

The Greatest of All Time

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[0 : 00] All right, if you have your Bibles, please have your Bibles, and please open up to Matthew chapter 12. If you don't have a copy of the Holy Scriptures, we've got a few around here to get to you.

Be ashamed to come to church and not have the Scriptures in your lap, and then just to rely on somebody to stand up and talk to you and tell you what to do. That's a pity. That's a terrible thing. Amen. It's a terrible thing to come and just expect some sinner to tell you how you're supposed to live or what you're supposed to do. It's a blessing to know what God said and to be able to read it yourself and have it and trust it and study it.

That's your job, by the way. Okay. Enough of that. Matthew chapter 12, and look at verse number 6 to begin here. Matthew 12, verse 6. Notice this statement of the Lord Jesus Christ while the Pharisees are complaining about him healing on the Sabbath.

[1 : 07] And he says this in defending himself. He references David, something he did with the showbread. And he says this in verse 6. He says, They're talking about the temple and profaning the Sabbath and the priests are blameless for what they do on the Sabbath day.

But he's like, I'm telling you, in this place is one greater than the temple. That sacred, beloved, holy temple revered and honored. It's the, I don't know, the crown jewel of the Jewish civilization. And Christ stood there and said, I'm telling you right now, there's one standing here that's greater than the temple. Now look over at chapter 12 and verse 41. He references Jonah, the prophet. And he says in verse 41, The men of Nineveh shall rise in judgment with this generation and shall condemn it. Why is that? Because they repented at the preaching of Jonas.

And behold, a greater than Jonas is here. The queen of the south shall rise up in judgment with this generation and shall condemn it. Why would she do that? For she came from the uttermost parts of the earth to hear the wisdom of Solomon.

[2 : 23] And behold, a greater than Solomon is here. Jesus Christ is greater than that temple. He's greater than all of these. He's greater than a preacher who you may not think too much of, but understand he was a man called of God, one of the holy men of God in the Old Testament that preached a simple message to what we know of as a city that's a large city that their wickedness was exceeding great.

And his preaching, his revival service that he held went in there and turned the whole thing around. They feared his message so much so that they repented in sackcloth and ashes and got right with God.

And God turned away his wrath. He's a great preacher whether you realize it or not, but Jesus Christ far greater than Jonah. Solomon, the wisest king that ever ruled over men. His fame extended to lands and regions beyond his rule. And Jesus Christ said, oh, a greater than Solomon is here. And I'm not going to turn you to the book of Hebrews this morning, but the entire book of Hebrews is a thesis to the Jewish people to describe that Jesus Christ is better than your whole history, your whole religion.

Every father, every man that you revere and hold up as Abraham, as Jacob, as the tribe of Levi, every single point of your religion, including your tabernacle, all of it, Jesus Christ is better than.

[3 : 56] You read through that book from point after point. Here's one case in chapter 3. Here's the writers talking about Moses. He says, who was faithful to him that appointed him as Moses was faithful in all his house.

But speaking of Christ, this man was counted worthy of more glory than Moses. Why, to the Hebrews, Moses, he's our leader.

He brought us out, our deliverer. He delivered unto us the words of God, our sacred law. Moses, this man, Jesus Christ, is counted of more glory than Moses.

In Hebrews chapter 1, speaking of Christ, when he had himself purged our sins, sat down on the right hand of the majesty on high, being made so much better than the angels, as he hath by inheritance obtained a more excellent name than they.

Better than Moses, better than the angels. In Hebrews, we learn that because of Jesus Christ, there's a better hope than the law could offer. He's a surety of a better testament.

[4 : 54] He is the mediator of a better covenant, which was established upon better promises.

Jesus Christ is greater than any king, than any preacher, than any leader, than any system, even that God himself established for his holy people, even than the holy place of the temple itself.

God's dwelling place. Christ is greater than all of these. Now, we'll keep thinking on this. Look at Philippians chapter 2. I want to point out two more passages quickly.

Philippians 2, and you can get Colossians 1, just a page or two after. Philippians 2. After a description of Jesus Christ humbling himself unto death.

