

**Temptations of Superman's Girlfriend
(Keeping the Battleship in Port)**

Matthew 17:1-13

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[Movie Clips from Superman]

Clip I: Crowd cheers as helicopter lands with Superman and Lois Lane hanging on.

SUPERMAN: Well, I certainly hope this little incident hasn't put you off time, Miss. Statistically speaking, of course, it's still the safest way to travel.

LOIS: Right. Wait! Who *are* you?

SUPERMAN: A friend. Bye!

Clip II: Superman flies onto Lois' balcony where she has a table set for two.

SUPERMAN: Good evening, Miss Lane.

LOIS: Hi.

SUPERMAN: Oh, I'm sorry, did you have plans this evening?

LOIS: Oh, this little thing? No.

SUPERMAN: Well, listen, it's no trouble at all for me to come back later . . .

LOIS: No! Don't move! Er . . . you can move. Just don't fly away, all right?

Clip III: Superman and Lois are flying together, hand in hand. Then their hands separate and Lois begins to fall, screaming. Superman flies down, rescues her, and takes her home.

SUPERMAN: Well, we forgot to time ourselves. Maybe next time.

LOIS: Oh.

SUPERMAN: You OK?

LOIS: Uh-huh.

SUPERMAN: Good night.

LOIS: Oh . . . good night! [Superman Flies away]
Superman . . . *Superman* . . .

CLARK KENT knocking at the door: Lois? Lois? Is anybody home? Hello? Lois? [Lois opens the door.]
Hi, can I come in?

LOIS: Oh, yes.

CLARK: Lois, for goodness sake. Didn't you hear me knocking?

LOIS: Uh-huh . . .

Revelation 3:20: "Behold, I stand at the door and knock; if any one hears my voice and opens the door"

Well, I just want to point out that being Superman's girlfriend might be rather stressful. He'd be so awesome, but you couldn't control him or comprehend him. He'd, like, be able to look right through you. It would be overwhelming. You might just try to domesticate the Man of Steel.

And if you were Superman, how would you get your girlfriend to listen? She'd be so self-conscious, she couldn't hear you. If you appeared as Clark Kent, she wouldn't give you the time of day. And if you morphed from Clark to Superman in front of her, she'd pass out.

How does God get His people to listen?

1. In Exodus, during the exodus, Moses climbs the mountain, and the glory cloud covers the mountain. He waits six days, and on the seventh day God speaks and gives the Law.
2. The prophet Elijah also climbed that same mountain, and God spoke telling Elijah to prophesy.
3. When Moses was on the mountain, the sight of the glory from below was like a consuming fire.
4. The people were so afraid, they asked that God not speak directly to them any more.
5. So God had Moses build a tabernacle (a tent) so that God could dwell among His people without killing them.

John 1:14: "And the Word became flesh and dwelt [literally "tabernacled"] among us, full of grace and truth."

Well anyway, if you were Superman's girlfriend, it might be a challenge for him to get you to listen. It might be too stressful for you to hear. You'd be tempted to domesticate him, contain him, keep him in a box: like a stone tabernacle.

Well, you *are* Superman's girlfriend. You're the bride of Christ.

Matthew 16:28-17:3:

“Assuredly, I say to you, there are some standing here who shall not taste death till they see the Son of Man coming in His kingdom.” Now after six days [that is, on the seventh day] Jesus took Peter, James, and John his brother, led them up on a high mountain by themselves; and He was transfigured before them [that is, He morphed in front of them; in Greek, “metamorphoo”]. His face shone like the sun, and His clothes became as white as the light [“whiter than any launderer’s soap,” writes Mark]. And behold, Moses and Elijah appeared to them, talking with Him.

The gospel of Luke informs us that they spoke of His departure—literally His “exodus” which He would accomplish at Jerusalem.

So Peter, James, and John see Jesus speaking with Moses and Elijah on the mountain.

The last book of the Old Testament ends with a prophecy:

“The Lord, whom you seek, will suddenly come to His temple, even the Messenger of the covenant But who can endure the day of His coming? And who can stand when He appears? For He is like a refiner’s fire and like launderers’ soap. . . . The Sun [S-u-n] of Righteousness shall arise with healing in His wings Remember the

Law of Moses, My servant, which I commanded him in Horeb for all Israel, with the statutes and judgments. Behold, I will send you Elijah the prophet before the coming of the great and dreadful day of the LORD” (Malachi 3 and 4).

