

## John 14.12-17—Continue the Mission

- I. Introduction
  - a. I recall while in seminary all of the taking in of what I was being taught. I was growing and learning so much. I'd get an opportunity to preach and I would preach for 3 days. When I was so busy with the work load and my brain seemed to be out of space for more, joy escaped me. I felt like a dead sea with no outlets.
  - b. I had several opportunities to preach, teach, share the gospel in the neighborhood, or go on mission trips. All of them would stir much joy in me because I was giving away all that I had been learning about the Lord. At those moments, I felt like a river and not a dead sea.
  - c. I think Jesus encourages his disciples in many ways as we have already looked at. But this section begins to lay out the work before them after he departs. And though they will suffer while doing the works of Jesus they will rejoice that they suffered for the name!
- II. Main Point
  - a. The main point is continuing the mission of making God known by means of prayer in the name of Jesus and in the strength of the Holy Spirit for the glory of God.
- III. Outline
  - a. Those who believe in Jesus will do greater works
  - b. Those works are accomplished through prayer
  - c. Those works are accomplished through the power of Holy Spirit
- IV. Exposition
  - a. This first point is a tough one. It seems strange and confusing to hear Jesus say that the one who believes in him will do greater works. However, we must remember that Jesus is still preparing them for his departure and instructing them on why they should not be troubled. In fact, Jesus is giving them reasons why it is better that he goes to the Father.
    - i. Though Jesus has promised a permanent residence with him in his Father's house, between the time that Jesus leaves and the time of his return for them, they have work to do.
      1. And it seems this is the part he wants them to pay most attention to when he says, "Truly, truly I say to you." Listen up. This is important.
      2. He opens the door not only to the eleven but to anyone who believes in him to do the works that he does.
        - a. So, the work he calls them to is not limited to these disciples.
        - b. If we were to scan the Book of Acts, I think we would see these works performed in detail.
        - c. But right now, details are not necessary. As you heard the disciples ask, they want to know the details. But in all honesty, the details of the suffering they would endure probably would not decrease the trouble in their hearts.
          - i. This is in part what it means to trust the Lord. In his wisdom, he knows that we need not know the details. I am thankful that I don't know the details of the future. I will trust the Lord, day by day, to be with me through whatever lies ahead.
    - ii. Now, let's look at what Jesus says: (Jn. 14:12) <sup>12</sup> "Truly, truly, I say to you, whoever believes in me will also do the works that I do; and greater works than these will he do, because I am going to the Father.
      1. Jesus says the one who believes will do the works that I do.
        - a. First, one must believe. It is a simple truth but it is the necessary truth.
          - i. From the beginning of John's gospel, the Word became flesh and dwelt among them that they might receive him and become children of God.

