

“These Things You Will Do and Greater”---Meaning of John 14:12

LESSON TEXT: John 14:8-14 NLT.

“Philip said, “Lord, show us the Father, and we will be satisfied.”⁹ Jesus replied, “Have I been with you all this time, Philip, and yet you still don’t know who I am? Anyone who has seen me has seen the Father! So why are you asking me to show him to you?”¹⁰ Don’t you believe that I am in the Father and the Father is in me? The words I speak are not my own, but my Father who lives in me does his work through me.¹¹ Just believe that I am in the Father and the Father is in me. Or at least believe because of the work you have seen me do.¹² “I tell you the truth, anyone who believes in me will do the same works I have done, and even greater works, because I am going to be with the Father.¹³ You can ask for anything in my name, and I will do it, so that the Son can bring glory to the Father.¹⁴ Yes, ask me for anything in my name, and I will do it!”

LESSON INTRODUCTION:

- Over the years, within the Church of Jesus Christ, there have been much interest in the interpretation of John 14:8-14 with special attention upon verse 12.
 - There have been many attempts at interpretation of this verse, but what truly matters is not one persons subjective opinion about a Scripture, which is usually based upon a subjective view based on individual “suppositions.”
 - Suppositions from perhaps: Denominations, Familial understandings, feelings, personal opinions, or even “favorite preachers” views.
 - No, the heart of the matter of understanding this verse, and any verse, is based upon sound Exegesis.
 - Because this particular verse is laden with so much “*baggage*,” I have chosen, as any good student of the Bible must always try their hardest to do, is to base their understanding of this verse upon a Hermeneutic based in a strong Exegesis, rather than a “*subjective supposition*.”
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- In order to come to an accurate understanding of what Jesus was saying here to His Disciples, there are several “**KEY**” points that must be made:
 - #1---What is the meaning of the word “**GREATER**” here in this passage in the original Greek?

- #2---What is the word “GREATER” referring to?
- #3---In order to fully understand what Jesus is saying here, we also need to take into consideration what the term “THINGS” (NIV), “WORKS” (NLT/ESV) He is referring to means.
- #4---We then must interpret the word “GREATER” Contextually within the whole of this passage, in order to fully come to the meaning of what Jesus was saying.

I. LESSON POINT #1---UNDERSTANDING THE WORD GREATER

- a. First, the word “GREATER” in the Greek is the word {megas} which Strong’s defines as: Large, great, in the widest sense,,,,,,,,,Exceedingly, great or greatest, high, large, loud, mighty,→Strong’s #3173.
- b. Second, the word “THINGS/WORKS” are in reference to the “ACTIVITIES” the Disciples had witnessed Jesus doing. What was Jesus doing? He was proclaiming the Kingdom of God, doing miracles that substantiated the arrival of the Kingdom of God, and that what He was proclaiming and validating, was indeed the long awaited inauguration of the Kingdom of God.
 - i. Therefore, Jesus is saying that like Him, we as His Disciples will be proclaiming the Kingdom of God through the preaching of the Gospel into all the world, and as enabled by the Holy Spirit, validating the veracity of what we are proclaiming as the Kingdom of God.
- c. These points are referenced in the fact that when Phillip asks of Jesus to “show them the Father,” Jesus’ declaration to Him is that “the Father is in Him; and He is in the Father,” and that His words (He had been proclaiming) are not His own, but rather the Father’s.
 - i. Then Jesus points to what some might consider an odd validation of the truth Jesus had just shared with Phillip. He says in essence: If you cannot believe that truth, then look to the miracles themselves as the source of validity to His claim to be “one with the Father,” and that He was indeed proclaiming the Father’s Kingdom and will.

II. LESSON POINT #2---WHAT WERE THE “ACTS” THAT JESUS DID AS AN DEMONSTRATIONS OF THE KINGDOM OF GOD?

a. What were the acts that accompanied the proclamation of the Inauguration of the Kingdom of God?

i. They were.....