Now Peter sees Moses and Elijah (law and prophet) speaking with Jesus whose face blazes like a Sun of Righteousness, who glows whiter than any launderer’s soap. Jesus said He came to “fulfill the law and prophets,” and the law and prophets prophesied about Jesus.

- Peter saw the law and prophets testifying to Jesus.
- Peter saw the Son of man somehow coming in His kingdom.
- Peter saw that Jesus was, like, the glory—the fire—the light. And all things are relative to light, even time.
- Peter saw the seventh day; he saw the Sabbath rest.
- Peter saw the finished product—eschatos man (ultimate man; super man). He saw the eschatos—last Adam (I Corinthians 15:45)—on the eschatos—last day.

So Peter even saw himself. He would be made in that image. He would reflect that glory. He would be that bride. He would actually become that body. Peter saw glory, whatever glory is. Peter saw Superman morph.

And what does Peter do? He gets religious. Next verse:

*Then Peter answered and said to Jesus,
“Lord, it is good for us to be here; if You
wish, let us make here three tabernacles:*

*one for You, one for Moses, and one for
Elijah.”*

Mark, who appears to have been heavily influenced by Peter, tells us that Peter was “exceedingly afraid” when he spoke these words. So in response to God’s glory, Peter wants to build religious buildings. He wants to build containers out of fear. Why?

Well, power like that is *dangerous*. The power of the sun is nuclear fusion reactions. The only fusion reactions on earth are hydrogen bombs. The problem with fusion is that the power can’t be contained. (Doc Oc finds that out in Spiderman II.) Jesus’ face blazes like the sun.

You’ll remember that David wanted to build God a stone temple. In 2 Samuel 7, God gets mad and says He doesn’t want to be kept in a stone temple but wants to move with His people. So He tabernacles among them.

Then God says, “One day a son of David will build me a temple.” Well, He was talking about more than Solomon who built the stone temple, but you do see why David and Solomon wanted a stone temple. It’s unsafe to store a hydrogen bomb in a tent.

Well, I bet Peter wanted whatever containment he could get. If this power and glory was in Jesus, it wasn’t contained.

- It could show up in a manger in a barn.
- It could show up in a boat on a lake.
- It could show up on a cross.
- It could show up in the last and least of these knocking on the door.
- It could show up in any old Clark Kent who came along.

That's unnerving, uncontrollable, uncontainable, unpredictable, incomprehensible.

Maybe Peter was trying to comprehend to gain control. He said, "Let me make three tabernacles." If anything, he should have said "one tabernacle." Moses and Elijah are not on equal footing with Jesus. There's just one tent, if there's a tent at all.

But Peter wanted to comprehend—dissect the truth—kill the mystery and explain it. That's what human religion does. It tries to conquer the mystery rather than bear witness to the mystery. To bear witness to a mystery you have to see the mystery and hear the mystery and surrender to the mystery. You have to die to your comprehension of the mystery to comprehend the mystery, for the mystery comprehends you. He reveals Himself.

Gregory of Nyssa said, "Concepts create idols; only wonder understands." That is, only worshippers know God. Worship is surrender—passionate surrender. Worship is frightening at first, because you worship a mystery.

A few weeks ago in worship, my wife looked up and saw Jesus. He smiled and said, "Are you ready?" After the service, two people came up and said to my wife out of the blue, "Are you ready?" She told me, and I said, "Ready for what?" She didn't know.

But that sounds just like Jesus: asking, "Are you ready?" and not saying for what. *I* want to know ahead of time where I need to go, when I need to leave, what I need to know, and just who I need to be. I want to know "ready for *what*?" I want to know so I won't have to walk by faith. Human religion will tell me with formulas, laws, programs,

and road maps that I can follow. But Jesus says, “Follow me.”

Uncontainable, unpredictable, incomprehensible, but good.

Maybe that’s why Peter wanted to build containers, because he was afraid this incredible experience would end. That’s what a denomination often is: a great experience of Jesus that’s been turned into a container; an institution that’s been built around one experience of the fire, like tongues or healing or evangelism or good doctrine.

We all do that to mountain top experiences. We try to contain them and thus lose them or kill them.

