

Hey, everybody, welcome to Valley Creek. It is so good. It is so good to see y'all. It is so good to welcome all of our campuses, everybody joining us online. I'm glad you're here. And does everybody know what's happening next week? Next week, you will go to your fridge or to your desk or to your wall, wherever your calendar is. You're going to go over there and you're going to flip that bad boy to August because August is here next week. And so, you know what that means? That means summer's winding down. It means back to schools, winding up.

Next Sunday is the first Sunday of August. Pastor John will be here. He's going to kick off a new series, y'all. He's got a full tank, so be here ready, ready to go. That's next week. But today, we're actually going to wrap up our summer series, 60 Days of Overcoming. And wow, what a journey we have been on. You see, for the past 60 days, we've been looking at people in Scripture, and we've discovered, you know, they're a lot like us. I mean, they had the same struggles that we do. They have the same challenges that we do. And in them, they were able to overcome all of these things. And over the past 60 days, you know what we've learned? That in Jesus, we're actually overcomers too. So, I want to wrap everything up by going back and asking a question that we were all asked 60 days ago. Do you believe that you, in Jesus, you're an overcomer? You were asked that question 60 days ago.

Do you believe that in Jesus, you are an overcomer? What was your answer back then? What's your answer today? You see, in the past 60 days, we've covered some really big topics of overcoming. We've talked about overcoming selfishness, overcoming feeling insignificant, overcoming idolatry, and overcoming insecurity, overcoming failure. Those are some really big things. And I'm so curious, if any of them jumped out at you, was there one particular that you were like, "Oh man, that's the area that I need to overcome." And did you then take that revelation and apply it? And maybe you're starting to see yourself overcoming. I mean, if that's you, if that's where you are, I am so glad for you. I'm excited. I celebrate you. And if that's not where you are, that's okay. Because I think there may be something in today's message that might unlock it for you. You see, we can find ourselves in this space.

It's this space between hearing something from God that He really wants us to take to heart and actually applying it. We can get stuck in this space in between. And it can be because, oh, we don't have time, or we get distracted, or a lot of time passes. We're like, "I don't know, was that really God or was that just me? I'm not sure." When we find ourselves in that in-between space, stuck between what God asked us to do and actually applying it, right there, I think there's an invitation to overcome something. To overcome ourselves. If we are going to become everything that God has designed us to be, we've got to learn to overcome ourselves. And if I was going to be real direct, I'd say it like this, "Y'all, we got to get over ourselves." That doesn't sound very nice, does it? And if I was saying it in context of what the world means, when the world says you got to get over yourself, it probably wouldn't be nice. But that's not what I mean.

When I say we got to get over ourself, I mean we got to get us out of us so that we can put more of Jesus within us. I mean, we've got to get out of our head so that we can go farther into the Father's heart. Because to be truthful of all the things that we talked about over the summer, sometimes the hardest thing to overcome is ourself. I mean, can't you be your own worst enemy sometimes? Sometimes aren't you hard to get over? Sometimes maybe we're the villain in our own story. Listen, I can get myself so spun up that the enemy takes a vacation. He's like, "I don't have to work. She's got herself pretty messed up. I don't have to worry about it." And it's in those moments that I reach for a lifeline verse and there's one like this. He must become greater. I must become less. He. He must become greater and I must become less. Man, if you're looking for one verse to put in the crosshairs as you're becoming, that's a great one.

I love another translation that says, "He must become greater and greater and I must become less and less." And I like that because it suggests that it's a process. And it is. Getting over ourself. It's not a one, done, check. No, no. It is a process and that's what we do when we are actually making that decision to follow Jesus. The rest of our life is a process of getting over ourselves so that we can become more like Him. It's no longer I who live. It is Christ who is crucified within me. I take up my cross and I follow Him daily. Daily. And so, every day, He must become greater. Now I must become less. And if we want to look at scripture to find somebody who really models this well, there's nobody better than the guy who said that. He was a guy named John the Baptist or John the Baptizer. Social media handle @JTB. So, what do you know about JTB? What do you know about him? Now you may know a little because he's kind of a minor character, but listen, he plays a major role in the kingdom.