- ii. In John 3:16 we hear that if we are not children of God then we will perish forever. However, faith in Jesus secures eternal life.
    - iii. Faith in Jesus in John 6:35 says that he is the Bread of Life and those who believe will never hunger again nor thirst again.
    - iv. In chapter 7, the one who believes (Jn. 7:38-39) 'Out of his heart will flow rivers of living water.'" <sup>39</sup> Now this he said about the Spirit, whom those who believed in him were to receive, for as yet the Spirit had not been given, because Jesus was not yet glorified.
      - 1. But notice the Spirit cannot come until Jesus has been glorified.
    - v. One more, (Jn. 11:25) <sup>25</sup> Jesus said to her, "I am the resurrection and the life. Whoever believes in me, though he die, yet shall he live...
  - b. God's design for the salvation of more and people is through the life, death and resurrection of his Son. To do that, His Son had to take on human flesh. Though Jesus was the Son of God, he lived his life on earth in the power of the Holy Spirit.
    - i. The Son's role in the salvation of the world included his perfect obedience to the Father and his death and resurrection.
      - 1. That part of the mission will soon be completed and Jesus will return to the Father.
      - 2. But he will send the Holy Spirit which is part of the New Covenant promises.
      - 3. But also, God's design for the continuation of the mission to save his people would be through his disciples as witnesses empowered by the Holy Spirit.
    - c. The works the Father did through the Son were for the purpose of believing in him. It cannot mean that the one who believes will do everything Jesus did. The book of Acts informs us of that. Certainly, many miracles are done through the Apostles in the name of Christ and they validate the same truth so that more and more people would believe in Christ for eternal life.
- 2. That gets us to the second part of this point that the one who believes will do greater works.
  - a. All the options that we will think about here in a moment are not possible apart from Jesus' death and resurrection. And if doing the greater works depends on "because I (Jesus) am going to the Father" it assumes those things. And he cannot send the Holy Spirit until he is glorified. So, he makes the way. No one can come to the Father except through him.
  - b. Now, in light of what will happen in the cross and resurrection, greater works will be done.
    - i. I think the greater works are numerous but they all involve Kingdom work which includes your daily walk with the Lord by the Spirit. Glad obedience. Repentance. Loving one another. All that Jesus commands of us. All of these work together. And none of it is possible apart from the saving work of Christ and the Holy Spirit. As we will see, the Spirit is only available to the one who believes.
      - 1. Disciples will make more disciples that make disciples. They will observe all that Jesus commanded. It is multiplication of those entering the Kingdom through repentance and faith in Jesus will be greater.

2. The scope is greater now that they are not limited to work in one area. You must see that Jesus is building his church all across the globe through his disciples who are filled with the Holy Spirit.
  3. And though we have touched on it several times already, the greater work available after the cross and resurrection is the conversion of souls. Not just in number as I have mentioned but the converted soul is even greater than the raising of Lazarus from the dead who would die again. Because, if you believe, though he dies, yet he shall live forever!
  4. If the least of these in the Kingdom are greater than John the Baptist, it is direct result of the amazing result of faith in Christ for salvation.
- iii. Dear troubled disciples...you have work to do. I wonder what they were thinking when he said that they would do greater works? I wonder what you are thinking? I suspect you are wondering how does that work?
1. Let me encourage you that this is not overly complicated. In one sense it's just what it means to be a normal Christian. You trust the Lord. Read and hear the word regularly. Respond to what God says from his word which will involve regular repentance, growing in holiness, helping others grow in their faith, growing in your own faith, worshiping the Lord in every aspect of life, sharing the gospel and loving your neighbor.
  2. God also calls some to missions in taking the gospel where Christ has not been named. This missionary should be doing the exact same things that I just described but in a different context. The same resources are needed in both places. Both are serving the Lord and loving one another.
- b. Faith in Jesus results in doing greater works. And those greater works are accomplished through prayer in the name of Jesus.
- i. As in the two examples given above and everything in between the resources needed to do these things is made available through prayer. (Jn. 14:13-14) <sup>13</sup> Whatever you ask in my name, this I will do, that the Father may be glorified in the Son. <sup>14</sup> If you ask me anything in my name, I will do it.
    1. Faith in Jesus reveals itself in asking. Those who believe pray.
    2. So, the disciples had been following Jesus for three years. If they needed him, for example, when the storm threatened to sink their boat, they woke Jesus up and asked for help. He rebuked the winds and they were safe.
    3. If we look past the resurrection where we will see that Jesus has returned to the Father, we will see Jesus still at work.
      - a. Here they are seeking to know which disciple to replace Judas. (Acts 1:24-25) <sup>24</sup> And they prayed and said, "You, Lord, who know the hearts of all, show which one of these two you have chosen <sup>25</sup> to take the place in this ministry and apostleship from which Judas turned aside to go to his own place."
        - i. They prayed and Jesus answered. They had been waiting as Jesus instructed. It seems they had been reading God's word (the Psalms) and responding to it by replacing Judas.
        - ii. In other words, Jesus continues to do his works through his disciples as they ask, he works but here the other side of the communication is God's written word.
    4. Though it says "whatever you ask" it cannot be separated from "in my name."