A counselor friend told me about a couple that came to him for help. The flame was gone in their marriage. The passion had died . . . even though (as they explained) they had dutifully and methodically made love every day without exception for ten years.

Do you see what happened? They had a mountain top experience and turned it into a religion. They killed the passion and lost the flame. They tried to control or contain the good.

Maybe that’s why Eve wanted the fruit from the tree in the Garden. She wanted to control, contain, and comprehend the good rather than trust the good.

In C. S. Lewis’ novel Perelandra, Ransom eats an incredibly good piece of fruit from a tree in a world that hasn’t fallen. Then he’s amazed that he doesn’t crave another. He comments:

This itch to have things over again, as if life were a film that could be unrolled twice or even made to work backwards . . . was it

possibly the root of all evil? No: of course the love of money was called that. But money itself—perhaps one valued it chiefly as a defence against chance, a security for being able to have things over again, a means of arresting the unrolling of the film.

Well, Peter certainly wanted to arrest the unrolling of the film. After what Jesus had just told them about His passion, Peter didn't want to go down the mountain. But if he trusted Jesus, he'd be ready; for he'd know that if Jesus was good in this moment on this mountain, He'd also be good in the next moment on the next mountain, even if that mountain was named Calvary.

Peter wanted to build a container for Jesus because Peter wanted to be safe. And didn't Jesus say Peter would build His church or something like that? Peter wanted to contain the glory and protect himself. He wanted to build a container out of fear.

That's what the temple in Jerusalem was. It contained the Holy of Holies—the fire—the glory cloud—the Shechinah glory. The temple was to be “a light to the nations,” or as Jesus put it, “a house of prayer for all people.” It was to be like a lighthouse.

A lighthouse holds the fire in order to shine the light. We need the light, even though touching the fire can kill us.

Well, Israel had, like, drawn the curtains over the window of the lighthouse, trying to contain the fire. For they actually hated the light.

Anthony Demello used to tell about a man who perfected the art of making fire and would go to tribes of people just to give this gift away. He came to one tribe

where the people loved the fire so much it made the priests very jealous. In fact, they killed the man (crucified him). Then wanting to maintain control, they did a very crafty thing. They made a portrait of the man and hung it in their temple. They placed the instruments he'd used for making fire in front of the portrait. The people were taught to revere the portrait and pay reverence to the instruments of fire. But there was no fire. He was the fire.

Well, the church is an instrument of fire. We can't make the fire, but we're called to exhibit the fire, for we hold the fire. We actually touch the fire, and that can be unnerving.

The church is us, and we are a lampstand. The lampstand holds the fire and shines the light. Jesus said, "*I will build my church,*" and that church was Peter. Peter heard, "*You will build my church,*" and the only church Peter could build was a tabernacle.

The only church we can build is: a building, a budget, a program, a lecture, some music, some laws, some religion. But that doesn't hold the fire. The only church we can build should serve the church God builds, which is you, and you hold the fire. But we often build our churches and tabernacles to protect ourselves from the fire, contain the fire so we won't have to touch the fire. We often build budgets, buildings, programs, and lessons so we won't have to depend on the fire.

The fire is good, but we are not good. So if it gets out, or if we are forced to touch it, we're afraid we'll get burned.

Well, anyway, Jesus morphed in front of Peter. Peter saw the glory and longed to build containers out of fear. He got religious, and what did God want? Next verse:

While he was still speaking, behold, a bright cloud overshadowed them; and suddenly a voice came out of the cloud, saying, "This is My beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased. Hear Him!"

That is, "Shebat, sabbath, stop and listen to Him! Look at him!" Just three chapters ago, Peter heard Jesus, and looking at Jesus he got out of the boat and walked on the sea. Jesus still wants the same thing from Peter.

A few days ago my wife was praying, and she prayed, "Jesus, you asked, 'Are you ready?'" (She sensed He was asking all of us.) "You asked, 'Are ya'll ready?' You don't have to tell me, but are we ready for what?" She told me she heard Him almost audibly answer with excitement and joy, "Are you ready to get out of the boat?"

Well, feel free to question my wife's prayer times. (I don't think she cares.) But I do sense Jesus asking us to get out of the boat; that is, to lose the container.

