A Greater Than

On Worthiness, the Old Shirt in the Closet, and the One Who Exceeds Every Forerunner

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The Old Shirt

One of the brothers in the assembly testified this morning about the tension we all live in, the gap between *what will be* and *what is*. Paul names that gap directly:

> . . . that you put off, concerning your former conduct, the old man which grows corrupt according to the deceitful lusts, and be renewed in the spirit of your mind, and that you put on the new man which was created according to God, in true righteousness and holiness. (Ephesians 4:22–24)

Put off the old man. Put on the new man. Two verbs. Both continuous, both in the active voice: *we* do the putting off, *we* do the putting on. The Spirit does the work in us, but the work shows up in our hands every morning. And here is the hard truth about that work: *we keep reaching into the closet, and the old shirt is right there at the front*. It is the one that feels familiar. It fits the body's existing shape. It is the story we have lived inside for so long that it has been molded to us, and we to it. *Reaching for it is not even a decision; it is muscle memory.*

And it is very difficult to live outside of that old story. The old story has a script. The old story has a wardrobe. The old story has a cast of characters who know what to expect of us, and from whom we know what to expect. *Stepping into the new story is awkward.* The clothes don't

fit yet. The lines aren't memorized. The people in the new story don't know us yet. So the old shirt keeps winning, simply because it requires no effort to put on.

But God has called us to live into a different story, *the story of his Son*. And the song the assembly was singing this morning was about exactly that: *the worthiness of the Lord*, and how *he has come and dwelt among us*. *That* is what makes the difference. Not our effort to bootstrap our way into the new story. Not our determination to make the old shirt fit better by clenching ourselves into it. *The presence of God dwelling among us, and within us, is the difference.*

My Inner Atheist

Let me be honest about how my own old shirt has worked. I have tried, many times, to grab myself by the bootstraps and pull myself up. I have tried to make myself behave. I have tried to manage my responses by force of will. And every time, what I have actually done is *replicate the very enemies I was trying to scatter*. You know how, when you slap your hand down on a puddle of water on a tile floor, the puddle does not disappear; it just goes *everywhere*? *That* has been my sin-suppression mechanism. *Let me just take care of this, once and for all, by pressing down hard on it.* And the result was a wider mess than the one I had started with.

Every time I get worked up about some household project (*some assembly required*, a job that ought to be simple) and I try to drive myself through it in fifteen minutes so I can move on to the next thing, the project resists, the small tools betray me, the instructions are written by someone who does not own the same kind of screwdriver I have, and *my inner atheist comes out*. (We all have one. Be honest.) *Dad-gum it. God bless America. Why does nothing work?* And what I have learned, slowly, is that if I will simply say *this is going to take all day, and that's fine*, the project goes together in a tenth of the time it would have taken if I had been wrestling it. *The grip is the problem, not the project.* And I think this is true of much more than household

tasks. Whenever I have tried to scatter my interior enemies by pressing down on them, *they have only spread*. Whenever I have tried to do God's work by force, I have done less of God's work, not more.

There is a different story we get to live into. And it begins with the realization that the One we are following is *worthy* in a way nothing else in our lives is.

Worthy up to What?

Think about what *worthiness* actually means in ordinary use. A ladder, for instance, has a load rating stamped on its side. *Worthy up to three hundred pounds.* That is a statement of what the ladder can hold without failing. Put your weight on a ladder rated for three hundred pounds, and you can stand on it confidently, *as long as you are under three hundred pounds*. The moment the load exceeds the rating, the ladder is no longer worthy of *that* weight. The ladder did not get less worthy as a ladder; the weight got too heavy for what the ladder was built to hold.

Now apply that to the things in our lives we have been leaning on. *Our political arrangements.* Worthy up to what? They will hold some load. They will not hold the weight of an ultimate trust. *Our economic frameworks.* They will hold some load. They will not hold the weight of an ultimate hope. *Our social structures.* They will hold some load. They will not hold the weight of an ultimate identity. *Even the church.* Brothers and sisters who love each other and meet faithfully are a real gift, but the church itself is not the ladder that holds the ultimate weight. I'll tell you straight: a church will let you down. Church leadership will let you down. Trustees will let you down. Sunday school teachers will let you down. People will fail you.

There is one who never fails. The One who never fails is Jesus. He is *the* worthy one. He is the ladder whose load rating has no upper limit. *He can hold every weight you put on him, and the weight beyond that, and the weight beyond that.* That is the worthiness the song was about.