So, let me give you, if I can, I want to give you a little bit of context around him so we can fully appreciate. See, John's mom had a real hard time getting pregnant. In fact, she only got pregnant with John through a miracle and it happened way late in life. Sister was past the childbearing age. And so, all of her friends were so excited when she finally got pregnant and they were throwing her a big baby shower and then comes this distant relative named Mary who steals all the thunder because she's pregnant too, but she's pregnant with the Messiah. So, before John was even born, he was kind of overshadowed. And then, his parents were obedient in naming him John because the Lord asked them to name him John. And the reason that's a big deal is because it wasn't a family name. And back then, having a family name was a pretty big deal. And then, to make matters worse, when he starts kind of getting into that teenage young adult age, he goes out into the wilderness and y'all, he develops a really bad diet and bad sense of style.

He starts eating wild locusts and honey. That is not today's charcuterie board. And he starts wearing clothes made out of camel's hair. And that was before animal print was like a fashion staple. Okay? So, you've just got to appreciate the fact that you've got this strange kid who dresses strange. He eats strange. Everybody's confused because they think that his mom's like his grandma. So, he kind of had a lot to overcome, but the calling on his life was great. You

see, John the Baptist had the calling of being the forerunner of Jesus. He was the one to break the 400 years of silence and say, "The Messiah, the one that we've been waiting for, He's actually here." And I'm going to tell you something, John did a pretty good job of it. In fact, he was so good at being a forerunner that his followers, they had next level devotion. They came to John and said to him, "Rabbi, that man who was with you on the other side of the Jordan, the one you testified about, look, He's baptizing."

And everybody's going to him. They were trying to elevate John the Baptist above Jesus, the very one that he had come to proclaim and to tell about. And you know what? Not for nothing. I don't think that I would have blamed John if he would have stepped back and went, "Well, okay then. All my life, I've been like overshadowed and I've been pointing to Jesus. I've been doing all this other, and now these guys are looking to me and they're saying, it's my time." I wouldn't have even blamed him if he would have said it. But that's not what he said. He said, "He must become greater and I must become less." At the praise of man, he was saying, "He must become greater, I must become less." See, what he was really saying is, it's not about me. It's all about Him. How did he do that? How did he not just do that once? How did he live that?

I mean, he lived a life of resisting temptation of the praise of man, of living in a pity party because his upbringing was kind of wonky. How did he do that? And I think if you watch his life, you can see that John the Baptist was able to overcome himself because he never put himself first in the first place. I think he would tell us, "It's really pretty easy to get over yourself if you just never put yourself first in the first place." And in every season of his life, at every junction of his life, he had an invitation to overcome himself by not putting his self first. We have those invitations too. Now yours truly can speak to it because I am in said invitation. I'm in a transition season in my life. It's this phase that people call the empty nester phase. I do not like it. I do not. A lot of people live for it. They're like, "Get these kids out of here." That's not me, man.

I loved having my kids in my house. I loved all their friends coming over and calling me Mama B. I even have a special cake that's a family recipe that's been handed down with secret ingredients. We call it Mama Cake. I love, love, love, love being a mama in that season of my life. And now both of my kids are young adults. One of them is married, so I've got an amazing son-in-law. I even have a grandbaby that's cuter than all y'all's. And I love him. I love him. I want to see him every day. I wish I could have him in my life every single day. I told my husband, I said, "The house is too quiet. It's too empty. Can we please have another baby?" He went really fast and got me a puppy. He did, he did. So, in this season of my life, in this transition, in this juncture, one that some people look forward to, I'm having to get over myself because it's not what I wanted. It's not what I thought it would look like. And it's been really hard.