Old Israel would not, and so God blew it up . . . not the true Israel, but the container. Jesus said, "Destroy this temple, and I'll rebuild it in three days." Matthew records that as Jesus died on the cross, the curtain in the temple ripped from top to bottom. You see, the fire and the glory got *out!* And on Pentecost it entered its new home: us, His people. Within one generation, the stone temple was leveled by Roman plows.

It's interesting that Peter and the disciples still hadn't left Jerusalem until that time, even though Jesus told them to "go disciple the nations." It's like God had to sink the boat to get the Israel of God to walk on the sea and bless the nations.

You know, we've built a pretty great boat: this beautiful, big, new building; a \$2 million budget; programs here and around the world; classes, worship services . . . a great boat. During the week I ask, "Lord, what am I to say?" This week a phrase kept running through my mind: "Sink the boat. Sink the boat. Sink the boat. Lose the container. Blow up the tabernacle."

If we sink the boat, maybe we'll walk on water with Jesus.

Now, let me say we can't sink God's boat. Hell can't sink God's boat. Any boat we sink only contained God's boat: His people, the church, and the Navy. And I don't mean light the building on fire, start a scandal, or stop giving. I mean sink the boat in your heart. Die to it. Sacrifice it. Place it on the altar.

I do believe the Commander in Chief told us to build this boat. While we built it, He was building us: the Navy. Well, the boat we built is a great battleship. It's an instrument of fire, and it contains immense fire power. And the fire power is Christ in you. We just finished, but maybe we're still in port or just taking some pleasure cruises when safe. But what if the Commander in Chief is calling: "Time to go to war. Time to sail on troubled seas"? Might we be tempted not to hear?—thinking to ourselves: "That's unsafe. War can sink a boat! And this is a great boat. We don't even have it paid for!"

Well, don't we see that a battleship sitting in port during time of war is an abomination? But a battleship sinking in a great battle is a picture of glory.

So let's sink the boat in our hearts right now! And so be willing to sail into the gates of hell if so commanded. Let's *don't* be safe.

If you say, “We must be good stewards,” amen! Read your Bible. The good steward is the one that risks everything. The bad steward is the one that won’t risk because he’s afraid.

If you say, “A king counts the cost before going to war,” amen! Read your Bible. The king counted the cost and told us the cost in the next verse: “So, therefore, whoever does not renounce all that he has cannot be my disciple” (Luke 14:33).

So renounce the ship,
sink it in your heart,
sail it into war.

I don’t know what that looks like other than unsafe. So if you’re thinking, “Here comes the pitch for the new program, the next giving campaign, or our new mission project,” hear me well: I’m not selling any new tabernacles. I just want us to be willing to sacrifice the one we’ve got so that we’ll be willing to hear the Commander in Chief when He calls our name. Fear over our boat will close our ears to His voice, because we’ll be focused on our boat rather than Him. But if we hear no one but Him, and if we see no one but Him, then I bet:

- We’ll be willing to spend what He asks us to spend, even if we think it might sink the ship.
- We’ll be willing to preach what He asks us to preach, even if people threaten to leave.
- We’ll pray what He wants us to pray, even if we’re up all night.

- We'll go where He wants us to go, even if we might not come back.
- We won't play it safe, and if the Enemy sinks our boat, we'll walk on water. And if we fail at that, who cares? I mean *really* . . . what's the worst that could happen? Have we forgotten just who our boyfriend is?

[Movie clip from Superman]

Lois lies dead on the ground after an earthquake. Superman screams in agony and flies straight up with all his strength. He flies around the earth again and again until the rotation reverses and time moves backwards to before Lois died. Superman lands next to Lois where she died, but this time she is alive.

SUPERMAN to Lois: Hi.

In Matthew 28:9, on Easter morning Jesus appears to the women running from the tomb and says unto them, "Hi."

What I'm saying is, we can take a chance on love (passionate love). We can sail this ship right into the gates of hell. We can drive this vehicle right into the depths of the earth, because Superman is our boyfriend. "And Lo[is], I am with you always" (Matthew 28:20).

What's the worst that could happened? We could die, experience His passion, and then live with Him forever in glory.

At the end of Spiderman II, Peter Parker morphs into Spiderman in order to save MJ, his one true love. Then

he tells her that if they're together, she'll be targeted by his enemies. And he must be Spiderman; he cannot be domesticated. So MJ plans to marry another. (I'm sorry if this spoils the movie for you, but maybe it could *make* the movie for you.)