And the more I read this book, the more I dig into who this Jesus is, *the more I realize who we are dealing with*. Let me show you what I mean by walking through Matthew's careful arrangement of *the greater thans*.

Greater Than John the Baptist

Matthew is building a portrait. Not just a biography. A *portrait*. And the portrait works by setting Jesus alongside the great figures of Israel's history and showing, at every comparison, that *Jesus exceeds them*. The cumulative weight of the comparisons is the cumulative weight of the worthiness.

Look at Matthew 11. Jesus turns to the crowds and asks:

> What did you go out into the wilderness to see? A reed shaken by the wind? But what did you go out to see? A man clothed in soft garments? Indeed, those who wear soft clothing are in kings' houses. But what did you go out to see? A prophet? Yes, I say to you, and more than a prophet. (Matthew 11:7–9)

And then comes the assessment:

"Assuredly, I say to you, among those born of women there has not risen one greater than John the Baptist; but he who is least in the kingdom of heaven is greater than he" (Matthew 11:11).

Read that twice. *No one greater than John the Baptist has been born of woman.* John, the desert prophet in the hairy garment, eating locusts and wild honey, proclaiming a baptism of repentance, is the greatest prophet ever born of woman. *And yet the least in the kingdom of heaven is greater than he is.* The mere act of entering the kingdom Jesus is bringing places you in a category that exceeds the greatest prophet of the old order. That is a staggering claim. Not because John is diminished. But because what Jesus is bringing is so much more than what John

was preparing for that even the smallest member of the new kingdom carries more weight than the greatest spokesman of the old.

And then Jesus identifies John more precisely:

"And if you are willing to receive it, he is Elijah who is to come. He who has ears to hear, let him hear!" (Matthew 11:14–15).

He is Elijah who is to come. This is a direct invocation of Malachi 4, the very last verses of the Hebrew Bible:

> Behold, I will send you Elijah the prophet before the coming of the great and dreadful day of the Lord. And he will turn the hearts of the fathers to the children, and the hearts of the children to their fathers, lest I come and strike the earth with a curse. (Malachi 4:5–6)

Israel had been waiting for centuries for this Elijah-figure to arrive. He was the one who would gather the fragmented families, reconcile the estranged generations, bind brother to brother again, and prepare the way for the One God would send. *And Jesus says: He has come. John is Elijah. The end-of-the-Hebrew-Bible promise has been fulfilled in the man in the camel-hair coat at the Jordan.*

So if John is the prophesied Elijah, and even John is exceeded by *the least in the kingdom*, then what kind of greater-than is Jesus, who is the one John has come to prepare the way for? *That* is the question Matthew is building toward. The Elijah-figure has come. The One greater than the Elijah-figure is now arriving.

Why Can't the Farmer and the Cowman Be Friends?

And here is what makes that *gathering of the families* promise so necessary. Look around. *You cannot throw a stone in this world and not hit someone who is at odds with someone*

else about something, even when the two of them are, by any reasonable measure, on the same side. The old musical *Oklahoma!* by Rodgers and Hammerstein has a song that captures it perfectly: *Why can't the farmer and the cowman be friends?* They are both working the same land. They are both raising their children in the same towns. They are both at the same dance on Saturday night. *And they cannot get along.* The distinctions we make in this world are so finely sliced that you can always find a reason to be at odds with the person next to you, no matter how aligned you actually are.

Israel needed an Elijah to bind those gaps. *Our families need an Elijah today*. Brothers estranged. Parents and adult children silent across the dinner table. Old friendships broken over politics or denominational distinctions or the latest cultural quarrel. The greater Elijah came not only to point to the One who would do the deeper work, but to do something of the work himself, and the One he prepared the way for has come to complete it. The fragmented family of humanity will be gathered. The estranged generations will be reconciled. The brothers who would not speak will, in time, sit at the same table. *That is the Malachi 4 promise, taken up by Matthew 11, and fulfilled in stages from John forward.*

Greater Than Moses

And then track the next comparison, because it has been running underneath Matthew's narrative from the opening pages. *Jesus is greater than Moses.*

Watch the parallels Matthew has been laying down. In the opening chapters, Pharaoh tries to kill the Hebrew baby boys (Exodus 1). *Herod tries to kill the Jewish baby boys* (Matthew 2:16). Moses goes down to Egypt and is preserved. *Jesus goes down to Egypt and is preserved* (Matthew 2:13–15). Moses leads Israel through the Red Sea into the wilderness for forty years of testing. *Jesus goes down into the waters of baptism, and then into the wilderness for forty days of*

testing (Matthew 3:13–4:11). And in the wilderness, when the tempter comes, *every verse Jesus uses to combat the voice of the tempter comes from Deuteronomy*, the very book that records Moses' account of Israel's failures in the wilderness. *Jesus is succeeding, point for point, exactly where Israel failed*.