I joke about it, but you talk to people that are close to me, it's been a really, really hard season for me. Now, you may not be in this season, but what season are you in? Is there a place in the season that you're in that you thought things would be different? It's not what you thought it

would look like. And frankly, it's just hard. Maybe it's your job. Maybe it's a relationship. Maybe it's a health condition. Maybe it's just a circumstance that you can't control, but it's really, really hard. Maybe God wants to highlight that in your heart today because he actually wants to help you get over yourself in that space. Maybe he wants to set you and me free. Maybe he wants to bring some joy back into our life because see, the world could care less about our joy. All the world wants to do is convince us that we got to put ourselves first. And let's be honest, it really doesn't take a lot of convincing, does it? I mean, don't we like to be first? First in line. First to get served. First to be picked.

I mean, we really like to be first, but there's an order issue there, and Scripture says something about order. It says the last will be first and the first will be last. I think this is the vibe that John the Baptist lived by. That's what he's saying. Don't put yourself first because if you don't put yourself first, then it's not that hard to get over it. But honestly, the world's saying something totally different. The world's saying, "Uh-uh, if you're going to succeed here, you got to hustle, baby. If you're going to hustle, you got to self-promote." You got to self-promote. That's what the world tells us. And so, we run around screaming, look at me. Talk about me. Serve me. And we're screaming to the world, and God is whispering, "No, child. Look at me. Talk to me. Serve me. Pick me." And yet, we start this whole idea of self at such a young age. I saw the cutest little toddler the other day. She threw her hand on her hip, and she said, "Me do it. All by my big girl self." I love the sass. I really did.

And yes, we have to teach our children to be independent. I know that. But when they start to make that transition into adolescence, preteen, teen, young adult, there's got to be a shift from being independent to independence on Jesus if they're going to find the life that He has for them. We have to find the life that He has. And Scripture says, "Whoever desires to save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for my sake, well, what, they will find it." Now, I know this is a familiar Scripture. Many of you have seen it many times. Let me ask you a question. As you've tried to save your life, have you ever used control? When you've tried to control, do you save or do you lose? I don't know about you, but every time I try to control, I lose. I lose my patience. I lose my peace. I lose my belief that God is really for me. Every time I try to control, I lose.

But what's our option? Well, the option's the other half of the verse, to lose our life for Jesus' sake. See, then our flesh starts to crawl. We're like, "Yeah. Well." Well, what am I going to have to give up? But the thing is, we're not giving anything up. It's a beautiful exchange. We're exchanging flesh for spirit. We're exchanging self-focus for Jesus' focus. We're exchanging self-serving for kingdom-releasing. We really have nothing to lose. We have everything to gain, but we got to overcome ourselves to do it. See, there's one thing we should know is that when we go through the process of overcoming ourselves, we're going to get opened up to all kinds of emotions. And by the way, we can't take responsibility for our actions until we take authority over our emotion. So, when you get ready to get over yourself and we start to try to let go of

control, one emotion that just might come looking for you is the emotion of worry. Worry. Well, if I let go, if I don't control, what's going to happen?

Okay. Do you know that today is the tomorrow you worried about yesterday? Say it again for the decaffeinated section. Today is the tomorrow that you actually worried about yesterday. So, let me ask you, how's your day? If it's good, all that time and energy you spent worrying was wasted. If it's bad, it didn't do you a bit of good anyway. So, as followers of Jesus, do we really believe, Jeremiah 29 11, man, we throw that thing around like it's a baseball. We're like, "Oh, you know, God has a plan. God knows the plans I have for you. I have a plan to prosper you." Okay, do we really believe that? Because if we really believe that God has a plan for us, why are we so worried about it? He's pretty capable. He's really pretty capable. And He loves us so much, He tells us, "Don't worry. I don't want you worrying about anything." Anything? Anything. He doesn't want us to worry about anything. He says, "Do not be anxious. Do not worry about anything." But in every situation, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your request to God and the peace of God, which transcends all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.

Okay. Another familiar verse, I know. But have you ever seen this? It says he's going to guard our heart and our mind. What does he guard it with? Peace. Huh. Okay. Use your imagination for a minute. When you think of a guard, what does it look like? Think of something that needs to be guarded. Think of a prized possession that needs to be guarded. Maybe it's like a fancy jewelry store like at Tiffany's. Maybe it's Fort Knox. Maybe it's your McLaren that you parked in a sketchy part of town. Maybe it's something that you need to guard. What does your guard look like? My guard, he's about 6'6". He's jacked. He's probably packed and he's wearing a T-shirt that says, "Don't even think about it." Because if you're going to try to get past him to get that prized possession, he's coming at you. See, the world's guards, aren't they like proactive and they can lean towards hostility quick if they need to?