In the last scene, MJ runs from her wedding in her wedding dress. She runs to Peter's dilapidated apartment, stands in the door, and says something like this: "Spiderman, you're off saving the whole world. But Peter Parker, don't you think it's time somebody saved you?" She doesn't mean she can save Spiderman in the same way he saved her. She can't save the world. She means that she can minister to him as he saves the world. She can minister to his body broken and blood shed; his lonely heart.

My two favorite movies this year were The Passion of the Christ and The Passion of the Spiderman. Remember in The Passion of the Christ when the women picked up the broken body of Jesus and held it with great passion? That's a picture of what Roman Catholics call "the adoration of the host." And by that they don't mean adoring bread but ministering to the wounds of Jesus.

I think it's what you do whenever you hear the knock on the door and minister to "the last and least of these, His brethren."

I think it's what you do when you worship with passion.

I think it's what you do when you worship Jesus Christ and Him crucified—the substance of glory.

Well, Peter wants to build tabernacles to contain the glory rather than worship the Glorious One. So God sinks his ship. He speaks, "Listen to Him."

And when the disciples heard it, they fell on their faces and were greatly afraid. But Jesus came and touched them and said, "Arise, and do not be afraid." When they had lifted up their eyes, they saw no one but Jesus only.

That's what God wanted. They saw no one but Jesus only. They heard no one but Jesus only.

God reveals His glory in Jesus, which kills us. And God saves us in Jesus, which is the revelation of His glory. That is: We die with Jesus, and we're resurrected with Jesus, seeing only Jesus. And that's how you walk on water: God's glory revealed in Jesus.

You say, "Well, I don't see any glory. They came up a mountain and saw His glory. I come up a mountain and only see a nice building, and oh yeah, in the middle some bread and wine. But no fire." Next verse:

Now as they came down from the mountain, Jesus commanded them, saying, "Tell the vision to no one until the Son of Man is risen from the dead." And His disciples asked Him, saying, "Why then do the scribes say that Elijah must come first?" Jesus answered and said to them, "Indeed, Elijah is coming first and will restore all things. But I say to you that Elijah has come already, and they did not know him but did

to him whatever they wished. Likewise the Son of Man is also about to suffer [“paschein” in Greek] at their hands.” Then the disciples understood that He spoke to them of John the Baptist.

I think Jesus is saying:

Elijah came, and they did not recognize him, for his power took the form of suffering. Likewise the Son of man comes, and they don't recognize Him, for His power takes the form of suffering. They don't recognize the glory, for His glory is the passion of love. God is love, and God is a consuming fire, and God is one.

Malachi 4:5: “Behold, I will send you Elijah the prophet before the coming of the great and dreadful day of the LORD.”

Malachi 3:1: “He will suddenly come to His temple, even the Messenger of the covenant But who can endure the day of His coming? And who can stand when He appears? For He is like a refiner's fire”

Do you see that on the cross the glory of God was revealed? The fire was revealed. The seventh day—last day—invaded time as Jesus cried, “It is finished.”

I believe you can come to the fire now: the judgment now. And His glory tastes like wine. He forgives your sin and redeems your time, for you desire His glory and receive it by faith. You can surrender to His glory here

or be devoured by it on the last day. His glory is love, and His love is a consuming fire. Jesus is His love poured out. The fire burns away all that's evil and purifies all that's good.

Yes, it's frightening, and yes it's scary, for His glory sinks your ship, sinks your control, sinks your self. It seems risky, but in reality no place is safer in all the world than walking on water, hiking down a mountain, hanging on a cross with Jesus . . . or "discipling the nations," for "Lo[is], I'm with you always." No place is safer than sacrificing your ship in love.

Could anything be more dangerous than building
tabernacles out of fear?

So on the night Jesus was betrayed, He took bread, and having given thanks He blessed it and broke it saying, "This is my body given for you. Do this in remembrance of me." In the same way, after supper He took the cup and said, "This is the cup of the new covenant in my blood poured out for the forgiveness of sins. Drink of it, all of you, in remembrance of me. I tell you truly, I will not drink again of the fruit of the vine until I drink it new with you in my Father's kingdom."

"This is my beloved Son," said God.

Do you see the glory?
Do you hear what He's saying?

Believe it, and you might just catch the world on fire.

Pray: "I surrender the ship."
"I surrender the church."
"I surrender myself to the fire."