- a. Do you remember the story of Naaman when he was healed of leprosy? He offered Elisha great gifts but he refused to take anything. However, Gehazi, Elisha's servant, followed Naaman and he asked for some of the gifts in Elisha's name. He lied to Naaman saying that Elisha had sent him to do ask for these.
  - i. When you ask for something in someone's name, you put that person's character on the line.
- b. I noticed something years ago while reading through the book of Exodus and particularly chapter 33 where Moses asked the Lord to show him his glory. Take note of this:
  - i. (Exod. 33:18-19) <sup>18</sup> Moses said, "Please show me your glory." <sup>19</sup> And he said, "I will make all my goodness pass before you and will proclaim before you my name 'The LORD.' And I will be gracious to whom I will be gracious, and will show mercy on whom I will show mercy.
  - ii. The glory of God is most certainly his goodness and his ways but it's also his name—who he is. All of this cannot be separated.
- c. So, when you ask for something in Jesus' name, his name means (Yahweh) saves. We must ask for anything that would uphold the character and name of Christ but also is for his glory to which Jesus will give his glory to the Father.
  - i. Let's think about the Lord's prayer. Jesus instructs the disciples to pray to the Father who is in heaven. And then he says, "hallowed be your name."
    1. In other words, may your name be seen as holy and set apart from all others. May the Lord be worshiped for who he is.
    2. I think everything else in this prayer is governed by the hallowing of the name.
      - a. (Matt. 6:10-12) <sup>10</sup> Your kingdom come, your will be done, on earth as it is in heaven. <sup>11</sup> Give us this day our daily bread, <sup>12</sup> and forgive us our debts, as we also have forgiven our debtors. <sup>13</sup> And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil.
      - b. All of these are things that will cause God's name to be seen and understood as holy.
    3. I think an example of not upholding God's name might be helpful here. (Num. 20:6-12) <sup>6</sup> Then Moses and Aaron went from the presence of the assembly to the entrance of the tent of meeting and fell on their faces. And the glory of the LORD appeared to them, <sup>7</sup> and the LORD spoke to Moses, saying, <sup>8</sup> "Take the staff, and assemble the congregation, you and Aaron your brother, and tell the rock before their eyes to yield its water. So you shall bring water out of the rock for them and give drink to the congregation and their cattle." <sup>9</sup> And Moses took the staff from before the LORD, as he commanded him. <sup>10</sup> Then Moses and Aaron gathered the assembly together before the rock, and he said to them, "Hear now, you rebels: shall we bring water for you out of this rock?" <sup>11</sup> And Moses lifted up his hand and struck the rock with his staff twice, and water came out abundantly, and the congregation drank, and their livestock. <sup>12</sup> And the LORD said to Moses and Aaron, "Because you did not

believe in me, to uphold me as holy in the eyes of the people of Israel, therefore you shall not bring this assembly into the land that I have given them."