Verse number 9. The Bible says, Wherefore God also hath highly exalted him, and given him a name which is above every name, that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of things in heaven and things in earth and things under the earth, and that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord to the glory of God the Father.

Who highly exalted the Lord Jesus Christ? The Father did. God the Father. Why? Because Jesus Christ is greater than all of these.

[6 : 23] Anything you can put up. Look at Colossians 1. One final place now. Colossians chapter 1. We'll begin in verse number 15.

It's talking, of course, about the Son of God, who is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn of every creature. For by him, for by Jesus Christ, were all things created, that are in heaven and that are in earth, visible and invisible, whether they be thrones or dominions or principalities or powers, all things were created by him and for him.

And he is before all things, and by him all things consist. And he is the head of the body, the church, who is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead. Get this last phrase.

That in all things, he, the Lord Jesus Christ, that in all things he might have the preeminence. For it pleased the Father that in him should all fullness dwell.

It goes on to describe what he accomplished on the cross. It is the will of God that Jesus Christ be exalted and that everything, every single thing bow down to him.

[7 : 37] It is the will of God that the Lord Jesus Christ have the preeminence, first place, the priority, high above everything else. And he gives reasons for it. He created all things.

They were created for him and by him. You don't even consist or exist without him. And keeping that in light and thinking on these verses we just read, this scripture, what could be more important in your life than your relationship with the Lord Jesus Christ?

What could possibly trump your relationship with him? What is there? Go ahead and name it. Try. Try. Think your life.

People in it. Things you've accomplished. Things you do. What in the world, in the entire universe, should take the preeminence over the Lord Jesus Christ?

I want to preach to you this morning, Jesus Christ, the greatest of all time. Now, I don't want to take that phrase from the sports world nowadays where they look at the quarterback and say, he's the goat.

[8 : 46] He's the greatest of all time. Or this basketball player, the goat. I don't want to take the term the goat and put it on Jesus Christ. Please don't do that in your mind. But that's certainly something that in all professions, in all entertainment and activities, somebody is lifted up as the greatest.

Even Muhammad Ali, that boxer of the past, told everybody that he's the greatest. He even said that his only fault was not knowing how great he is.

And a cocky, foolish, arrogant sinner, before he died, he couldn't even talk. He could only mumble. Why? He's not the greatest.

He might have been good at something for a short time. But the greatest of all time, of all time, the greatest is Jesus Christ. And let's think about that then.

I asked you a question there. What could be more important in your life than Jesus Christ? Can you name one thing that we or you should exalt above him? And I want to submit to you that he is the most important thing.

[9 : 48] And in your life, he ought to be the most important thing. Your relationship and fellowship and your walk with him should be more important than anything else.

Nothing matters more. He's more important than any other thing, than any other relationship. There is not one thing in this life more deserving of your worship and of your heart and of your time and of your commitment and of your obedience than the Lord Jesus Christ.

Not your family. Not your spouse. Not your career. Not your business. Not your money. Not your health. Not your accomplishments. He's better than everything.

He's the greatest of all time. Yet, yet, here we are. There are certain things that folks tend to put above Jesus Christ.

There are certain things that we as Christians that know him and that have tasted the heavenly gift, we tend to put or allow to go above or to trust in or to rely on instead of Jesus Christ.

[10 : 56] Sometimes, sometimes, there are things we fall in love with and we give ourselves to. And I want to point out this morning that not one of them is better. I want to call your attention to five categories that man commonly elevates above Jesus Christ.

And I want to declare to you while we're pointing them out that Christ is greater. And that you're a fool if you don't give him the preeminence in your life. And you're the one that's going to lose out if you let something else steal your attention and your devotion to him from him.

He deserves it. Come to Galatians chapter number one. And I got five things. I'll be quick with them. I know the time. None of these will take much time at all. Galatians chapter one.

And let's look at verses 13 and 14 about the apostle Paul. Before he was converted, he was a devout man, but in the wrong way.

Verse 13. Galatians 1.13. For you have heard of my conversation in time past in the Jews' religion. The Jews have a religion. And he lived it.