Then Jesus gathers crowds and goes up a mountain. Matthew 5. He sits down. He opens his mouth. He delivers a sermon that we have called the Sermon on the Mount for two thousand years. The parallel with Moses is exact. Moses went up Mount Sinai. Jesus is going up a mountain. Moses came down with tablets of stone. Jesus is opening his mouth and speaking words that will be written on the hearts of his disciples. And listen to the formula Jesus uses repeatedly throughout the sermon:

"You have heard that it was said to those of old, 'You shall not murder . . .' But I say to you . . " (Matthew 5:21–22).

"You have heard that it was said, 'You shall not commit adultery.' But I say to you . . " (Matthew 5:27–28).

You have heard it said. But I say to you. Who said those things first? *Moses* said them. *Moses* delivered the command not to murder. *Moses* delivered the command not to commit adultery. And Jesus does not contradict Moses. *He goes deeper than Moses*. He takes the surface command and reaches down into the root system underneath it: *anger, contempt, lust, covetousness, the inner postures that produce the outward actions Moses had named*. Moses was right. Moses was God's appointed lawgiver for his time. *And Jesus is greater than Moses* because Jesus addresses the root the Mosaic law could only address at the surface.

Greater Than Solomon

And then Matthew 12. Jesus is responding to those who keep asking him for a sign:

> The queen of the South will rise up in the judgment with this generation and condemn it, for she came from the ends of the earth to hear the wisdom of Solomon; and indeed a greater than Solomon is here. (Matthew 12:42)

Remember the queen of Sheba. She traveled across the ancient Near East to see Solomon, and when she saw him, her response was:

> It was a true report which I heard in my own land about your words and your wisdom. However I did not believe the words until I came and saw with my own eyes; and indeed the half was not told me. Your wisdom and prosperity exceed the fame of which I heard. (1 Kings 10:6–7)

The half was not told me. Solomon, the wisest king Israel ever produced, was greater than his reputation. *And Jesus is greater than Solomon.* That is what Matthew wants us to feel. Solomon was a foreshadowing. Solomon was the high-water mark of Israelite kingship and wisdom. *And the One standing in front of the Pharisees in Matthew 12 exceeds him*. The wisdom of God incarnate has come into the room, and the religious experts are missing him because they cannot believe that anyone could exceed the Solomon they already know.

Greater Than Jonah

And in the same paragraph:

> "The men of Nineveh will rise up in the judgment with this generation and condemn it, because they repented at the preaching of Jonah; and indeed a greater than Jonah is here" (Matthew 12:41).

Now consider Jonah's preaching. He arrived in Nineveh (*a great city*, a three-day walk across) and his message was, by anyone's count, brief. *Yet forty days, and Nineveh shall be overthrown* (Jonah 3:4). That is *eight words* in English, and only *five words* in the underlying

Hebrew. The reluctant prophet delivered the world's shortest evangelistic sermon and then turned to walk out of town.

And the city repented. The whole city. The king came down off his throne, put on sackcloth, and decreed that *everyone in the city*, including the cattle, would fast and put on sackcloth (Jonah 3:6–8). Cows in sackcloth. Donkeys in sackcloth. *On the strength of a five-word message from a reluctant prophet who didn't even want them to repent.* That is the most dramatic mass conversion in the entire Old Testament.

And a greater than Jonah is here. If Jonah's word, delivered grudgingly, converted Nineveh, what should the response be to Jesus' word, delivered freely? The Pharisees standing in front of him heard the comparison and *did not bow*. The cows of Nineveh repented at less. *A greater than Jonah is here*, and his own generation is sitting on its hands.

Greater Than Elijah, Greater Than Elisha

Now those are the *explicit* comparisons Matthew makes. But Matthew also weaves in a less obvious set, the parallels with Elijah and Elisha that show up in the texture of the Gospel without being announced as such. *Once you see them, you cannot unsee them.*

Begin with Elijah. He prays that it will not rain, and it does not rain for three and a half years (1 Kings 17:1; James 5:17). Ahab and Jezebel have been bringing in their prophets of Baal and corrupting Israel's worship. Elijah is on the run. *And he goes into the wilderness and fasts for forty days*, sustained by an angel of the Lord who prepares bread for him (1 Kings 19:5–8). Familiar parallel? *Jesus goes into the wilderness, fasts forty days, and is ministered to by angels* (Matthew 4:1–11).