But God says, "I'm going to guard. I'm going to guard your heart and your mind, your prized possessions. I'm going to guard them with my peace." Honestly, I didn't get this. I really didn't get it until I thought of a child. Can you imagine a little four-year-old and they're just worried? Their little soul's just all stressed out and they're just worried. What brings them peace? Isn't it a mama's embrace? Isn't it a big bear hug from dad? My point is you do not have to be overcome by the emotion of worry as you're overcoming yourself. So, worry is one. Another emotion that may come looking for you is anger. See, we say okay, "I'm going to get the shot. Get over myself. I'm going to let go of control." And then, it doesn't go right. And we get angry.

We get mad at people. We get mad at God. We get mad at ourself. And when we get mad at ourself, we take it out on people. We take it out on God. Now, I'm not a mathematician, but if I was to make an equation for anger, this is what mine would be. Anger is unmet expectations plus fear. Anger is unmet expectations plus fear. Think of the last time you got really angry

about something. Wasn't it because something didn't go like you thought it would? And because of that, what did it make you think you were a little afraid of? See, I've done this story problem of math in my life right now. And I can tell you when I have found myself getting angry, it's usually because there's a circumstance or a situation that didn't meet my expectations. And so, then I have to ask myself, "Well then what am I afraid of?" Well, I know. I'm afraid that I'm going to be all alone and I'm going to die in my empty nest.

That's genuinely what I'm afraid of. That my kids are going to live in different states and different cities, that they're going to forget about me and I am going to die all by myself in this very empty nest. Now, you may say, that sounds a little irrational. I know, I know. My fear probably sounds irrational to you. Your fear probably sounds irrational to me. But it doesn't make it any less real to you. And it doesn't make mine any less real to me. And when anger becomes fear, then fear shifts into another emotion and that is sadness and sorrow. And it can be depression. And we start believing lies. I start believing lies of the enemy, like my future's never going to be as fulfilling as my past was. And so, in those times, when we start to go down that vortex, that's when I got to reach for that verse. He must become greater. He must become greater. I must become less. Because that's where my sense of joy is.

And God did not wire us. Y'all, we are not wired to live in a state of sorrow and sadness and depression. We are wired for joy. That's how He created us. And so, we've got to remember, greater is He. That's where that joy comes from. I like it, C.S. Lewis said it like this. He said, "God cannot give us peace and joy apart from Him because it's not there." It's not there because He's not there." See, happiness is based on circumstances. Oh, but joy, joy is that deep, founded, internal certainty. So, how do we do that? How do we stand on that certainty way down deep? Well, we do that by taking our part of our soul care. Notice that the title of this message, the title of it is, Overcoming Your Self. It's not overcoming your soul because those are two very different things. When I say self, I'm talking about our mind and our will and our emotions. Our soul, that's the deepest, deepest part of us where the Lord engages us.

And the Lord has a plan for us to have a healthy soul. Oftentimes, what'll happen is we'll take a hit. We'll take a deep hit to our soul and instead of relying on God and letting Him bring healing to our soul, we pick up control and we want to take care and fix our self. He wants to heal our soul and we want to fix our self. It's called self-help, self-care, self-soothing. Now, I don't know about you, but I like it. I am just as big of a fan of a spa day as anybody, more than most people are. But there's some times that when I've got a soul hurt, I do not need to go self-soothe by getting a mani-pedi. My feet do not belong in rose-petaled waters. I belong at the foot of the cross, crying out to Jesus and saying, "Lord, there's something that's broken. My heart is broken and I can't fix it, but Lord, I know you can."