"On Fire"

They tell you where you need to go
They tell you when you need to leave
They tell you what you need to know
They tell you who you need to be.

But everything inside you
knows there's more than what you've heard
There's so much more than empty conversations
filled with empty words

And you're on fire
when he's near you
You're on fire when he speaks
You're on fire burning at these mysteries.

Give me one more time around
give me one more chance to see,
Give me everything you are
Give me one more chance to be near you.

When everything inside me
Looks like everything I hate
You are the hope I have for change
You are the only chance I'll take

And I'm on fire when you're near me
I'm on fire when you speak
I'm on fire burning at these mysteries.

I'm standing on the edge of me,
I'm standing at the edge of everything I've ever been
And I've been standing at the edge of me, standing
at the edge

-Switchfoot

I want to remind you who your boyfriend is and how great He is and that you're going to be wed: the date was set before the foundation of the earth. So, Lois, resist the temptation to domesticate Him but listen to Him. And I imagine we'll go sailing this year. I don't know where, but it will be good. Believe the Gospel in Jesus' name. Amen.

Relevant Texts and Quotations (from bulletin)

Then Moses went up into the mountain, and a cloud covered the mountain. Now the glory of the LORD rested on Mount Sinai, and the cloud covered it six days. And on the seventh day He called to Moses out of the midst of the cloud. The sight of the glory of the LORD was like a consuming fire on the top of the mountain in the eyes of the children of Israel.

Exodus 24:15-17

Now all the people witnessed the thunderings, the lightning flashes, the sound of the trumpet, and the mountain smoking; and when the people saw it, they trembled and stood afar off. Then they said to Moses, "You speak with us, and we will hear; but let not God speak with us, lest we die."

Exodus 20:18-19

"And let them make me a sanctuary; that I may dwell among them. According to all that I shew thee, after the pattern of the tabernacle, and the pattern of all the instruments thereof, even so shall ye make it."

Exodus 25:8-9

"The LORD your God will raise up for you a Prophet like me from your midst, from your brethren. Him you shall hear according to all you desired of the LORD your God in Horeb in the day of the assembly, saying, 'Let me not hear again the voice of the LORD my God, nor let me see this great fire anymore, lest I die.' And the LORD said to me: 'What they have spoken is good. I will raise up for them a Prophet like you from among their brethren, and will put My words in His mouth, and He shall speak to them all that I command Him. And it shall be that whoever will not hear My words, which He speaks in My name, I will require it of him.'"

Deuteronomy 18:15-19

Then the cloud covered the tabernacle of meeting, and the glory of the LORD filled the tabernacle. And Moses was not able to enter the tabernacle of meeting, because the cloud rested above it, and the glory of the LORD filled the tabernacle. . . . For the cloud of the LORD was above the tabernacle by day, and fire was over it by night, in the sight

of all the house of Israel, throughout all their journeys.

Exodus 40:34-35, 38

And it came to pass, when the priests came out of the holy place, that the cloud filled the house of the LORD, so that the priests could not continue ministering because of the cloud; for the glory of the LORD filled the house of the LORD. Then Solomon spoke: "The LORD said He would dwell in the dark cloud. I have surely built You an exalted house, and a place for You to dwell in forever."

1 Kings 8:10-13

So he arose, and ate and drank; and he went in the strength of that food forty days and forty nights as far as Horeb, the mountain of God. And there he went into a cave, and spent the night in that place; and behold, the word of the LORD came to him, and He said to him, "What are you doing here, Elijah?"

1 Kings 19:8-9

"Behold, I send My messenger, and he will prepare the way before Me. And the Lord, whom you seek, will suddenly come to His temple, even the Messenger of the covenant, in whom you delight. Behold, He is coming," says the LORD of hosts. "But who can endure the day of His coming? And who can stand when He appears? For He is like a refiner's fire and like launderers' soap. He will sit as a refiner and a purifier of silver; He will purify the sons of Levi, and purge them as gold and silver, that they may offer to the LORD an offering in righteousness. . . . For behold, the day is coming, burning like an oven, and all the proud, yes, all who do wickedly will be stubble. And the day which is coming shall burn them up," says the LORD of hosts, "That will leave them neither root nor branch. But to you who fear My name the Sun of Righteousness shall arise with healing in His wings; and you shall go out and grow fat like stall-fed calves. You shall trample the wicked, for they shall be ashes under the soles of your feet on the day that I do this," says the LORD of hosts. "Remember the Law of Moses, My servant, which I commanded him in Horeb for all Israel, with the statutes and judgments. 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 3:1-3; 4:1-6