And note the political backdrop. *Elijah is at odds with Ahab and Jezebel, an inappropriate marriage between an Israelite king and a foreign idolatress.* John the Baptist is at

odds with Herod and Herodias: *exactly the same configuration*, an inappropriate marriage that John denounces, and that ultimately costs him his head:

"For Herod had laid hold of John and bound him, and put him in prison for the sake of Herodias, his brother Philip's wife. Because John had said to him, 'It is not lawful for you to have her'" (Matthew 14:3–4).

Same pattern. *Jezebel goes after Elijah. Herodias goes after John.* The Old Testament Jezebel does not quite succeed in killing Elijah; God hides him and eventually takes him to heaven by chariot of fire. *The New Testament Jezebel (Herodias) does succeed* in killing John. *But there is a third movement in the typology*. The mantle of Elijah falls onto Elisha. *And the mantle of John, in a deeper sense, falls onto Jesus.* The forerunner has done his work; the One the forerunner prepared the way for now takes up the ministry, and *exceeds* it.

The Widow of Zarephath and the Canaanite Woman

Now follow the Elijah-Jesus parallel one layer deeper, because Matthew is doing something extraordinary in Matthew 15. During the famine in Elijah's day, Elijah is sent, *not to a widow in Israel, but to a widow in Sidon*. Listen to the original account:

> So he arose and went to Zarephath. And when he came to the gate of the city, indeed a widow was there gathering sticks. And he called to her and said, "Please bring me a little water in a cup, that I may drink." (1 Kings 17:10)

She is a Gentile widow with a small son. They are about to eat their last meal (*a little flour, a little oil, a small cake*) and then prepare to die in the famine (1 Kings 17:12). Elijah asks her, first, for water. Then for a cake. She protests that she has nothing to give. And Elijah promises:

"For thus says the Lord God of Israel: 'The bin of flour shall not be used up, nor shall the jar of oil run dry, until the day the Lord sends rain on the earth'" (1 Kings 17:14).

She obeys. The flour does not run out. The oil does not fail. *The Gentile widow and her son are sustained by the God of Israel through the prophet of Israel for the duration of the famine.* And shortly thereafter, when the son falls ill and dies, Elijah raises him from the dead (1 Kings 17:17–24).

Now read Matthew 15 against that backdrop:

> Then Jesus went out from there and departed to the region of Tyre and Sidon. And behold, a woman of Canaan came from that region and cried out to Him, saying, "Have mercy on me, O Lord, Son of David! My daughter is severely demon-possessed." (Matthew 15:21–22)

The same region. Tyre and Sidon, the very territory of the widow of Zarephath. A *Gentile woman* (Matthew calls her a *Canaanite*; Mark calls her *Syrophoenician*, both terms point to the same ethnic origin). *A daughter in distress*. Crying out to a prophet of Israel for help. The geographical and structural parallels with 1 Kings 17 are unmistakable. *Matthew is deliberately placing Jesus in Elijah's shoes.*

And then Jesus' words are striking:

> But He answered her not a word. And His disciples came and urged Him, saying, "Send her away, for she cries out after us." But He answered and said, "I was not sent except to the lost sheep of the house of Israel." Then she came and worshiped Him, saying, "Lord, help me!" But He answered and said, "It is not good to take the children's bread and throw it to the little dogs." And she said, "Yes, Lord, yet even the little dogs eat the crumbs which fall from their masters' table." (Matthew 15:23–27)

Do you feel like an unworthy dog today? Do you feel like you do not deserve what blessing might fall to you? Do you live in tension between who you are called to be and who you still find yourself being? You think, oh, I can't be; I'm not this fully faithful person. Read this passage and know who is keeping company with you. That Syrophoenician woman, in the same region where Elijah had blessed the widow of Zarephath, comes to Jesus with no claim of her own, accepts the framework Jesus initially names, and finds in it a place she had not seen at first. Yes, Lord, but even the dogs at the master's table get the crumbs. Her humility is not self-erasure. It is the very means by which she gets her daughter healed.

