



## Redeeming Greatness

Luke's Gospel: Investigating the Man Who Is God - Part 41  
Pastor Mark Driscoll | Luke 9:46-50 | August 15, 2010



Luke 9:46–50

*<sup>46</sup> An argument arose among them as to which of them was the greatest. <sup>47</sup> But Jesus, knowing the reasoning of their hearts, took a child and put him by his side <sup>48</sup> and said to them, “Whoever receives this child in my name receives me, and whoever receives me receives him who sent me. For he who is least among you all is the one who is great.”*

*<sup>49</sup> John answered, “Master, we saw someone casting out demons in your name, and we tried to stop him, because he does not follow with us.” <sup>50</sup> But Jesus said to him, “Do not stop him, for the one who is not against you is for you.”*

### JESUS IS GREAT

All righty, Mars Hill, we continue today in Luke’s gospel, “Redeeming Greatness.” Luke 9:46–50. As you’re finding your place, let me I ask you a question: Whose greatness, other than Jesus’, that’s the obvious answer, whose greatness, other than Jesus’, do you really, truly, sincerely admire? Who is it that really interests you, intrigues you? Do you have your favorite Iron Chef? Do you have your favorite musicians that you follow their tweets and have their T-shirt? Is there an athlete that is your particular favorite, and, you won’t tell anyone, but their jersey is your jammie? Is there someone that you really admire, somebody in your field of business, study, your favorite filmmaker, author, whatever it might be?

What about their greatness intrigues you? What, in your own life, are you pursuing greatness in? Who are you trying to become? What are you trying to do? What are you working on right now? What kind of conversations are you having with your friends about what it is you aspire to do, who you aspire to be, the greatness that you long for? It leads us to the curious text today in Luke where one of the most interesting conversations is had among Jesus’ disciples. And they’re asking the question, “Well, what is greatness, and who is great, and how can we become great, and which one of us will be the greatest of all?”

For your own personal study and your community group discussion, you’ll also find summaries of this account in Mark 9 and Matthew 18, and here’s how we find it in Luke 9:46–48. “An argument arose among them,” this is the twelve disciples, “as to which of them was the greatest. But Jesus, knowing the reasoning of their hearts,” he could read their minds, “took a child and put him by his side and said to them, ‘Whoever receives this child in my name receives me, and whoever receives me receives him who sent me. For he who is least among you all is the one who is great.’”

This is one of two things: number one, it is possibly the dumbest conversation in the history of the world, and most commentators seem to believe that that's exactly what's going on, because the context is that Jesus is God come into human history. He's just been transfigured in glory on the Mount of Transfiguration. Moses and Elijah have come out to hang with him, and then he comes down the mountain. He casts a demon out of a guy, quotes Daniel, and says he's the Son of Man. And then the disciples, you know, as sharp as a butter knife, are sitting around asking, "I wonder which one of us is the greatest?" Well, probably him. That could be what is happening.

In some ways, if that's the case, this is like a whole bunch of jockeys who happen to have a twenty-seven-foot friend, and they're all talking about which one is going to be the tallest, as if that wasn't already decided, pretty obvious, to everyone else. And most of the commentators read the text that way, like, what a dumb conversation to have with Jesus, "Which one of us is the greatest?" Obviously, it's Jesus. This may be the dumbest conversation in the history of the world; most of the commentators think it is.

I disagree with them, so I'm probably wrong. Just so you know. I'm gonna put that out there at the beginning, but I'm gonna now preach a whole sermon on what I think is really going on, and I could be wrong, which may mean, I'm having the second dumbest conversation in the history of the world. But here's what I think is going on in Luke 9.

I think what is going on is that Jesus is great, and he is revealed in greatness, and being aware and present to the greatness of Jesus inspires, in the disciples, a longing for greatness. Is that not true? How many of you, you see greatness and you respond to it? You're a musician, and then you go to a concert or a show, or you download an album and all of a sudden, you're like, "I've gotta practice some more. I've gotta get better. That was amazing. I don't know if I could ever do that, but I want to try."

Or you're an athlete, or kind of an athlete, or you used to be an athlete. You see something on TV and think, "That's amazing. I gotta try that." You try it once, and then they do surgery, and you recover, but it inspires you for a moment to try something great. How many of you have watched a cooking show on the Food Network, and all of a sudden, you're in the kitchen trying? Just like, "How can I make this mac and cheese awesome?" You're inspired by it, so you try to up your game, you try to improve your behavior. You try and do better.

I think that's what's going on here. Jesus is revealed in greatness, and the disciples realize, "Man, there's so much more that we could be, and do, and know. We've gotta up our game. What does greatness look like for us? How can we pursue greatness?" And the reason I don't think it's a stupid conversation is 'cause Jesus doesn't rebuke them, and he rebukes them a lot, because these guys, they have a lot of work that needs to be done on them, and they're oftentimes, like you and I, making some serious mistakes. And Jesus will come, and correct, and rebuke them, but here he doesn't. He doesn't come and say, "What a dumb idea that you want to be great." Instead he comes and says, "Let me tell you how to do that." He doesn't rebuke them, he instructs them.

## **RECEIVE, REJECT, REDEEM**

So what are we to make of greatness, what are we to do with greatness? Is greatness a good thing, is it a bad thing, is it something we should aspire to? Is it something we should avoid? What do we do with this human longing for greatness? And this issue, like all others, fits into a taxonomy of three options that I've been laying out for years, but it's receive, reject, redeem.

Now, there are certain things, as Christians, we can just receive, even if non-Christians do them, or think they're a good idea, they're part of general revelation, common grace, good idea. You go to your non-Christian doctor, they say, "Exercise, drink water, and eat good food." I'll receive that. That's just good counsel.

There are other things that we need to reject. As Christians, we don't have Christian crack, or porn stars, or terrorists, we just don't. All right, there are no verses on our pipes. We just don't do that. That's just not—we can't do that. We're like, "No, I love Jesus, the answer's no." Right? I mean, Jesus, not Jihad, that's how we do it. I vote no, I can't do that.

There are other things that you can redeem, meaning they're good or maybe even God created them and gave them to us as a gift, but they've been really corrupted and polluted, and there's a redeemed way to enjoy, use, and steward them. At Mars Hill, we use this as an example, oftentimes, sexuality. God made it, gave it to us as a gift within the context of heterosexual covenant marriage, and a lot of people do a lot of nasty things, but that doesn't mean that it is in and of itself wrong, it just needs to be redeemed, and it needs to be something that is enjoyed within the confines of Scripture and God's will.

