

# Greater Works

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[ 0 : 00 ] Would you take your Bibles this morning and open them to the Gospel of John?

We're going to deviate from my series through Luke. We deviate because of our emphasis this month. And John chapter 14 is a marvelous passage of Scripture.

And in fact, that entire chapter is just fantastic. But I want us to focus starting with verse 12. In fact, our text for this morning is from verses 12 through 21 of John chapter 14.

This passage has much to do with the mission of the church. And so therefore, highly relevant for our focus, pertaining to our focus this month, which of course is missions.

And so let me go ahead and read the passage. And with the time that we have left this morning, I want to share with you what God has to say to us here. Starting with verse 12, John chapter 14.

[ 1 : 12 ] And I will pray.

And I will pray.

Now, we don't have enough time to really pick apart every single word and phrase and verse.

Of this passage. Wish we did. Maybe we can come back and look at it a little bit in more depth at another time. But we can look at some wonderful promises that are contained in these verses.

Now, the subject of chapter 14, if we might just kind of think about the context of this passage. The overall subject, we could say, is the departure of Jesus.

[ 3 : 07 ] Jesus is leaving. Very soon, He's going to be going to the cross. And He says there in the very first verse. And He says there in the very first verse of that chapter, let not your heart be troubled.

And why would He say that? Because their hearts were troubled. The hearts of His disciples. They knew that He was very soon going to be leaving. They may not have understood all about that.

Did not have understood exactly everything about the way He would be going and so forth and so forth. But they didn't know He was going and they were troubled in their hearts. And Jesus again confirmed that He was going.

He said in verse 2, I go. So He's going. He says, I go to prepare a place for you. So very shortly, Jesus will be going to the cross and He will be put to death.

And of course, after that, He will be raised from the dead and ascend back to the Father. That's what He meant by actually going. Now, Jesus began to explain a little bit of this.

[ 4 : 05 ] And then He was interrupted by some questions. The disciples had some serious questions for Him. We're not going to be looking at those questions. But again, just kind of setting up the passage in which we're going to be focusing this morning.

Thomas first asked a question. Then we have Philip asking a question. In a sense, really kind of interrupting Jesus in His teaching here. Because they had these burning questions on their hearts about Jesus going and all about that.

And then we have then the passage that we're going to be looking at this morning. And then after that, there's another question. A question comes from Judas. That's the other Judas, not Judas Iscariot.

And so He's going to ask a question. So in between Philip's question and Judas' question, Jesus gives some teaching here. And I would say to you that what He gives us here are three promises. Three promises given to the church. And these promises are specifically directly connected with the work of the church.

[ 5 : 12 ] Or to use another term, our mission. The mission of the church. All right, so Jesus is leaving. Yes, He's leaving very clearly.

The disciples understood that. We, of course, know that He did leave. We know He's also coming again. But Jesus did leave. And yet, though He left, His ministry had not come to a close when

Jesus left.

He wasn't saying that His ministry was going to come to a close. In fact, far from it. It was just beginning. It was just beginning. Now, Jesus would not be doing the ministry directly and solely. It would be carried on by the church. In fact, Luke, in his second gospel, which we call the book of Acts, the Acts of the Apostles, in the book of Acts, Luke begins by telling Theophilus, whoever that guy was, that his first gospel, the gospel of Luke, was something that involved the ministry of Jesus. And he said that in Luke, we have all that Jesus began to do, began to do, and to teach. So you see, it just began with Jesus, and that ministry continues on.

[ 6 : 32 ] And it's the church, of course, that is to continue the work of Jesus, the work Jesus began, the work Jesus inaugurated. Jesus said in John chapter 20, verse 21, as the Father has sent me, I also, what?

Send you. All right, so it's a continuing work. All right, now, then, he gives us then, in relation to this, connected to this, directly connected to this work that we are to be doing, he gives us three promises.

Three promises. And so in the time I have left, I want us to consider these promises. The first promise appears in verse 12, and it's an amazing promise, where Jesus promises the church what I want to call an expanded program of missions.

An expanded program of missions. In fact, I could put it this way, a greatly expanded program of missions. If you look at verse 12 again, this is amazing.

Most assuredly, he said, I say to you, he who believes in me, the works that I do, he will do also.

[ 7 : 50 ] That's amazing, isn't it? I mean, think about that. How incredible is that? We will do the same works Jesus did. Can you imagine anyone today doing the same works that Jesus did?