[12 : 07] He says, how that beyond measure I persecuted the church of God and wasted it. How much did you do it, Paul? Beyond measure. I couldn't even tell you how much I did this. So much.

And profited in the Jews' religion above many my equals in mine own nation. Being more exceedingly zealous of the traditions of the fathers. You want to talk about a religious man that put his money where his mouth was.

That lived it totally. This is the man. His name was Saul back then. He profited in the Jews' religion above many of his equals in that nation.

I mean, he was up there. And the first thing I want to point out, we'll come back to this. One thing that can and has stolen people's attention and devotion away from the Lord Jesus Christ is religions.

And Jesus Christ is greater than religions. Religions will call just any system of deeds and works or ceremonies, any system of observances that declares that if you follow these, we will get you access to heaven.

[13 : 18] You'll get closer to God or find yourself worthy of the grace of God if you follow these steps, no matter what they are. And religions have been promoting that for millennia.

They say you have to follow these steps and then you have to continue following these steps. And some people even say that all religions lead to God. I had a conversation with a painter about a week and a half ago and he told me that.

He says, well, all religions lead to God. And we talked for a few minutes and gave him a track and tried to point him away from religions. But that sounds fair, doesn't it?

Doesn't that sound like just an even playing field to the entire globe? All religions lead to God. No matter what yours is, it goes to the same place. And that just sounds fair since we all want to be fair. That doesn't exclude any race. It doesn't exclude any culture. It doesn't exclude any faith. Why, you can be in the jungle and you can worship your ancestors and these spirits and fear them and offer things to them.

[14 : 25] Or you can face Mecca on a prayer rug three times a day. You can light candles in a church or you can offer gifts to what you believe are thousands of gods and idols all over the city and along the sides of the road and just slip in there and offer some fruits and offer some money and offer something to that god.

Well, that doesn't exclude anybody if we say that all religions lead to God. It sounds fair, but is it true? Is the question. Does it work?

Do all religions work? Does the idol worshiper or the devout religious man or woman have peace in their heart? And do they have a relationship with God, their creator?

Do they know Him? And do they know that they've been accepted by Him? Do they know that they've been accepted by God? Do they know that they've been accepted by God? The fact is, no, not one. Not one.

Not one religious man or woman. Not one religion offers peace and hope and truth. Not one. But Jesus Christ is greater than all religions.

[15 : 31] That man is a fool to obey a religion because he'll end up in hell. Working and working and like Paul, doing beyond measure all that he could do, profiting in that religious system above everybody else, showing himself more devoted, more worthy.

And if he'd have stuck with it, he'd have ended up in hell. Look at Philippians chapter 3. Come just to the right now. Philippians chapter 3. And watch what Paul says when he had his eyes open to the truth about Jesus Christ.

Look what he did with his religion. Philippians chapter 3. And let's just read verses 7 and the beginning of verse 8. Paul says this, But what things were gained to me, those I counted loss. Why did you count them loss? Could you just tell us in two words, Paul, why you counted all that loss? For Christ. The eight doubtless I count all things but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord.

The apostle Paul dumped his religion. He was so great in his religion. Why would you dump all of that work and effort and time and your upbringing? Because he found out there's something greater than his religion.

[16 : 43] It's Jesus Christ. Jesus Christ, the greatest of all time. He's greater than all religions. Put them all together. He's the only one that can offer peace. He's the only one that can offer true forgiveness.

He's the only one that has righteousness to give you. And he gives eternal life through his death, burial, and resurrection. Come back to Matthew chapter 10. I've got another one.

Not just religions, but something else that tends to take people's attention away from the greatest of all time. Something that tends to take people away from their personal relationship with the greatest one ever is other relationships.

In Matthew chapter 10 and just this verse, verse 37. I know the context and the doctrine here, but just understand the principle.

Jesus Christ said, He that loveth father or mother more than me is not worthy of me. And he that loveth son or daughter more than me is not worthy of me.