What I'm trying to say is there's a tipping point to over-reliance on our self that God never intends us to do because it actually takes us farther from overcoming ourself. He must become greater. I must become less. And when those times happen, when we're tempted to do the

self-soothing and self-helping and all that, it's usually when either the circumstances are hard or we don't understand it. That's when things are primed for that. And John the Baptist, he understood that too. It says, "The child grew and became stronger in spirit and he was in the wilderness until the day of his public appearance to Israel." So, the Lord looked at him and said, "Okay, he's strong in spirit." You would think that the Lord would send him out to do his mission then, but he didn't. He sent him to the wilderness. So, here goes John with this huge calling that he's appointed and anointed for, and he goes in the wilderness where he is all by himself and where he is completely unseen. Hmm, you ever been there?

I mean, stop and think about it. He's in this hidden place. Maybe you're even now in a hidden place. Maybe you're in a job that you're overqualified for. Maybe you're in a serving role and you've actually got more leader qualities than the person who's actually leading the team. Maybe you're on a sports team and you're riding the bench right now and everybody knows really you're the most talented player. It's your own wilderness. You've got it, but you're very unseen. Boy, I'll tell you, in that time, it is really easy for us to become full of ourselves. I deserve this. I've worked hard to get where I am. What in the world? And we forget, we're supposed to be crucifying ourselves and we want everybody else to crucify themselves because that's what's going to make us feel better. But yet, even in the wilderness, eating bugs and wearing bad clothes, even there, John the Baptist is still doing it. He's still saying, "He must become greater and I must become less."

And I know he did it. You say, how do you know? I know that that's what he was doing because John the Baptist's life proves it. See, our belief drives our behavior. So, let's ask ourselves a question that might be a little uncomfortable. What does your behavior say you actually believe about being an overcomer in Jesus? I mean, would people look at you and be like, "Eh, they've actually like, they've lost control." Or they'd be like, "Oh, they have lost control." Because remember, God is not outside of you judging you. He's inside of us. He's empowering us and that's why in Jesus we can overcome ourselves and we don't judge others. And that's really important. Because as God is helping me to overcome myself, He may ask me to give up some things. And I have to be willing to give up some things, but He may not ask other people to give up the same things. So, I have to be willing to give up that dream or those finances or that opportunity, that vacation. Whatever it is that God's asking me to give up, He may not be asking somebody else to give it up because they're on their own journey with Him and we are on ours.

It is not a one size fits all. And that's why it's really, really important that we seek Him in everything. Seek first His kingdom and His righteousness. Becca paraphrased, everything else is going to be all right. Everything else is all right. But we have to seek Him first. Even when we're trying to overcome ourselves, we have to seek God on how do you want me to do that? You know why? Because our flesh is so sneaky. We won't even realize it and our flesh will sneak back in and take control again. It looks like this. You'll say, "Oh, I need to overcome this. So, I'm going to fast because that's what spiritual people do." Listen, if you fast and God didn't ask

you to fast, you're going to get hangry and that's about the best you can get. If you find that you feel like your spiritual disciplines, your spiritual practices, if they don't feel like they have life, if you feel like you're just going through the motions, can I just encourage you, take a step back and ask yourself, "Have I taken over control again?"

Because we may feel like we're strong in self when we are strong in self, we are weak to sin and our flesh may be built up, but the Holy Spirit may be beat down. Romans 8 talks about this. It says, "Those who live according to the flesh have their minds set on what the flesh desires, but those who are in accordance with the spirit have their minds set on what the spirit desires." John the Baptist had his mind set on the Lord and the kingdom. That's why he didn't give in to flesh in the wilderness. That's why he didn't give in to his flesh when the men started all talking about how great he was. He was set on spirit, but if we live according to the flesh, our mind is under attack and when our mind is under attack, we don't overcome, but we're susceptible to over a lot of other things. We're prone to overeat, overspend, overreact, get overwhelmed and the reason is because, track, when the flesh is in charge, the flesh drives hard to excess. Why? Because it's desperately trying to heal something that it can't.