Of course, you've noticed that I stopped a little bit early in that passage because Jesus says a whole lot more than that, doesn't he? He says really the unthinkable, the unfathomable, and greater works, greater works than these, what?

What are these? The works that Jesus did. Greater works than these, he will do because I go to the Father. So can you imagine then anyone today, any believer today, doing works that are greater than the works Jesus did?

Can you imagine that? Now think about it. Jesus, on one occasion, fed over 5,000 people with a little boy's sack lunch and they picked up 12 baskets of leftovers.

Jesus, on one occasion, simply just stood in the boat and he spoke a word of command to the winds and the seas to be calm and they obeyed him.

[ 9 : 08 ] Jesus, on one occasion, it was at a wedding in Cana of Galilee, he took a jar of water and he blessed it and turned it into wine. By the way, about 120 gallons of it.

Jesus, on another occasion, of course, walked on the water. And this is just simply a very small sampling of the many things that Jesus did during his earthly ministry.

And so I ask you, is it possible for any of us to do greater things than that? Is it possible for us to command the wind and the seas?

Is it possible for us to walk on water? Is it possible for us to raise the dead? And my answer to that is, I'm sorry, but no.

No. No. It's not possible. Jesus did these kind of miracles, these kinds of things. The apostles did similar works of miracle for a time after Jesus left, but after you get past the apostles, all that ceased.

[ 10 : 10 ] All that was done because primarily because the Word of God was completed. So can we do those kind of things? Walk on water? Command the water? Command the seas? Command the wind?

Raise people from the dead? No. Now here's the point. Jesus did not promise that we would do greater miracles. You notice the difference? He said that we would do greater works.

Greater works. And that greater work is the work of salvation. It's the gospel work. It's evangelism. We would do greater works of missions.

That's the subject, by the way, in another passage in John. In John chapter 5 and verse 20. And I'll just read it to you very quickly here. In chapter 5 verse 20, Jesus said, For the Father loves the Son, and He shows Him all things that He Himself does.

And He will show Him greater works than these, that you may marvel. Greater works than these great miracles that were performed. Greater, that you would marvel.

[ 11 : 14 ] What are these works? For as the Father raises the dead and gives life to them, even so the Son gives life to whom He will.

And I'm talking about resurrections, physical resurrections. He's talking about here, in this sense, He's talking about salvation. He's talking about the new life, the new birth.

He says in verse 24 of that same chapter, Most assuredly, I say to you, He who hears My word and believes in Him who sent Me has everlasting life and shall not come into judgment but has passed from death into life.

That's the subject there, salvation, you see. Most assuredly, I say to you, the hour is coming and now is when the dead will hear the voice of the Son of God and those who hear will live.

He's talking about being raised to new life. The subject there is salvation. That's the work that Jesus did. So you see, greater than raising someone from the dead physically is to raise someone from the dead spiritually through the proclamation of the gospel of Jesus Christ.

[ 12 : 23 ] Listen to John chapter 4 verse 35 and following. But He said to them, I have food to eat of which you do not know. Remember, this is the story of Jesus going into Samaria, into a Samaritan town and preaching the gospel to a Samaritan woman there at the well.

Disciples have come and they're offering Him food. And He says, I have food to eat that you don't know. And therefore, the disciples said to one another, Has anyone brought Him anything to eat? And Jesus said to them, My food, what's the food of Jesus? My food is to do the will of Him who sent me and to finish His work. Not works of miracles and signs, those served a purpose, but the work of which He speaks is the work of salvation.

And so He says to them, Do not say there are still four months and then comes the harvest. Behold, I say to you, lift up your eyes and look on the fields for they are already white for harvest.

The subject there is evangelism. It is the proclamation of the gospel. So what is the work that Jesus was to finish? That work in Luke 19.10 He says, For the Son of Man has come to seek and to save that which was lost.

[ 13 : 37 ] That's the works that we are to do. The same works that Jesus did. And Jesus said, Greater works. He said, You will do the same works and more.

Greater works you will do. Greater how? Is really the next logical question. Well, we could really answer that in a number of ways. Let me give you three possible answers.

Greater works geographically. I mean, that's obvious, isn't it? Did you know that Jesus' ministry never did extend beyond Galilee and Judea?