### **1. RECEIVING GREATNESS**

Back to my point, they're arguing about greatness. Should we just receive it, should we reject it, or should we redeem it? We'll look at the three options in succession.

Number one, first option is just receiving greatness, just receiving greatness. You look out in the world, there's a great value on greatness. And if we allow the world, the culture, to define greatness, and we just receive it, it's going to be very devastating for us in our relationship with Jesus.

This is a picture of a guy named Narcissus. Narcissus was a story in ancient Greek myth, and folklore, and legend, and it told a story that there was a young man who was walking along, and he saw his face reflected in water. And he couldn't believe it how magnificent, and beautiful, and glorious, and intriguing, and fascinating this person was, and he became so addicted to, and enamored with himself that he just gazed upon himself continually until he died.

Now, clinically, out of this, there has come something called narcissism based on the myth of Narcissus, and that is that some people have—I would say, virtually everyone, except for when they're in the process of repentance, has themselves as the center of their life. "The most important person is me. I'm the center of my universe. I'm addicted to, enamored with myself." We have a whole culture that promulgates self-love, self-esteem, self-help, self-actualization so that I can get all I

can get, be all I can be, do all I can do, feel all I can feel, have all I can have, to use the language of worship, "I want my glory."

And the truth is, we were made in the image and likeness of God to image God. The Bible says we are to be imaging God. That means we are to mirror, we're to reflect God. The God who made us is loving, and gracious, and kind, and good, and just, and truthful, and we are to image, to mirror, to reflect God, to show something of the character and nature of the invisible God to the visible world.

And what happens in narcissism is that we remain worshipers, but we worship ourselves. We're absolutely consumed with ourselves to the degree that we don't really have much regard for God or other people, unless we feel they can benefit us. So if God will bless me, and people will serve me, then I will pay attention to them, but I'm really not loving them, I'm just using them. And so we were made to be mirrors for God, but we end up being addicted to mirrors, and gazing upon ourselves.

Now, what's curious is this culturally is synonymous with greatness 'cause in our day, to be great, and to pursue greatness means becoming famous. There was a day you'd become famous by doing something. "I went to the moon," right? "I created software." Today, tell me anything any Kardashian has ever done, okay, and I'll give you the rest of your life to try. Nothing. You say, "Well, Paris Hilton." Yeah, nothing. On the Richter scale of contribution, flatline, nothing.

People are famous by virtue of just being famous. They're known for being known, not for doing anything. And so if you accept a cultural definition of greatness, the whole goal will be narcissism. "I just want to be famous. I want everybody to know me."

And some of you right now, you're smart. And you're like, "You're on a stage in front of us all, Twittering and Facebooking, seems like you're a narcissist." And the truth is it's something that is convicting me, something I'm praying through, something I'm looking back and asking, "Have I said or done—" "Have I," ha— "When have I said and done—" "Hypothetically, I know this guy, he's about this tall and says things that he shouldn't." I know looking back there have been times I've said and done things in such a way to get a bigger audience, and a bigger splash, and a bigger crowd, to get more attention, and it can detract attention from Jesus and the needs of others. That's narcissism.

It's something I'm thinking and praying about, and it kind of was triggered, interestingly enough, by Dr. Drew. Some of you say, "Oh, he's a Christian?" No. He's a nice enough guy. I did the Loveline Radio Show with Dr. Drew a few months back, and we're taking calls from addicted and abused people for the duration of the show. And we were talking in between callers, and he said, "Boy, we don't, you know, we don't agree on a lot of things, but we do agree on why these people have these issues."

We didn't agree on the solution, so I have no indication that he's a Christian, but he's since gone on to become sort of a cultural, celebrity expert. When Mel Gibson had his total meltdown, they brought him out on various shows to give his perspective. He's written a book actually called *The Mirror Effect*. *The Mirror Effect*, which is interesting 'cause it's the language of the Bible ("imaging God"), and it's the

language that John Calvin and other Reformers used to talk about, “We’re supposed to image God,” and what he said is that narcissistic people become celebrities, their whole goal is to be famous.

They’ll do anything to become famous, and then normal people become abnormal by imitating, mirroring, mimicking the behavior of those who are celebrities, and it leads to the train wreck that we call pop culture. And so, from his book, *The Mirror Effect*, I’ve taken a few of his principles, and I’ll describe this as godless greatness. If you just say, “I want to be great,” which means, “I want to be famous,” and you just walk into this world with the aspiration of fame, here’s what’s gonna happen.

Number one, narcissists become celebrities. You’re self-absorbed, you’re self-addicted, you’re the drama queen, you need all the attention and everyone to pay attention to you. For some of you, you sort of have this in a minor regard where in your circle of friends, everybody needs to pay attention to you, nobody else gets to talk, nobody else gets to decide anything, and everybody better be following your Twitter feed otherwise they’re gonna hear about it. You have to have attention. And it escalates all the way up to celebrities, where they want the whole world to pay attention to them, not because they’re helping, or serving, or praying, or caring, or teaching, but just so that they can get attention.

And this starts, parents, when kids are young. I saw this at a Mariners game recently. There were, they said, twenty thousand people at the game, and it didn’t look that way, but in front of Gracie and I, there was a family, a mom, a dad, and a boy who was maybe four or five or six years of age, and this kid is going to be trouble because he didn’t know that the twenty thousand people who were there were there to watch the game. He thought the twenty thousand people were there to watch him. He had no concept that there was a universe beyond himself, and that anyone would be interested in anything other than him.

And to make matters worse, his mother completely indulged him. She had a camera, and must have been taken ten bajillion photos of everything he did. “Oh, it’s so cute. It’s so cute.” And this boy, for the entirety of the game, is standing on his chair doing things, trying to be cute, messing around, hoping to get twenty thousand people to care more about him than Ichiro, and the whole time his mother is taking his photo, which is just practicing for him to be on *TMZ* some day. That’s how I saw it.

It reached about the eighth inning, and all of a sudden, he ran out of things to do, and he ran out of people paying attention to him, so he started taking his pants off while standing up on the chair. Again, you know, just, he’s just practicing for *TMZ*. That’s the culture we live in. Narcissists become celebrities, and it starts when you’re young.

I’m not saying you ignore children, but you tell them, “God is the center of the universe. There are some other people on the planet. You may not always get all the attention, deal with it.”