And the chapter ends with Jesus doing in this Gentile region what Elijah had done in this very same region centuries earlier, only larger. *Greater than Elijah is here.*

The Feeding of the Four Thousand

Watch what happens immediately after:

> Jesus departed from there, skirted the Sea of Galilee, and went up on the mountain and sat down there. Then great multitudes came to Him, having with them the lame, blind, mute, maimed, and many others; and they laid them down at Jesus' feet, and He healed them. So the multitude marveled when they saw the mute speaking, the maimed made whole, the lame walking, and the blind seeing; and they glorified the God of Israel. (Matthew 15:29–31)

They glorified the God of Israel. That phrase is the same one Elijah used when he promised the widow of Zarephath that the God of Israel would bless her if she obeyed. Now, in this Gentile region, the multitudes themselves are speaking it. *The God of Israel is being glorified by Gentiles*, on the soil where Elijah once promised that the God of Israel would bless a single Gentile widow. *The blessing has multiplied.*

And then comes the feeding:

> "I do not want to send them away hungry, lest they faint on the way . . ." His disciples said to Him, "Where could we get enough bread in the wilderness to fill such a great multitude?" Jesus said to them, "How many loaves do you have?" And they said, "Seven, and a few little fish." So He commanded the multitude to sit down on the ground. And He took the seven loaves and the fish and gave thanks, broke them and gave them to His disciples; and the disciples gave to the multitude. So they all ate and were filled, and they took up seven large baskets full of the fragments that were left. (Matthew 15:32, 33–37)

Seven loaves. Seven baskets of fragments. Now compare it to Elijah's feeding of the widow at Zarephath. One widow. One son. One bin of flour. One jar of oil. Sustained for the duration of the famine. And now the One who is greater than Elijah feeds four thousand Gentiles, with seven loaves, leaving seven full baskets behind. The single Gentile family Elijah fed becomes a Gentile multitude under Jesus. Greater than Elijah, with greater abundance, in greater territory, with greater fragments left over.

The Mantle Falls: From Elisha to Jesus

And now follow the Elisha parallel too, because it is just as carefully woven.

When Elijah is taken up into heaven by the chariot of fire, his mantle falls. *Elisha picks it up.* He cries out: *My father, my father, the chariot of Israel and its horsemen!* (2 Kings 2:12), and then carries Elijah's mantle to the Jordan. He strikes the water with it and asks:

> "'Where is the Lord God of Elijah?' And when he also had struck the water, it was divided this way and that; and Elisha crossed over" (2 Kings 2:14).

Where is the Lord God of Elijah? The river parts. Elisha crosses. The successor has received the mantle of the forerunner, and the same God who acted through Elijah now acts through Elisha.

Now look at the timing in the Gospel. *John the Baptist has been killed by Herod.* Matthew 14 records the death scene. And what does Jesus immediately do?

"When Jesus heard it, He departed from there by boat to a deserted place by Himself. But when the multitudes heard it, they followed Him on foot from the cities" (Matthew 14:13).

And before the chapter is finished, *Jesus walks on water*. Mantle of Elijah → striking the river → river divided. Mantle of John → walking on the Sea of Galilee → water carrying the weight of the One on whom the mantle has fallen. *The forerunner has been killed; the One greater than the forerunner has taken up the mantle; and the waters yield*.

Do you need to know a God who has power over the chaotic waters? Do you need a God who can settle the chaos in your life? *Then there is a greater than Elisha who can do it.* The One who takes the mantle that fell when the forerunner was killed has power over the water. He can part the sea for you. He can stand on it for you. He can pull you out of it when you start to sink and lose courage.

The Hundred Prophets and the Five Thousand

And Elisha goes on, after receiving the mantle, to perform *roughly double the miracles* Elijah performed. Two hundred kings to be cursed (where Elijah cursed one). The healing of Naaman's leprosy (where Elijah had been confined mostly to Israel). The doubling that Elisha had requested when he asked for *a double portion of your spirit* (2 Kings 2:9) plays out across the rest of his ministry.

And one of Elisha's miracles is the multiplication of food. *A hundred hungry prophets* show up at his door, and his servant says:

> "What? Shall I set this before one hundred men?" He said again, "Give it to the people, that they may eat; for thus says the Lord: 'They shall eat and have some left over.'" So he set it before them; and they ate and had some left over, according to the word of the Lord. (2 Kings 4:43–44)

A hundred men fed from twenty loaves of barley and a few ears of grain. That is the miracle. And there were leftovers.

Now compare it to Matthew 14:

> "So they all ate and were filled, and they took up twelve baskets full of the fragments that remained. Now those who had eaten were about five thousand men, besides women and children" (Matthew 14:20–21).