He never got outside the borders of those two regions of the world, the land, kind of the land, a small portion of the land of Israel. He just never went any further. Now, Paul went a little bit further than that.

In fact, it's argued that Paul may have been a missionary to all points of the known world, the civilized world of the day. And yet, that is even limited.

[ 14 : 36 ] Jesus never ventured beyond His home, Galilee, and never beyond a small portion of Judea. And yet, we have right here in this building today people who have done greater works than Jesus geographically.

Jesus never traveled to Ukraine. Jesus never extended His ministry to China or Mexico or Cuba or India or parts of Africa.

And not only that, but right here in this building, every one of us here today live and witness the gospel in a land Jesus never visited. I'm sorry, Mormons got it wrong.

Jesus never did come to America. He never came here, here in the United States of America.

Greater works geographically. Think about the gospel expanding through the church, by way of the church and missionaries that have been called out to go to all points on this globe and they are still being called out to do that and even reaching some of the most remote places in this world that Jesus never did go to.

Greater works geographically. But also, greater works ethnically. Greater works ethnically. We have a few isolated exceptions in the gospels, but Jesus' ministry was exclusively directed toward the Jews.

[ 16 : 03 ] It came for the house of Israel. Today, for now, 2,000 years plus, the gospel has been effectively extending to all the Gentile nations of this world.

to all peoples everywhere. Greater, you see, greater works geographically, ethnically, and I would add one other one.

This one might surprise you, though it really is very logical. Our works are greater numerically than Jesus. Greater works numerically. Did you know that by the close of Jesus' ministry, He had some 500 disciples?

That's the best we understand from Scripture. Paul tells us that in 1 Corinthians chapter 15. 500 disciples in His, you know, a little less than three years of ministry.

I'm not saying that to demean Jesus in any sense, but to highlight what He is saying that you will do greater works. I mean, within months of His death, resurrection, and ascension, really within a little better than a month, 3,000 were saved in one day in Acts chapter 2 verse 41.

[ 17 : 24 ] And by the time you get to Acts chapter 4 verse 4, 5,000, just counting the men, were saved there on that occasion. And that's just the beginning of it.

Just the tip of the iceberg because numerically speaking, of course, the church has grown exponentially into the multiplied millions, since Jesus walked this earth.

And God has enabled us to be a part of that. Isn't that exciting? That we can be actually directly a part of the gospel expanding to all the nations of the world and seeing the harvest of souls being saved and brought into the kingdom and we can be a part of that.

An expanded mission. You see, that's what we're talking about here. An expanded program of missions. But there's a second promise and it's connected really in a way connected to the first promise with the phrase because I go to my father.

That's what you have at the close of verse 12. Because I go to my father, Jesus said, greater works than these you will do because I go to my father.

[ 18 : 44 ] And so here's the second promise. The second promise follows this in the very next verse, in verse 13. Jesus promises the church an exalted purpose for missions.

This is very important. An exalted purpose for missions. You know, part of our problem when we disobey the Great Commission, part of our problem when it comes to not being witnesses of the gospel, part of that problem is because we really do not understand the exalted purpose of it.

It's something that goes way beyond just simply adding people to the church. It really goes way beyond just simply our duty to obey. Now, if that's all we go on, then so be it.

But it goes way beyond that. It really points us to an exalted purpose in missions. An exalted purpose. Look at verse 13. And whatever you ask in my name, that I will do.

And then he repeated the promise in verse 14. If you ask anything in my name, I will do it. Now, get that.

[ 20 : 01 ] whatever you ask in my name, anything you ask in my name, I will do it.

We just want to stand up and shout, don't we? Now, be careful. Be careful because we don't want to make the all too common error of trying to apply this promise to any and all prayer requests that we would have.

You know, hopefully, we're smart enough to know that Jesus is not just simply essentially giving us a blank check, as it were. Whatever you want, whatever you ask, anything you want, it's yours, just ask me for it.

There are some people who believe that that's a promise that we claim and anything we ask, he'll give it to us. And now, understand the context here.

Context is so important in getting at the meaning of any particular passage of Scripture. If you just read simply the verses or verse that you're focusing on and not pay attention to what's all around it, then you're going to very typically make a mistake.

[ 21 : 19 ] And here's a prime example. What's the context here? I've already told you. The context is the works of Jesus. and that we'll be able to do greater works.