Number two, what happens then, extreme, dangerous, and self-destructive behavior is how you become famous. You can’t become famous by being normal. Like, you’re not gonna go home, and turn on like *The Soup* or *Tosh.0* and out comes, “Oh, today we

followed Hank around. He woke up early. He read Proverbs. He drank decaf. He took the bus to work to reduce his carbon footprint. He did a really good job. He didn't steal any money. He stayed late 'cause he loves his employer. Came home, kissed his wife, read Proverbs with his kids, and then went to bed." Nobody's gonna watch that, unless, "And then he ate someone." You're like, "Oh, well yeah, there we go. Okay, that's interesting." You have to do something crazy, right?

And what this leads to is—I'll give you some examples—bizarre addictions to body image, so, eating disorders, bulimia, anorexia, extreme surgeries, procedures; hypersexuality, all kinds of deviant sexuality; extreme addiction to substances and alcohol; dangerous and violent behavior. Right, so Johnny Knoxville's got his 3D movie coming out, and *Bully Beatdown* is out, and it's just, "I'm gonna become famous through taking risks with my own life and safety." Self-harm, which can include cutting, all kinds of disorders like hoarding.

We find people that have the most eccentric, troubled, broken, harmed lives, and we don't have the ability to just pray for them or serve them, we're intrigued by them. And what promulgates this is reality television, which isn't that realistic, but reality television is this explosive phenomenon, where in an effort to get a show, you have to do more and more extreme behavior, so that you can be more famous to increase your greatness.

In the year 2000, how many reality television shows do you think there were? Four. Today, three hundred twenty. All right, now, we've been offered two. Two times we've been offered, "Do you Driscolls," me and the kids and Grace, "You guys want to be an extreme television family?" No, we don't, 'cause first of all, my whole goal is a boring testimony. It'd be like, "Hey, Alexie can color and Mark's still reading." Right, it should be boring. Look at the reality television, *The Hogans*, bad. Osbourne's kid in rehab, shocker. Who could have seen that coming? You know, now it's *Kate Plus 8*, 'cause John, well, didn't go so well. You have to continually increase your extreme, bizarre, ridiculous, nonsensical behavior to keep attracting an audience, and what it leads to is a culture of death.

Now, what happens then, people in culture think, "Well, I see it all the time, it must be normal." So you got junior high girls sending out naked photos of themselves on their phones, and you got kids trying to reproduce *Jackass* stunts, and, you know, they're twelve. They don't understand gravity or deductibles. They don't understand what they're doing. And people, you know, they just mimic this behavior, and then what happens is they use social media thinking, "Well, I want to become famous. I want to put it on Facebook, Twitter, MySpace, YouTube. I'm gonna put it out there on my blog. I'm gonna become famous by saying and doing something nuts." And everybody talks about them. "Well, it works, I'm famous. I guess if I want to be more famous, I gotta get more nutty."

And this ultimately, because it's an identity founded on someone and something other than Jesus, and it's glory for me, and not glory for God, it's sin. It ultimately leads to death. You can go all the way back from Marilyn Monroe to Belushi, to Farley, to Elvis, to Cobain, to Layne Staley. I mean, you can just look at the train wrecks, and you can look at those that are in process. Lindsay Lohan, jail and rehab. Number one personality on Twitter today, Britney Spears; you go from a Mouseketeer to rehab.

That's the world we live in. Robert Downey Jr. has said openly and publicly that he's a narcissist. You wonder why guys like Mel Gibson freak out. It's because they think they're God and when someone tells them no, wrath comes down.

Say, "What is going on?" That's the world we live in, and then if the average person thinks, well, that's normal or that's how you become famous or that's the price you pay. You want to be great, you want to be famous, you want everybody to know you, you want to have the most Twitter followers, you want to have the biggest fans on Facebook, you want everybody to click "like," which is interesting. It's a worship act. "I like."

Now, Dr. Drew comes along, and he has this interesting quote, "Celebrities—like all narcissists— . . . rely on the world as a mirror," Calvin's language. It's amazing. A non-Christian has got some insights here that are helpful. "Constantly gazing outward in search of gratification or affirmation, in order to stave off their unbearable feelings of internal emptiness."

Celebrities are not healthy people. They're not. Famous people are not doing well. I mean, if you listen to Eminem's latest album, he basically says, "I ruined my whole life, but I'm trying to fix it. I want to do better, and be a good dad. I have no idea what I'm doing. I have no idea what I'm doing, so let's do it together, follow me." Really? Maybe you should follow somebody else. I know this guy who rose from death, maybe that guy.

Now, in addition, how about this? For those of you who are young, and by young, I mean under forty 'cause I'm almost forty. "51% of 18- to 25-year-olds said that becoming famous was their generation's most important, or second most important, life goal." The very neutral Pew Research Center.

Now, a lot of people in Mars Hill are in that age, some you are. Some of you are parents, your kids are at or near that age. Some of you are grandparents, your grandkids are at or near that age. You ask the average young person today, "What do you think the most important thing is for your generation? You guys want to be holy?" "Nope." "Want to be loving?" "No." "Compassionate, generous?" "Nope. Famous!" "Really? How you gonna do that?" "I'm gonna do something crazy." And then the self-destructive cycle of death kicks in, it just does. This is why we get juiced athletes trying to cheat. Lying politicians, crooked business leaders. Everybody's using everybody. Everybody wants to be somebody. Nobody's loving anybody.

Now, I'll give you one tragic, horrendous, devastating recent example. How many of you know Laurence Fishburne? He was an actor, became quite famous with *The Matrix*, pretty good actor. He's got a teenage daughter. She recently made her first porn film on her own, distributed it herself to make herself famous. Her dad is obviously distraught and devastated by this. He has tried to purchase the rights to it, but it's too late, it's been distributed. He, according to certain reports, has, along with his friends, has tried to buy all the copies, but can't track them all down. It's led to a conflict between he and his teenage daughter, who says this, "I view making this adult movie as an important first step in my career. . . . I've watched how successful Kim Kardashian—" You could add Paris Hilton, you could add Pamela Anderson—"became and I think a lot of it was due to the release of her sex tape by Vivid. I'm

hoping the same magic will work for me. I'm impatient about getting," what? "Well-known." I want to become famous quick. And having more opportunities and this seemed like a great way to get started on it." Do you feel it? Just changed the temperature in the room.

If you say, "I just want to be great. I'm gonna walk out in the world, and I just want to— my greatness means fame. I want to be known." It ends up with reckless, dangerous, unhealthy behavior mimicking the least healthy among us, trying to outdo others to gain a bigger fan base.

