical death, certainly, and because they give the examples that Abraham died and the prophets died. So you know they were thinking he's saying physical death.

[27 : 09] Here's the thing, ultimately he is. Ultimately, the resurrection is to come and we will be resurrected to be with him. Ultimately he is, but in this text he was not speaking of that particular thing.

He was speaking of that spiritual resurrection, that spiritual life. You know what I'm talking about, where he comes to the sinner who's dead to him, who doesn't, who says maybe I believe in Jesus, but not really.

We're in the Bible Belt, so we got, that's how we live here. We say, we all say we believe in Jesus, but not really. He comes to folk like us, like that, and he, the Spirit of God makes them alive.

John 3, once again, the John stuff, it just rotates. You know, he just keeps it coming at us. John 3, he makes us alive spiritually, so that now we are born again, and once we are born again, we fly to Jesus.

We can see the kingdom. We can see the king of the kingdom, and we come around and to Jesus. He's talking about that life. We will never see ultimate death because we have been raised to spiritual life now.

[28 : 22] And when we do close our eyes physically for the last time in this realm, oh yes, we will open them again like our brother Gene Johnson has just done. We will open them again in the presence of the living Christ and be alive forevermore in the story.

Or is it the beginning of our greater story? No. They didn't get it.

They didn't get it. And Jesus says, the reason you don't get it is because you're not keeping my word. You have no desire to keep my word. You see, if you were raised to life, if you would experience the grace of God and been resurrected to life, you want to keep the word of God.

That's a good thing to keep in mind, saints. You know you've been raised to spiritual life because you want, you see the glory and greatness of Jesus and you want to obey him.

If that's not your testimony, you have not been raised to spiritual life. You're still dead in your sins, but here's the good news. You're still alive and you can call upon him today.

[29 : 35] And he is, and if you call upon him, he who calls upon the name of the Lord will be saved. By his grace, you don't have to clean yourself up or change yourself. He does all the heavy lifting.

But the second, the second statement is probably the one that as you saw, grips me. Jesus knows who he is.

They freak out talking about Abraham and all that stuff and you think you've seen Abraham? You think you know Abraham? You don't know Abraham? You ain't 50 years old. Abraham lived over a thousand years ago.

How can you talk about knowing Abraham? Jesus looked at him and said, if he wore glasses, if this was, if he wore, I can see him doing this.

He stops, takes off his glasses, looks him straight in the face. Truly, truly, that means amen, that's amen, amen, by the way.

[30 : 36] Truly, truly, I say to you, before Abraham was, I am. I am.

He could have just said before, I mean, he could have softened the blow a little bit. Just said before, you think Abraham, you think, yeah, of course I know Abraham.

Before he was, I was. He could have just said before he was, I was. I mean, that would have worked. But he wanted to crush him with his greatness, okay?

It's a good thing to be crushed by the greatness of Jesus. That's what humbles us that brings us to faith in him. Remember, his greatness is holy greatness and he uses his greatness not to make you look small, but to draw you in.

But in this case, Jesus is talking to self-righteous hypocrites who think that they know everything and have insulted him, have claimed to be servants of his father and were not, have been leading the people astray and he had, and right now, he's done.

[31 : 48] It's time. Before Abraham was, I am. Boop. I am. Now listen, remember he said, I am the bread of life.

I am the light of the world. We've seen that. We're going to come back to light of the world soon in some other statements of the I am. This is the only place where he just says, before Abraham was, I am.

And he's, in this context, he's making it clear. I am the self-existent one. I am the one who always was. I'm the uncreated cause.

I'm, you know what I mean? I, I, you know, I, I am the, the, the reality of the universe. I wish I had language.

Jesus just blows them away. And listen, they got it. How do you know? They tried to stone him.

[32 : 47] They tried to stone him. Jesus slips through the crowd, hides, he actually hides himself, and then slips out the back door of the temple.

St. Augustine said this really powerful statement he made. He said, as man, he fled from the stones, but woe to those whose stony hearts God has fled.

St. Augustine, African father. Well, time's up and I'm a little, just a little bit over. So let me just end with a quick statement, quick, quick application.

Now, should we pursue greatness then? Because that's what people tell us to do. We tell our children, should we pursue greatness?

And the answer is yes. We should pursue greatness, but not the way the world keeps telling us to do it. By making a name for ourselves and plastering our faces and accomplishments across the internet.

[33 : 53] Our greatness is seen in our likeness to Christ. And he modeled for us what greatness looks like, didn't he? For even the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve and to give his life a ransom for many.

Greatness. Remember that, that was it, that he said that in response to their question, who is the greatest in the kingdom? He says, you're thinking like the world.

Don't think like that. The greatest in the kingdom is the servant of you all. Listen, yes, we are called to pursue greatness because we're called to pursue Christ.

The great one has come. He has given his life for us that he might also make us into his image. And what does that look like? What does true greatness look like?

It looks like self-sacrificial service to people around you. Especially the household of faith.

Especially your family. But not only are you a servant.

[34 : 56] I was told a young man this morning, he had a servant's heart. Do you have a servant's heart? Do I have a servant's heart?

Do I have a servant's heart? Do I have a servant's heart? Is our servant's heart directed toward us to serve ourselves? For others to serve us? Or do we have a servant's heart, the servant's heart of Christ who served us to the maximum?

Laying down his life that we might be brought to God. The great one died for people who were not great. that he might lift us out of the muck and make us great.

Sons and daughters of Jesus, you will shine like stars and the firmament throughout all eternity.

You are great! But are you living in greatness?

Or has the world so co-opted our minds and our ambitions so that we make money for us? So that we get good grades for us.

[36 : 07] We seek that position for us. And that's for his glory. And so that through seeking his glory, we might become servants and remember truly great ones bless others.

truly, the truly great, make others great. Lift others up. Is that your testimony?

Whose glory, whose greatness are you pursuing? Father, in Jesus' name, help us to reflect the greatness and the glory of our Savior Savior, who is truly great and holy.

And through that, Lord, touch lives around us that they may see Jesus and come to him who is great. In his name we pray. Amen.

Amen.