The flesh cannot heal the wounds in our soul. Only Jesus can. So, we overcome when we come under. When we come under His protection, when we come under His plans, when we come under His care. We think we overcome by going over? Uh-uh. We overcome by coming under, but can His only coming under His care where we find the grace to change. We will not overcome ourselves without change. Are you willing to change? Change what? Change your mind? Change your perspective? Change your plans? Am I willing to change my belief that an empty nest means an empty life? We've going to be willing to change and we only find that when we come under the grace of Jesus. And change is interesting because people embrace progress, but they resist change. Have you ever noticed that? People, they love progress. When the road is finally complete, praise God, progress.

But when that construction is going on, there's some change happening and people, we fight that. But that's what the whole life of following Jesus is. It's always a life of constant change to become more and more like him. And actually, he died so that we could do that. It says He died for everyone so that those who receive new life will no longer live for themselves. Y'all, we don't have to live for ourselves. Instead, we're living for Christ who died and was raised for us. When we live outside of ourself, that's when the fruit of the Spirit shows up. Love, joy, peace, patience, kindness. Kindness, kindness. Do y'all realize how rare of a commodity kindness is these days? And when somebody sees somebody just being kind, they're like, "They're different." Yeah, they are. They're probably an overcomer in Jesus. And we have so many people like that in our church. Let me tell you about a few of them. Robert and Lisa are one of them. Robert and Lisa is a couple here at Valley Creek and they used to pastor their own church for over a decade. God was moving. God was changing lives. God was doing great things.



And after 12 years, God said, "It's time for that door to close." Now, they had a choice. They could be obstinate or they could be obedient. But they knew it was the Lord. And so, even though it was breaking their hearts to do it, they walked in obedience. And when that church closed its doors, they walked into Valley Creek. Now, they are serving. They are leading. They are releasing kingdom in ways that they couldn't imagine, but they had to be willing to overcome themselves. I can tell you about Mike. Mike is a Valley Creeker. He's married. He has launched six kids into young adulthood. And Mike wakes up one day and looks at his life and he's like, "This is not what I think my life should be." He could have a pity party or he could be proactive. And so, he made a list. These are lists of all the things in my life that are not what God's best. Then he took another list. This is what God's best would look like. Put it together, put it in a book. He's now a published author releasing the kingdom, but it wouldn't have happened if he wouldn't have gotten over himself. I can tell you about Hannah and Leah. These are two students that met in a high school cosmetology class.

They recently went on a mission trip this summer. And it just so happened on that mission trip that they needed to release the love of Jesus through something as practical as haircuts. The team lead looked around and was like, "Anybody know how to cut hair?" These two sweet girls raised their hands and said, "We do." And so, they got out of themselves. They got over themselves. They released the Kingdom of God in something as sweet and as tender, has given haircut. See, when we live outside of ourselves, we have something to give. And we know what Scripture says about giving. It's more blessed to give than to receive. We know this. We believe this so strongly that one of the values here at Valley Creek is we believe that we have a responsibility to give what we've received. So, we've received love. We're responsible to love. We've received forgiveness, compassion. We're responsible for giving that away. And that's a great value as a person and as a collective church because it keeps us from being self-focused.

He's greater. And we are less. And y'all, we need rules like this for life. We need them all through life because even at the end of our days, doubt, it can creep back in to our heart and our mind, our most prized possessions. This happened to John the Baptist too. He found himself alone again except this time he was in prison and he knew this was probably how it was going to end for him. And I can just imagine the thoughts, maybe even the words he was saying, "Seriously, Jesus? I mean, really? After everything that we've been through together? I mean, bro, we're family and you're going to leave me here in this prison all by myself? Where are you? I need you." Have you ever said those prayers? I have. And John the Baptist did. And so, this is what he did. He called a couple of his buddies and he sent them to the Lord to ask them, "Are you the one who's to come or should we expect somebody else?"