Now, some will come along, and try and Christianize this with fantastically nonsensical theology. They will say, "Oh yes, but God exists to give us greatness. Yes, we don't want the world's definition of greatness, what we want to have is a vision for our own greatness where we're healthy, and successful, and overachievers, and overcomers, and victors. And so we still want to pursue greatness as the world defines it by health, and beauty, and status, and success, and possessions. And God exists for my glory. God exists to worship me. God exists that I would have all I could have, be all I could be, do all I could do." It's all the way back to the first lie in Genesis, "You could be great like God."

Then false teachers come along, and say, "And God will help you by worshipping you." No, we don't exist to be worshiped by God. We exist to worship God. So we must, and I would just implore you from both the theological and the practical level, we must reject the cultural definition in pursuit of greatness. We must, and we must also reject a false theological system that says, "Well, Jesus will give you worldly greatness." No. We have to reject that.

## **2. REJECTING GREATNESS**

So then certain Christians will react to that, or overreact to it, and they'll reject greatness altogether, not just the worldly form, not just the cultural form of greatness, but reject greatness altogether. They'll say, "Yeah, the world is messed up. I don't want to be like that. I don't want to be that addictive, destructive, narcissistic, self-consumed, self-absorbed, don't love people, use them kind of person." And they'll go to places like James 3 and say, "Yeah, the Bible really condemns jealousy, which is coveting other people, and what they have, and what they wear, and where they live, and what they drive, and who they sleep with, and what they look like." That kind of selfish ambition that James rebukes. Don't want to be selfish, don't want to pursue ambition.

So there could be this overreaction where there's not just the rejection of worldly greatness, but of greatness altogether, and it oftentimes, in Christian circles, is in the false name of humility. "I don't want to pursue greatness, I just want to be humble." And it's this spiritual answer for the cowards, and the lazy, and the unmotivated to appear holy while being unholy. See, some of you say, "Well, I don't want to make much money. I don't want to, you know, get great grades. I don't want to push myself academically. You know, I don't want to lead my company because, you know, I'm just trying to be humble." Really? Is that true?

I meet a lot of young people that talk a lot about the needy, and the poor, and the hurting, and the suffering, therefore, "I'm not going to be very ambitious. I'm not

going to pursue greatness.” Well, why don’t you try and do something, like making money and giving it away or innovating solutions so that people can live a better life?

## **RESCUING AMBITION**

It’s very important that we learn to rightly perceive ambition. Ambition and pride are not always the same thing, though they can be synonymous to be sure. And those who reject greatness in any form—there’s a book called, *Rescuing Ambition*, and he talks about six different ways that people try and excuse their lack of ambition, and their rejection of all pursuit of greatness.

Number one, there are people who say, at least in their own mind, you wouldn’t put this on your blog. “I think I’m great already.” Why pursue greatness if you’re already pretty great? And some of you think you’re pretty great. You’re not really motivated, ambitious, hard-working, studious, because you feel like, “I’m kind of there. I’m doing pretty good.”

Number two, “I think I have great potential.” Now, you twenty-year-old guys, this is you, okay, and that is, “I have potential to be great,” which means, “If I want to, I can be great, and if I don’t become great, it’s just ‘cause I didn’t want to be, but I could have been,” which means “I’m not great, but I’m pretty great for not being great ‘cause I have great potential.”

Let me tell you this, when you’re in your teens, great potential is intriguing. When you’re in your twenties, it’s a little disappointing. When you’re in your thirties, it’s embarrassing. When you’re in your forties, it’s not potential. It’s a wasted life. And some people just keep talking about their potential, but they don’t do anything. What they have is potential, but not results. Not results.

Okay, I’m a baseball fan. I’m tired of drafting guys with potential. You know what I like? Results. “Someday he might hit a ball.” Today’s a good day. Today’s a really good day. Potential is always, “Maybe someday, perhaps, perchance, they can become blank, or do blank, or achieve blank, or accomplish blank.” You know what matters? Not just potential, but potential that is disciplined to be a disciple of Jesus; it is to be disciplined toward accomplishing the potential that you have.

Number three, “I used to be great.” You have your back-in-the-day friend? Everybody’s got their “back in the day,” I don’t know when the day was. This is usually like the broken ex-jock, right? “Back in the day when I could see my feet, I was so fast back in the day. Back in the day, I was so—back in the day, everybody wanted to date me. Back in the day, everybody liked me, back in the day.” And you’re hanging out with him for a while and after a while, you’re like, “I have heard all of these stories before, and every time, they get a little less likely.” Like, you were a little cooler, and cuter, and faster than you could possibly be even in a resurrected body, all right, back in the day.

And these are people, who—they’re not working for their present. They’re not anticipating their future, just talking about their past. “Remember when I did blank?” Yeah, that was awesome. “Remember when I said—” Yeah, yeah, I know. I know, we all know. You’ve done three things, and you keep talking about them. Do a fourth eventually, just give us some new material.

How about this one—you guys aren't laughing, that's 'cause it's you. I apologize. "That is not funny." It is, yeah. Back in the day, I used to not make fun of people.

Now, number four is, "I'm comparatively great." "I'm not great, but compared to the loser friends that I've chosen to surround myself with, I'm pretty great. Look, look, I have pants on. I'm great." And some of you intentionally, you intentionally just compare yourself to people who, you know—and I always get this, this is everyone's favorite in counseling. "At least I'm not Hitler." Oh, good point. Yeah, good for you. That's a big deal right there. That's a big deal. You haven't murdered millions of people. Now I'm impressed. See, I was disappointed, but now that you put yourself on that chart, you and Hitler, you're killing it. You're fantastic. But see, that's what we tend to do, we compare. That's why some of you, you'll watch the news looking for the worst person that did the worst thing, and the next day you'll talk about it 'cause you look pretty good.

Number five, "Tomorrow, I'll be great." This is the businessman. "I'm closing a big deal. Wait, wait, wait till I close this deal. Wait, you wait. I'm gonna nail that paper. I'm gonna finish that class. I'm gonna get that—wait, wait, wait, tomorrow. Tomorrow I'm gonna do that thing. I'm gonna start that ministry. I'm gonna pay off my debt. I'm gonna read that book. I'm gonna go to that community—tomorrow, tomorrow. It's coming, baby. Tomorrow!" Then after a while you're like, you know tomorrow, tomorrow never happens. You just, you live for the future, but you don't ever achieve anything.