[17 : 49] And Matthew puts it lightly here. Luke puts it a little bit tougher. He's a little harder in that statement. But let me just say here that relationships, other relationships can have and continue to pull Christians away from their most important relationship with the Lord Jesus Christ.

Whether they're a romantic relationship, a business relationship, family relationship like we're reading here. Putting people in your life above the Lord Jesus Christ.

It sounds to me from what Christ says that he feels that your relationship with him and your obedience to him is the most important thing. More than any other relationship.

Yet a pretty girl or a handsome young hunk starts to pull at that emptiness in your heart and starts to fill it.

And starts to pull and tug on your heart. And I've seen it happen. You've seen it happen. A relationship with a boy or a girl pulls some young man or young woman out of church. And they go chasing something else.

[18 : 56] And they leave their walk with Jesus Christ and obedience to him. Why? It's not just single young people. I've seen believers that have left loving and obeying Christ to please a spouse.

Do whatever it takes to make them happy and to keep peace in the home. And what it took was walking away from Jesus Christ. Something's wrong. For some it's family time.

Family time a perfect excuse to forsake the assembling of ourselves together as the manner of some is. Or some insist I need to be first at work. Impress the boss.

I'll go to great lengths to impress the boss instead of putting Jesus Christ first. Instead of struggling or they impress their boss but struggle to maintain any consistent and meaningful fellowship with Christ.

I want you to consider and think what one person, one person can you name one in your life that has done more for you than the Lord Jesus Christ. If you can't do it then why do we allow other relationships to get above him?

[20 : 04] He's the greatest. Your children will disappoint you. But Jesus Christ won't. He's faithful. In business relationships you have to give yourself in order to get something in return.

The boss doesn't say, hey, here is your year's salary. I hope you show up every day. I hope you do a good job from here for this year. Come back next year I'll give it.

It doesn't work that way. But it does with Jesus Christ. He's greater than any relationship in business or in home. He offers you spiritual blessings in heavenly places.

Right here and right now in this life. And there's more to come, believe me. But the Lord Jesus Christ doesn't make you obey him in order to forgive your sins.

He doesn't make you give up something so that he'll bless you. Your forgiveness, the righteousness of Jesus Christ is already imputed to your account. You can live like hell and still go to heaven because of the security we have in him.

[21 : 07] No one's done more for you than Christ. Your romantic relationships, they happen all the time where they dissolve. Whether they're boyfriend, girlfriend, husband, wife.

These things happen all the time where they fall apart. It's not a good thing, but it happens. But I want to submit to you that Jesus Christ will never leave you nor forsake you.

He's greater. He's greater than any relationship on this earth. I tell my kids that I love their mother more than I love them. And I mean it.

Not being mean to my kids. But I want them to know she's more important than you. And if push comes to shove, I've got her back, not yours. I care about her more.

And that's what Jesus Christ wants from you. To love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, soul, mind, and strength. To put him first. You can love other people, but they're not supposed to be loved above him.

[22 : 07] Your relationships. There's another thing. I want to take your Bibles and go back to Proverbs 23. And while you're going, I'm going to save some time for you and read from 1 Timothy chapter 6.

Proverbs 23, I'd like you to be there. There's another thing. I'd like to say the third thing that folks tend to put above Christ is riches. Riches. Riches.

In 1 Timothy chapter 6, I'm reading verse 9. It says, But they that will be rich fall. They fall. Into temptation and a snare and into many foolish and hurtful lusts, which drowned men in destruction and perdition.

For the love of money is the root of all evil, which while some have coveted after, they have erred from the faith and pierced themselves through with many sorrows.

And then the preacher said, Now, O man of God, flee these things. Get away from loving money and wanting to be rich. Riches have and certainly will take your attention and your heart away from your relationship with Jesus Christ.

[23 : 21] Look at Proverbs 23. And just reading verses 4 and 5. Labor not to be rich. That's what Paul said to Timothy.

They that will be rich, they're seeking it, they want it, they fall. Labor not to be rich. Cease from thine own wisdom. You need a Bible to tell you that.