1. Healings!
2. casting out demons!
3. Raising the dead!
4. Miracles, etc.
 - a. Acts/actions which validated the truthfulness of what Jesus was preaching and demonstrating.
 - b. Jesus Himself summed up His mission in **Luke 4:18-21** NLT.

¹⁸“The Spirit of the LORD is upon me, for he has anointed me to bring Good News to the poor. He has sent me to proclaim that captives will be released, that the blind will see, that the oppressed will be set free, and that the time of the LORD’s favor has come.” ²⁰ He rolled up the scroll, handed it back to the attendant, and sat down. All eyes in the synagogue looked at him intently. ²¹ Then he began to speak to them. “The Scripture you’ve just heard has been fulfilled this very day!”

b. Jesus ties into His meaning of “**GREATER**” in the fact that “**He is going to His Father,**” and “**Anything you ask in my Name I will do.**”

**In Your
Own
Words!**

Identify what YOU believe Jesus means here by the phrase “Greater Things!”

c. Going to His Father is a reference to the truth that when Jesus leaves, He would not leave the Disciples “alone,” He would send the Comforter, the Holy Spirit. We see this a little further within the context of this passage in verses 16-18.

JOHN 14:16-18...

“And I will ask the Father, and he will give you another Advocate, who will never leave you. He is the Holy Spirit, who leads into all truth. The world cannot receive him, because it isn’t looking for him and doesn’t recognize him. But you know him, because he lives with you now and later will be in you. No, I will not abandon you as orphans—I will come to you.”

ADVOCATE →

Can also mean, and is interpreted:

*Comforter, or Encourager, or Counselor. The Koine Greek reads **Paraclete***

- d. Anything you ask in my name is not a “Name it/Claim it” reference as has been so abused, but rather the truth that as Christ’s Disciples, fully aligned with His purpose and will, we will ask for things that will be within the context of that will, and bring glory to the Father through the Son,.....and Jesus will grant those requests.
- e. Now, having said all this the meaning of “**GREATER-WORKS**” here in this passage is this:
 - i. This is not in reference to doing something “**BETTER**” than what Jesus did!
 - 1. And I hardly think Jesus had the preaching of the Gospel over TV and Internet in mind, but rather He had not yet offered Himself for our sins, rose from the dead, ascended into Heaven, and sent the Holy Spirit.
 - ii. So, now that He has done all of that, through his Vicarious Atonement, Believers now have:
 - 1. The infilling of the Holy Spirit!
 - 2. His powerful enablement’s
 - 3. And the ability to proclaim the Good News of Jesus Christ, and ask for all these things to be accomplished in Jesus’ Name.

THE IVP COMMENTARY PUTS IT LIKE THIS:

“These greater things are possible because I am going to the Father (v. 12). That is, Jesus' greatest work has yet to occur: his death, resurrection and ascension. After he is glorified, the Spirit will be given (7:39), and believers can then receive the full benefits of the salvation Jesus has accomplished through the union that comes through the Spirit. The disciples' works are greater in that they are "the conveying to people of the spiritual realities of which the works of Jesus are `signs'" (Beasley-Murray 1987:254).

So greater things refer to our having a deeper understanding of God and sharing in his own life through actual union with him, which is now possible as a result of Jesus' completed work (cf. 14:20). It is not just a matter of

more disciples; it is a matter of a qualitatively new reality in which the disciples share.

Even though Jesus is departing, these greater things are not accomplished by the disciples apart from Jesus (cf. Bultmann 1971:611), but rather through prayer to him (vv. 13-14). Even though he will be gone, they can still ask him."

CONCLUSION:

- We now have our salvation.....
-We now have available to us the power of the Holy Spirit (*Who had not yet been given when Jesus said this*),.....
-We now have the ability to pray in Jesus' Name, and when aligned with His will and purpose, expect to see it answered!

The greater is not **BETTER**, but of a different **NATURE**! A nature infused with the powers of the Vicarious Atonement of Christ, Praying in Jesus' Name, and the power of the Holy Spirit.