Greatness is just beyond your reach, which is also the case with number six. "If only blank, I would be great." "Man, if I would have made that investment when I knew that stock was gonna go up, man, that would be great. If I would have had the courage to ask that girl out, ah man, she would have married me 'cause I'm compelling. That would have been great. Oh, man, if I would have read that book before I ruined my life, that would have been great. Oh, if I wouldn't have got hurt, I would have got drafted. I would have went pro, but I got hurt." "If only this had happened or not happened, I would have been great," which is, "I'm a victim, not my fault. I was destined for greatness, and I got sideswiped."

And what happens is some people reject greatness altogether, or they even come up with excuses, and seemingly holy ways, or maybe even religious ways of rejecting any sort of ambition, or courage, or risk, or effort. "I'm just humble."

Okay, now let's unpack this. Do you think that if you drive around in second gear, and you don't maximize the gifts, talents, dollars, and opportunities that God gives you, do you think that's humble or sinful? Do you think it glorifies God to kind of live a half-hearted, dispassionate, disorganized, somewhat lazy routine, predictable, ultimately safe life? Do you think you're a being a good steward under those conditions, investing and maximizing who you are in what God has entrusted for you to accomplish? No.

Do you think it's very loving toward other people? I mean, if they're in need, and you can help, and you're not doing what you can or should, is that very loving? No, it's selfish. Sometimes it's cowardice, it's poor stewardship, it's laziness, it's

disorganization.

Let me ask you this, 'cause it sounds good in theory, and a lot of young Christians, they're just in theory, like not being ambitious, not being aggressive, not trying your best, not doing your best. It's kind of this counterreaction to the Tony Robbins, *Your Best Life Now*, if you can think it, you could be it. Smile and just dream it. You know, that kind of a garbage-tastic, suburban, syrupy sweet, ridiculous nonsense, happiness view of life apart from sin, and the fall, and the curse, and there could be a generational overreaction to that.

But when you apply that, that kind of half-hearted, lazy, disorganized, self-righteous, cowardly, poor stewardship view of reality where you say, "I just don't want to pursue greatness," and you apply it to particular roles in your life, does it make any sense?

Do you not want to have a great marriage? Do you not want to be a great parent? Do you not want to be a great spouse? Do you not want to have a great prayer life? Do you not want to have great theology? Do you not want to be part of a great church? Do you not want to have a great ministry? Do you not want to have a great impact on the needs of those who are suffering and hurting? When you die, do you not want to leave anything for anyone?

How many of you right now are not looking for a good surgeon? Like, "I don't want a good surgeon, I want a Christian. I want someone who is humble and went to class half the time, and sometimes kills people because what I don't want is an arrogant surgeon who's aspiring to greatness to cut me open. I'm looking for a mediocre one." No. See, we don't, you don't want—you want your pilot to aspire for greatness, right? You want your brake mechanic to aspire for greatness. You want your heart surgeon to aspire for greatness. You would like your spouse to aspire for greatness, at least at being nice or helpful.

See, the truth is, we should desire greatness. We're built for greatness. We long for greatness. We can't just openly and wholeheartedly just reject greatness. Be a bad spouse, be a bad Christian, be a bad friend, be a bad parent, be a bad student, be a bad employee, be a bad steward, be a bad church member. "Humble like Jesus." No.

Because it too is narcissism. This is the case, there are the category one narcissists who want everybody to pay attention to them all the time, and they're addicted to all the applause. And the category two narcissist says, "I just want to be humble. I want to be cool. I want to be simple. I want to be minimal because I care about what people think about me." They still suffer from the same dilemma, it is seeking the approval of someone other than God, and living for the praise of people other than the maker, and there's just two ways of going about it. "I have rims." "I don't have rims." "I have a big house." "I live in a tent." "I drive an S.U.V." "I ride a bike to work." Both are just saying, "I'm good, holy, righteous, pious, esteem me, praise me, love me, give me my glory." They're both narcissists, one's just got more junk than the other one, as a general rule.

### **3. REDEEMING GREATNESS**

So that pushes us to the third option. Again, back to the story—we're gonna do a lot of cultural analysis today because the Bible says to watch our life and doctrine, and to

look at your life in culture, and back it up and say, what does our doctrine have to do with our life in culture? I hope it's clear that if you just pursue greatness as the world defines it, you will not be a faithful Christian. You cannot live a healthy, holy, happy life.

Furthermore, if you reject all forms of greatness, you will live a simple, pathetic, unimpressive, minimal life that is not what God intends for you, and you will not be giving glory to him or stewarding life well. And you can call it humility, it's not. It's cowardice, and laziness, and foolishness.

And it pushes us into the third category, which is redeeming greatness, and we go back to the story. "An argument arose among them as to which of them was the greatest." Luke 9:46–48, "But Jesus, knowing the reasoning of their hearts, took a child and put him by his side and said to them, 'Whoever receives this child in my name receives me, and whoever receives me receives him who sent me,'" God the Father. "'For he who is least among you is the one who is great.'" He adds in Mark 9, "he who is willing to serve," he who's willing to take the slave, lowly, servant position. He's the greatest of all. That's what he is alluding to here.

So they come to Jesus, say, "We want to be great." He doesn't say, "Well, be great like the world." He doesn't say, "Oh, no, no, no don't aspire to greatness, that's really dangerous." He says, "Okay, let me tell you how to be great." "That's a decent motivation and ambition. Let me tell you how to do that. Let me tell you how to achieve that," and he pulls up a child.

Now, this was very unusual. In that day, children were not taught the Torah until they were twelve years of age. They were considered a total waste of time. One rabbi in the Talmud says, quote, "Morning sleep, midday wine, and chattering with children, and tarrying in places where men of the common people assembled destroy a man." See, in their day, like ours, if you want to be a winner, run with the winners. You want to ruin your life and be a loser, get up and drink, sleep in, hang out with losers, and spend time with children. That's all a waste 'cause you can't climb the cultural, or economic, or political, or social ladder, whichever wall you're leaning on, if you're just hanging out with simpletons, and poor people, and kids.

Jesus brings up the child. A little kid. I see a little boy with a Fudgesicle, and, you know, one pant up, and one pant down, and a booger in his nose, and bedhead. And he's probably got this look like, "Huh, I'm teaching rabbis, okey-dokey." I mean, it's probably an interesting moment for this kid, and Jesus does something totally unexpected because people in that day, like our day, in large part, did not receive children well.