Because inside of you is go forward and gain more and accomplish more and get and achieve and amass to yourselves things, riches, wealth, power.

That's just a drive for most men and women to go forward. And the Bible has to tell you, put the brakes on that one. You go that direction, you're going to find yourself in trouble.

You're going to find it's going to get a hold of you. Or you can't hold on to it. Look at the next verse. Will thou set thine eyes upon that which is not? You're going to go chasing something that you can't have or can't keep?

[24 : 22] You're a fool. For riches certainly make themselves wings. They fly away as an eagle toward heaven. Oh, not me.

I'm smart. I invest my money in securities. Secure things. It'll never go away, really.

You know how many people are in the Ukraine right now that can't touch their funds, their wealth? Can't access it. Can't do anything. Don't even know if they're ever going to.

Their life's work, their savings, their investments. Insurance could be just forever flown away and gone. And they're back to square one.

Shouldn't have trusted in riches. Shouldn't have let riches get your heart away from Jesus Christ. Money can come and go. Money is unstable. And back in 1 Timothy 6, verse 17, God tells the rich in this world not to be high-minded nor trust in uncertain riches.

[25 : 25] They're unstable. They're uncertain. They can't be trusted in. The Bible also uses the term the deceitfulness of riches. Thinking that you've got security when it's gone.

But the Lord Jesus Christ, the Bible says, the Son abideth ever. Riches will make themselves wings and fly away.

But Jesus Christ isn't going anywhere. You do well to set your affections on your relationship with Christ because he's far greater than money. Far greater than wealth and riches.

In Jesus Christ is contentment, but not in riches. In Jesus Christ is security, but not in riches. In Matthew 19, there's a young man, a ruler, who had great possessions.

A young ruler with great possessions. A wealthy young man. And the Bible tells us that he came to Jesus and had a come, met him face to face.

[26 : 30] Had a conversation with Christ. And then it says he went away sorrowful. Why? Christ said, come unto me.

He invites all to come to them and give them rest. Jesus Christ even said to that man, follow me. Why did that young man walk away sorrowful when he should have followed Jesus Christ?

He would have had peace and joy and contentment and fulfillment. Well, I know why. The Bible says he had great possessions. He couldn't part with his wealth.

His wealth had his heart. And I can guarantee you something about that man right now. He regrets his decision.

He remembers wherever he is. He remembers that moment when he stood face to face with Jesus Christ and Christ said, follow me. And he went away sorrowful. He made the wrong choice.

[27 : 32] He chose his riches. He chose the relationship with his riches over his relationship he could have had with Jesus Christ. What a mistake. Christ is greater than riches.

In 2 Timothy chapter 3, I'm moving quickly. I'll just read the verse. 2 Timothy chapter 3 and verse 4. The Bible says this phrase describing men in these last days that they'd be lovers of pleasures more than lovers of God.

That shows you they've put something above loving God and its pleasures. And I want to say fourth that something else is recreation. Can take your heart away and be placed above Jesus Christ.

Recreation. Lovers of pleasures more than lovers of God. There's so much. I could never list all of the opportunities and options you have for entertaining yourself in this world.

The pleasures of this life. There's so many. For some families, it's the little league games and it's going camping and there's hobbies and there's trips. And there's things that are necessarily wrong and they never will be necessarily wrong of themselves.

[28 : 44] But they are wrong when they're placed above your relationship with Jesus Christ. When folks choose pleasures of life over pleasing Christ, they're wrong.

They're saying to God, my recreation is more important than you. It's more important. It's greater. But no, Christ is greater.

I've heard some parents say this. This wants me to shake them. I've heard parents say, I signed my kids up for this soccer or baseball or this ball thing, you know, this team.

I signed them up for that. And I told them, you wanted to play. I signed you up. Now you're going to be there every time. I'm teaching them they're going to be committed. And I think, are you going to teach them to be committed to a game?

Or teach them to be committed to God? You have a choice. Which one's greater? Some foolish parents decide, I'm going to teach them commitment by taking them out of church.

[29 : 52] The kid will choose the fun thing every time. But the parent's responsibility is to train up a child in the way he should go. Amen. Parents sometimes don't see it straight, do they?