He was basically saying, "My whole life, has my whole life been a joke or is this real?" Man, I would have loved to have been there. I think you could have heard a pin drop in that moment. Here's the guys, they're asking Jesus. He's with the disciples in the crowd. What would you have expected Jesus to do? What would you have done? I know what I would have done. I would have hijacked me a camel, broke every speed limit there was to get to that prison. I'd go

in. I'd grab ahold of John and I would shake him and say, "Don't you dare doubt yourself. You're amazing. You're the best forerunner. I could have wanted you. You're an awesome cousin. I'm so proud of you. You did everything right. And now, let's sit down and have some mama cake together." That's what I would have done. Jesus didn't do any of that. At that very time, Jesus cured many people of their diseases, illnesses, and evil spirits. And He restored sight to many who were blind. Then, He told John's disciples, "Go back to John and tell him what you've seen and heard. The blind see, the lame walk, the lepers are cured, the deaf hear, the dead are raised to life, and the good news is being preached to the poor."

And in my mind's eye, he kind of stopped and he leaned in with intensity when he said this next piece. "Go tell him that God blesses those who do not turn away because of me." Jesus didn't go to John knowing full well that his life was going to end in that prison. He didn't go to him. He didn't tell him how great he was. Instead, what Jesus did was he cured John the Baptist's doubt. He restored John the Baptist's faith, and He did it by talking about the others. He did it by talking about the Good News of the kingdom. See, John the Baptist didn't need to hear how great he was to overcome his self. He needed to know that Jesus and the mission that he gave his life for was still on track. I think that we think our doubt needs to be erased by affirmation of ourself.

Tell me I'm great. Tell me I'm doing a good job. But Jesus knows that the only way that we're really going to be able to get over ourself, it's not by being told how great we are. It's by being reminded of how great He is. Even at the end, even at the end of John the Baptist's life, there were still some places in his heart where he just couldn't help. He was about him. Even in our life right now, there's still some places in our heart where we are about us. And we really have to watch it because that's where resentment and bitterness and entitlement can creep in. Really, God? Really? That's how this is going to go when I need you most? But it says, "He blesses those who don't turn away." Turn away from what? Who don't turn away from Jesus? Who don't turn away from their faith? Who don't turn away from their family of faith? Because they don't understand Him. Because they don't understand what Jesus is doing.

It's a blessing if we don't walk away. So, here's what I would say. Parents, if you've raised your kids in church and now, they're living their adult life and they've gone completely off the rails, don't turn away. Husband, wife, if you are working so hard right now, you're sacrificing for your family, you're doing everything you know to do and nobody sees it, nobody appreciates it, don't turn away. Young person, student, if you're saving yourself, if you're living a life of purity for your future husband or wife and nobody's even giving you, nobody's asking you out, don't turn away. Wherever you are, wherever you are in the sorrow of your unmet expectations, don't turn away. Don't turn away from Him because we've got to make that decision today because every time in our life when there's a season, when there's a transition, when there's a junction point, there's going to be an invitation to overcome ourself. It doesn't matter if you're a student, a young adult, a young family, an adult, a super adult. There's always an invitation to overcome ourself because there's always more of Him to gain.

So, the guys go back to John the Baptist to give him the news and then Jesus looks at the crowd and this is what he says, last slide. "I tell you, of all who have ever lived, no one's greater than John. Yet even the least person in the Kingdom of God is greater than he is." Jesus set the record straight. John is the GOAT. If you're wondering, John is the greatest of all time, but the second sentence is ours. You see, John was the greatest under the old covenant, the Covenant of Law. We are now under the Covenant of Grace. We are in the kingdom. We are on this side of the resurrected Jesus. John did not have the Holy Spirit inside of him. We do. We do. So, what he's saying is even the least, and you might say, "That's me, I'm the least. Great." Even the least in the kingdom of God is greater than the GOAT. So, I'll leave you with the question. Do you believe that?

Do you believe that in Jesus you're greater than John the Baptist? Do you believe that in Jesus you can overcome anything in your life? You can even overcome yourself. So, Jesus, I thank You. I thank You that we have an ability to overcome ourselves, Jesus, because of You. And Lord, I think of the Scripture that says, the man that cried out and said, "I believe, but help me in my unbelief." Lord, would you help us to go deeper in you, to empty ourselves of self and to gain more of you? Would you become greater so that we can become less so that we can live all that you've created us to be so that we can overcome and live on mission that others may be drawn to you. I thank you, and I pray in Jesus' name. Amen.