See, in our day, "Children are a burden. They cost money, so let's have sex, but not marriage. Let's use birth control," which isn't always a sin if you are married. "If we do get pregnant, let's abort the child, and if we do have the child, it's the worst thing that ever happened because it disrupts our ability to pursue our greatness, and the kid takes time and money, and what about me?"

And it was kind of that issue in that day. Grown men don't hang out with children, and Jesus is a grown man, a single man, a childless man who loves children, and

children love him. And Jesus sets this cultural paradigm that is shocking. He's telling the disciples, "You guys need to hang out with kids more."

Not that kids are innocent and pure and they are our future, and lead them well, and they'll show us the way and, you know—gosh, I hate that song. I heard it recently in the grocery store, and I was like, "I'm so glad I'm not on the knife aisle. I would just kill myself, geez." It's not that children are sinless, and naive, and perfect, and we should learn from them, and they're apart from the fall. No, it's not that at all.

Jesus is saying, "You know what? Until you humble yourself, and you're willing to have a child-like," not a childish. Again in Matthew 18 and Mark 9, the corollary texts where he gives us, through his servants, this summary; he talks about a child-like faith, not a childish faith. He's talking about hanging out with those who would otherwise not be your first choice for friends, learning some humility, and service, and love of others. What Jesus is doing here, he's using an unlikely illustration from a little boy to say, "Let me tell ya how to be great." And so I put it together for you.

Here's what Jesus says about redeeming greatness, okay? Five things in an acronym. I thought you would like that, and since I'm a narcissist, I wanted to share that with you. So redeeming greatness in five points.

Number one is you live for the glory of God alone. Now, you know what? The truth is none of us are perfectly, continually always gonna do this. We'll always need to check our heart, check our intentions, check our motives, and repent of our sin. But to glorify God is not to not submit to authority. It's not that you're unwilling to listen to other people. It's not that you're unteachable, but ultimately, you're living your life in such a way this you will hear God say, "Well done, good and faithful servant," whether or not other people along the way agree with you, whether or not other people agree with you along the way.

Okay, and I've talked to a lot of people. I could give you a lot of simple examples. A gal became a Christian. She really liked her boyfriend, but he was not a Christian, had no interest in Jesus. She realized they could not, you know, end up being married unless he changes his heart by God's grace in the future, so she said, "You know, this relationship is off." Well, now her family and her friends are pressuring her. "Can't you just marry him?" "No, because that would not glorify God. I do care for him. I do appreciate him, but we're not equally yoked. That's not God's will for me, not God's will for me."

I met someone recently that became a Christian, their family's rejected and disowned them. Their family's like, "Can't you just keep your faith to yourself? Why do you gotta let people know you're a Christian?" "I am a Christian, and I do love Jesus, and that is who I am, and I'm not trying to be mean or rude, but that's just who I am." "Well, don't talk about it." "Well, I need to talk about the one who's changed my life, 'cause I want other lives to be changed. I need to glorify God." I know people that have lost jobs recently, 'cause they love Jesus, not 'cause they were sinning on the job or doing anything wrong.

But it's glorifying God. And you know what? Sometimes when you live to the glory of God alone, you may not make the most money, you may not get the promotion. You

may not get everyone's approval, right, you may not get the largest following of friends and fans. You may actually pick up a few foes. You're not trying to be self-righteous, or proud, or haughty, you're just saying, "God, I love ya. I'm reading the Bible. I'm trying to obey ya, 'cause I do love ya, 'cause you do love me, and I'm just trying to live for the glory of God."

What that means is how we spend our money, how we spend our time, our talent, our treasure, how we invest our days, how we organize our life, our sexuality, our friends, our family, our work ethic, all of it is to the glory of God. It may not be the way everybody thinks it should go, but it's what God says in his Word, and it's what honors him.

Now, some of you say, "Boy, but that sounds tough." You know what it does? It liberates you to stop using people, and start loving them because if you're living for everyone's approval, applause, and praise, you're not loving them, you're using them. It's when you live for the glory of God alone that you can stop using people, and just love them. Whether or not they agree, whether or not they approve, whether or not they applaud.

And ultimately, that's Jesus. That's Jesus. Jesus perfectly, continually, unceasingly lived to the glory of God the Father alone.

Number two, reject unhealthy comparisons to others. This is part of the issue with the disciples. They're all arguing, "Which of us is gonna be the greatest?" No. That's not healthy behavior. The truth is you should learn from other people, but not compare yourself to them in an unhealthy way. I was talking to a young lady recently, newly married, fresh out of college, got college debt, she and her husband are trying to figure out how to pay it off. She's trying to figure out how to live with him. They're trying to figure out how to get a ministry started in their home and community group. You know what? She's trying to figure a lot of things out, life's had a lot of change. You know what she needs? Wisdom, counsel from people who are a little older, been through this season, can help her learn.

So you should learn from other people, but don't compare yourself to other people. Unhealthy comparison of yourself to other people leads to one of two things, pride or despair. Pride: "I'm cuter than they are, smarter than they are, funnier than they are, more successful than they are, wiser than they are. I'm just better than they are." This sense of smug superiority. Or despair: "I'm not as cute as they are. I'm not as smart as they are. I'm not as rich as they are. I'm not as funny as they are. I just kind of feel like the loser."

Don't practice unhealthy comparison of yourself to others, because when there is that kind of competition, it really kills community. Community is where we serve one another, competition is where we do battle with one another, and that doesn't lead to peace, and service, and love, and help.

Number three, enjoy humbly serving the outcasts, that's what Jesus is saying. He brings up the little boy. Says, "You know what? You guys are all arguing about how to be the greatest. Charlie here needs somebody to play with. Charlie here needs to go to the restroom. Charlie here can't find his truck 'cause there's a big crowd of people,

and he dropped it somewhere. You know what? Instead of arguing about who's the greatest, why don't one of you guys help Charlie? Just stop arguing about which one of you has the most true Facebook fans, and which posts get the highest rating, and somebody go get Charlie a Fudgesicle, all right, make yourself useful." This is my interpretation of how it's going.

And what Jesus is saying here, "You're thinking about yourself, you're not thinking about somebody in need. You're overlooking people. You should be serving them. Get your eyes off yourself, love others," 'cause here's the deal, if you live to the glory God, and the good of others, that helps combat against our selfish, narcissistic, self-consumed, navel-gazing, "I love that person in the mirror," me-ism.