Five thousand men, plus women and children, fed from five loaves and two fish, with twelve baskets of fragments. Elisha fed a hundred from twenty loaves. Jesus feeds five thousand from five loaves. And then in Matthew 15 he feeds four thousand from seven. The multiplication has been multiplied. The fragments have been multiplied. And Matthew wants his readers to see that the prophet who fed a hundred has been exceeded by the Prophet who has come to feed the multitudes, Jewish and Gentile alike, with a bread that does not fail. Greater than Elisha is here.

The Mountain of Transfiguration

And then watch Matthew complete the entire picture in chapter 17. After Peter's confession at Caesarea Philippi, after the first prediction of the cross, Jesus takes Peter and James and John up a high mountain:

"And He was transfigured before them. His face shone like the sun, and His clothes became as white as the light. And behold, Moses and Elijah appeared to them, talking with Him" (Matthew 17:2–3).

Moses and Elijah, standing on either side of Jesus. The two great figures Matthew has been comparing Jesus to throughout the whole Gospel are now physically visible alongside him. The lawgiver and the prophet. The forerunner of the law and the forerunner of the kingdom. And the Father's voice from the cloud delivers the verdict that Matthew has been quietly building toward for sixteen chapters:

"This is My beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased. Hear Him!" (Matthew 17:5).

Hear Him. Not *Moses*. Not *Elijah*. *Hear Him.* The Father has gathered the two greatest figures of the old order onto the same mountain as his Son, *and then directed every eye toward the Son*. The voice does not say *Moses is wrong, Elijah was misguided*. It says *Moses pointed forward; Elijah prepared the way; Hear Him*. The whole arc of the Old Testament has been arrowed at this point. The Lawgiver, the Prophet, and the Son finally stand together on the same mountain, and *the Son is the one we are commanded to hear*.

Peter, to his credit, immediately wants to memorialize the moment by building three tabernacles, one for each. *He still wants to equalize them.* And the Father's voice corrects him before he can finish the sentence. *There are not three to be tabernacled. There is one to be heard.* Moses and Elijah are now in the supporting cast. *Jesus is the leading voice.*

The Greater Than

Now bring it all home to the question with which we began. *What is worthy to hold the full weight of our lives?*

Not the political arrangements. They are worthy to hold some load, but not the ultimate weight. Not the economic structures. They will fail under sufficient stress. Not the social distinctions we have spent our lives constructing. *Not even the church we love and serve*, for the church too is a fellowship of the same flawed humanity that needs the One who is being heard from heaven. The only weight-bearing center of a human life is the One the Father has identified by name from the cloud: the greater than Moses, the greater than Solomon, the greater than Jonah, the greater than Elijah, the greater than Elisha, the One on whose name we are commanded to call.

And here is the gift of all of this. *That One has come into the world to make the difference in us that we have been unable to make for ourselves.* I will continue to live in the tension between *the old man* and *the new man*. I will continue to put off and put on, *both verbs continuous, day after day, until the day I die*. But every day the One who is greater than every forerunner is at work in me, *and the new man does fit better than the old shirt, over time*. The old shirt does not even feel right anymore in many of the places it used to.

One of the brothers in the assembly testified earlier about waking up out of a season of stupor, and finding himself wondering *where did all the time go?* Someday, I think, we will all wake up out of the long stupor of this present age and find that we are face to face with the Son who has been pulling us toward him the whole time. *Jesus, is that You?* And he will say *yes*. And we will look at how he did it (the slow patient pulling of the heart, year after year, decade after decade) and we will say, my God, how did you do it? How did you take this old shirt off me and put this new one in its place without my ever noticing the swap was happening? And the answer will be: I am the One who is greater than every forerunner. I am the worthy One. I held what no one else could hold. I bore what no one else could bear. And I have brought you to this place.

Hold on to the greater than. Greater than Moses. Greater than Solomon. Greater than Jonah. Greater than Elijah. Greater than Elisha. Greater than every figure who ever walked before him pointing to him. *He is making a difference in me. And he will make a difference in you.*

And it was Peter, on the mountain, who proposed three tabernacles. *The Father said, no, one to be heard.* The voice of the prophets was great. The voice of Moses was amazing. The voice of Elijah was extraordinary. *But the voice of Jesus Christ is the voice of the One who is in the bosom of the Father*. He will declare the Father's word over you. *What does God want to speak over your life this week?* Let Jesus speak it into you. *Be transformed by it.* And see what happens.