What are these works? Evangelism, missions, the work of the church, in bringing the gospel to every creature.

It's all wrapped up in the Great Commission. That's what Jesus is talking about here. He's talking about missions, the gospel ministry of the church.

And so Jesus is saying, I'm going to the Father. And it's a good thing, because I promise you, I'm going to the Father, but I promise you that I will supply from heaven all that you need to effectively work these greater works.

Because I'm going to the Father. So just ask me. Here's kind of the initial part of the promise, though there's really much more than this. He's saying, ask me. Ask and keep on asking me.

[ 22 : 31 ] But ask in my name. Meaning, ask in perfect agreement with my nature, my character, my word, my will, my purpose of redemption in this world.

Ask in accordance to that and I will do it. This is a promise for missions. That's what this is. And what a promise it is.

But we do not have the full promise yet until we get to the last phrase of verse 13. What does he say? That the Father may be glorified in the Son.

And that's not just simply tagged on there. This is part of the promise. And I would say to you it's the ultimate promise. That the Father may be glorified in the Son.

That's the goal of missions. Did you know that? It's not to grow the church.

[ 23 : 40 ] Though that's a result, a fruit, and praise God for that. It's not so that you can get kudos from God. Mark that off. You are faithful. witness.

You know, obeying the Great Commission so that your life will be blessed. That's not the goal.

That's not the goal of evangelism. It's not the goal of the church.

I like what John Piper said about this. In his book, Let the Nations Be Glad, The Supremacy of God in Missions, he wrote this. Now listen to this very carefully.

John Piper said, Missions is not the ultimate goal of the church. I mean, right off, especially we Southern Baptists, we say, Oh!

Because that's just been what we've always been about from our conception. You know, I can remember the slogan some years ago, quite a few years ago, let's make the main thing the main thing.

[ 24 : 48 ] Speaking of missions, in a sense that's correct, I'm not against that, but listen to what Piper says here, and see if you would agree with him. Missions is not the ultimate goal of the church.

Worship is. And right off, if you're like me, I kind of bristle a little bit about that because, what is he saying?

What we do here on Sunday morning, that's the main goal? No, you're not talking about the worship of the church. Listen, listen further. Missions is not the ultimate goal of the church.

Worship is. And so missions exist because worship does not. That is out here, out here in Bartlesville.

There are a multitude of people here in this community who do not worship God. I don't mean they don't go to church.

[ 25 : 50 ] I mean they don't worship him as the one true God. That is, they're not redeemed.

They're not believers. the majority of the people in this state, Oklahoma, with its, I don't know how many, countless churches, the majority of the people in this state are not worshipers of the one true God because they're not saved.

Our country, our God blessed America, this, this, quote, Christian nation, the majority of the populace of this country are not worshipers.

A lot of them go to church. I'm not talking about church. I'm talking about responding to who God is, responding to his glory.

We're talking about worship. And only believers can worship. You understand we're going beyond and out to the nations of the world.

The vast majority of the population of this planet are not worshipers. the goal of missions is worship because worship does not exist with most people in the planet.

[ 27 : 25 ] Now listen to the rest of what he says. He puts it all together. Worship therefore is the goal of missions because in missions whether we're going to Ukraine or China or Colorado or Bartlesville or prison ministry once a month.

By the way, I don't know, on any given time we go to the prison there's between both sides about a hundred prisoners we get the opportunity to minister to.

Our aim in missions is to bring the nations of this world into the white hot enjoyment of God's glory. And these have to be saved in order to do that. You see how then the goal of missions is worship.

And what an exalted purpose this is that God has called us to when you think about it.

what kind of new light does that shed on this whole thing of evangelism? If we were to understand this ultimate primary objective in sharing the gospel whether it's at the Hope Clinic or at Bible Baptist Church Open Bible Baptist or Vladimir's Church in Comenica to Nova Ukraine or wherever.

[ 29 : 09 ] What an exalted purpose. Psalm 67 verses 3 and 4 let the peoples praise you. This is a prayer offered up to God. This is what Jesus is talking about when whatever you ask in my name it will do it.

Here's a prayer. Here's what we ought to ask. Let the peoples of the world praise you. Oh God let all the peoples praise you.

Oh let the nations be glad and sing for joy. There's a prayer with substance. Let the nations be glad and sing for joy for you shall judge the people righteously and govern the nations of the earth. So three promises. Three promises an expanded program of missions. Greater works you will do. An exalted purpose of missions.