So all of a sudden, you're like, "Man, God loves them, and I can help, and God loves me, and he's helping me. And I need to do what Jesus said, love God, love my neighbor, and stop being absolutely addicted with myself, humbly serving those in need." And it's oftentimes humbly serving those in need quietly, not 'cause the camera's on, not so that you get all kinds of applause, just 'cause it's the right thing to do.

That's what he's telling them. "Why don't you guys stop arguing and help some kids?" And you know what? That's true in our day. Very rarely do you see good, strong, courageous, competent young men investing in children. You just don't. You just don't. Forty percent of kids tonight go to bed without a father. They don't have a dad. Jesus' words ring as true as ever. You want to be great? Why don't you help some kids? That would be great, they could use some help. Many of them don't even have a dad. See, in their day like ours, if you saw a single man with children, it often meant he was a predator. Jesus is no predator. He's got a father's heart and he loves kids, even as a single man. This includes widows, and orphans, and the poor, and those with disability, and the shut-ins, and the incarcerated, those who are overlooked, those who are neglected, those who aren't gonna kick up your social status, your economic status, your cultural status.

And it's a gospel issue because our God loves us, and his reputation has not improved hanging out with us. We bring to him nothing that he doesn't already own, and God comes as Jesus to hang out with us, and love us, and be with us, and serve us because he's good. What he says is, "If you belong to me, why don't you do that? Show people what I'm like." How many of you, you only pick your friends, you only pick those who you hang out with because they can help you? They're attractive. They're smart. They're rich. They're going somewhere, and you're using them. Jesus says, "That's not how we do community."

Number four, accept your life and do your best. "Your life," now here—I'm trying to thread a needle here. The false Christian theology on greatness is start with a vision for your life, have enough faith, sow a seed of faith, and God will bless you, and you will become great! *[Blows raspberry]* The vision for your life doesn't begin with you, it begins with God. Right? How we got from, "I worship a single homeless guy who got murdered so I could be rich, and famous, and healthy, and awesome," like, I don't get that. That makes no sense at all. That's like, "I punched myself in the head to get a jellybean." That doesn't make any sense, that just doesn't make any sense. And you say, "That doesn't make any sense." That's my point. It just doesn't make any sense.

We worship a broke, homeless, virgin murder victim thinking all our dreams will come true, and we'll all be rich, and happy, and successful, and fulfilled. No. God doesn't exist to read the lines that you and I write for our life. God, in his sovereignty, he has good works for us to walk in, Ephesians says, and you've gotta accept your life.

You know what? Maybe you wanted to be married, and you're single, okay? Because no one's married you, or your spouse died, or you're divorced. Or maybe you're married, and you want to be single, all right? Can't laugh real loud 'cause your spouse is next to you, but you know what I'm talking about. Maybe you wanted kids, but you're infertile, or you miscarried. Maybe you wanted to be healthy, but you're sick. Maybe you wanted to be rich, but you're poor. Maybe you wanted to be funny, and you're just weird. It happens. Accept the life that God has given you, and do your best. Do your best.

Paul tells a guy in the New Testament, Timothy, he says, "Do your best." I love that line. I mention it all the time. Do your best. Some of you say, "I'm broke." Then be the best broke you can be, to the glory of God and the good of others by the grace of God. Some of you say, "I'm sick, and I'm suffering, and I'm dying." Well, then be sick, suffering, and dying in an awesome, God-glorifying, use-it-for-something, help-somebody-else kind of way. "Well, my spouse died, and I'm lonely." Well, use it to the glory of God and the good of others by the grace of God. Make something out of it. Do your best.

You may be weird, broke, eccentric, single, childless, have cancer, and you know what? Take the life God has given you, use it to glorify God, help others by the grace of God, and it's a great life. Now, it may not be, it may not be great online, like, "Hey, all of you people with eccentric humor, and, you know, "weird cowlick in your hair who've been divorced "and, you know, can't get a job, and have cancer, you guys want to be like me?" No. You'll have two fans, one's your mom, right? So in this world, you're not gonna get a lot of kudos for that, but it's a great life. It's a life that honors God. It's a life that serves God. It's a life that inspires others. It's a life that's invested. It's a life like Jesus'.

Now, some of you are gonna be rich. Some of you are gonna be poor. Some of you are gonna be beautiful. Some, not gonna happen. All right, some of you are gonna live a long time, some of you are gonna live a short time. Some of you are gonna be totally healthy, some of you are gonna be really sick. Some of you are gonna grow old with your spouse. Some of you are gonna get divorced prematurely. Do your best with the life you have. Have a godly, holy, redeemed ambition to live for the glory of God and the good of others by the grace of God, and that's a great life. That's a great life.

Number five, take opportunities to redeem your ambitions. The truth is you could start off with really good ambitions, and then your selfishness and your pride, it can absolutely corrupt the good start that you have. And God here is giving, to the disciples, an opportunity to redeem their ambitions. "You want to be great? Let's talk about how to do that." See, Judas wants to be great, and he's got a totally different plan. "I'm gonna steal from Jesus, and put myself in charge." That's one way to be great. Jesus here is giving the disciples an opportunity to redeem their ambitions for

greatness. Apparently, eventually eleven of the twelve take him up on that offer and one doesn't.

You and I are in that same position today, Jesus is giving us an opportunity to redeem our ambitions. What are you ambitious for? What are you desirous of? Who do you want to be? What do you want to do? Is that God-glorifying, others-helping by the grace of God? If not, redeem your motives, but it doesn't mean that you don't do anything. It means that you correct your motives in the things that you do.

I'll give you an example, a guy got saved not long ago. He's really good at making money, really good at making money. Came to me said, "Man, I made a lot of money. I acquire companies. I do a great job with this. God's given me a skill to make a lot of money, but man, I've used people, I've been cutthroat, I've been greedy, I've wasted money. I've not stewarded well. I've not been generous with the poor. I've not given to church or ministry, and now I met Jesus, and I'm really convicted that I worship money, and my whole life is upside down."

I said, "So what are you thinking?" He said, "I think I'm gonna quit business, and go plant a church. I'm just gonna be broke and a pastor." I said, "We don't need another one of those broke pastors." That's like right-handed people. They're everywhere, right, there's no shortage of them. You know what we don't have is people who know how to make money, and are generous with it. I said, "Do you think you could not change your career or your skill set, but redeem your ambitions? Say, I'm gonna work humbly. I'm gonna work in a holy way, a God-glorifying way. I'm gonna take good care of my employees. They're gonna be able to take care of their families. I'm gonna live simply, not gonna go buy twenty-seven houses and have rims on my rims. I'm gonna live, you know, a decent life, and then I'm gonna give generously."