- ii. And finally, before we move on from prayer, it must be understood here as a means by which to do the works of Jesus and the greater works. That's why he tells them to ask for whatever in my name to accomplish these works THAT the Father may be glorified.
  1. Jesus will do it. Jesus will do it. Jesus will do it.
  2. And part of the reason it must be asked in his name is because Jesus will no longer be with them.
  3. For God to get the glory, these things must be done and asked for in the name of Jesus.
    - a. (Acts 2:38)<sup>38</sup> And Peter said to them, "Repent and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins, and you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit.
    - b. (Acts 3:6)<sup>6</sup> But Peter said, "I have no silver and gold, but what I do have I give to you. In the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, rise up and walk!"
- c. Those who believe will do greater works. Those works will be accomplished differently after Jesus goes to the Father. They will ask Jesus and he will do it. But it's conditional. You must ask. If you ask, he will do it. That means, if don't ask then he won't do it.
  - i. One reason it must work this way is because it leaves no question as to who it was from and who gets the glory.
  - ii. Those who believe will do works. Those who ask will receive. And now, those who love Jesus will keep his commandments.
    1. There has been no mention of the disciples' love for Jesus. He has talked about his love for them. He has commanded that they love one another. Now, he says if you love me, you will keep my commandments.
    2. I really think this is part of the doing greater works. But it's also clear that it's a contradiction to say that you love Jesus but do not do his commandments.
      - a. (1 Jn. 5:3)<sup>3</sup> For this is the love of God, that we keep his commandments. And his commandments are not burdensome.
  - iii. Jesus has much more to say about this so I will be brief here. But my question is, how will the disciples love and work for the glory of God? Is it not in the power of the Holy Spirit? (1 Pet. 4:11)<sup>11</sup> whoever speaks, as one who speaks oracles of God; whoever serves, as one who serves by the strength that God supplies-- in order that in everything God may be glorified through Jesus Christ. To him belong glory and dominion forever and ever. Amen.
    1. Notice the coming resource to accomplish the work! (Jn. 14:16)<sup>16</sup> And I will ask the Father, and he will give you another Helper, to be with you forever,
      - a. Another Advocate! This same word is used of Jesus in (1 Jn. 2:1) My little children, I am writing these things to you so that you may not sin. But if anyone does sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous.
      - b. Most certainly, the Helper is the Holy Spirit. We shouldn't hear the Helper and think that somehow the Spirit is below us or even equal to us. He is God the Holy Spirit.
      - c. The word Helper literally means the One called alongside for the purpose of helping, exhorting, and encouraging. He is the Advocate who prays on our behalf when we are groaning. He is the Comforter in our pain. Not to take away the pain, now, but to be with us through the pain.
      - d. And of great importance, he is the Spirit of Truth to which Jesus says the world cannot receive. Why? Because it neither sees him nor knows him.

- e. However, the disciples know him. How do they know him? Because he dwells with them.
  - i. He is with them because Jesus is with them. And how do they know the Spirit? (Jn. 1:32-33) <sup>32</sup> And John bore witness: "I saw the Spirit descend from heaven like a dove, and it remained on him. <sup>33</sup> I myself did not know him, but he who sent me to baptize with water said to me, 'He on whom you see the Spirit descend and remain, this is he who baptizes with the Holy Spirit.'
- f. After the cross and resurrection, Jesus will give his disciples the Spirit. I mentioned early that the disciples asked Jesus who should take Judas' place. As it turns out, they cast lots (roll the dice) in order to discover which person to choose. However, the Spirit had not come yet. What's interesting, they never roll the dice again. The Spirit leads them to the truth.

#### V. Response

- a. All of this work is bound up in the new covenant promises which are these: (Ezek. 36:26-27) <sup>26</sup> And I will give you a new heart, and a new spirit I will put within you. And I will remove the heart of stone from your flesh and give you a heart of flesh. <sup>27</sup> And I will put my Spirit within you, and cause you to walk in my statutes and be careful to obey my rules.
  - i. The Spirit was with his disciples while Jesus was here. But Jesus came that he might pay the penalty of sin so that the Holy Spirit could not only be with them but in them.
  - ii. In the Old Covenant, God presence was with his people to make the distinct or hallowed—set apart from all other people. His presence is what changed them. However, he could not remain among them because they would break the covenant.
  - iii. However, when Jesus dies on the cross and is raised, all who believe in him receive forgiveness and Holy Spirit. And God's presence can remain because we have a better covenant—a lasting one.
  - iv. Do you have a new heart? Do you love Jesus? Do you obey him? Are his commandments burdensome?
  - v. If all of those are true of you then you are part of the New Covenant family. Do great works for the glory of God!
  - vi. However, if this doesn't describe you, the way in is through repentance and faith in the Lord Jesus Christ and you will be redeemed.