Now after six days Jesus took Peter, James, and John his brother, led them up on a high mountain by themselves; 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. Then Peter answered and said to Jesus, “Lord, it is good for us to be here; if You wish, let us make here three tabernacles: one for You, one for Moses, and one for Elijah.” While he was still speaking, behold, a bright cloud overshadowed them; and suddenly a voice came out of the cloud, saying, “This is My beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased. Hear Him!” And when the disciples heard it, they fell on their faces and were greatly afraid.

Matthew 17:1-6

God is so much more—more in every way—than we had imagined. Everything within us wants to back away from the danger. And yet, and yet . . . We can’t make ourselves move. We’re terrified, to be sure, but there’s more delight in the terror than we’ve ever before experienced. Not able to go forward toward the throne because of the fear, but also not able to move away because of the joy, we do the only thing we can do: we fall to our faces in awe. Only a God who is wholly other *and* wholly other-in-love could inspire such a response.

The trivial gods of our own making do not fill us with reverence. How could they? They remain under our control, subject to our desire, and thus they inspire a good deal of misdirected devotion from a culture in the thrall of scientific methodology, with its zealous dedication to control and explanation.

Donald McCullough

One cannot serve God as one serves another Majesty who, humanly speaking, has a cause. Action is indeed true worship, but it is true worship only when it is freed from all busyness, as if God had a cause. To give up everything – not because God must make use of you as an instrument, no, by no means – to give up everything! This is what it means to worship and serve God.

Soren Kierkegaard

And the Word became flesh and dwelt [tabernacled] among us, and we beheld His glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth.

John 1:14

But Jesus came and touched them and said, “Arise, and do not be afraid.” When they had lifted up their eyes, they saw no one but Jesus only. Now as they came down from the mountain, Jesus commanded them, saying, “Tell the vision to no one until the Son of Man is risen from the dead.” And His disciples asked Him, saying, “Why then do the scribes say that Elijah must come first?” Jesus answered and said to them, “Indeed, Elijah is coming first and will restore all things. But I say to you that Elijah has come already, and they did not know him but did to him whatever they wished. Likewise the Son of Man is also about to suffer at their hands.” Then the disciples understood that He spoke to them of John the Baptist.

Matthew 17:7-13

“Behold, I will send you Elijah the prophet before the coming of the great and dreadful day of the LORD.”

Malachi 4:5

Jesus answered and said, “This voice did not come because of Me, but for your sake. Now is the judgment of this world; now the ruler of this world will be cast out. And I, if I am lifted up from the earth, will draw all peoples to Myself.” . . . He who rejects Me, and does not receive My words, has that which judges him—the word that I have spoken will judge him in the last day.

John 12:30-32; 48

And I looked, and behold, in the midst of the throne and of the four living creatures, and in the midst of the elders, stood a Lamb as though it had been slain, having seven horns and seven eyes, which are the seven Spirits of God sent out into all the earth. . . . And the kings of the earth, the great men, the rich men, the commanders, the mighty men, every slave and every free man, hid themselves in the caves and in the rocks of the mountains, and said to the mountains and rocks, “Fall on us and hide us from the face of Him who sits on the throne and from the wrath of the Lamb! For the great day of His wrath has come, and who is able to stand?”

Revelation 5:6; 6:15-17

And those who passed by blasphemed Him, wagging their heads and saying, “You who destroy the temple and build it in three days, save

Yourself! If You are the Son of God, come down from the cross.”

Matthew 27:39-40

Now this is the main point of the things we are saying: We have such a High Priest, who is seated at the right hand of the throne of the Majesty in the heavens, a Minister of the sanctuary and of the true tabernacle which the Lord erected, and not man.

Hebrews 8:1-2

Now I saw a new heaven and a new earth, for the first heaven and the first earth had passed away. Also there was no more sea. Then I, John, saw the holy city, New Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband. And I heard a loud voice from heaven saying, “Behold, the tabernacle of God is with men, and He will dwell with them, and they shall be His people. God Himself will be with them and be their God.”

Revelation 21:1-3