He said, "I can do that." I said, "How many church planters do you think you could fund?" He said, "I don't know, hundreds." "That's more than one. Let's do that. Let's do that. Let's not change what God has given you the skills to do, let's redeem the motivation and the outcome. Let's use it for something good." He's like, "Really, so I can go make a lot of money?" "Yes, just don't keep it all. Be generous, give it away." "Okay." That's his plan.

I want you to redeem your greatness, and God gives us all an opportunity today to check our hearts, to check our motives, to check our ambitions, to check our intentions. And some of you, you just have a worldly view of greatness that you just need to reject. Who cares if people think you're cool? Who cares who's singing your praises and applause for your conduct? I mean, who cares? You need to just let that fear of man go.

Some of you, though, you're not ambitious. You're not disciplined. You're not aggressive. You're just lazy, or you're cowards, or you're just disorganized, or you just lack ambition in the name of humility. You need to also reject that kind of behavior, and I invite you all today to this is opportunity to redeem our ambitions, to redeem our desires, to redeem our yearnings and longings for greatness.

## **REJOICE IN OTHERS' GREATNESS**

Then he closes with this. You know that you've made some progress when you can

rejoice in others' greatness. Luke 9:49–50, "John answered, 'Master, we saw someone casting out demons in your name, and we tried to stop him,'" I wish I could have been there to see that. That just had to be interesting. "Because he does not follow with us.' But Jesus said to him, 'Do not stop him, for the one who is not against you is for you.'"

They come and say, "Jesus, this other guy's doing great things. He's got a great ministry. He's casting demons out of people. We told him to stop, he won't." Jesus is like, "Well, does he love me? Is he a good guy? Is he doing a good job?" "Yeah, he's casting demons out of people." Well, that's a good thing. Like, who's against that? "People have demons, I get rid of them." "No!" Like, what? Demons are bad. We all agree on that and if they leave, that's good.

But the disciples are like, "Well, he didn't go to our seminary. He didn't go to our Bible college. He's not part of our denomination. He didn't go through the deacon process. He didn't check the box. He didn't fill out the visitor card. He didn't—he just kind of did it. He just kind of did it. We had a chart and he's like, I don't do charts. He just does ministry."

Jesus is like, "Well, is it working?" "Yeah." "Does he love me?" "Yeah." "Are demons leaving?" "Yeah." "Good," 'cause the kingdom of God is advancing so rejoice wherever it is, 'cause you know what? If it has to be part of your team, it has to be part of your theology, it has to be part our tradition, it has to be part of our church or our network of churches, then we can't rejoice when other people are going good things, and God's gracious to them, and greatness is among them. We get suspicious, or envious, or jealous, or critical instead of saying, "Praise God. You're helping people and you love Jesus. That's great."

We're not talking about people here with character defects or false doctrine. There may be churches that we disagree with some things on, and some Christians that we disagree with things on. But you know what? If they love Jesus, and they have holy ambition, and they're pursuing greatness that glorifies God, and helps others humbly, and God is using them, and things are happening, cheer, cheer, cheer. Be a friend, be a fan, be a prayer warrior, be an intercessor, be an encourager. Praise God, wherever the kingdom of God is advancing, praise be to God. The church is part of the kingdom of God. Our church is part of the kingdom of God, but the kingdom of God is really what it's all about. So he's telling his disciples, "Look, don't be jealous of someone else's greatness, rejoice in it and learn from it."

## **JESUS IS HOW WE RECEIVE GREATNESS**

Now, let me say this, Jesus is not only our example of greatness, and not only our inspiration of greatness, he is the means by which we receive greatness. He is our God and Savior. The next verse, Luke 9:51, will transition the whole storyline of Luke. It says that Jesus set his face toward Jerusalem. He begins his march toward the cross. The whole book here hinges toward the cross. Everything is moving in the storyline of Luke toward the cross of Jesus, where God is going to substitute himself, and he's gonna go to the cross, and he's gonna take our sin, and he's gonna give us his righteousness through his son Jesus.

Second Corinthians 5:21 says, "God made him who knew no sin to become sin so that

in him, we might become the righteousness of God.” If you’ve been around awhile, you’ve heard me say this, Luther calls it the great exchange. All of our sin, idolatry, narcissism, pride, jealousy, envy, me-ism, all of it, which is sin, goes to Jesus, and he dies paying the penalty for our sin. And he gives us, in addition, reckons to us, imputes to us his righteousness.

This means that you and I now possess, through faith if we are the children of God, the righteousness of Jesus, the perfect, sinless, obedient, selfless, worshipful, imaging life of Jesus. It’s reckoned, credited to our account. So now we want to pursue greatness, not for an identity, but from our identity in Christ. We want to pursue greatness, not for our righteousness, but from the righteousness that is given us by Jesus. Not for our glory, but from the glory of God. Not for God’s approval, from God’s approval in Christ. Not for the love of God, but from the love of God.

Greatness is pursued by the children of God, by the power of the Holy Spirit who indwells them in newness of life, greatness of life, rich or poor, living or dying, healthy or sick, succeeding or failing to the glory of God and the good of others by the grace of God through the power of the Holy Spirit, which is our joy, which is our joy. That’s what greatness is. I don’t know if I’m the only one excited about this, but I am very excited about this. It means a passionate, free life that glorifies God, helps others, and gives me joy. What a gift. What a gift.

Father God, I pray for us all. God, some of us have received a worldly definition of culture, and it is not good for us. And God, I know in various times and ways, I have, so I want to confess my own sin publicly, and how convicting this is for me, and causing me to really rethink how I message everything. Thank you for serving me in your Word. God, I pray for those of us who, in the name of false humility, have rejected any pursuit of greatness. We’re really not doing what we should. We’re not caring for people as we ought. We’re not giving what is required. May we repent of that lack of holy ambition and God, help us to take this opportunity as you gave the disciples, Lord Jesus, to redeem our definition of greatness, to redeem the means by which we pursue it. God, we want to be great worshipers by your grace. We want to be great friends, and spouses, and parents, and employees, and servants, and helpers, and ministers. God, we want to love well. We want to give much because that’s how you are, and we just want people to see you and talk about you. In Jesus’ name, Amen.

*[End of Audio]*

*Note: This sermon transcript has been edited for readability.*