In training up their children. It's better to find fulfillment in serving Jesus Christ than in recreational activities. I say this, if you want to experience some entertainment and some excitement, if you want some stories to tell, stories and experiences that will literally last for eternity, then sell out to

serving the Lord Jesus Christ.

Be that rich young ruler that came and parted from his great possessions and followed Jesus Christ. You won't regret that. Make your relationship with him the greatest thing in your life and decide, I'm following Jesus, no turning back.

And see where that leads you. You get a taste of the joy of being used by God. It's better than the beach. You get a taste someday of leading a soul to Christ and it'll sink in what took place.

And you'll want to shout. You'll want to just scream. You'll want to sing. You'll want to testify. It's better than fishing. It's better than skiing, shredding the slopes.

[31 : 16] That one's going to last for eternity. There's a lot of enjoyable activities at your disposal. But there's none greater than serving and being used by the Lord Jesus Christ.

He's the greatest. That'll last forever. Finally, I want to say this. The fifth and final thing here that can steal your attention. And folks, they tend to put above Jesus Christ is their responsibilities.

The responsibilities in this life. Those are kind of those things, those terms that you've agreed to when you've entered into something. And it comes with some responsibilities.

Sometimes those responsibilities become excuses to skip out on what you know is right to do. And I want to tell you that it's not God to be blamed for putting you in that situation.

And to making that choice. Somebody says, well, I'm the coach. I have to be there. I'm the president of the committee, organization. I have to show up there.

[32 : 21] I have to be in. I have responsibility. I've got to clean the house. Had to work long. Had to do something.

I have companies coming over. And I've seen it too many times. It's a shame that company, family, friends come to visit.

And you show them that your relationship with them is more important to you than your relationship with Jesus Christ. These responsibilities in this life, situations you choose to put yourself in, can get in the way of your relationship with Christ and obedience to him.

Dr. Bob Jones Sr. is dead and gone. But he said this, duties never conflict. He also said that you can do anything that you ought to do.

And I like the way he talked. It's just true. But it's up to you to decide what's more important. You'll say, well, what about when such and such happens? And there's some scenario, there's some decision that's not so easy.

[33 : 37] I get it. That's going to happen. You know what? This is why your personal relationship and fellowship with Christ is so important to you. So that you can seek his face.

That you can put some fervent prayer on a decision or a choice and seek him to put peace in your heart about what's right. What he would have you do. And then you make the decision.

But you talk to him. And you offer to him that you're willing to obey him whatever he leads. The responsibilities in this life can interfere with your relationship with Christ, with your obedience to him.

But remember, Jesus Christ is the greatest of all time. He's greater than any job, than any relationship, than any friends, than any leader, than any king.

And you need to develop a personal walk with him. Where it's just you and him. You and Christ. Not you, me and Christ.

[34 : 41] Not you and mom and dad in Christ. Not you and, no, you and Jesus Christ. If he's your savior, then you need to walk with him. And you need to develop that relationship.

He's the greatest. And there's nothing more important than your relationship and fellowship with him. I want to challenge you this morning to consider your walk with Jesus Christ. If you haven't yet, learn why he's so great.

By walking with him. Take his yoke upon you and learn of him. Experience it. What he offers. And why it's more fulfilling than any other relationship or thing or means in this life.

And then also beware of things. And beware of people. That you love. That can pull your attention away from Jesus Christ. Let's bow our heads and close our eyes in a moment.

We'll have a song and we'll sing. And I want to invite you to consider this morning. Is he the greatest to you? He is the greatest whether you give it to him or not.

[35 : 48] But is he the greatest to you? Evaluate this morning, please, in your own heart, with God. How is your personal relationship with Jesus Christ?

Or is he the greatest to you, in your own heart, with God? Evaluate this morning, valuable? I can see you. And I'll pray I will worship you and bless you with your heavenly42 không. For now. Possibly, when you're unhappy at peace of my heart, with God. You'll come to come to me and hear me and learn you and tell me and publish me.