The father be glorified in the son. That he be worshipped. And then finally Jesus promises the church an exclusive presence in missions.

[ 30 : 16 ] And this is very important. An exclusive presence with us. In missions. Verse 15. If you love me.

Keep my commandments and I will. Let's stop right there. This is a condition. If. All right. So now you know this is introducing a conditional clause.

If. It's a condition. And the condition is attached to the promise that comes next. So. If you will. I will. I'm not talking about earning God's grace and so forth. I'm not talking about salvation here at all. Except in the sense that if you love me that means you're a believer.

If you love me evidenced by the fact that you keep my commandments. If that's you. I hope that's you. You love Jesus.

[ 31 : 15 ] He's your Lord and your Savior. The proof. One of the proofs is that you keep his commandments. If you love me. Keep my commandments. I will.

I will. Here comes the promise. I will pray the Father and he will give you another helper that he may abide with you forever. This is interesting.

Jesus said another helper. Some of you have comforter. We the King James has comforter. And it's primarily because in the old English language helper, comforter, they meant the same thing.

But it's better to think of it in the sense of helper. The word there in the Greek is parakletos. Some places the form is paraklete.

You've heard of the divine paraklete. It's parakletos here. It's a compound word. parakletos. Para, preposition, means beside, alongside.

[ 32 : 25 ] And then kletos is from the Greek word kaleo, meaning to call. To call. And so it means called alongside.

And so since Jesus is speaking of a person, then it is the one called alongside. That's the comforter, the helper. The one called alongside of us to help us, to empower us, to strengthen us, to guide us, to encourage us, because we need that sometimes, don't we?

A lot. And so who are we talking about? It's the Holy Spirit. This is the Holy Spirit. Jesus had another helper.

And it's a reference to the Holy Spirit that is given as a gift to all born-again believers. And Jesus is going to initially give it there, here in our passage, when he leaves, he gives another helper.

And that's the Holy Spirit. But Jesus also said another helper. And I dare say we really haven't paid much attention to that.

[ 33 : 44 ] Another helper. There are two words in the Greek language that are usually translated another. And you could probably guess, one means another of a different kind.

The other means another of the same kind. It's pretty logical. Another of a different kind, another of the same kind. Now in this passage, Jesus used the word that means another of the same kind.

The same kind. So if the Holy Spirit is another of the same kind, then who is the other one? Who's the other one?

Of whom, the one of which he is the same kind, of the same kind. Who is that? Well it's Jesus, of course. It's one of those questions where Jesus is the right answer.

It's Jesus. Alright, so Jesus is a helper. And it's not that we're not going to have him anymore, and the Holy Spirit is going to take his place.

[ 34 : 50 ] He's saying I'm giving you another, an additional one of the same kind. And so Jesus is our helper in heaven, and the Holy Spirit is our helper on earth.

One in heaven and one in our hearts. Now this makes the promise even greater, doesn't it? That we would have the active presence of God the Son seated in the heavens at the right hand of the

throne of God helping us.

He ever lives to make intercession for us. And at the same time, the active presence of the third member of the Trinity, God the Holy Spirit, seated where?

In our hearts. seated in our hearts, helping us, guiding us, strengthening us, encouraging us, empowering us, and so forth.

And that means, again, in the context of missions, whether it's here or on the other side of the world, that means that we cannot go anywhere, cannot say anything, cannot do anything, where we do not take Him with us.

[ 36 : 12 ] He's with us, and He takes part in every aspect of our lives. promise. And no one else has that promise but us.

It's exclusive. And that's why Jesus said in John, in verse 17 of this passage, this presence in you He's talking about, is the Spirit of truth, whom the world cannot receive, because it neither sees Him nor knows Him, but you know Him, don't you?

You know Him, for He dwells within you and will be with you. Jesus goes on to say the same thing in a number of other ways in the rest of this passage.

But it's the exclusive presence in missions that we have been called to, the missions we've been called to, exclusive presence. Where you go, who you're talking to, what the set of circumstances are.

He is. He's there. That's unique. What a promise. Listen, dear people, as I wrap this up.

[ 37 : 38 ] We possess a great salvation, don't we? Great salvation. commission. We've been given a great commission.

We serve a great God. A great God. Thank you. Thank you. Thank you.